

# OPERATIONAL PLAN

## IV: INTEGRATION OF WORKFORCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION QUESTIONS 6 - 9

Functional Integration	
<b>Guidelines Pages 46-47</b>	<p><b>6. Discuss the accessibility and coordination between and among access points in the local area. Include in your discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. How partners who are not co-located coordinate services with full service centers.</b></li> <li><b>b. How partial service and specialized service centers coordinate with full service centers.</b></li> <li><b>c. The accessibility of the full service, partial service, specialized service, and planned locations (e.g., toll-free numbers, automated systems, extended hours, ADA compliance).</b></li> <li><b>d. How rural customers access the workforce development network in the local area.</b></li> </ul>
<p>All full-service and satellite centers are ADA compliant, and each full-service center has a TDD machine and toll-free number. TWIST service is available at all centers. Services by partners who are not co-located in the workforce centers are coordinated through a documented referral system. Access to child care services and unemployment insurance benefit information is through toll-free numbers.</p> <p>The WDA is rural and there is at least a satellite center in each of the 12 counties. Full service centers are located in Angelina, Nacogdoches, Shelby, Jasper, and Polk Counties and are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A site manager is located in each of the full service centers. Satellite centers are located in the remaining 7 counties, and are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Each satellite center is under the supervision of a site manager from a full service center. Services not available at the satellite centers, or not convenient to current workers due to the hours, are available through toll free numbers to staff at full-service centers and by appointment. All centers have been assessed and are ADA compliant. All workforce center brochures and advertising publish the TX Relay number. The toll-free numbers also give access to non co-located partners. An intranet is planned and this will increase access and services available to the satellites.</p>	

## Functional Integration

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7. **Describe the Board's design for a functionally integrated workforce development area. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. **Strategies to establish regional cooperation with neighboring local workforce development areas.**
  - b. **A description of capacity building strategies for Board staff, Center staff, and subcontractors aimed at integration and the streamlining of service delivery.**
  - c. **How communication is facilitated between and among Board staff, Center staff, and subcontractors to improve the delivery of workforce services.**
  - d. **Examples of Center staff utilization that engenders and furthers the integration process.**
  - e. **A discussion on how the Board will monitor the continuous improvement of eligible training and contracted service providers and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants (e.g., through capacity-building activities).**

The Board currently has MOUs with adult education cooperatives located outside the WDA. Region VI ESC serves four counties in the Deep East Texas WDA, Houston, Trinity, San Jacinto, and Polk; Region V ESC serves Shelby County; and Region IV ESC serves Jasper, Newton, and Tyler. A number of WIA Title I training providers are located in neighboring areas. As discussed in the strategic portion of the plan, neighboring areas are important to the economies of border counties of the WDA and do influence training selections of individuals in those counties.

Capacity building activity occurs at the Board and Board staff level through TWC, DOL, and other workforce and related conferences and trainings. When needed, Board staff offers both technical assistance and training to all contractors. The contractor has developed an on-going training plan for all staff that includes cross training with partners.

Workforce center partners and Board staff meet semi-annually to discuss the status of operations, coordination, program or operation changes, and to strategize for improvements. Changes in procedures, operations, and contract compliance requirements are formally distributed to contractors through Board Issuance or contract amendments. Meetings, phone conversations, or e-mail correspondence occur with individual contractors and partners as needed to address issues as they arise.

Specific workforce center staff are designated to assist with employment services, increasing capacity to take job orders, interview job seekers, and conduct job development. Two functional units have evolved utilizing both employment services staff and contractor staff. One unit is an

intake unit for job seekers, which provides core services and an orientation to the workforce center; the other is the business services unit. The business services unit consists of two teams. One team makes outside employer contacts, develops jobs, and writes subsidized employment contracts. The other team handles inside employer calls and screenings. Job orders are maintained by the business services staff that takes the order, which allows for better continuity and follow-up.

The Board will monitor through regular monitoring, oversight of training plans, compliance issues, customer suggestions and complaints, and staff suggestions. The Board members, staff, and contractor staff currently meet with local community colleges and existing community employer associations. The Board works with these associations and area educational institutions to identify training needs and employer satisfaction. The Board will continue to provide technical assistance and conduct training as required and requested. All full-service workforce centers in Deep East Texas have customer satisfaction surveys for training completed. The surveys are compiled in a notebook, which is available to all customers. The Board reviews these surveys during monitoring. Because participants are informed of labor market information and strongly encouraged to complete career exploration prior to enrollment in training, participants are more apt to choose a training provider that meets their needs.

## Functional Integration

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**Question 8 (revised).** Describe how the Board complies with the local planning component required in Texas Government Code § 2308.303(a)(8-9) and § 2308.304(b)(3) that states the Board shall evaluate all existing workforce training and services, and the effectiveness of those programs or services, available throughout the local area. Include in your discussion the following:

- a. how the evaluation of services offered through contracted funds (i.e. contracted service providers) is conducted and coordinated with evaluations of other services, programs and resources in the local area that are not funded by the Board;
- b. what the main issues and the significant workforce development outcomes documented during PY 2003 evaluations were and how the Board utilized or will utilize the information obtained from the evaluations to expand and improve the existing workforce and economic development network to include the coordination and integration of programs and services between all available Board-funded or non-funded services in the local area;
- c. how new and existing services to special population groups in the region are identified and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure the needs of special populations are adequately addressed and that services to these groups are continuously improved and integrated in the workforce network; and
- d. how the Board has collaborated, or plans to collaborate, with the local public community colleges, the state-wide extension service, community services organizations, and both current and prospective employers in their area, to develop Skills Development Fund (SDF) and Self-Sufficiency Fund (SSF) related projects and proposals, to include:
  - i. a description of the outcomes of such collaborations and recent SDF and SSF projects,
  - ii. an explanation of plans for future collaborations, including the expected local benefit, and
  - iii. a description of the type of training, employer partners and occupations selected for training.

*NOTE: The response to Question 8 should consider all types of workforce resources mapped by the Board, i.e., all service provider and funding sources available in the local area, such as coordinated activities with employers and economic development entities, regional initiatives targeting industry clusters, partnerships with community-based organizations (CBO's) and faith-based organizations (FBO's) or other non-profit organizations (NPO's), coordination with community colleges and vocational or technical educational institutions, financial and non-financial agreements or memoranda of understanding with optional center partners, layoff aversion or customized training assistance,*

*vocational rehabilitation entities serving individuals with disabilities, institutions assisting disadvantaged youth and ex-offenders, as well as all other available direct federal, state, local and private grant opportunities.*

Services over which the Board has oversight responsibility are evaluated through monitoring and quality control by the Board and contractor, customer satisfaction surveys completed in the Workforce Centers and by TWC, monthly program management by the Board, a review of performance measures outcomes, a baseline assessment of workforce center services, formal and informal networking with businesses and business organizations. Focus groups are conducted in each full-service center and involve employers and special interest groups, such as the disabled community. Informational items, such as tax credits and working with the new WorkInTexas.com system, are presented during the focus groups. Time is devoted to feedback from employers on how to make services more responsive to employer needs. This interaction with key players in workforce-related services is expected to be an important venue for assessing the area's services and identifying needs and resources. An evaluation of current resources in focus groups consists of feedback from attendees. The Board has also contracted for a baseline assessment of Board and center services as the first step in a comprehensive quality improvement program. The baseline will then be compared to required and desired service activity levels for all populations so that improvements can be made where applicable.

The Board has not conducted a formal evaluation of other local services, programs, and resources not under the Board's purview, except for the 2003 resource mapping for youth services with School and Main. However, in working toward meeting its' goals and objectives, and developing and implementing programs and services, the Board reviews other programs, services, and resources in the area. For example, organizations requesting letters of support for grant opportunities, such as skills development, are evaluated based on the proposed impact to local employers, the community, and employees. A positive impact on these groups would be indicated by the proposed quality and relevance of training, long term benefits, and economic impact. Local needs for skilled labor, including basic skills, targeted occupations addressed, and targeted industries served would address these criteria. The Board evaluates services of training and providers either through statewide performance requirement, such as the TPCS system, or by a review of the contracted performance results. The Board and its contractor is a strong community presence through our attendance at economic development meetings, chambers of commerce meetings, interagency meetings, community resource coordination groups (CRCG), Community Events, Veterans events, the Rural Entrepreneur Project, business organizations, Senior events, career fairs and other school functions. The Board is a member of many of our community college advisory groups. The Board was a part of the Summit on Regionalism, an event that brought together economic development and workforce development in three workforce development areas. Active involvement in these and other events helps the Board to identify and evaluate workforce issues and resources, and to provide linkages for businesses and organizations. The Board coordinates the evaluation of current and other grant opportunities to maximize its resources so that there is no duplication of services for Board funding programs or services that may serve the same population.

The Return-On-Investment (ROI) study conducted by the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas determined that for every public dollar invested into employment and training and other

workforce services in the Deep East Texas Workforce Development Board area in 2000-2001, \$7.60 would be returned to the taxpayer over 5 years. The 5-year net ROI for workforce investments in this area is estimated to be 760 percent.

The workforce centers received over 4,000 job orders and located jobs for over 4,000 job seekers. Over 6,000 phone contacts or on-site visits to businesses were made.

The Board served approximately 60,000 people through the Deep East Texas workforce system, providing 5,350 individuals with intensive services in special programs, and 580 individuals with training in demand occupations.

Services within the workforce centers have improved significantly under the new contractor. The new contract is projected to save the Board approximately \$500,000 over the 13 month contract period. These savings are being directed to workforce center infrastructure and customer services.

Working with local economic development and government bodies by providing company specific local labor market data, assisted in turning a potential business closing into an expansion for one local business, and assisted in presentations that resulted in the relocation of another business, and an expansion of another.

Board and workforce centers have had the opportunity to speak to economic development, civic groups, and chambers of commerce on over 65 occasions.

The Board supported two skills development grants, one with Angelina College, one for Panola College, and self-sufficiency grants for Panola College and Region VI Education Service Center. All grants were awarded.

Within the workforce centers, the employer rooms were used on approximately 120 occasions; center staff provided application screening services on 275 instances, labor market information to over 100 occasions, testing services on 70 occasions to over 50 businesses, and hosted or attended approximately 60 job fairs.

The Board received and implemented a National Emergency Grant for over 400 workers affected by the Louisiana Pacific plant shutdown in Bon Weir. Rapid Response services to Abitibi Consolidated workers after the December 2003 announcement of an indefinite plant shutdown. Layoff assistance was provided to an additional 30 businesses over the year.

An incumbent worker training project targeting the health care industry was initiated. The Board awarded 4 contracts totaling \$188,400.00. Over 100 workers have received skills upgrading or begun occupational skills training within 7 months.

The Board's annual independent audit resulted in no audit findings.

As part of the Board's overall marketing strategy, a "doing business as" (dba) was developed and the Board is now doing business as WorkForce Solutions-Deep East Texas.

A resource-mapping project for youth services with School and Main identified a lack of mentoring resources in the area. Mentoring training was then provided on November 4, with 13 interested individuals attending, representing 10 entities. A Mentoring Coalition was formed and meets monthly in Angelina County; its goal is to promote mentoring initiative in Deep East Texas. The group grew to over 20 individuals in 2 months.

The Board uses the information obtained from both the formal and informal evaluations to identify additional services or changes to services that are needed by businesses, community groups, and workers. Working with business and other organizations, the Board is able to link Board-funded programs to other programs in the area to avoid duplication of effort and provide better business and career services.

New and existing services to special population groups in our area are identified by networking with other groups, and by customer assessments at the centers, either during intake or intensive services. By being actively involved in the local communities, the Board has the opportunity to learn about services that are offered by other agencies to special populations. If it is determined that mutual services would benefit special populations, the Board and the organization may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding. Customer assessment at the workforce center is able to identify needs of individuals, and refer to appropriate services. Services are evaluated based on whether or not customer needs are being met through existing services. Continuous improvement and integration of services will be addressed following the completion of the Board's baseline assessment. A continuous improvement plan will then be developed and implemented.

The Board has had a long-standing, successful relationship with both Angelina and Panola community college. The Board has supported numerous Skills Development Fund and Self-Sufficiency Fund applications from both colleges, and from Region VI Education Service Center. Business outreach efforts include information regarding both grants. Training under these grants includes literacy activities and/or occupational specific training in the manufacturing, health care, and education industries.

## Functional Integration

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9. Provide an explanation of the local coordination and integration of Rapid Response services. Include in the discussion the following items.
  - a. Discuss how the Board ensures that Rapid Response activities are coordinated with the workforce investment activities performed in the Centers.
  - b. Discuss how Rapid Response services will be provided when a Petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is filed.
  - c. Discuss how potential trade-affected workers will be assessed to determine the need for providing core and intensive services, once the petitions are filed.

The primary purpose of both Rapid Response and Trade services is to move affected workers into new jobs as quickly and effectively as possible. The coordination of Rapid Response services may vary by situation, however the general procedure is as outlined here.

Layoff notice may be received a number ways, including news articles, trade petitions, rumor, or contact with the workforce center. The Board Rapid Response Coordinator contacts the employer to obtain additional information about the layoff, discusses Rapid Response Services, filing of a federal Trade Petition, and schedules an on-site meeting. Notice of layoff information is then distributed to all relevant persons, including the TWC Dislocated Worker Services, the Board Rapid Response Coordinator, and the Board's Rapid Response contractor. Notification is made by transmitting the Layoff Notice form. An on-site meeting with the employer is conducted with the Rapid Response Coordinator and contractor to gather more information about the event, explain available programs in more detail, and to schedule for services. Trade petitions will also be discussed. Orientation sessions are then conducted, providing all relevant information and services. Rapid Response activities will not duplicate any outplacement services for which an employer contracts.

During Rapid Response orientation, data is obtained about affected workers and this data is entered into TWIST. Information packets are distributed, including information about Unemployment Insurance, mass claim information (if relevant), available services through Rapid Response and the local workforce centers as well as the locations and schedules for those services, job search information, TAA information, and labor market information. Affected workers are invited to visit the local workforce center.

Data entry of customer information obtained during orientation sessions facilitates the customer entry into center services. All workforce center customers are provided core services and offered an orientation. A brief individual or group orientation is held with all first-time center customers, including dislocated workers who file a trade petition, to brief them on available services and procedure within the centers. This includes procedures for WIA application and more intensive services, including training. A brief initial assessment by center staff normally consists of an interview and a review of the information provided by the worker on the common center application, which includes work history and education. Center staff may determine

initially if the occupation from which the worker was laid off is an occupation in demand. If the assessment determines the need for more intensive services, and the workers are referred to WIA staff to complete the application process, and to schedule a comprehensive assessment and employment planning. Services are planned based on individual needs. Co-enrollment in the WIA dislocated worker program and the trade program will be accomplished if applicable.

During initial assessment, center staff will determine potential TAA eligibility, determine if a trade petition has been filed if applicable, and if one has not, information and assistance will be given to file a petition. Trade petitions filed outside of the above Rapid Response process, such as those filed by individual workers when little or no notice of layoff is given, will be handled by giving a brief, individual Rapid Response orientation. Following initial assessment and filing the petition, center staff will instruct these workers to complete an on-line assessment of their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and match other potential occupations with their previous occupation if their previous occupation is not an occupation in demand. A job match search will be performed in WorkInTexas.com, and referrals made to suitable openings. Other appropriate Trade papers will be completed, such as the TAA-3 and 15. If retraining is indicated by a lack of demand in same or similar occupations, referrals will be made to a WIA career specialist for eligibility determination. After eligibility is verified and determined, the worker will complete a comprehensive assessment. The area currently uses the TABE for basic skills testing, and the CAPS, COPS, and COPEs for interests, skills, and abilities. The in-depth assessment will indicate the workers suitability for occupational goals, and provide documentation of the workers ability to succeed in training and in future jobs in their chosen occupation. An in-depth interview will be conducted to determine the workers circumstances, soft skills, and attitude, as well as goals and supportive service needs. If further career exploration or other services are needed, the worker will be referred as appropriate. The career counselor and worker will meet again to develop an Individual Employment plan, using the results of the comprehensive assessment and interviews to guide the development of the plan. The plan will be based on an overall occupational goal, interim goals, and various activities to designed to guide the worker toward re-employment

If training services are indicated on the individual employment plan, the client will be directed to review the eligible training provider list for appropriate training facilities and program, as well as other funding, such as Pell grants.

## SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS QUESTIONS 10 - 19

### Services to Employers—Outreach

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- 10. What are the Board’s expectations and goals for outreach to employers? How do these expectations relate to applicable goals and objectives described in the Strategic Section of the local plan? Include in your discussion:**
- a. The goals set by the Board that direct Center Operators in performing the outreach function.**
  - b. Current and planned activities performed by the Board that facilitate outreach to employers.**
  - c. How the Board oversees and monitors outreach to employers.**

The Board’s expectations and goals for employer outreach include, but are not limited to, increased employer access and participation in the workforce network, increased employer satisfaction, and increased job placements. These operational expectations and goals relate to the Board’s strategic goal to provide quality, performance-driven, workforce services through a streamlined system of access to Texas workforce centers for employers who need workforce services.

As part of an outreach program, both personal visits and telephone contact will be utilized along with job development procedures. Site Managers, employer services specialists, and job developers are expected to participate in local economic development and business organization activities. Labor market information is a primary tool used to target employers to be contacted. Emphasis will be placed on obtaining high wage, high skill job orders. A resource library for employers will include information on employment law, tax credits, labor market and area demographics, etc. Other services will include seminars, incumbent worker and customized training, focus groups, computer job matching, referrals of job seekers, and employee screening and testing. Additionally, the Board’s Business Services Manager will market workforce services during contacts with individual businesses as well as various business organizations in the area.

Refer to the response to question Questions 2 and 8 for a discussion of Board oversight and monitoring.

### Services to Employers—Outreach

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- 11. What policies and marketing strategies has the Board established (or has plans to establish) to attract and encourage employer participation? Include in your discussion:**
- a. Examples of successful marketing strategies used in the local area (e.g., brochures, radio/TV spots, newspaper ads, job fairs, etc.).**
  - b. The role of the local media in these marketing strategies.**
  - c. How Boards identify new, expanding and prospective employers in the local area and those employers who have not previously been contacted.**

The Board will coordinate activities with strategies carried out by economic development and business organizations in the area on initiatives and activities that address common goals. Board staff, workforce center staff, and Board members will attend meetings, make presentations, and participate as appropriate to accomplish strong employer linkages. A full array of employer services will be provided through the workforce centers. The workforce center operator and Employment Services will coordinate the delivery of these services to meet the hiring needs of employers. Employers will be involved through employer focus groups etc. at the workforce centers. Designated workforce center staff will maintain contact with employers to ascertain their needs and ensure that center services are adequate to meet those needs. An employer contact log is maintained in each workforce center. New, expanding, and prospective employers are identified through local chambers of commerce, newspaper announcements, and networking activities.

The Board has implemented a marketing plan directed to employers and job seekers. The marketing plan includes billboards, local radio public service announcements and talk shows, and outreach packets and marketing materials, such as cups and pens containing the name and 800 telephone numbers for the centers.

Job fairs for individual employers or groups of employers, as well as radio and newspaper advertising, have also been used successfully to attract job seekers for local employers.

**Services to Employers—Outreach**

**Guidelines  
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- 12. Who performs outreach activities to employers in the local area (e.g., a group designated to perform the function of a Business Services Unit or a group consisting of individuals from all services within the Center)? Citing specific examples, include in your discussion:**
- a. A description of how Center partners collaborate and coordinate to expand the employer base in the local area.**
  - b. How Center partners participate in these endeavors and apprise employers of all the services available to them throughout the local area (e.g., presentations, cold calls, documentation, etc.).**
  - c. How Center partners share information to better coordinate outreach initiatives.**

The workforce center operator has job developers in place in the workforce centers' business services units. They are trained to work alongside TWC ES staff to outreach employers in their assigned areas throughout the WDA. Formation of employer focus groups is also used to ensure that services are meeting the needs of area employers. The business services units will use a combination of outreach methods to include cold calls, presentations at civic functions, employer seminars, promotional items, and mailouts to keep employers informed of services available to them. Contacts will be documented by entry into the job matching system.

Refer to the response to question 11 for related discussion.

**Services to Employers—Labor Market Assessment and Service Planning**

**Guidelines  
Pages 49-50**

- 13. Discuss the specific sources used by the Board to gather information about the local labor market. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. How the Board utilizes labor market information to plan services to employers (e.g., employer focus groups).**
  - b. How this information assists Boards in defining the educational and training needs in the local area.**

The sources of labor market information include that available through the TWC Labor Market Information department, the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Texas A&M, Texas Natural Resources Information System, and Texas Career Development Resources. Further information was obtained from the Texas Department of Economic Development, an economic study commissioned by the Deep East Texas Council of Governments, and contacts with local economic development agencies and chambers of commerce. The Board issued a request for proposals for a local labor market study in July 2000, and contracted with ERISS for a local employment survey. The results of the survey were displayed on an individualized web site until early February 2002. Because of the development and improvement in the TWC TRACER site, the Board chose not to renew its contract with ERISS. The Board plans to redesign its web site to display local labor market information, as well as provide links to sources sited above.

The Board utilized labor market information to target industries and employers in need of workforce services and as an information source for employers. Because workforce monies are limited, the business services unit can use labor market information to focus their efforts. Labor market information targets workforce training needs for local employers. Labor market information is also a valuable information source for employers in recruiting personnel and planning resources.

Labor market information defines the vocational and occupational training needs in the local area by indicating occupations with the potential for self-sufficient employment. The targeted occupations list is used to approve courses submitted by training entities for inclusion on the state's eligible training provider list.

**Services to Employers—Labor Market Assessment and Service Planning**

**Guidelines  
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- 14. Based on the analysis of targeted occupations completed in Appendix F, discuss how the Board will provide the connection between the skill sets needed by employers and the required skills of qualified applicants to fill those needs. Include in your discussion:**
- a. specific strategies to determine employer needs, including, but not limited to, labor shortages, layoff aversion and transitional services to employers;**
  - b. specific strategies the Board has developed to provide solutions to employers' workforce challenges, including their needs for workers with specific skill sets;**
  - c. formal methods used by the Board to continually assess which specific skill sets are needed by area employers and any plans to further address this issue, particularly with regard to dislocated workers and trade-affected workers;**
  - d. procedures for continually evaluating how labor market factors, such as the skill requirements of area businesses, trends in industry staffing patterns and changes in business practices, affect planned services to employers;**
  - e. the process the Board uses to measure the degree to which they are meeting employers' needs and the ways the Board will improve this process over the next two years;**
  - f. procedures carried out by the Board to ensure that only qualified applicants are referred to employers for job vacancies;**
  - g. methods the Board has established to verify that eligible training providers (in Texas' Training Provider Certification System) are matched to planned training in targeted occupations identified on the Board's final targeted occupations list;**
  - h. procedures the Board has in place to continually consider new labor market situations, which may warrant a revision or update to the Board's targeted occupations list whenever needed to meet the current needs of business and the changes in the local economy; and**
  - i. procedures used by the Board to evaluate and document employer satisfaction with fill rates in targeted occupations.**

See Questions 12 and 13 responses for a discussion of focus groups, employer linkages, and labor market information planned activities.

The Board plans to continually assess which specific skills are needed by area employers by several means. As the Business Services Unit (BSU) has the most direct contact with many local employers, they have been instructed to ask employers about skill shortages and provide reports to the Board regarding any skill shortages employers are experiencing. The BSU work with career counselors who determine if any specialized program participants meet employer skill requirements. Additionally, the Board plans to hold at least one meeting annually with local employers to discuss skill shortages and other employer needs, including, but not limited to, labor shortages, layoff aversion and transitional services to employers. Finally, the Board will continue to work with our local colleges who have developed advisory councils for several fields of study offered at these institutions in response to employer requests.

The Board plans to improve this process over the next several years with stronger ties to businesses and business associations, and by providing several avenues to capture employer feedback. Through focused marketing efforts, businesses' increased awareness of the Board's function in workforce planning will improve communication regarding the specific skills needed by area employers. The Board has filled a business services manager position, whose function will be to keep abreast of local industry needs. Other avenues of feedback include the employer focus groups, and the Board's web page.

As the Board becomes aware of employers' workforce challenges, including their needs for workers with specific skills sets, it will research possible avenues to meet those needs. This may include grant applications, the application of current worker funds, marketing specific occupations to job seekers needing retraining, and/or linkages to other available resources.

The Board continues to assess which specific skill sets are needed by area employers through the formal annual labor market review and the development of targeted industry and occupation lists. This list is available in draft form during the publication period for the plan, and is available and distributed to local training providers and business organizations, such as chambers of commerce and economic development. Upon becoming aware of specific skill sets needed, such as health care occupations, the Board meets with, or plans to meet with, affected businesses to devise solutions. Community meetings are also planned. Specific plans to assist the health care industry in the WDA consist of making training funds available to health care employers to help alleviate skills shortages in that industry.

The Board's procedure for continually evaluating how labor market factors, such as the skill requirements of area businesses, trends in industry staffing patterns and changes in business practices, affect planned services to employers consists of reports from the Business Services Manager and Workforce Center Operator to relevant Board committees or to the full Board. These factors are also considered in the annual labor market review.

Board uses customer satisfaction performance and feedback from comments made during customer satisfaction surveys and mystery shoppers, as well as comments from business groups and employer focus groups and training providers to measure the degree to which they are meeting employers' needs. This is also measured by placement of job seekers, particularly those who have been trained in target occupations. The Board will improve this process over the next two years by holding more employer and community meetings, improving relationships between employers and the Board and its contractors, and providing a more direct feedback

method through the Board's web site.

To ensure that only qualified applicants are referred to employers for job vacancies, workforce center staff compares job seeker training and experience with employer requirements prior to referral. Although this works well for some posting, many jobs listings are available to the public, who may apply directly to the employer. Employers who require highly skilled workers are encouraged to use the centers to screen all referrals. It is hoped that when the WorkinTexas.com system is available, that all referrals will be qualified.

The procedure to verify that eligible training providers (in Texas' Training Provider Certification System) are matched to planned training in targeted occupations identified on the Board's final targeted occupations list is for the Board to compare the submitted course' Classification of Instructional (CIP) code with the targeted occupation Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) code or Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code using a crosswalk. Coursework that closely matches the target occupations is then approved, provided they meet relevant performance standards. See Question 51 of this section for more information.

The Board has a procedure to update the targeted occupation list. Either an employer or a training provider may make requests for occupations to be added to the local targeted occupation list. The employer or training provider must submit a written request to the Deep East Texas Workforce Development Board for consideration. Such request must include at a minimum the justification for inclusion on the targeted occupation list (i.e. – new industry), the projected growth of the occupation in the Deep East Texas area within the next 5 years, the number of projected annual openings in the Deep East Texas area, and the average entry wage in the Deep East Texas area. Board staff will explore the occupation for possible inclusion on the targeted occupation list. If the occupation meets the local criteria for targeted occupations and is approved by the Board, the requestor and Workforce Center Operator will be notified of the decision regarding the inclusion of the occupation. Requests are processed within 90 days. Additionally, the targeted occupation list may be updated when the Board learns of new industries with skills needs.

Board evaluates all performance, which includes fill rates in targeted occupations as a part of job entry and retention, and employer satisfaction. The "mystery shopper" reports are also used as an evaluation tool. The local college has advisory groups who advise the college on various training. The Board's Business Services Manager attends these meetings and is able to get feedback from employers attending the meeting.

**Services to Employers—Labor Market Assessment and Service Planning**

**Guidelines  
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- 15. Discuss the educational and training resources available in the local area that will assist the Board in developing potential employees to meet local employers' needs. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Whether or not these resources are adequate to meet the educational and training needs of the local area and how this affects the labor exchange process.**
  - b. How the Board will address any deficiencies in educational and training resources.**
  - c. How employers assist the Board in identifying and developing employment activities and/or training programs that address current labor needs.**
  - d. How employers work with the Board to develop *Workfare* and/or subsidized training slots. If this kind of collaboration does not currently exist, what plans does the Board have for creating such opportunities for employers and, subsequently, job seekers?**

Within the boundaries of the Deep East Texas WDA are a four-year university, Stephen F. Austin State University; two community colleges, Angelina College and Panola College Shelby Center; a proprietary truck driving academy; a hospital-based LVN program; and a welding school. Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin University have a number of distance learning points throughout the workforce area. There are adult learning sites in most of the twelve counties.

In response to specific employer and community needs, several cooperative projects are underway. A trade instruction center was completed and opened in 2002. This is a joint initiative by Panola College and Shelby County officials in Center, Texas. A training center was completed in early 2001 in Sabine County that was a joint effort among Temple-Inland Corporation, Sabine County, Angelina College, and other employers. The satellite workforce center in Pineland is housed here also. The major purpose of this center was to retrain Temple-Inland employees for employment in the upgraded Pineland plant. Without this training opportunity, these employees would not have been employable in the remodeled mill. Training programs continue for many workers, area youth, and the community. In Jasper, Angelina College and Lamar University participated in the development of a training center for Jasper County, which also opened in 2001.

To augment services available in the area, the Board seeks applications from schools outside the WDA for the statewide training provider list (WIA) and for individual referral agreements for training for youth and welfare populations. Other training resources available include various types of employer training, including *Workfare*, work experience (both paid and unpaid), and on-the-job training. These are all allowable activities under at least one of the various funding

stream. For example, Workfare is used exclusively for Food Stamp E&T ABAWD participants and is not subsidized employment. The number of hours worked by a Workfare participant may not exceed the amount of the Food Stamp grant amount divided by the minimum wage. Unpaid work experience is allowable for FS E&T participants, as well as Choices, WtW, and WIA. Paid work experience, in which the participant is paid wages by an employer of record but is not hired by the employer who is providing the work experience training, is not allowed using either FS E&T, Choices, or WtW funding. On-the-job training is not allowed for FS E&T funds, but is allowable under Choices, WtW, WIA adult and dislocated worker programs, and while it is not disallowed for WIA youth, it is not recommended.

The Business Services Unit and career counselors work with non-profit organizations to identify workfare and work experience positions. Job developers will notify private employers of the availability and requirements of subsidized employment.

The Board's contractor for workforce center services (which includes FS E&T) requires that the FS E&T career counselors contact public agencies and non-profit entities to develop Workfare slots. These career counselors speak with a variety of agencies during interagency or community meetings to develop new Workfare slots. The number of slots is determined by the employer and the career counselor, who meets with the employer at the site to ensure that there is adequate work and supervision for the number of slots requested. Interested agencies tend to agree to provide several slots, which allow the career counselors flexibility in that the FS E&T ABAWD population varies to some extent on a monthly basis. The DET area does not use for-profit entities for Workfare slots or paid work experience, as this is not allowed with FS E&T funds.

DET has provided paid work experience with for-profit agencies, which is allowable under WIA. Work Experience slots (paid or unpaid) are developed in a manner similar to Workfare slots. Business services staff or career counselors will contact public agencies, as well as for-profit companies, and inform them of the opportunity to train individuals in work skills.

Employers who agree to provide training for either Workfare or work experience sign a non-financial agreement that explains the purpose of the placement and outlines their rights and responsibilities. All agreements show the number of hours per week and the maximum number of hours per placement. The participant also signs an agreement to indicate an understanding of the purpose of the placement, the training to be received, and work rules expected to be followed.

On-the-job training and other subsidized employment will be marketed to employers by business services staff, who will evaluate the site, assist the employer with application completion, and review all applicable assurance and requirements with the employer. A training plan is included in the contract and is based on the employer's need and the participant's existing skills.

**Services to Employers—Employer Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 51-53**

- 16 (revised). Describe the services offered to employers and the role of center staff in providing these services, such as job matching, access to labor market information, Skills Development Fund training for potential or current employees, Self-Sufficiency Fund activities, and direct federal, state, local and private grant opportunities. Cover the following areas in the discussion.**
- a. Is there an established Business Services Unit in any of the centers or is there one established in the Board area, and if so, how does this Business Services Unit contribute to overall workforce development efforts in the local area? How does the Board measure the success of the Business Services Unit?**
  - b. Are any centers in the local area specially designated to perform services to employers, and if so, how do these centers contribute to the overall workforce development efforts in the local area?**
  - c. How do center staff (including Wagner-Peyser funded staff) coordinate and collaborate to meet the specific needs of employers in the local area and ensure that local and statewide goals are met?**
  - d. How do center staff collaborate to share information about employer contacts and employer feedback?**
  - e. Describe efforts to further integrate and coordinate the center partners' provision of employer services.**

There is an established Business Services Unit in the Board area. The Business Services Unit contributes to overall workforce development efforts in the local area by making business aware of workforce services, providing informational and other services, and gathering information about business workforce needs. Staff in the Business Services Unit are given performance goals, including items such as a number of employer contacts.

Services offered to employers include informational services, assistance with applicant screening and referrals, interview scheduling, skills, aptitude and proficiency testing, assistance with job fairs, job posting, labor market information, seminars, and workshops. Job search/job readiness classes offered to applicants increase employee awareness of good work etiquette and soft skills, which benefit employers in terms of a lower turnover. Business services staff provide information ranging from Skills Development funding, tax credits, availability of subsidized employment, where to find additional workforce resources, as well as the availability of assistance with employee recruitment and training and the job matching system.

The five full-service centers offer employer services as listed above, and all are equipped with toll-free numbers to facilitate (other county) employers' use of some services, such as job listings, in these centers. The seven satellite offices do not currently offer a wide range of

services to employers, but staff are trained to assist employers with a full range of services. This will contribute to workforce development in the Deep East Texas area by increasing job postings and, consequently, more job placements. It is also anticipated to increase customer satisfaction in that a wide range of services will be available to all area residents.

Workforce center staff will meet, either in person or by teleconference regarding employer contacts and feedback, as well as employer needs. Employer contacts (either phone or personal visits) will be logged using either the existing TWC employment services system or a system that is modified to meet new information needs. Career counselors will be made aware of the log, which will list the outcome of the contacts, and may request additional information from Business services staff as needed. Because career counselors work closely with individual customers, and develop employment plans (as appropriate), it will be their responsibility to maintain close contact with the job developer when an opening would be appropriate for one of their clients.

**Services to Employers—Employer Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 51-53**

- 17. Describe the network available to employers to allow them maximum access to qualified job seekers. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How automated systems such as TWIST and the State’s job matching system are used to facilitate meeting employers’ needs, including a description of how job orders are handled.**
  - b. How the interstate and intrastate labor exchange processes are facilitated in the local area.**
  - c. Additional services in the Center(s) that are available to employers.**

Employer job listings will be processed by designated staff. The employer services unit will be staffed by Employment Services personnel and other designated workforce center staff where Employment Services resources are insufficient to meet the need. In addition to taking job listings by phone and informing employers of the new WorkinTexas.com system, personal visits will be made to maximize employer contact. The visits will be used to locate employers who are not current users of workforce services and to inform them of available services and ascertain their needs.

An assessment of employer needs may be made on occasion by coordinating with area chambers of commerce and economic development groups to conduct surveys of employers. Marketing efforts beyond contacts by staff may include presentations to employer and civic groups by Board staff, Board members, and workforce center staff, and open houses, and marketing campaigns.

Job orders and applications entered into the job matching system will be the primary means of job matching. Other methods of facilitating a match between job seekers and employers are on-site and workforce center interviews by employers; referrals to employers the day an application is made and before information is entered into the automated system; WorkinTexas.com internet matching system; America’s Job Bank; and Governor’s Job Bank. Veterans will be given preference regardless of the method used.

Interstate labor exchange tools will be available in the self-service areas, and include Job Express and America’s Job Bank. Assistance to customers will be provided by staff.

**Services to Employers—Employer Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 51-53**

**18. Does your workforce area have a significant agricultural employer?**

**Yes**

**X**

**(Mark with an “X” if yes and list these locations below.)**

**No**

**(Mark with an “X” if no, continue with Question 4.)**

**Describe efforts to provide specific employment services to agricultural employers. Include the following in your discussion:**

- a. The process for linking available migrant and seasonal farmworkers with the agricultural employers, including the cooperation with coordinating groups (e.g., agricultural employer organizations, migrant and seasonal farmworker service organizations, etc.).**
- b. The process of how services available to agricultural employers are promoted within the local area (e.g., through participation in employer conferences, by developing marketing tools, through provision of labor exchange information, and by recruiting U.S. workers, etc.).**

When job orders are called in and it appears that a MSFW will meet the need, the job order will be opened, the match processed, and the MSFW referred to the job.

Staff will use the worker profile list to outreach and offer services to migrant and seasonal farm workers. Clients identified as a MSFW will be given assisted services and will be tracked. Staff will work with clients who only need placement services to refer them to job openings. Job opportunity information will be accessible by all available means in the workforce centers. As a part of employer services, there will be coordination with agencies and groups in the agriculture industry to offer the services available in the workforce centers.

Agricultural employers will be included in the overall marketing of employer services and activities such as those previously described will be carried out.

**Services to Employers—Employer Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 51-53**

**18c. Complete the following chart:**

**Projections for Agricultural Labor Exchange**

<b>Expected # of Agricultural Job Orders to be Received</b>	<b>Projected # of Agricultural Job Orders to be Filled</b>	<b>Projected % of Agricultural Job Orders to be Filled</b>  Projected # of Agricultural Job Orders To be Filled / Expected # of Agricultural Job Orders to be Received
<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>73%</b>

**Services to Employers—Employer Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 51-53**

- 19. Describe how the Board monitors the services provided to employers in the local area. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How the Board gauges the effectiveness of services to employers.**
  - b. Areas of service delivery planned for improvement and/or expansion, and how the Board identifies and addresses these issues.**

Refer to the response to Questions 2 and 8 for the Board’s monitoring practices.

The Board gauges the effectiveness of services by employer customer satisfaction, number of job orders placed and filled, and repeated and increased use of workforce centers by employers.

## SERVICES TO JOB SEEKERS QUESTIONS 20 - 47

Services to Job Seekers—Outreach	
<p><b>Guidelines</b> <b>Pages 54-55</b></p>	<p><b>20. Describe the Board’s expectations and goals regarding how Center partners outreach to job seekers. How do these expectations relate to applicable goals and objectives described in the Strategic Section of the local plan? Include in your discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. The marketing strategies developed by the Board to guide Center partners in performing outreach activities to job seekers.</b></li> <li><b>b. Ways that the Board assists in facilitating the outreach function to job seekers.</b></li> <li><b>c. The Board’s plan for providing all job-seeking customers, or the universal population (i.e., adults and dislocated workers, low-income participants, current workers, and youth), with quality information on the workforce development network (e.g., services, training providers, employment activities, etc.).</b></li> <li><b>d. Strategies developed to outreach to rural customers in the local area and apprise these customers of the services available to them.</b></li> </ul>
<p>The Board expects Center partners to use a variety of outreach methods, including automated systems, presentations, flyers, brochures, public service announcements, signage, promotional items, job and career fairs, and coordination with appropriate organizations and agencies serving same populations. Outreach efforts will be coordinated with the Board’s marketing plan when finalized. These operational expectations and goals relate to the Board’s strategic goal to provide quality, performance-driven workforce services through a streamlined system of access to Texas workforce centers for job seekers who need workforce services to prepare every citizen to successfully compete in the labor market, including those who will need to make the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency.</p> <p>The Board facilitates the outreach function to jobseekers by developing a marketing plan and ensuring that this plan is implemented. The plan will identify areas of service that will be promoted and the most effective method of reaching those to whom it is directed. Part of the marketing plan is the development of the Board web page, which describes a full range of services as well as links to other resources. The Board will make contractor staff aware of community resources; will work with other agencies through MOUs and other agreements to increase referrals from those agencies; and will continue to be a part of employer and community associations and events.</p> <p>The Board plan for providing quality information on the workforce network to the universal</p>	

population includes continuing use of brochures, both in the workforce centers and displayed at other appropriate sites that are available; the completion of the Deep East Texas WDB web page; marketing; and outreach.

Customers who are TANF recipients have been outreached since 2001 as voluntary Choices customers. Response to outreach has improved since January 2002 when the Choices minimum service counties changed to mandatory counties. Strategies to outreach rural customers will be tailored to meet the needs of those customers. Customers in rural areas, in many cases, tend to rely on word-of-mouth news for local changes. The Board considers this when marketing to the more rural counties. Additionally, the contractor has hired staff in the satellite offices, many of which are from the county they will serve. This will work to allow those customers from that county to identify with a contact that they more than likely know. Board or contractor staff attendance at community events in the rural counties will be very important. Business service activity in the rural counties will include visits to county judges and chambers of commerce. In many instances, the chambers are a significant point of contact for those employers looking for job seekers, and vice versa.

### Services to Job Seekers—Outreach

**Guidelines**  
**Pages 54-55**

- 21. Provide examples of successful practices used by the Board and Center partners to attract and encourage customer participation. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Examples of the products developed by the Board and Center partners to target the job seeker population regarding workforce center services (e.g., brochures, newspaper ads, radio/TV spots, etc.).**
  - b. How Center partners coordinate and collaborate to implement the Board’s plan for outreaching job seeker customers.**
  - c. How automated systems/technology (including WORKINTEXAS.COM) facilitate customers’ acquisition of information.**

A common application is used by all workforce center partners for intake at the reception point. Eligibility determination/verification for special services is conducted by career counselors. The common application pre-screens for eligibility-based services, as well as other center services that might be of benefit to the individual. Customer choice is ensured through providing a menu of services and orientation to center services. A brochure of workforce center services is available.

As stated previously, at least one satellite center is located in each of the 12 counties. Intake will be conducted at each of the full-service centers and at least on a part-time basis at the satellite centers. All centers will be accessible to the disabled.

The centers will be the intake sites for intensive and training services. Customers will be provided information on targeted occupations, the state-approved training provider list, cost and performance information on training providers, and information on the use of individual training accounts. The case manager will interact with the customer so as to maximize customer choice.

Alternate intake sites may be used, such as schools for in-school youth and employer sites for dislocated workers. Workforce centers meet accessibility requirements, but additional intake efforts may be conducted at sites or service providers that target the disabled or other specific groups, such as older workers.

The common application will pre-screen for eligibility for TAA. Customers who are potentially eligible for TAA and UI Profiling will be referred to appropriate staff. The WDA will identify and refer TAA clients for services as soon as possible, preferably before layoff. Services for TAA customers may include co-enrollment and the delivery of services by multiple programs. Staff has been cross-trained to be aware of the benefits of and eligibility requirements for each program to ensure customers have access to all services. The WDA will utilize the Worker Profiling for Re-employment Services system that will facilitate entry into the program for clients and service providers by allowing electronic access for designated staff. The designated staff have the capacity and equipment to call in potential clients for services without having to

depend on local TWC staff for this function. This will allow immediate access to clients for whom eligibility can be immediately and easily certified via an on-line hookup with the state. Workforce center operator staff will pull the WPRS list weekly and determine the cutoff date. Clients whose benefits are down to cut off will be called in for a profiling session and a discussion of service options. Job search is done at the workforce centers for UI profiled customers.

Potential WtW participants will be identified by referrals from DHS to the workforce orientation for TANF applicants, TWIST, other referrals from DHS, use of the common application form in the workforce centers, and referrals from the Office of the Attorney General.

All customers will be pre-screened in the workforce center for WtW eligibility along with eligibility for other center services. WtW eligibility and time limits for TANF recipients will be determined using the TWC TWIST system and/or the DHS SAVERR system.

Intake, assessment, and case management will be conducted at the workforce centers using the common application for pre-screening, an objective assessment process, and integrated case management delivery.

Food Stamp eligibility and allotment amount will be verified initially by the referral/appointment form, and monthly on the TWIST system and/or the DHS SAVERR system.

Verification of eligibility will be performed initially and monthly by Choices staff using the TWC TWIST system and/or the DHS SAVERR system.

CCMS eligibility is determined by the CCMS contractor except that career counselors notify CCMS of Choices, Food Stamp E&T, WIA, and Welfare-to-Work eligibility via the form 2510 or other Board-approved child care notification instrument. Individuals are apprised of the toll-free number in the workforce centers and given access to telephones for contact.

Customers can also use telephones in the centers to contact the UI benefits office via a toll-free number, or use center computers to access UI benefit information on-line.

Job fairs are another outreach tool and are advertised on public service announcements, radio, TV, and newspapers.

**Services to Job Seekers—Outreach**

**Guidelines  
Pages 54-55**

**22. Describe the methods used by the Board to monitor outreach activities to job seekers in the local workforce area and to ensure that outreach efforts are successful.**

Refer to Questions 2 and 8 for the Board's monitoring activities.

**Services to Job Seekers—Intake & Eligibility**

**Guidelines  
Pages 55-56**

- 23. Describe how Center partners coordinate the intake and eligibility determination of participants for workforce activities and services. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How Center partners coordinate and collaborate to eliminate duplicative efforts in the intake and eligibility determination of participants.**
  - b. Other entities with which the Centers coordinate and how this process is achieved.**
  - c. How intake procedures reflect the Board’s policy for priority of services.**
  - d. How the concept of “customer choice” is conveyed to participants.**
  - e. How the intake process helps to identify the range of services/assistance for which a participant is eligible.**
  - f. How the requirement for administering a work test for the State unemployment compensation system is met.**
  - g. The use of automated systems to facilitate the intake/eligibility process.**
  - h. Examples of innovative practices the Center(s) employ in the intake/eligibility process.**

All workforce center staff have access to individual applications to eliminate duplicative efforts on behalf of the customers. Customers complete a registration form upon entering the workforce center. Staff record all services accessed by the customer the day of the visit. Customers are not required to sign in.

Veterans receive same-day services and have priority for job referrals.

Refer to the response to Question 21 for discussion of the other points.

**Services to Job Seekers—Intake & Eligibility**

**Guidelines  
Pages 55-56**

**24. Discuss plans the Board has for improving the intake/eligibility function over the next five years. How do these plans relate to the goals and objectives described in the Strategic Section of the local plan?**

The Board was awarded a \$140,000 grant by TWC for one stop enhancement. A portion of these funds was used to increase accessibility of workforce services to the disabled through adaptive equipment and staff training. T-1 lines have been installed in all 12 centers so that staff has access to TWIST, and eligibility and case management can be completed on site. This has impacted the intake/eligibility function positively. The Board will explore technology options for improving the intake/eligibility function. The Board's goals and objectives include continuously improving services to all customers and increasing usage of the workforce system. Use of technology at intake/eligibility can decrease wait time for customers and increase accuracy of service tracking.

<b>Services to Job Seekers—Intake &amp; Eligibility</b>	
<b>Guidelines Pages 55-56</b>	<b>25. Discuss how the Board oversees and monitors intake and eligibility determination processes performed by Center partners in the local area.</b>
Refer to the response to Questions 2 and 8 for the Board’s monitoring activities.	

**Services to Job Seekers—Assessment/Individual Service & Employment Planning**

**Guidelines  
Pages 56-58**

- 26. (revised) Describe the assessment process used by center partners to assist job seekers in choosing and identifying the services and/or training activities to which they are referred. Include in your discussion assessment procedures for the disabled and other special populations as well as the following topics.**
- a. Describe how the assessment process helps define participants’ abilities, career interests and goals, as well as any needs that may require additional intervention (e.g., support services and specialized training). Specifically, discuss how the assessment process effectively evaluates the range of needs for “job ready” and “not job ready” participants, and efficiently identifies needed resources without requiring participants to undergo duplicative assessments.**
  - b. Explain how center staff coordinate and collaborate to ensure that job seekers receive the most appropriate and effective services. Are assessment/testing results shared among all service providers to avoid duplication? If so, give examples of how center staff work together to disseminate the information. If not, explain how this problem will be resolved.**
  - c. Discuss how center staff collaborate when additional assessment is required. Specifically, how do center staff further develop a participant’s profile without duplicating past efforts?**
  - d. Describe how center staff assess participants who are enrolled in more than one program. Will other service providers have access to previous assessments? Explain why or why not.**
  - e. Provide a discussion of the assessment tools and instruments used to determine appropriate services. Are these standardized throughout the center and used by all center partners?**
  - f. Provide a description of the self-assessment tools available to job seekers.**
  - g. Discuss how trade-affected workers are provided assessment services and what types of assessments are provided through Rapid Response activities and core or intensive services.**

During core services and after an initial assessment of skills, work experience, education, abilities, and interests using the common application, staff will enter information into the job matching system and make appropriate job referrals. Employment Services personnel will perform limited case management in that contact with customers will be maintained and documented to track progress toward obtaining employment and to offer assistance, including career counseling as appropriate, unless the customer has been referred for specialized services such as Choices or Food Stamp E&T. In the case of specialized services, program requirements and customer flow will be governed by policy. Career counselors will work with Employment

Services staff and enter appropriate data into the job matching system. Customers who require more intensive services will be referred to appropriate staff.

All Deep East Texas workforce centers observe a central filing system and data-enter all cases into the TWIST system. This facilitates tracking of the customer through various services, and alerts staff when other programs may be appropriate for this customer. To avoid duplication of effort between programs within and without the centers, the Board's workforce center policy allows staff to make use of and share, as appropriate, other program assessment results. If test results are shared outside of the centers, a release of information form is obtained from the customer. In some cases, testing that has been completed previously will not be adequate or appropriate for the customer's current situation. This is especially true with some of the youth testing, particularly in the area of interest surveys, because youth are still in a developmental stage.

Intensive services will be delivered by workforce center case management staff who will also verify eligibility for intensive services. During intensive services, a more comprehensive assessment of interests, skills, and abilities will be conducted. An Individual Employment Plan (IEP) will be developed jointly between the case manager and customer. This IEP will be based on the comprehensive assessment, discussion with the customer to ascertain supportive service needs and personal desires and to further identify barriers to employment. The in-depth assessment will indicate the workers suitability for occupational goals, and provide documentation of the workers ability to succeed in training and in future jobs in their chosen occupation. If the assessment results vary considerably from the participant's goals, additional career exploration may need to be completed, or the participant would be counseled regarding the differences. Time limits for welfare recipients will be taken into account when developing the IEP for those customers. Referrals to providers of pre-vocational services and supportive services will be made as planned on the IEP. Case management will be performed at the required level of intensity to assist the customer to obtain employment. Job development and job placement will be coordinated with Employment Services staff. Other workforce center staff may be designated to work with Employment Services staff to deliver job development and placement services to special populations. Customers who are still unemployed will be evaluated as to need and suitability for training services.

The WDA uses a variety of web-based sites for self-assessment of interests and aptitude. Comprehensive assessment is accomplished using the TABE 7 & 8, CAPS, COPS, and COPES. The TABE 7&8 is used by adult education providers in this area and test results are shared between partners. Service providers under contract to the Board for youth programs are allowed to choose other standardized assessment instruments, subject to Board approval. Center staff makes accommodations for individuals with disabilities with regard to assessment to the extent possible, such as computerized assessment using adaptive equipment. However, referrals to other agencies who specialize in services to individuals with disabilities, such as the Texas Rehabilitation Commission or the Commission for the Blind, may be more appropriate and would eliminate duplicative efforts in serving special populations.

Trade-affected workers and dislocated workers served through Rapid Response activities are provided basic assessment services during the initial assessment of skills, education, abilities, and interests as listed above. See Question 9 for more detail.

**Services to Job Seekers—Assessment/Individual Service & Employment Planning**

Guidelines  
Pages 56-58

- 27. (revised) Describe the process used by center partners to assist participants in developing individual service/employment plans. Include in your discussion the development of those plans for the disabled and other special populations as well as the following topics.**
- a. Discuss how employment goals, and the course of action to achieve these goals, are determined.**
  - b. Explain how center staff ensure that the individual service/employment plan is utilized effectively to assist participants in achieving their goals.**
  - c. Provide a description of the format used in developing the individual service/employment plan. Specifically, do all center staff use a common format? If yes, describe the format. If no, describe plans to address this inconsistency.**
  - d. Provide a description of how center staff collaborate to develop an individual service/employment plan, when a participant is co-enrolled in more than one program.**
  - e. Describe the tools/technology used by center staff to develop and track individual service/employment plans.**
  - f. Explain how center staff collaborate and coordinate to eliminate a duplication of effort in the development and oversight of individual service/employment plans.**
  - g. Discuss how Individual Employment Plans (IEP's) are developed for trade-affected workers utilizing the integrated services available in the workforce centers.**

Employment goals are developed following assessment. Employment goals give customers a sense of direction as well as step-by-step actions required to achieve their goals. Career counselors working as partners or coaches encourage customers to complete their goals and assist when unforeseen circumstances arise.

Prior to development of the IEP, the customer is assessed and interviewed to determine strengths, weaknesses, skills, and interests, as well as any barriers. The IEP is then completed with the customer, and considers the customer's circumstances, such as available income and family needs, to reach the overall and interim goals. IEPs are developed with the overall goal in mind, and timeframes may exceed some program participation parameters. For example, a TANF recipient may indicate a goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. Choices program requirement prohibit education beyond certificate programs over 12 months in length. An interim goal would indicate Licensed Vocational Nursing. Once working, the individual would no longer be eligible for the Choices program, or hindered by program restrictions, and could pursue longer-term

goals on their own.

Career counselors maintain contact with the customer to monitor progress during participation. Progress toward meeting goals is assessed at least monthly.

The area uses the TWIST employment plan. The format of the individual employment plan includes a targeted employment goal as an overall goal, followed by shorter-term interim goals. Activities are then assigned for each interim goal.

Individual employment plans for the disabled and other special populations are completed as above, however, additional barriers for the disabled and special populations may necessitate the use of the center's adaptive equipment, specialized job development, and referrals to other agencies also providing services to this population to assist in the removal of additional barriers that this population possesses.

Individual Employment Plans are developed for trade-affected workers utilizing the integrated services available in the workforce center according to the process stated above, and is identical to IEP development for other dislocated workers. Training for trade affected workers is dependent, as it is with any dislocated worker, on the workers current skills and the need for those skills in the area, or an area to which the worker may choose to move.

Refer to the response to Question 26 for further related discussion.

**Services to Job Seekers—Assessment/Individual Service & Employment Planning**

**Guidelines  
Pages 56-58**

- 28. Discuss how the Board oversees and monitors the assessment of job seekers and the development of individual service/employment plans. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Standards the Board has established regarding job seeker assessment and individual service/employment plan development.**
  - b. How the Board assesses the effectiveness of these processes.**
  - c. Plans for improving the assessment process over the next five years. How do these plans relate to the goals and objectives described in the Strategic Section of the local plan?**

The Board expects that job seeker assessment will be available to all workforce center customers. The method of assessment and review of same with the customer will be in intensity appropriate to the customer's level of service at the workforce center. All decisions resulting from the assessment and regarding IEP development will be made with the customer and customer choice will be maximized. The IEP will be a "living" document that will be adjusted as required throughout the customer's participation in workforce activities.

The Board standards regarding job seeker assessment and the employment/service plan are reflected in workforce center policy, and include the requirements and standards of the various programs. While the differences in program requirements vary by degree of intensity, assessment and planning should be sufficient to assist the job seeker in ultimately finding employment. Consequently, performance goals are one standard to assess the effectiveness of this process. Other monitoring of outcomes and customer satisfaction will show if the process is sufficient or requires changes.

Over the next five years, the Board will review testing options with the workforce center operator, including computer-based instruments, and appropriate adjustments to the process will be made.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

**29. How do the “Work First” philosophy and the overarching principle of self-sufficiency guide Centers in providing services to job seekers?**

The Work First philosophy for welfare reform programs is integrated into all phases of services provided to those populations. Clients are informed of the importance and benefits of employment.

Workforce centers offer job search and job readiness classes, interviewing/application and resume workshops covering a variety of topics to assist individuals in their job search during core services. Customers eligible for special programs are made aware of continued assistance if needed while working until self-sufficiency is attained.

The Board has designated \$12.00 per hour as a self-sufficient wage. The WDA’s targeted occupations start at a minimum of \$8.50 per hour, however, the majority of the targeted occupations have a starting wage at or over the self-sufficiency wage. The lower-wage, targeted occupations include occupations for which there are good opportunities for career advancement with further training, and/or are in very high demand in the area.

Efforts will be made to identify opportunities for individuals to enter the job market at their current level of training/skills and then to advance on the job, through work experience and/or training to self-sufficiency.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 30. How are Center partner services integrated to provide a seamless foundation for service delivery to the universal population? Include in your discussion:**
- a. Measures taken by Center partners to eliminate duplicative efforts among services.**
  - b. The structure used to promote coordination and linkages among services.**
  - c. How referral to services is coordinated among Center partners.**

Workforce center services integration begins with a common registration form and common application. These documents are shared with partners on an as-needed basis to avoid duplicative efforts. If case files are set up, they are cross-referenced to other program case files. Files are integrated for all workforce center programs. Assessment results are shared, as are employment plans. Staff also have a common referral form for outside partner and agency referrals. Referrals to outside agencies are followed-up on by career counselors. Staff continue to cross-train in workforce center programs and receive information regarding partner and other agency services to avoid duplication of effort.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 31. Discuss the structure of services, including core services, employment activities, and referrals to intensive and training services (if applicable), available to job seekers to assist them in attaining or upgrading employment. Explain how access to these services is provided. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. How basic labor exchange services (including the State’s job matching system) assist job seekers in 1) locating employment opportunities; 2) presenting themselves in a positive manner to employers; and 3) continuing to be considered for any job openings received in the system for which they are qualified.**
  - b. How Center partners educate job seekers to assist them in choosing services and/or activities in which they will participate.**

Basic labor exchange services assist job seekers by providing job matching services, career counseling, job seeker workshops, proficiency testing, labor market information, and job development.

Customers are notified orally and in printed materials on their initial visit that applications/registration are current for only 60 days for the job matching system. They are encouraged to update as necessary.

An orientation is held with job seekers to make them aware of the range of services available. Additionally, customers receive an information packet at their initial visit. Staff is available to assist customers at all levels of service and answer any questions.

Refer to the response to Question 26 for related discussion of these matters.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

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**32. Focusing on where services to job seekers intersect and coordinate, describe how the integrated service delivery system addresses the needs of the following job seeker populations (Youth, Rural Populations, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are addressed in Questions 34–36).**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>a. <i>Adults and Dislocated Workers</i></b><br/>(including displaced homemakers, women and minorities, and/or those individuals targeted for service by TAA/NAFTA-TAA, the Worker Profiling and Re-employment Service, and Rapid Response)</p>  | <p><b>e. <i>Public assistance recipients</i></b></p>  |
| <p><b>b. <i>Current Workers</i></b></p>   | <p><b>f. <i>Populations with disabilities</i></b><br/>(including those who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and other individuals with disabilities)</p> |
| <p><b>c. <i>Low Income Individuals</i></b></p>  | <p><b>g. <i>Veterans</i></b></p>  |
| <p><b>d. <i>Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment</i></b><br/>(including those with skills deficiencies, limited English-speaking abilities, substance abuse issues, domestic violence issues, and/or poor work histories) [ITA Procurement issues with regard to these populations are discussed more thoroughly at Question 47.]</p> | <p><b>h. <i>Ex-Offenders</i></b><br/>Including individuals in the Reintegration of Offenders program (Project RIO)</p>  |
|   | <p><b>i. <i>Older populations</i></b></p>   |

**For each population, include in the discussion:**

- i.* All resources, services and activities available in the local area (including training).**
- ii.* How these services, resources and activities are structured in the delivery system.**
- iii.* Plans for activities that are not part of the current network.**
- iv.* Plans to extend linkages to resources in the community that may not yet be leveraged.**

In general, workforce services are integrated for adults and dislocated workers, current workers, low-income individuals, individuals with multiple barriers, public assistance recipients, individuals with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, and older populations. Workforce services are basically similar from program to program, varying in intensity depending on need, how the services are delivered depending on individual needs, and allowability depending on funding

stream. Required and voluntary partners, either co-located or off-site, give and receive referrals for special population needs. Program specific rules and policies govern services and activities to special populations to a certain degree. For example, veterans must receive same day service. Customers receive services within program parameters and according to their needs. The centers are accessible and furnished with adaptive equipment. Additionally, staff training was provided regarding sensitivity to individuals with disabilities.

i. Resources, services, and activities available to job seekers in the workforce centers include:

**Core services**, or informational and self-help services. Core Services, the common entry intake point for the universal population, considers those individuals who are essentially job ready and able to use available resources with minimal staff assistance to enter employment. This does not mean that all populations are seeking the same goals or require the same resources. Core services require customer registration, an initial evaluation of the customer's needs, an informational packet, an orientation to center services, resources such as a computer with Internet access, copier, phone, and literature, and sufficient instruction to allow the job seekers to operate the equipment and find information.

- a. Adults and dislocated workers in core services are more apt to be familiar with labor market information, have some work experience, and have support networks as well as job networks. Supplying information regarding center services, job banks, and training information to adults and dislocated workers during core services ensures that this information is available to those who may need this knowledge to locate the a specific occupation. It also provides access to computers, fax machines, copiers, and resources that they may not have available to them in their homes. Initial assessment of customer needs may require referrals to community resources for displaced homemakers, dislocated workers, and other individuals who have an immediate need. Displaced homemakers, women (and men) and minorities also receive information on non-traditional employment and training opportunities. Individuals eligible for additional services under TAA will find the local and national job banks to be of assistance when looking for work, and the career exploration information helpful if they are considering a new career. Individuals who are outreached for worker profiling and re-employment service are referred for job search workshops, application and interviewing workshops, and resume workshops. They are also determined eligible for WIA Dislocated worker services, and given an orientation to the workforce center. Individuals who receive rapid response services may receive core services at their place of employment or special facilities prior to lay-off. As part of Rapid Response core services, stress management and financial counseling is also provided to address the special needs of these individuals. Potential trade-affected workers will be informed of procedures to file a TAA petition and will be given a brief Rapid Response orientation and services as needed.
- b. Informational services for current workers meet their needs by allowing them to access data on training for skills upgrading or a new career. All five full service centers are open extended hours to serve current workers. See the answer to question #6 for more information.

- c. Low income individuals needs are addressed in that services are free, equipment is available that they would otherwise not have finances for or access to, initial evaluation of needs may indicate intensive services for supportive services, and referrals to community resources will ensure that customers and their families have their basic needs met while looking for work.
- d. Individuals with multiple barriers to employment will benefit from core services by gaining an understanding of the resources that are available to assist them, and by referrals to other community agencies who may be able to help with personal problems, such as substance abuse. Individuals with skills deficiencies and limited English-speaking abilities will be evaluated initially, and may be determined to be in need of a referral for adult basic skills, ESL, or literacy training through a community center. The center also employs at least one individual who is bi-lingual. The contractor may provide training for domestic violence issues to allow staff the opportunity to identify these individuals early in their entry to the centers. Community resources are included as part of the initial information packet. Women's shelters and counseling agencies are included on the list. Individuals with a poor work history will be referred to Job Search/Job Readiness classes, application and interviewing workshops, and/or resume preparation workshops to assist them in their job search.
- e. Public Assistance recipient's needs are addressed in that special programs allow this population to progress to intensive services. During Job Readiness classes and other workshops, they are given additional assistance with core services. Workforce Orientation for applicants assists individuals who have applied for TANF to potentially find work prior to receiving assistance, thereby saving time-limited benefits for another time.
- f. Populations with disabilities needs are also addressed in core services. Individuals with disabilities have access to the same services as anyone else because the centers are ADA compliant. The Board received a contract with TWC to enhance computer services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Contractor staff will make accommodations for individuals with other disabilities, and many web sites exist to accommodate those with learning disabilities. The Texas Relay number is readily available and printed on center literature. Referrals may be made to TRC; Goodwill; Texas Commission for the Blind; and Work Connection, a local agency that works with individuals who have disabilities.
- g. Veterans receive same-day service during core services intake. Veterans receive orientation and information services and receive preference for job referrals. They are assigned a case manager their first day.
- h. Ex-Offenders, including individuals in Project RIO, have multiple barriers to employment. This population normally receives referrals to the centers from the TDC or Parole Officers, and is assigned to a case manager when they make the appointment.

- i. The older population has access to information and equipment in the centers. Older individuals may be referred to STEP workers for evaluation as part of core services. The center also uses STEP workers in a variety of capacities.

**Intensive services** including assessment and service/employment planning, work experience, job clubs, supportive services, job search/job readiness workshops, prevocational instruction, adult education, literacy, and ESL instruction;

- a. Intensive services benefit those adults and dislocated workers who are seeking or require an in-depth assessment and employment plan to enable them to find employment or change careers, due to either personal or economic circumstances. The plan will allow the individual to focus on specific objectives. Displaced homemakers, women and minorities may need intensive services to realistically appraise their skills and formulate goals and objectives. They may need group employment counseling or work experience training. TAA eligible individuals, as well as those who are worker profiled, have little likelihood of returning to their usual occupation. Consequently, career counseling may be crucial for them to meet their employment needs. Many of these individuals will need to be evaluated to determine the need for re-training. Group job clubs are another good option to meet the needs of this population. Ideally, the majority of those persons involved with rapid response will find employment during core services. Those who cannot, for whatever reason, will find that intensive services will meet their needs for direction and evaluation.
- b. Intensive services for current workers will allow individuals to identify training needs, or to give these workers a chance to explore other options in the same field with better pay and benefits.
- c. Low Income Individuals will be evaluated and a career plan toward self-sufficiency will be implemented. Supportive services for low-income individuals may well play a key role in gaining skills they need to reach their goals.
- d. Intensive services will benefit those individuals with multiple barriers who are seeking or require an in-depth assessment and employment plan to enable them to find employment, or change careers from one that the individual is no longer able to perform, either due to personal or economic circumstances. The plan will allow the individual to focus on specific objectives to be accomplished rather than the overwhelming challenge of overcoming obstacles that have prevented the individual from obtaining employment to date. Individuals with skills deficiencies and limited English-speaking abilities may have supportive service needs while they are building their skills, and work experience or job clubs to build their confidence prior to getting a permanent job. Individuals with substance abuse issues will require counseling and mentoring which is available under intensive service, in addition to specific intensive employment services that are identified through assessment and planning. Other individuals with domestic violence issues may find career counseling will also meet their needs, as well as the other support services in intensive services. Individuals with a poor work history may benefit from intensive job readiness/job search

workshops, career counseling to identify the reason for the poor work history, and a plan to follow to find suitable employment.

- e. Public Assistance recipients are enrolled in the Choices and (normally) the WtW program which meets the special needs of this population through assessment, planning, intensive case management, and after-employment assistance such as occupational/vocational training or options on who to move to better jobs to reach self-sufficiency.
- f. Populations with disabilities may need the additional support offered by intensive services to overcome the barriers facing them. Staff may assist individuals through career counseling to identify occupations for which they are suitable, and to find information on reasonable accommodation. This includes those who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and other disabilities.
- g. Veterans, may be determined eligible for training and receive veteran work-study assistance besides receiving case management and referral preferences. This assistance provides them with paid work experience while they are going to school.
- h. Ex-Offenders, including individuals participating in Project RIO, may require the direction and career counseling that is provided in intensive services. This population receives specific job screening.
- i. Older individuals' needs may range from evaluation for re-training to career counseling to work experience, which may be offered during intensive services.

**Training services** including occupational/vocational skills training (long and short term) and on-the-job training. Individuals enrolled in WIA are evaluated prior to enrollment into training.

- a. Training/retraining for adults and dislocated workers may be required by many who have worked in low skill/low pay jobs or those who must change occupations after working in a field for a number of years. Displaced homemakers, women and minorities often need training/retraining to successfully enter/re-enter the labor force. Training for those individuals targeted for service by , individual who are worker profiled or involved in rapid response may all need training/re-training because of plant closures or a declining market for their current skills.
- b. Training services for current workers may be required for those who require new skills to retain employment or change careers.
- c. Low Income Individuals may find that they need training to be able to earn a self-sufficient wage.
- d. Training, in addition to gaining occupational/vocational skills, will help individuals with multiple barriers gain the self-confidence they need to overcome their barriers. Persons with skills deficiencies and limited English-speaking abilities may need ESL

training, on-the-job training, or individual job development to access the job market and improve their skills. Individuals with substance abuse issues may need to get into a less stressful occupation that may only be available through training. Individuals with domestic violence issues normally have low self-esteem. Training and learning job skills may meet these individuals' needs for employment and a more satisfying life. Those with a poor work history may need training to enter employment that is more suitable for them, to allow them to find job satisfaction.

- e. Public Assistance recipients will find that training may meet their need to be able to attain a self-sufficient wage and support their families.
- f. Populations with disabilities, including those who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and other disabilities may find that training may meet their need to obtain specialized skills attainment to allow them to work in spite of their disability.
- g. Veterans may need training to build on skills learned in the military to be able to get a job.
- h. Ex-Offenders, including individuals involved in project RIO, may need training to overcome the barriers faced as a result of incarceration.
- i. Older population may require training or retraining to enter/re-enter employment if they have not kept up with technology and changes in the workplace, or if their normal occupation is demonstrating a decline in the labor market to be able to work until they wish to or must retire.
- ii. Core or assisted core services, resources, and activities are normally structured in the delivery system as follows: orientation, informational, resource usage or referral services, intake, and evaluation. Referrals to appropriate staff for eligibility determination for other programs is completed to meet customer need. If more intensive services are warranted, assessment and an individual employment plan is completed by an assigned career counselor. Further services depend on the results of the IEP. The customer may remain in intensive services, or progress to training services, as appropriate. The following information shows how these services, resources and activities are structured in the delivery system for specific populations if they are not provided as indicated above.
  - a. Adults and Dislocated workers – as listed above.
  - b. Current workers - as listed above.
  - c. Low Income Individuals - as listed above.
  - d. Individuals with multiple barriers - as listed above.
  - e. Public Assistance recipients – Prior to TANF certification, individuals who apply for

public assistance are referred by TDHS to the workforce center for a workforce orientation. Applicants receive information about services available through the center, include assistance in job search and supportive services. Applicants who have a job but require only supportive services to accept the job have these needs provided to divert them from completing their TANF application to employment. An appointment is made at the orientation for the applicant to attend an employment planning session, and outreach for participation in the Choices program is conducted for all TANF recipients who are not currently participating, including recipients who are exempt or failed to participate previously. The employment planning session informs the recipient of Choices services available to them, and participation requirements. Assessment and a job readiness classes follow the employment planning session. A Family Employment Plan is developed to assist the participant to identify goals and activities to reach their goals. The participant then performs an intensive, assisted job search. If the participant has not found employment before the end of a four week job search, they are assigned to work in a community service or work experience. Other activities the participant may be involved in, depending on the needs of the participant and area employers, are subsidized employment or on-the-job training, vocational education, job skills training or other educational services. Intensive case management and coaching is offered throughout participation. The ChoicesPlus and WtW program normally provides intensive post-employment supports and follow-up for the participant to assist them in reaching their goals, thus avoiding a possible return to TANF in the future when difficulties arise.

- f. Populations with disabilities including individuals who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and other disabilities - as listed above, unless the customer requires immediate assistance or accommodation. .
  - g. Veterans – Veterans are referred to the veteran’s representative when identified. The Vet Rep provides career counseling and additional assistance as needed. Center staff will also provide services to veterans as needed.
  - h. Ex-Offenders, including individuals in RIO are referred to the representative from Project RIO, who provides career counseling and additional assistance as needed.
  - i. Older population. - as listed above.
- iii. The Board will evaluate activities that are not part of the current network, and may implement those at some future date. The Board has no current plans to add additional activities.
- iv. The Board and contractor plan to extend linkages to other resources in the communities. These agencies/entities normally provide special assistance to specific populations. Linkages will be forged through Board and contractor interaction in community events and networking with other professionals, public speaking engagement, marketing of workforce center services, and as other opportunities present themselves, such as informational notices from TWC. The Board will, as appropriate, sign MOU’s with agencies who are willing to enter into a formal agreement. Many agencies and entities

exist for special services. Below are some local agencies which will be targeted

- a. Adults and Dislocated workers, including displaced homemakers, women, minorities, and/or those individual targeted for service by TAA, individuals identified through worker profiling, re-employment services, and rapid response, may benefit from linkages to Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Department of Agriculture Extension Services, the Regional MHMR services, Love, Inc., and etc.
- b. Current workers may benefit from linkages to local training providers.
- c. Low Income Individuals may benefit from linkages to financial and housing assistance programs such as Salvation Army, Social Security, Buckner Family Place, etc.
- d. Individuals with multiple barriers, including individuals with skills deficiencies, limited English-speaking abilities, substance abuse issues, domestic violence issues, and/or poor work history may benefit from linkages with Goodwill Industries, Christian Information and Service Center, etc.
- e. Public Assistance recipients may benefit from stronger linkages with housing and financial assistance programs, crisis intervention, and counseling services.
- f. Populations with disabilities, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and other disabilities would benefit from linkages with counseling and disability services such as Goodwill, Texas Commission for the Blind, Work Connection, and Texas Rehabilitation Commission.
- g. Veterans may benefit from stronger links to veteran's agencies and organizations.
- h. Ex-Offenders may benefit from counseling and crisis intervention linkages.
- i. The Older population may benefit from counseling and educational linkages.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 33. State and discuss the Individual Training Account (ITA) policy/process in the local area. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How this process is coordinated with the integrated service delivery system described in Question 32, above.**
  - b. Plans to improve and expand the ITA process over the next five years.**

Individual training accounts (ITA) will be used for WIA adult and dislocated worker training other than OJT and customized training. All training will be in targeted occupations. Information on provider performance and cost will be provided to individuals; and customer choice will be maximized in the process. The ITA system used in Deep East Texas is a voucher system for tuition, fees, books, and supplies, and where needed, room and board. While an ITA will have a value that reflects full completion of a training program, for training beyond one semester or delivered in some other system of phases, vouchers will be issued for each phase or semester, contingent upon verification of participants' commitment and attainment of minimum criteria for attendance, GPA, etc. It is anticipated that most training can be accomplished for \$3500 - \$4500 for a two-year period. ITAs are generally limited to two years of full-time training, or four years of part-time training.

The ITA process is coordinated with integrated service delivery for all customers seeking training who are eligible for training, and for whom, after assessment and planning, training is found to be an appropriate activity. Exposure to the eligible training provider list on Training Provider Certification System, and the use of career exploration tools such as O'NET, which are available as core services, assists individuals in making wise career choices.

Improvements and expansion of the ITA process will be evaluated based on performance, the availability of educational institutions that are certified, and customer satisfaction.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 34. Discuss the type and availability of youth activities and services in the local area. Consider all programs and resources available to youth. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How the Board’s expectations for the provision of youth services relate to the goals and objectives identified in the Strategic Section of the local plan.**
  - b. The composition of the Youth Advisory Group (if applicable). What organizations and/or entities do the members represent (e.g., foster care agencies, educational entities, law enforcement organizations, etc.)? How do the members interact with the Board to perform their duties?**
  - c. The role of the Youth Advisory Group (if applicable) in structuring, organizing and guiding youth services in the local area.**
  - d. The criteria used by the Board to identify successful providers of youth activities.**
  - e. Special services developed specifically for youth 14-18 years of age.**
  - f. Special services developed specifically for youth 19-21 years of age.**
  - g. Any additional services developed for youth of other age groups.**
- Youth procurement issues are discussed in Question 52.**

Youth services in the area include Job Corps, Workforce Investment Act, Communities-in-Schools, GEAR UP projects, Tech Prep, Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR), Angelina County Chamber of Commerce Business in Education, alternative school services at most ISDs, and a cooperative among Angelina County school districts, the Beth and Horace Stubblefield Learning Center where dropouts can obtain their high school diploma or GED.

The Board goals and objectives direct that youth services will prepare youth to prepare for and enter employment through coordinated efforts with area youth programs. Youth programs will provide career exploration, academic preparation, dropout recovery strategies, school retention, post-secondary education and employment opportunities. Youth programs include those strategies necessary to support youth through a series of appropriate services of sufficient duration to ensure success at obtaining and retaining employment at self-sufficiency.

The Youth Committee of the Board involves advisory members from various agencies serving youth. The Committee is seeking to involve more partners as advisory members to facilitate more coordination. The Committee receives input from the advisory members when identifying gaps in existing programs and making decisions regarding youth services and youth providers. The Board criteria for successful providers of youth activities includes demonstrated

performance in providing the services the Board seeks; demonstrated administrative and financial capacity to operate programs; and demonstrated need for the services to be provided. The Board evaluates the proposed services against the Board's objectives for youth.

Due to decreased funding, the Board has combined youth operational services and programs under the Managing Director contract.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 35. (revised) Discuss the activities and services, including transportation and support services, available to rural job seekers in the local workforce development area. Include in your discussion the following topics:**
- a. Explain whether or not the proportion of rural job seeking customers accessing services has increased or decreased since the Board began administering services. If this proportion has decreased or remained static, how does the Board plan to improve services to this population?**
  - b. Describe how training services for rural populations are coordinated in the local area.**
  - c. What steps has the Board taken to sustain the provision of services to rural areas throughout periods of fluctuations in financial resources?**

As previously discussed in this section of the Plan, the WDA is a rural area of 12 counties. Services are made available with at least a satellite center in each of the counties. These satellite centers are manned from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. five days a week. Those who need services but are unable to access services during regular hours may make an appointment. Outreach in the more isolated areas will mirror that used in larger counties, with increased emphasis on personal contacts.

Training services are available for rural populations, and are coordinated by providing transportation or relocation assistance as needed for those populations to access training. The increase in distance learning options, such as internet courses, and the increase in rural educational centers, such as the ones developed by Angelina College and various partners in Jasper and Pineland will increase further help to coordinate training services in the more rural counties.

A marked increase in the number of customers served in these counties has been seen as a result of full time services. For the months of January 2002 and January 2003, our seven satellite centers recorded the following applications and renewals.

	Houston	Newton	Sabine	San Augustine	San Jacinto	Tyler	Trinity
<b>Jan. 2002 JSMS</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Jan. 2003 JSMS</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Enrollment – All programs</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>106</b>

The Board plans to sustain the provision of services to rural areas through periods of fluctuations in financial resources. The original procurement of facilities was done with the consideration of possible future funding fluctuations, and only necessary facilities space was obtained. Equipment and other resources were purchased within the last 2 years, and upgrades will only be

purchased as needed when funds are available. Staff is cross-trained to provide services in more than one program area. Established partnerships will be maintained to the extent possible.

**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
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**36. Does the Board have an office in any of the following areas (i.e., designated by DOL for PY00 as having significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) populations)? Mark those locations in the local area with an “X”.**

<b>Brownsville</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>*</b>	<b>Hereford</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Canutillo</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Lamesa</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Carrizo Springs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Laredo</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Crystal City</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>McAllen</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Del Rio</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Muleshoe</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Eagle Pass</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>*</b>	<b>Pecos</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Edinburg</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>*</b>	<b>Plainview</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>El Paso</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Raymondville</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fabens</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Uvalde</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Floydada</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Weslaco</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Harlingen</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>

**IF ANY BOX IS MARKED, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 36a & 36b BELOW.**

**IF ANY BOX with an “\*” IS MARKED, ANSWER 36a, 36b, & 36c.  
IF NO BOXES ARE MARKED, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 37.**

**36a. Describe the services and outreach activities provided to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs), including any plans and activities coordinated with other agencies. Include in your discussion a description of the resources available through existing cooperative agreements with public and private community service agencies and groups serving MSFW populations.**

**The Board does not have any of the above locations in its area.**



**Services to Job Seekers—Services/Employment Activities/Training**

**Guidelines  
Pages 58-62**

- 37. Describe how the Board monitors the services provided to job seekers in the local area. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How the Board gauges the effectiveness of services to job seekers.**
  - b. Areas of service delivery planned for improvement and expansion, and how the Board identifies and addresses these issues.**

Refer to the response to Questions 2 and 8 for the Board's monitoring activities.

The Board gauges the effectiveness of services to job seekers by job seeker customer satisfaction, center usage statistics, job placement and retention as well as earnings gain of customers.

The Board will monitor and assess services, making improvements and enhancements deemed appropriate to meet job seeker needs.

**Services to Job Seekers—Case Management**

**Guidelines  
Pages 62-63**

- 38. Describe the Board’s expectations and goals for the Center partners’ case management of participants. Include in your discussion:**
- a. The process used by Center staff to determine which participants receive case management services.**
  - b. The process used by Center staff to follow a participant’s progress and to track services provided to that participant. Is information collected on paper, through an automated system, or both? How is this process coordinated with the individual service/employment planning process?**
  - c. The method by which case managers from all services access the information described in (b).**
  - d. How case management is coordinated among Center partners to eliminate duplicative efforts of service resources.**
  - e. Examples of effective case management strategies.**

All workforce center customers will be assessed for eligibility for special programs. Once enrolled in a special program, a career counselor is assigned. Career counselors maintain weekly or monthly contact with customers enrolled in a program, depending of program requirements. Both paper and electronic case files are maintained. Paper files are located in a central file. All workforce center staff have access to TWIST cases. Coordination and prevention of duplication will be ensured by the use of individual employment plan/service strategy and integrated case management. Integrated case management is accomplished by using an integrated filing system, TWIST entries, and partner meetings. This is further discussed in the response to Question 32.

Effective case management involves customer contact, goals and objectives monitoring, encouragement, professional objectivity, and assistance when needed.

**Services to Job Seekers—Case Management**

**Guidelines  
Pages 62-63**

- 39. Describe how *case management* facilitates participants achieving their goals. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How barriers to employment are identified and addressed, including the need for child care.**
  - b. How *case managers* determine if a participant’s progress is appropriate or if further intervention is necessary.**
  - c. How *case managers* ensure that a participant’s activities meet that individual’s goals when co-enrolled in more than one program (whether provided through Center services or through other entities outside the Center).**

Case management provides focus and direction to individual customers. Barriers are identified when the customer completes the common application, during the IEP interview, and during customer contact. Continuing contact enables the career counselor to determine progress and intervention needed. Customers co-enrolled in programs may occasionally have more than one career counselor. Career counselors meet, either formally or informally, to update each other on progress. Since case files are centrally located, each counselor has access to file notes and TWIST case notes for each customer.

**Services to Job Seekers—Case Management**

**Guidelines  
Pages 62-63**

- 40. Describe the capacity-building strategies used in the local area to foster continuous improvement in the delivery of case management services. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Any formal communication strategies designed to strengthen the collaborative relationship among case management providers (e.g., monthly meetings, case management training, etc.).**
  - b. The Board’s role in helping to expand the resources for case management, and to define services beyond those currently offered in the Center.**
  - c. Plans to enhance the case management function within the local area. How do these plans relate to the goals and objectives described in the Strategic Section of the local plan?**

The workforce center managers hold at least one monthly staff meeting in each center to update staff on policies, discuss areas of concern, and identify training needs.

Monitoring case management activities will identify areas of concern. If needed, the Board will arrange for or provide specific training in case management areas.

Continuous improvement will involve a combination of strategies listed above to identify ways to better serve customers.

**Services to Job Seekers—Case Management**

**Guidelines  
Pages 62-63**

- 41. Discuss how the Board oversees and monitors the case management of job seekers. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Standards the Board has established regarding case management.**
  - b. How the Board assesses the effectiveness of the case management process.**
  - c. Plans to improve this function over the next five years.**

Refer to the response to Questions 2 and 8 for the Board’s monitoring activities.

The Board expects that case management will be provided with appropriate intensity for the individual. Contact between the career counselor and customer will be a minimum of monthly and more often if warranted by program specific policy or customer need. Case management will assess customer’s changing needs as they progress toward their employment goal. Case management will be provided in the maximum possible integrated fashion to include integrated files and team case management approach.

The effectiveness of the case management process is assessed by monitoring goal attainment, completion rates, retention, and earnings gain.

Refer to the discussion in the response to Question 40 for plans to improve this function.

**Services to Job Seekers—Support Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 64-66**

- 42. Discuss the Board’s expectations and goals regarding the Center’s delivery of support services. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. How Center partners perform needs analyses to determine when support services are necessary for participants.**
  - b. A description of the process used by Center staff to track the support services provided to participants.**

A preliminary determination of an individual’s need for support services will be made by the workforce center staff reviewing the common application. A complete assessment of need and current providers will be made during the formation of the Individual Employment Plan. Referrals to appropriate providers or arrangements through center programs will be made at that time. To determine that services are not otherwise available to the customer, support services will be monitored and coordinated through integrated case management, using the Individual Employment Plan, documented referrals, and the TWIST computer system. Copies of applicable documents will be kept in the case file.

Referrals to off-site intensive services and supportive services will be made by the workforce center operator. All referrals will be made in writing and documentation will be maintained in the centers. Supportive service referrals will be entered on the E-5 form, which will be given to ES staff to enter into the automated system for tracking.

**Services to Job Seekers—Support Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 64-66**

- 43. Describe the methods used by case managers to obtain and update information on all the support resources available in the local area, including non-workforce development entities. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. Strategies used by Center staff to form working relationships with local area entities, agencies and institutions that provide support service resources for workforce development participants.**
  - b. Methods by which Center staff facilitates the connection between the participants and the resources described above.**

Workforce center management is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date directory of support service sources in the immediate area. The Board plans to provide links to all area support agencies on the Board’s web page.

Board and workforce center staff will continue to attend community interagency meetings and functions to network and gain an understanding of additional resources that could potentially meet customer needs. Formal and informal meetings between staff facilitate the disbursement of this information.

**Services to Job Seekers—Support Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 64-66**

**44. Discuss collaborative efforts between Center partners and faith-based organizations to expand resources in the local area. If no such coordination efforts exist at this time, what plans does the Board have for initiating such relationships?**

The WDA has vendor agreements with faith-based organizations to provide child care. The Board includes faith-based organizations on its vendor lists. Most efforts with faith-based organizations are referrals for support services. The Board and its contractors will continue to attend community events and will partner and coordinate with faith-based organizations as appropriate.

### Services to Job Seekers—Support Services

Guidelines  
Pages 64-66

- 45. Describe how child care services are integrated with other Center services. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How Center partners perform needs analyses to determine which participants require child care assistance.**
  - b. How Center partners educate and inform participants and customers about the child care services available to them in the local area, and how they assist these individuals and families in choosing a child care provider.**
  - c. How Center staff facilitates the linkage between participants and customers and needed child care services.**
  - d. How child care services are made available to rural populations in need of such support.**
  - e. How the Board leverages area resources (including fundraising activities and collaboration with employers) to expand services and improve the quality of child care.**

Child care is considered to be an integral part of the overall integrated services for job seekers for without child care, it is not possible for parents to work.

Workforce center counselors, working in conjunction with CCMS staff, interview job seekers to determine what their needs are for child care. Should customers need child care, referrals are made to the CCMS for assistance. Parents may call directly from their counselor's office, or they may call on their own at a later time. Parents are able to access the CCMS through a toll-free 800 number. This number is printed on a poster at all the workforce centers, and the center staff shares the information with parents. In addition, the CCMS has a brochure detailing the child care services, and these brochures are available in the workforce center resource rooms.

From information on the common application and, as appropriate, the individual employment plan process, workforce center staff assesses the customer's need for all support services, including child care. As stated, customers are informed of available resources and how to access services through brochures and support service directories.

The CCMS does their own needs analysis to determine customer's needs for child care. In addition to the above, customer satisfaction surveys are done annually and a waiting list is maintained as needed. Finally, through intake interviews with parents, the CCMS is able to determine what child care needs they have. Access to the CCMS is through a toll-free number posted in all workforce centers and brochures explaining services. Workforce center customers needing child care services are made aware of area providers from which the parent chooses. Self-arranged child care with eligible relatives or registered and licensed centers are available for parents wanting that option. This option is especially important for parents needing child care at

non-traditional hours, such as at night or on weekends. In addition to CCMS, child care services are funded with WIA funds for those intensive and training customers who are unable to obtain the service otherwise. Customers enrolled in Choices, Food Stamp E&T, and Welfare-to-Work are eligible for CCMS child care. Career counselors notify CCMS of eligibility by fax or mail.

Our CCMS partners educate and inform participants and customers about child care services by providing an up-to-date provider list of all CCMS contracted centers. This detailed list gives the age range of children accepted, hours of care, services provided, name of the director, address and phone number of the facility, and the Texas Rising Star status of the center. Parents are informed that it is their choice as to the facility they choose for their children. They are offered the option of choosing from registered family homes, group homes, day care centers, or self-arranged care from an eligible source. Parents are provided education about the importance of choosing quality child care for their children, and tips for determining quality care are discussed with them. Finally, parents are encouraged to view the Board's website where child care providers are also listed.

The workforce center career counselors facilitate the linkage between participants/customers and the CCMS through the Child Care Referral Form (2510). The career counselors notify the CCMS when changes occur that would necessitate a change in the parent's child care.

The Deep East Texas area is primarily rural. All twelve counties have rural areas. Child care may not be available in all those areas. Therefore, the CCMS child care specialists work hard to ensure that any registered or licensed child care facilities are contacted about becoming CCMS providers. In addition, the specialists attend all the Child Care Licensing orientation sessions to explain the CCMS system to all prospective child care providers. This has helped tremendously to make sure that all child care is available for parent choice. Parents seeking employment, regardless of which workforce center they go to, are able to access child care by calling the toll-free number.

The Board has two agreements for local match. There are certification agreements with Angelina College for \$168,000, and with Stephan F. Austin State University for \$118,473. These agreements will draw down additional federal funds. These agreements allow eligible parents to attend college and develop skills that will enable them to become marketable employees in the local workforce.

In addition, the Quality Improvement Director utilizes area churches, chamber of commerce meeting rooms, county extension offices, and provider and non-provider facilities for caregiver training sites. These facilities are generously donated by the above entities; fees are never paid for these rooms.

**Services to Job Seekers—Support Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 64-66**

- 46. Describe how transportation services are provided in the local area. Include in your discussion:**
- a. The collaborative relationships that have been established between the local workforce development network and local transportation providers. If none exists, what plans does the Board have for establishing these links?**
  - b. The resources that have been identified in the local area to provide transportation services to participants. If none exists, what plans does the Board have for identifying local resources for transportation?**
  - c. How Center partners perform needs analyses to determine which participants require transportation assistance.**
  - d. How transportation services are provided to rural participants. If these services are not currently available to rural participants, how will the Board address this issue?**

There is one public transportation provider that serves some areas of Angelina and Nacogdoches counties and will serve other areas of the region in response to individual demand. Workforce customers may be issued tokens for these services.

Transportation assistance is assessed, as are all support service requests, using a needs-assessment form that compares income to expenses. Transportation policies make transportation assistance available to customers through reimbursement, vouchers for gas, tokens, and assistance with auto repairs for personal vehicles. Costs related to operation of personal vehicles, public or employer transportation, and ride sharing are allowable.

Transportation in the WDA is a major workforce issue that, due to the rural nature of the entire WDA, must be addressed with a combination of efforts based on individual circumstances. Lack of large populations to access services has hindered expansion of mass transit services. The Board has discussed and will explore the Wheels-to-Work project.

Refer to question R of the External/Internal Assessment portion of this plan for related discussion.

**Services to Job Seekers—Support Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 64-66**

- 47. Discuss how the Board oversees and monitors the provision of support services to job seekers. Include in your discussion:**
- a. Standards the Board has established regarding the provision of support services.**
  - b. How the Board ensures the quality of support services provided in the local area.**
  - c. Specifically, discuss the quality assurance process for child care services.**

The Board oversees and monitors the provision of support services to job seekers by several methods. The first was to set standards by including these in local policy. Standards include allowable types of services, limits, handling of exceptions to limits, and allowable and acceptable methods of delivery. The contractor reports exceptions to the limits to the Board for review. The Board reviews TWIST supportive service reports monthly. Customer and contractor suggestions and complaints are considered during monitoring to determine the need for any changes.

The Board expects that a broad array of support services will be available to workforce center customers. While workforce funds may be used to pay for support services, every effort should be made to coordinate with other available sources to maximize the number of persons who benefit from workforce funds. Support service needs of customers are to be reassessed periodically and adjustments made as appropriate.

The Board ensures the quality of support services provided in the local area by providing written supportive service policy. Policy determines the availability, allowability, and accessibility of various support services. Oversight and monitoring of contractor systems and service delivery also ensures that quality is maintained. The Board and contractor plan to implement quality improvements to the system and process during the coming year after reviewing all aspects of this activity following the quality improvements made to date. Coordination of support service sources, responding to customer satisfaction issues, and addressing gaps between needs and resources through identification of alternate sources or possibly applying for appropriate grants may be used to ensure quality support services.

The Child Care quality assurance process evaluates all aspects of the child care system. The first step in monitoring uses the TWC monitoring system that pulls at least a 10% random sample of child care recipient and provider names, the records are then reviewed using a monitoring instrument originally developed by TWC and customized to fit area needs. Files are reviewed to ensure accurate and timely client eligibility, and to ensure parent share of cost is accurately set. Site visits are made at least annually to 100% of child care providers during which attendance, billing, and parent fee records are reviewed for accuracy.

To increase child care availability in rural areas, child care specialists go to licensing orientations and aggressively search for group homes and registered family homes.

Other processes and quality initiatives include an annual survey of providers. Parents who utilize the child care system are surveyed annually to determine if their needs are being met. Public meetings in the WDA will allow parents and providers to give direct input to the Board. The Board may then compile all input and formulate additional quality initiative and improvement services.

**PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES  
QUESTIONS 48 - 53**

Procurement of Services	
<b>Guidelines Pages 67-69</b>	<b>48. Describe the awarding of contracts for WIA intensive services when Center(s) are unable to provide such services (WIA§117(d)(2)(D)).</b>
<p>The workforce center contractor currently provides the majority of intensive services, such as assessment, development of individual employment plans, group counseling and job clubs, individual career planning, case management, relocation assistance, and assistance with internships, except when other contracted entities and agencies have agreed to or normally provide the intensive service. For example, if a contract is awarded for retention activities and that agency has agreed to complete assessment, develop an IEP, and provide counseling, the Workforce Center contractor does not duplicate the service.</p> <p>The Board seeks providers of intensive services through a request for information process that results in individual referral contracts. A request for proposal or information process may be used depending on the type of intensive service offered. Work experience and subsidized employment agreements are procured by the workforce center contractor, as are supportive services such as gasoline, work apparel, and school supplies.</p> <p>The WDA has sufficient adult and literacy instruction through regional education agencies, and MOUs are in place for referrals and coordination with those agencies.</p>	

**Procurement of Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 67-69**

- 49. Describe the WIA Training Provider Certification system for the local area. In doing so, cover the following items:**
- a. The Board’s policy for submission and review of applications by initially eligible providers, including apprenticeship programs (WIA§122(b)(1) et seq.).**
  - b. Any performance standards that are above the minimum specified by the State to measure performance of contracted Training Providers (WIA§122(c)(6)(B)).**
  - c. The Board’s policy and/or procedure for establishing a list of approved training providers that is consistent with the State’s policy for developing the Training Provider Certification list (WIA§122 et seq.).**
  - d. Any plans to expand the Training Provider Certification system to accommodate the needs of other programmatic services.**

The Board uses the Training Provider Certification system application developed by TWC. The Board solicits providers annually from a potential vendor list and newspaper announcement. The Board adopted the state minimum levels for performance for non-exempt providers. When an application is received, it is reviewed for completeness, and compliance with performance standards, and relation to area targeted occupations. It is then referred to the Board’s Workforce Center Committee for a recommendation to the full Board and subsequently forwarded to TWC, if approved. Applicants are notified of the decision on their application and of the area individual training account process, if approved. Copies of approved initial applications from non-exempt providers are distributed to the workforce centers. Access of the list will be through the Training Provider Certification System (TPCS) website.

The Board has no plans at this time to expand the TPCS process and system to any other programmatic areas at this time. The use of the TPCS system will be evaluated by the Board periodically to determine its effectiveness, the availability of educational institutions that are certified, and customer satisfaction. The Board will maintain a system of individual referral contracts for Youth, TANF, and WtW funding streams.

**Procurement of Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 67-69**

**50. Describe the Board’s policy and/or procedure for establishing subsequent eligibility that is consistent with the State’s policy for the Training Provider Certification System (WIA§122 et seq.).**

The Board uses the subsequent eligibility application developed by TWC. Providers are notified approximately 120 days prior to the expiration date for a program that it will expire and of local protocol and state requirements for recertification.

The Board has adopted state minimums for performance standards. The Board also adopted adjustments to those minimums for completion rate for ALL participants (41%). The Board will also entertain exceptions for performance for all standards for small universe (less than 5), not including WIA Certification, Degree, and Skill Attainment Rates.

For subsequent eligibility purposes, providers must submit either a list or source for the skills competencies incorporated into the program curriculum. The Board currently allows providers to choose from these two options, and will work on development of a standardized matrix over the next several years.

**Procurement of Services**

**Guidelines  
Pages 67-69**

- 51. State and discuss the Board’s policy governing the procurement process for training services that are exceptions to the WIA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for adults and dislocated workers. Include in your discussion:**
- a. The ability of local training providers to accommodate the needs of the ITA system, and a statement and discussion of the Board’s policy and procedure for determining if there is an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area to accomplish the purposes of the ITA system (WIA§134(d)(4)(G)(ii)(II)).**
  - b. A discussion of the Board’s policies and procedures governing how the Board designates training services or programs offered by community-based or other private organizations in the local area. How is the effectiveness of these programs evaluated by the Board, and what services are offered by these organizations to address the needs of special populations with multiple barriers to employment? (WIA§134(d)(4)(G)(III)).**
  - c. If (b) is applicable, include a statement and discussion of the Board’s definition of “hard-to-serve” populations (a special participant population that faces multiple barriers to employment). (WIA§134(d)(4)(G)(iv)(IV)).**

The Board’s policy regarding procurement of training services outside the TPCS is to contract with a sufficient number of training providers to accommodate quality and customer choice for WIA Youth and TANF funded customers, seeking training in demand occupations. The Board seeks providers of services outside the WIA training provider certification system through a request for information process that results in individual referral contracts, or through a request for proposal for some services. This process requires that the Board advertise and send requests to appropriate individual entities from our potential vendor list. Training institutions then submit an application. Applications are then reviewed for completeness and appropriateness of training, considering the target occupations and customer need in this area. A contract for individual referrals is then signed. The contract contains all applicable assurance for direct contractors. The process for on-the-job training procurement mirrors the process above.

Though training providers are limited in the WDA to two community colleges, Angelina and Panola, several nurses aide and nursing programs both within and outside of the community college system, various private training providers offering training in truck driving, welding, and other specific vocational training, and one university - Stephen F. Austin State University, bordering regions provide additional opportunities for occupational skills training to maintain quality training and customer choice.

Local training providers have varied in their responses to accommodate the needs of the TPCS.

Angelina and Panola colleges have both submitted all courses that are offered relating to target occupations, even though the process has required a considerable increase in record keeping requirements (for performance) for these entities. Most private training providers have applied for and been approved for inclusion on the TPCS, and are able to accommodate the process. Board policy is to encourage and assist training entities, to the extent that we are able, to apply for and receive certification. The Board procedure for determining if there is an insufficient number of eligible training providers in the local area will be to monitor the number of ITAs that are issued for training providers outside of the WDA, taking into consideration the reasons individuals may choose training outside of the area.

Boards policy on designating training services or programs offered by community-based or other private organizations is to encourage all entities to apply for certification or make application for an individual referral contract. The Board's procedures are to include community-based and private organizations on the potential vendors list. Their services are solicited through requests for proposal and requests for information for individual referral services. The effectiveness of any training program is evaluated by monitoring to ensure that performance is met or exceeded, and customer suggestions and complaints are incorporated, as applicable and appropriate, into any modifications to the system.

Goodwill Industries of Central East Texas currently offers services to youth with multiple barriers to employment that offers life skills and work experience to youth in special education. This project began with a Board contract for youth services, and has continued through the use of other funding. The Board will work with this and other CBOs to continue with innovative services to special populations. The Board also will consider developing exceptions to the procurement process for CBO to provide services to special populations with multiple barriers to employment within the parameters of applicable legislation, rules, and procurement standards.

Hard-to-serve populations include any individual who is not work ready due to two or more individual personal circumstances. This could include an individual with no work history and no financial support to an individual with an acquired disability who is unable to perform the type of work with which the individual has become familiar.

## Procurement of Services

Guidelines  
Page 67-69

- 52. State and discuss the Board's policy and procedures for selecting eligible providers of WIA youth activities (WIA§123). Include in your answer:**
- a. The criteria used to award grants for youth activities.**
  - b. The role of the Youth Advisory Group (if applicable) in recommending the awarding of grants for both WIA and non-WIA funded youth activities.**
  - c. The identification of providers currently serving youth.**
  - d. How the Board will coordinate youth activities with local programs.**
  - e. How the Board will coordinate youth activities with Job Corps programs in the local area (if applicable).**
  - f. How the Board will coordinate youth activities with local awardees of Youth Opportunity Grants (if applicable).**
  - g. Any plans to expand the eligible youth provider selection process to accommodate the needs of other programmatic services.**

The Board's policy for selecting eligible providers of WIA youth activities is to review proposals submitted in response to a competitive procurement for such services as required by the WIA, and determine if the considered provider meets the identified needs of area youth. The procedures include naming a review team of at least three members who review the proposal for the following criteria: responsiveness; consistency of the information provided; performance ability or performance history of the organization; quality of the proposal; proposal clearly states the purpose, benefits and outcomes of the program; proposal is consistent with and will contribute to the achievement of the Board's youth goals which are measurable, attainable, and quantified and include one or more of the required youth outcomes or performance measures; proposal identifies the target populations and barriers to be addressed; proposal includes demographic characteristics and the percentage each group will form of the total enrollment; proposal contains specific measures to attain planned enrollment; identifies entrance requirements, including the minimum functional grade level or range of grade levels in reading, language arts, age, aptitude or other criteria; proposal describes all proposed activities in detail; includes flow chart; proposal identifies curriculum to be used and delivery of services; proposal identifies counseling methods and reasons counseling will be implemented; accessibility, proposal identifies appropriateness of activities to area youth; program time-frames; and any other specific criteria as applicable to procurement for specialized services.

The Board has a Youth Committee composed of Board members and representatives of other youth service providers as advisory members, including Job Corps, Communities-in-Schools, and juvenile probation. Representatives of other youth service providers do not vote, but may

take part in discussion and advise. The Youth Committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding providers of youth programs. The Board seeks providers of youth programs through a request for proposal process. Providers of occupational skills training will be sought through an application process that results in individual referral contracts.

The Board plans to increase participation of advisory members of the Youth Committee and to develop a plan of coordination among area activities and funding streams available to the Board.

Refer to Question 34 for further discussion of this subject, including current youth services in the WDA.

**Procurement of Services**

Guidelines  
Pages 67-69

- 53. Discuss how the Board oversees and monitors the procurement process. Include in your discussion:**
  - a. Standards the Board has established regarding the procurement process.**
  - b. How the Board ensures quality procurement.**

The Board oversees and monitors the procurement process during annual contracted monitoring or self-evaluation of all Board systems. The review of procurement involves an examination of completed procurements to determine if fair and open competition existed, that the procurement instrument(s) indicate that services and/or products to be procured are clearly stated and demonstrate the need for the services and/or products; that the procurement process was available to the public; that the review of the procurement was fair and equitable, and that a justification is documented if bidders whose pricing was higher than others was chosen, and that a clear flow from the procurement to contract is evident. The Board ensures quality procurement through written policy, and oversight of staff who are involved in the procurement process to ensure adherence to the Board's written policy. Quality is also maintained by reviewing monitoring or self-assessment reports, and making adjustments as appropriate; and by continuous learning through technical assistance and workshops provided by TWC or other training as is available for board staff who deal with procurement. The Board standards for procurement are established in Board policy, which states that all Board procurement must adhere to open and fair competition principles and must be conducted in accordance with the TWC Financial Management Manual and the Board's procurement policies and procedures.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONS 54 & 55

Customer Satisfaction	
<b>Guidelines Pages 70-71</b>	<p><b>54. Describe the quality control process established by the Board to oversee services to employers. Include in your discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. How the services provided by Center operators and network partners are measured in terms of employer satisfaction. Include a description of the assessment tools/methods used to assess employers' satisfaction with workforce development services.</b></li> <li><b>b. How the Board ensures that Center contractors maintain the quality of job referrals, job orders and applications.</b></li> <li><b>c. Methods to follow up with employers to verify that trainees received the necessary skills and that they are using those skills in the workplace.</b></li> <li><b>d. How employer satisfaction results are communicated between the Center contractors and the Board.</b></li> <li><b>e. How employer satisfaction results assist the Board in setting policies for employer services.</b></li> <li><b>f. How employer satisfaction results assist the Board in improving services to this population.</b></li> </ul>
<p>The Board policy regarding employer services requires that job developers and career counselors provide follow-up to both the employer and job seeker to determine if workforce center services were satisfactory, and if the employer/trainee relationship was satisfactory and accomplished the training objectives. Staff will determine and recommend any changes to the process based on employer/trainee suggestion and/or complaints.</p> <p>Services to employers are subject to formal and informal monitoring to ensure employer satisfaction. Staff have received, and will continue to receive cross training so that all staff understand quality of referrals. Neither the Board nor the workforce center operator conducts or plans to conduct a structured satisfaction survey of employers because of state efforts in this area. It is feared that repeated contact with employers using the system regarding satisfaction with services will cause the employers to stop using the system. However, both the Board and operator assess employer satisfaction while conducting business services or involved in community functions. As business relationships develop between the Board and center staff, employers are more apt to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services. Any reports of dissatisfaction are reported to center management and appropriate changes are made when possible.</p>	

The center contractor submits at least a quarterly report of all center activity, including activities involving employers. Customer satisfaction for employers will be difficult to quantify with no formal survey process, but the contractor will consolidate informal employer compliments, suggestions and/or complaints in this report. Because good communication has been established between the Board and the contractor, the contractor also reports any employer compliments, suggestions and/or complaints during informal verbal reports to the Board.

The Board is able to translate employer suggestions into improved services. When the Board becomes aware of employer suggestions or complaints, employer services policy and procedures will be reviewed, as applicable and appropriate, to determine if there is a flaw in the system, or if quality can be improved. A plan for improvements will then be established and monitored.

## Customer Satisfaction

**Guidelines  
Pages 70-71**

- 55. Describe the ways in which the Board assesses customer satisfaction for job seekers. Include in your discussion:**
- a. How the services provided by Center operators and network partners are measured in terms of job seeker satisfaction. Include a description of the assessment tools/methods used to assess job seeker satisfaction with workforce development services.**
  - b. Methods to follow up with job seekers to verify that they have received the necessary skills and that they are using those skills in the workplace.**
  - c. How job seeker satisfaction results are communicated between the Center contractors and the Board.**
  - d. How job seeker satisfaction results assist the Board in setting policies for job seeker services.**
  - e. How job seeker satisfaction results assist the Board in improving services to this population.**

Customer satisfaction surveys are available at the workforce centers and customers are encouraged to complete these. Following training activities, customers are also asked to complete a survey regarding the training. The results of surveys are discussed by site managers with staff and improvements are made as appropriate.

Board policy is impacted by customer satisfaction from a continuous improvement standpoint. Satisfaction of customers shows the strengths and weaknesses of services offered and presents opportunities for improvement.