

PANHANDLE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA (PWDA) PY 2017-2020 INTEGRATED PLAN

The Panhandle Workforce Development Board (“Board”) is a business-led group, the majority of which is comprised of employers from the private sector, as well as representatives from community-based organizations, labor, economic development, secondary and post-secondary education, adult and continuing education, literacy, vocational rehabilitation, public employment services, and the State department of human services. The Board is appointed by local elected officials, and oversees workforce program services provided in our 26-county region. The Board and its partners together implement an Integrated Plan, which directs local entities in their efforts to build a labor force that sustains local communities and supports a positive economic climate. Section I of the plan describes the PWDA’s strategic goals and objectives, and outlines the challenges that the Board will address during the period of July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020.

Board Mission

The Board supports the present and future economic growth and prosperity of the PWDA by actively assisting local employers with finding and developing the talent they need, and by investing in skills development which increases workers’ career opportunities and economic self-sufficiency.

Part A: Strategic Elements

Board’s Vision

The vision of the Board is to establish and enhance a workforce delivery system that serves the needs of area employers, job seekers, and constituents with efficient and effective services by promoting collaboration among stakeholders, creating partnerships with other community organizations, and focusing on workforce issues.

The Board also supports regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency that will guide the development and provision of services during the three-year period of the PWDA Integrated Plan, as described in the following sections.

1(a). Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, include:

- Supporting a regional workforce system where individuals are empowered to embark on career pathways leading to increased educational, occupational, and adult literacy skill levels, attainment of recognized credentials, employment with self-sufficiency earnings, and employment security, while meeting the immediate and future skills needs of employers;
- Increasing the number of customers engaged in career services and short-term training that leads to employment in high-wage, in-demand occupations;
- Meeting local employers' demand for skilled workers with an educated, highly skilled, and well-qualified labor force;
- Implementing effective employment placement and retention of veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals who have exhausted unemployment insurance benefits, dislocated workers, the underemployed, and high-risk population groups such as welfare recipients, disconnected youth and adults who have barriers to employment, and for those individuals who are basic skills deficient; and
- Increasing the number of low-income customers and individuals with barriers to employment who engage in short-term training leading to employment.

1(b). Goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) § 116(b)(2)(A) include collaboration with workforce system partners to align, leverage, and combine local communities' workforce resources by:

- Effectively serving local employers' skill needs and hiring expectations;
- Meeting job seekers' employment needs for placement, retention, and earnings;
- Leveraging resources with education partners to address skill gaps including adult literacy skills deficiencies;
- Outreaching and re-engaging Out-of-School and older youth in work-based training;
- Increasing short-term occupational training opportunities leading to attaining recognized credentials; and
- Assisting students to successfully complete training which results in measurable skills gains, entered employment, retention, and earnings gains.

2. Strategies to work with entities carrying out core programs with required partners to align resources and achieve the vision and goals of this Plan include development of the Board's newly formed Business Advisory Committee, comprised of Board and non-Board members, private sector, Board staff, and contractor staff, and established to assist the Board in designing and delivering services based on business and industry needs, as well as enhancing employer engagement, and to support industry partnerships.

Identifying and developing effective career pathways, creating data driven career choices that align with demand, and delivering appropriate services for Adults, Youth, and Dislocated Workers under WIOA, are critical to the success of the PWDA's workforce goals and objectives, and are further described in this Plan.

Where training gaps exist, options such as Local Activity Fund, Wagner-Peyser grants available through the Governor's office, and Skills Development Grant projects may be pursued to fund curriculum development that initiates instructional availability.

Continued collaboration with required partners in local business and education, and with local organizations, will enhance the Panhandle workforce system's capacity for delivering effective employment and training services, while meeting required performance. Successfully aligning resources and responding to expected shortages of workers in skilled trades and technical occupations due to the skills gap created by employee turnover, combined with the increasing demand for a highly-technically skilled workforce, are essential. In addition to the activities associated with the required partners as outlined in this Plan, other workforce partners and existing activities include:

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) provides training and employment services to low-income job seekers age 55 and older to assist them in securing unsubsidized employment in the public and private sectors. Program participants earn while they learn, gaining competitive job skills and refining existing skills through paid, part-time, on-the-job training assignments at nonprofit organizations and government agencies. During training, participants earn minimum wage and provide valuable community services. Senior Service America, as the Panhandle's SCSEP grantee, provides training, counseling, employment assistance, and paid, part-time community service assignments designed to move older workers into unsubsidized employment, which ensures that job seekers identified by Workforce Solutions staff are likely to benefit from services.
- Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET), the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) contractor serving our region, includes mutual referrals for services, coordination of the delivery career and intensive services co-enrollment of individuals eligible for WIOA and NFJP who would benefit from the services of both programs. Partnering activities include joint case management and employment planning, joint staff training, and provision of space to MET staff at Workforce Solutions Panhandle (WSP) offices on an itinerant basis if available.

Note: MET's Regional Specialist Manager serves in the role of SCSEP Grantee through Senior Service America described above.

- Panhandle Community Services (PCS) continues their partnership to assist customers in reducing their dependence on PCS for utility assistance and to enhance employment services to these customers. PCS identifies customers who need assistance with workforce services to obtain full-time employment or complete short-term training leading to self-sufficiency and makes referrals to WSP staff to begin the process of determining an individual's career pathway. PSC work-based services include subsidized work experience arrangements or when appropriate, customers may be referred to WIOA for short-term training. The partners collaborate on the provision of supportive services to referred customers who are eligible and participate in these activities, and job search assistance is provided when customers are job-ready.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

3(a). Economic Conditions:

The issue most likely to affect the Board's ability to accomplish its goals is the availability of public funding. Consistently low unemployment compared to other regions in Texas and declining rural populations have resulted in reduced State allocations. Additional federal budget cuts and reauthorization of legislation that funds workforce programs may generate a lower level of resources for local use, especially if States gain greater flexibility for the distribution of those resources.

Due to past funding limitations, seven of the region's eight WSP offices were closed, primarily in rural areas, affecting much of the 26 counties in the Texas Panhandle, and requiring significant changes in business practices to facilitate continued services to these areas. Although a limited rural presence has been reinstated, the Board's continuing challenge is to ensure that employers, job seekers and students in rural communities continue to access needed workforce services, despite the lack of a constant, or limited physical presence.

According to the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) website, tremendous opportunities for employment growth exist due to the Centerport Business Park being developed in downtown Amarillo designed to be the region's epicenter for manufacturing and distribution. With eight initial tenants and a combined workforce of over 850 employees providing products for global customers, the venture will support businesses that create and sustain a diversified local economy. Investments in rail and road infrastructure make the park uniquely equipped for continued development as Amarillo continues to serve as a truck and rail transportation hub.

A multitude of healthcare providers, facilities, and agencies offer broad range of medical services and continue to serve as a major source of employment in the region. Continuing efforts to identify and collaborate with these entities on innovative and successful skills development initiatives, such as the recent Skills Development Grant Partnership with the Texas Workforce

Commission (TWC) and two Amarillo hospitals, which increased training for incumbent worker skills, are producing a highly qualified and well-compensated workforce to administer care to patients throughout a multi-state region.

New home building has been steadily high, as business expansion and new business ventures in hotels, retail, and restaurants keep construction activity high. Increased food production, processing, and packing facilities offer opportunities for jobs involving industrial mechanical repair. A large immigrant population primarily employed in the meat slaughtering sector of this industry presents unique challenges to provide basic literacy services, including ESL, that offer opportunities for increased wage earning potential.

3(b). Employment Needs of Employers:

Our region is subject to the so-called “brain drain” that many other regions experience, with the added challenge of the relativity of pay scales customary in other states and other parts of Texas. Regional unemployment levels have consistently remained among the lowest in the State, presenting unique challenges to companies in recruiting and hiring qualified workers.

WSP’s Business Services team utilize monthly surveys and engage local employers to report on technology and employment trends in their industries, skill shortages, and recruiting challenges, and suggestions for services that could help them address their labor force needs. Results are coordinated and reviewed, and have been incorporated into this Plan for implementation in the coming year. Economic development organizations, school districts, elected officials, and the public are solicited to share their ideas and provide input as well.

Information is gleaned from AEDC-conducted labor market assessments to determine the needs of Amarillo employers, along with information obtained from independent school districts, postsecondary institutions, adult education providers and other workforce partner organizations.

To identify demographic, industrial and employment trends and potential skill shortages, data is pulled from multiple sources, including TWC tools such as SOCRATES, the Strategic Workforce Assessment Program (SWAP), Texas Industry Profiles, Tracer, and additional resources from other providers, such as Help Wanted Online.

Assessment of employers’ needs is also conducted through the involvement of WSP staff with businesses, collaborative activities with community colleges and local organizations, and input received from employers and community leaders. WSP staff shared their front-line experience working with employers, job seekers and students to add practical, current and “real-life” information to be considered during the development of this Plan.

Board staff and WSP Business Services staff gather information on labor market developments and formulate recommendations on those industries and occupations on which to focus workforce resources. Small, medium and large employers, economic developers, chamber of commerce representatives, educators, local elected officials, and other interested parties and stakeholders have input.

Data analysis on all information collected is used to identify high-growth and other high-priority industries. Board and WSP staff seek the following information from representatives of those industries about their businesses, and economic development professionals for:

- Industrial and Occupational trends;
- Education and training preferences;
- Employee recruiting methods; and
- Specific gaps in employees' skills.

Target and In-Demand Industries and Occupations

The “local wisdom” gathered through this process is used to validate and/or update statistical data, and results in a more complete picture of labor market needs considered in the development of this Plan. Labor market information is also gained through data analysis and input is considered in the development of priorities for the identified workforce needs. The Board approves recommended In-Demand Industries and Occupations, for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program training, target occupations, and related workforce investment strategies for incorporation into this Plan.

4(a). List of PWDA In-Demand Industries:

2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code (4-digit)	NAICS Industry Name	Total <u>Current</u> Positions for the Industry in the Area	Total <u>Projected</u> Positions in 10 Years	Job Growth Rate
2011	Oil & Gas Extraction	3180	2900	-8.8%
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	2790	3600	129.0%
2389	Specialty Trade Contractors	1160	1380	119.0%
3116	Animal Slaughtering & Processing	11430	12590	110.1%
3331	Agriculture, Construction, & Mining Machinery Manufacturing	930	870	93.5%
4841	General Freight Trucking	2190	2500	114.2%
5415	Computer Systems Design & Related Services	480	600	125.0%
5511	Management of Companies & Enterprises	1010	1140	112.9%
5611	Office Administrative Services	620	790	127.4%
6111	Elementary & Secondary Schools, Public & Private	14690	16670	113.5%
6211	Offices of Physicians	2980	3930	131.9%
6221	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals, Public & Private	6480	7890	121.8%
7225	Restaurants & Other Eating Places	13170	16780	127.4%
8111	Automotive Repair & Maintenance	1730	2260	130.6%
9000	Government, State & Local	State: 4000 Local: 7700	State: 4030 Local: 8030	State: 100.8% Local: 104.3%

Source: TWC (Texas Workforce Commission) LMCI (Labor Market Career Information)

4(b). List of PWDA In-Demand Occupations:

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Wage 2015	Hourly Wage 2015	Total Annual Average Openings	Annual Openings due to Growth	Annual Openings due to Replacements	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	\$24,932	\$11.99	320	120	200	5,730	6,920
41-2011	Cashiers	\$19,638	\$9.44	300	75	225	5,310	6,050
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	\$18,534	\$8.91	295	145	150	4,700	6,130
45-2092	Farmworkers & Laborers; Crop, Nursery, & Greenhouse	\$19,691	\$9.47	265	0	265	9,920	9,480
45-2093	Farmworkers; Farm, Ranch, & Aquacultural Animals	\$22,700	\$10.91	185	25	160	5,960	6,220
35-3031	Waiters & Waitresses	\$19,041	\$9.15	180	55	125	2,600	3,160
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	\$30,925	\$14.87	170	50	120	5,480	5,960
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Managers	\$92,514	\$44.48	165	0	165	9,710	9,560
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$43,023	\$20.68	165	80	85	5,040	5,830
29-1141	Registered Nurses	\$60,063	\$28.88	160	85	75	3,200	4,030
43-5081	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	\$23,981	\$11.53	120	40	80	2,450	2,840
53-7062	Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	\$28,265	\$13.59	110	35	75	2,580	2,950
37-2011	Janitors & Cleaners, Ex. Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	\$22,890	\$11.01	105	45	60	3,050	3,480
11-1021	General & Operations Managers	\$103,308	\$49.67	100	35	65	2,590	2,960
47-2061	Construction Laborers	\$30,129	\$14.49	95	40	55	2,870	3,250
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	\$27,721	\$13.33	95	40	55	2,260	2,670
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special Education	\$45,231	No Data	90	35	55	2,400	2,760
35-3022	Counter Attendants; Cafeteria/Food Concession/Coffee Shop	\$17,657	\$8.49	85	25	60	1,000	1,250
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	\$18,323	\$8.81	85	65	20	2,310	2,980
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, & Fish Cutters & Trimmers	\$24,466	\$11.76	80	30	50	2,570	2,850
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	\$25,112	\$12.07	80	40	40	1,740	2,140
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special/Career/Technical Ed	\$51,529	No Data	80	30	50	2,140	2,450
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	\$32,635	\$15.69	75	25	50	1,960	2,220

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Wage 2015	Hourly Wage 2015	Total Annual Average Openings	Annual Openings due to Growth	Annual Openings due to Replacements	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024
43-6014	Secretaries & Admin Assistants, Ex. Legal/Medical/Executive	\$29,060	\$13.97	75	35	40	4,030	4,370
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	\$21,143	\$10.16	70	40	30	1,040	1,430
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers	\$38,141	\$18.34	70	35	35	1,240	1,590
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	\$47,483	\$22.83	70	25	45	2,100	2,350
39-9011	Childcare Workers	\$18,987	\$9.13	65	20	45	1,600	1,810
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	\$42,536	\$20.45	65	25	40	1,330	1,560
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	\$22,038	No Data	65	25	40	1,630	1,870
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	\$72,856	\$35.03	60	20	40	1,530	1,730
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	\$28,849	\$13.87	60	30	30	1,690	2,000
37-2012	Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	\$18,129	\$8.72	60	20	40	1,780	2,000
25-3098	Substitute Teachers	\$19,757	\$9.50	60	25	35	1,770	2,000
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicles & Equipment	\$22,658	\$10.89	55	20	35	950	1,160
33-3012	Correctional Officers & Jailers	\$36,469	\$17.53	55	5	50	1,900	1,930
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	\$19,825	\$9.53	55	25	30	1,160	1,430
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	\$25,809	\$12.41	55	5	50	1,560	1,620
41-4012	Sales Reprs, Wholesale/Mfg, Ex Technical/Scientific Products	\$61,772	\$29.70	55	20	35	1,680	1,870
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	\$29,354	\$14.11	50	35	15	1,280	1,650
45-2091	Agricultural Equipment Operators	\$27,700	\$13.32	45	25	20	820	1,050
51-9111	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders	\$24,066	\$11.57	45	10	35	1,040	1,150
53-7064	Packers & Packagers, Hand	\$21,217	\$10.20	45	10	35	1,410	1,510
49-3023	Auto Service Technicians & Mechanics	\$42,817	\$20.58	40	15	25	930	1,060
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office & Admin Support Workers	\$53,688	\$25.81	40	20	20	1,340	1,530
35-9031	Hosts & Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, & Coffee Shop	\$17,932	\$8.62	40	10	30	450	560
43-4081	Hotel, Motel, & Resort Desk Clerks	\$18,175	\$8.74	40	10	30	540	610
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$49,591	\$23.84	40	20	20	810	1,000

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Wage 2015	Hourly Wage 2015	Total Annual Average Openings	Annual Openings due to Growth	Annual Openings due to Replacements	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024
37-3011	Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	\$23,327	\$11.21	40	15	25	1,310	1,460
31-9092	Medical Assistants	\$26,766	\$12.87	40	25	15	810	1,070
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Ex Special/Career/Technical Ed	\$47,227	No Data	40	15	25	1,150	1,320
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	\$54,449	\$26.18	40	5	35	1,100	1,170
21-2011	Clergy	\$46,130	\$22.18	35	10	25	1,060	1,150
35-9011	Dining Room & Cafeteria Attendants & Bartender Helpers	\$17,550	\$8.44	35	10	25	500	610
47-2111	Electricians	\$48,053	\$23.10	35	20	15	990	1,190
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	\$47,061	\$22.63	35	5	30	1,150	1,220
43-3071	Tellers	\$24,377	\$11.72	35	5	30	780	800
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	\$41,431	\$19.92	35	5	30	1,060	1,130
35-3011	Bartenders	\$22,034	\$10.59	30	10	20	470	580
35-2012	Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	\$22,309	\$10.73	30	10	20	800	880
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, & Repairers	\$62,378	\$29.99	30	10	20	900	990
53-7051	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	\$30,713	\$14.77	30	10	20	780	890
35-9021	Dishwashers	\$18,775	\$9.03	25	5	20	520	580
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers & Repairers	\$42,522	\$20.44	25	5	20	510	570
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers	\$75,912	\$36.50	25	5	20	1,190	1,240
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors: Construction Trades/Extraction Wkrs	\$61,723	\$29.67	25	15	10	1,100	1,230
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	\$57,672	\$27.73	25	10	15	590	700
47-2073	Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	\$40,326	\$19.39	25	10	15	1,010	1,090
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	\$42,735	\$20.55	25	15	10	820	980
43-4171	Receptionists & Information Clerks	\$25,266	\$12.15	25	5	20	660	720
43-3021	Billing & Posting Clerks	\$30,710	\$14.76	20	10	10	550	650
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	\$35,910	\$17.26	20	0	20	2,150	2,080
49-3031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	\$43,789	\$21.05	20	10	10	630	710

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Wage 2015	Hourly Wage 2015	Total Annual Average Openings	Annual Openings due to Growth	Annual Openings due to Replacements	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024
49-9012	Control & Valve Installers & Repairers, Ex. Mechanical Door	\$45,197	\$21.73	20	5	15	430	470
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	\$17,728	\$8.52	20	0	20	760	770
41-2021	Counter & Rental Clerks	\$26,128	\$12.56	20	5	15	580	630
31-9091	Dental Assistants	\$35,229	\$16.94	20	10	10	420	520
11-9032	Education Administrators, Elementary/Secondary School	\$69,952	No Data	20	5	15	450	510
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	\$35,770	\$17.20	20	15	5	360	500
53-1031	First-Line Supervisors: Trans/Material-Moving Mach/Veh Oprs	\$55,875	\$26.86	20	5	15	410	460
31-1011	Home Health Aides	\$20,612	\$9.91	20	10	10	440	570
13-2072	Loan Officers	\$84,876	\$40.81	20	10	10	460	550
33-9032	Security Guards	No Data	No Data	20	5	15	1,010	1,070
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, & Mining	\$43,191	\$20.76	20	0	20	530	450
39-3091	Amusement & Recreation Attendants	\$19,966	\$9.60	15	5	10	200	230
53-6031	Automotive & Watercraft Service Attendants	\$21,645	\$10.41	15	5	10	200	250
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	\$72,475	\$34.84	15	5	10	630	690
47-2031	Carpenters	\$45,938	\$22.09	15	5	10	900	970
21-1021	Child, Family, & School Social Workers	\$39,956	\$19.21	15	5	10	370	410
53-7011	Conveyor Operators & Tenders	\$25,563	\$12.29	15	5	10	280	320
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	\$18,532	\$8.91	15	5	10	320	340
43-5032	Dispatchers, Ex. Police, Fire, & Ambulance	\$45,543	\$21.90	15	5	10	330	380
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	\$33,457	\$16.09	15	5	10	520	580
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, School, & Vocational Counselors	\$53,655	\$25.80	15	5	10	370	430
51-3099	Food Processing Workers, All Other	\$24,990	\$12.01	15	5	10	430	470
49-9021	Heating, AC, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	\$46,333	\$22.28	15	10	5	400	490
49-9098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Workers	\$25,282	\$12.16	15	5	10	360	430

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13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	\$54,783	\$26.34	15	5	10	410	450
51-4041	Machinists	\$41,346	\$19.88	15	5	10	320	390
11-9111	Medical & Health Services Managers	\$84,751	\$40.75	15	5	10	300	360
47-2141	Painters, Construction & Maintenance	\$31,556	\$15.17	15	5	10	490	550
41-2022	Parts Salespersons	\$31,183	\$14.99	15	5	10	430	480
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	\$33,198	\$15.96	15	10	5	460	540
43-5061	Production, Planning, & Expediting Clerks	\$50,558	\$24.31	15	5	10	430	470
47-5071	Roustabouts, Oil & Gas	\$35,540	\$17.09	15	0	15	700	600
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, & Traffic Clerks	\$32,738	\$15.74	15	5	10	570	600
13-2082	Tax Preparers	\$32,568	\$15.66	15	5	10	310	350
49-3093	Tire Repairers & Changers	\$25,890	\$12.45	15	5	10	350	410
11-3011	Administrative Services Managers	\$69,285	\$33.31	10	5	5	250	280
49-3021	Auto Body & Related Repairers	\$44,895	\$21.58	10	5	5	320	390
51-3011	Bakers	\$20,592	\$9.90	10	5	5	260	310
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	\$25,115	\$12.07	10	5	5	330	380
47-2051	Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	\$36,757	\$17.67	10	5	5	260	300
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators & Tenders	\$61,490	\$29.56	10	0	10	260	260
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technicians	\$39,472	\$18.98	10	0	10	410	410
17-2051	Civil Engineers	\$85,261	\$40.99	10	5	5	200	240
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, & Investigators	\$79,902	\$38.41	10	5	5	140	170
13-1041	Compliance Officers	\$60,395	\$29.04	10	5	5	250	280
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	\$73,357	\$35.27	10	5	5	260	330
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	\$47,050	\$22.62	10	5	5	470	540
11-9021	Construction Managers	\$74,284	\$35.71	10	0	10	740	750
13-1051	Cost Estimators	\$67,024	\$32.22	10	5	5	190	230
21-2021	Directors, Religious Activities & Education	No Data	No Data	10	5	5	200	240
11-3031	Financial Managers	\$121,065	\$58.20	10	5	5	270	310
33-2011	Firefighters	\$55,379	\$26.62	10	0	10	420	440

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39-1021	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	\$37,174	\$17.87	10	5	5	330	360
39-9031	Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	\$30,454	\$14.64	10	5	5	210	240
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	\$28,876	\$13.88	10	5	5	310	360
35-3041	Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	\$18,201	\$8.75	10	5	5	300	350
11-9051	Food Service Managers	\$56,458	\$27.14	10	5	5	210	250
51-8092	Gas Plant Operators	\$61,330	\$29.49	10	0	10	220	220
45-2041	Graders & Sorters, Agricultural Products	\$28,970	\$13.93	10	5	5	300	340
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists	\$23,646	\$11.37	10	0	10	340	340
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	\$48,863	\$23.49	10	5	5	110	140
23-1011	Lawyers	\$103,621	\$49.82	10	5	5	490	560
43-4131	Loan Interviewers & Clerks	\$32,784	\$15.76	10	5	5	220	260
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	\$53,755	\$25.84	10	5	5	190	230
13-1111	Management Analysts	\$81,383	\$39.13	10	5	5	390	450
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	\$40,841	\$19.64	10	5	5	130	170
29-2011	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists	\$57,351	\$27.57	10	5	5	200	250
29-2071	Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	\$36,715	\$17.65	10	5	5	260	330
51-9023	Mixing & Blending Machine Setters, Operators, & Tenders	\$34,627	\$16.65	10	5	5	250	290
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	\$93,572	\$44.99	10	5	5	110	160
51-9122	Painters, Transportation Equipment	\$34,634	\$16.65	10	5	5	220	270
47-2071	Paving, Surfacing, & Tamping Equipment Operators	\$39,089	\$18.79	10	5	5	200	230
29-1051	Pharmacists	\$126,972	\$61.04	10	5	5	290	320
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	\$20,342	\$9.78	10	5	5	90	130
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	\$57,692	\$27.74	10	5	5	130	170
29-1123	Physical Therapists	\$92,638	\$44.54	10	5	5	170	220
29-1069	Physicians & Surgeons, All Other	\$240,159	\$115.46	10	5	5	240	290
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	\$50,668	\$24.36	10	5	5	360	400

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Wage 2015	Hourly Wage 2015	Total Annual Average Openings	Annual Openings due to Growth	Annual Openings due to Replacements	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Ex. Special Education	\$38,309	\$18.42	10	5	5	180	210
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	\$55,180	\$26.53	10	5	5	230	260
13-1023	Purchasing Agents, Ex. Wholesale, Retail, & Farm Products	\$57,751	\$27.77	10	0	10	320	320
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	\$52,249	\$25.12	10	5	5	180	220
39-9032	Recreation Workers	\$30,096	\$14.47	10	5	5	190	230
21-2099	Religious Workers, All Other	No Data	No Data	10	5	5	160	190
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	\$50,781	\$24.41	10	5	5	240	310
11-2022	Sales Managers	\$125,869	\$60.51	10	5	5	220	250
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, & Financial Services Sales Agents	\$77,773	\$37.39	10	5	5	310	360
49-2098	Security & Fire Alarm Systems Installers	\$40,499	\$19.47	10	5	5	230	290
11-9151	Social & Community Service Managers	\$63,843	\$30.69	10	5	5	150	180
21-1093	Social & Human Service Assistants	\$33,053	\$15.89	10	5	5	190	230
25-2054	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	\$53,936	No Data	10	5	5	210	230
51-2092	Team Assemblers	\$26,904	\$12.93	10	5	5	330	380
49-2022	Telecommunications Equip Installers/Rprs, Ex Line Installers	\$43,666	\$20.99	10	5	5	320	380
13-1151	Training & Development Specialists	\$55,001	\$26.44	10	5	5	300	340
43-6011	Executive Secretaries & Executive Administrative Assistants	\$44,970	\$21.62	5	0	5	490	480
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Ex. Engines	\$45,233	\$21.75	5	0	5	160	170
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$56,925	\$27.37	0	0	0	30	50

Source: TWC Labor Market Career Information (LMCI)

In-Demand occupations meet the following criteria: TWC projects 15 or more annual openings, or 100 or more openings over the next 10 years.

The PWDA includes the following counties: Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochilree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler.

4(c). List of PWDA In-Demand Industries and Associated Target Occupations:

NAICS Code*	In Demand Industry	Associated Target Occupations**
2011	Oil & Gas Extraction	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
2389	Specialty Trade Contractors	Aircraft Mechanics & Service Technicians Carpenters Electricians Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers
3116	Animal Slaughtering & Processing	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators
3331	Agriculture, Construction, & Mining Machinery Manufacturing	Industrial Machinery Mechanics Machinists
4841	General Freight Trucking	Bus & Truck Mechanic & Diesel Engine Specialists Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor-Trailer
5415	Computer Systems Design & Related Services	Computer User Support Specialists Network & Computer Systems Administrators
5511	Management of Companies & Enterprises	Accountants & Auditors General & Operations Managers
5611	Office Administrative Services	Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
6111	Elementary & Secondary Schools, Public & Private	Elementary School Teachers Secondary School Teachers
6211	Offices of Physicians	Licensed Vocational Nurses Medical Assistants Nursing Assistants Occupational Therapy Assistants Physical Therapist Assistants
6221	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals, Public & Private	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians Medical Records & Health Information Technicians Pharmacy Technicians Radiologic Technologists and Technicians Registered Nurses Respiratory Therapists
7225	Restaurants & Other Eating Places	Food Service Managers
8111	Automotive Repair & Maintenance	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics
9000	Government, State & Local	Correctional Officers & Jailers Fire Fighters Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers

Source: TWC Labor Market Career Information (LMCI)

In-Demand Industries and associated new Target Occupations are highlighted in gray.

* North American Industry Classification System

** While only listed once above, several PWDA Target Occupations are associated with multiple PWDA In-Demand Industries. The associated list above is abbreviated to show examples for reference.

5. List of PWDA Target Occupations:

SOC Code	Training Occupation	SOC Code	Training Occupation
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	31-9092	Medical Assistants
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	29-2071	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks	49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanic & Diesel Engine Specialists	15-1142	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
47-2031	Carpenters	31-1014	Nursing Assistants
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants
33-3012	Correctional Officers & Jailers	47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
47-2111	Electricians	29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
33-2011	Fire Fighters	33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
11-9051	Food Service Managers	29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	29-1141	Registered Nurses
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics	29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	25-2031	Secondary School Teachers
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor-Trailer
29-2061	Licensed Vocational Nurses	51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
51-4041	Machinists		

New Target Occupations are highlighted in gray.

6. Analysis of Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs of Employers:

Employer engagement is the key to meeting the myriad of regional workforce needs. Identifying appropriate operational strategies that lead to attainment of the goals of this Plan involves examining local labor market skills and service gaps.

To understand those challenges, Board staff conducts analyses of local, state and national data that identified demographic, industrial and employment trends and potential skill shortages, using a variety of economic tools provided by TWC, other State agencies, and federal, local, and private resources.

The WSP Business Services team continues to craft solutions that successfully address local labor force challenges such as assessment of employers' skill needs, implementation of low-cost, effective and timely methods that match capable workers with job openings, and collaboration with educators, economic developers and community partners.

Replacing retiring workers in skilled trades, despite fewer young adults seeking entry into long-term apprenticeship programs in technical occupations remains a challenge. Aligning resources and focusing on "right skilling" will not only replace workers, but will ensure the replacement workers have the enhanced technical skills to meet the unique requirements created by the increasing demands of an exceptionally complex and specialized business environment.

7. Analysis of Regional Workforce:

The size and scale of the Panhandle region, with its 26 counties encompassing 26,000 square miles, presents obvious geographic limitations. The rural areas with the most need for workers have the smallest labor force. The regional downturn in oil and gas production impacted the rural areas the most, with substantial layoffs and few new jobs to replace those that were lost. Skills in this industry are often not transferrable to other industries, and many former oil field workers are reluctant to take a lower paying job and hold out in hopes production will ramp up again.

The population of individuals with barriers to employment in the Panhandle region is sizable. Poverty levels are relatively high, as many families and individuals receive some type of public assistance, and teenage pregnancy rates have also remained high. A growing homeless population, including veterans and individuals with disabilities, adds to the strain on available resources and services, and presents its own unique set of challenges.

While most workers are able to find jobs, underemployment remains an issue. The lowest-paying jobs seem to have the most growth, due in part to the abundance of restaurants, eating establishments, and hotels/motels per capita, which impacts increasing poverty numbers in our region due the relatively lower wages paid in these areas.

The need exists in the Panhandle region for stable jobs which pay a self-sufficient wage. The dual challenge is to find and engage a well-qualified workforce to meet employers' needs for highly skilled, stable workers. With a younger (median age below age 35), more educated (82%

with a HS diploma), and growing regional labor force (15%), the pool of available workers in the region offers the potential for realizing economic growth and future stability for employers and workers alike.

Local labor market needs provide the core direction for Panhandle workforce investments. To understand the region's skill needs, Board and WSP staff combine a broad analysis of local, state and national data with local information gained from employers' input and workforce professionals' experience delivering services.

Conducting market research and analysis, developing and implementing a regional business engagement plan, and creating and improving opportunities for developing and implementing skills development initiatives, especially among small employers, and employers in demand industry sectors and occupations, are priorities in the PWDA.

8. Analysis of Workforce Development Activities Including Education and Training:

The strengths of workforce activities in our region are the innovative employment and training opportunities that are developed through the creation of new partnerships with businesses and employers in emerging industries in the Panhandle, such as wind energy, food processing, and industrial production, through renewing alliances with existing entities including aviation and food production, and with other local employers that have maintained a steady presence in the area job market.

Additional successes include:

- Industry-Recognized Skills Certification Initiative Grant funds utilized through training workers at local community colleges for employment at a large food processing plant in the region;
- Collaboration between a major local employer with business locations throughout the region to provide management level training to incumbent workers and a local community college, offering opportunities for career growth and increased earning potential; and
- Partnering with employers to fund basic truck driver instruction and licensure, followed by job placement with an experienced driver to complete required over the road training.

The challenges to improving workforce activities in our region include:

- Identifying individual's barriers to employment, including veterans and youth with disabilities, and prioritizing services provided to enhance skill levels, complete credentials, and increase earnings potential;

- Overcoming obstacles encountered in developing short term training opportunities, such as paid or unpaid work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based training such as On-the-Job-Training (OJT). Individuals may be reluctant to work without pay, despite the inherent opportunities available at the completion, and employers may be reluctant to take a chance on a relatively unskilled, untested worker, whether or not the training is subsidized;
- Outreaching and engaging older, out-of-school youth, and re-connecting them with the local job market and employers.
- Increasing awareness and educating older youth and parents that cultural changes may be needed in realizing that a four-year college degree is not necessarily the path to success in the job market;
- Increasing collaboration with local AEL partners to consolidate intake, referral, and service strategies that focus on attaining necessary credentials, completing training, and entering employment with the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency;
- Developing relevant career pathways based on data driven decisions that serve the needs of individuals in removing any barriers to employment, attaining credentials, and enhancing skill levels and earning potential.
- Facilitating coordination with transitioning staff from VR Services to provide a seamless approach for service delivery to disabled individuals, including co-management of cases and cross training among staff;
- Fully utilizing a newly acquired mobile unit to begin providing workforce development services on a regular and consistent basis to rural areas in the Panhandle who have had limited to no activity in their area;
- Encouraging individuals who are reluctant to work without pay, despite the inherent opportunities available at the completion, and employers are reluctant to take a chance on a relatively unskilled, unknown worker, especially when the training is subsidized; and
- Overcoming cultural changes and convincing youth and parents that a four-year college degree is not necessarily the path to success in the job market.

The capacity of the PWDA to provide workforce development activities to address these weaknesses are described in the Operational Section of this Plan.

Part B: Operational Elements

This section of the Panhandle Workforce Development Area Integrated Plan outlines operational strategies designed to lead to attainment of the Plan's strategic goals and objectives. It describes the local workforce development system, the programs and services to be provided to specific populations, and workforce staff support and promotion of state-operated programs and technology to be applied to service delivery.

Description of the workforce development system

1(a). One-stop required partner/programs included in the system:

- WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs;
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program;
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program;
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program;
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) program;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program;
- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training programs;
- Subsidized Child Care programs;
- Apprenticeship programs (Texas Education Code, Chapter 133);
- Veterans employment and training programs;
- National and Community Service Act of 2007 program;
- SCSEP; and
- Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs.

1(b). The Panhandle's workforce development system is comprised of the organizations and activities that assist job seekers with finding employment, help workers advance in their careers, provide access to occupational and educational training that leads to self-sufficient employment, improve basic literacy skills among youth and adults, and ensure a skilled workforce exists to support local industry and the local economy over time. This workforce system includes local organizations that serve the adults and youth who may need help preparing for and succeeding in the workforce. The Board will support TWC's State Plan strategy through continued and strong collaboration among WSP, local employers and industry, training providers and educational institutions, service and advocacy organizations, and other local organizations critical to support and deliver effective, integrated workforce services through the core programs, as further described in this section of the Plan.

2(a). Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services:

WSP Business Services and Board staff will continue to provide assistance to community colleges and businesses to obtain training resources to increase workers' skills and build educational capacity in the region, including the Skills Development and Self-Sufficiency Fund, and other grant opportunities which expand capacity. Workforce resources pledged to such prospective projects may include labor market information, grant writing assistance, building employer consortia, assistance with eligible students' tuition, fees and materials costs, and job placement.

To respond to continued employer input regarding deficiencies in the work-readiness/soft skills of job applicants and employees, additional work-readiness training options will be made available to job seekers and targeted populations through new tools to be provided in the WSP office in Amarillo and online on our updated website.

2(b). Career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs:

WSP case management staff are well trained in assessing customer workforce needs and collaborating with customers to arrive at employment plans which meet the customers immediate and future needs. Staff works diligently to identify and develop effective career pathways which reflect realistic employment goals that can involve occupational training as well as work based training, designed to meet the prescribed objectives of the plan. Staff is made aware of sources for labor market and career information, and to look for every opportunity for co-enrollment and integrated case management to enhance desired outcomes. Board policy exists for exploring community partners and agencies which may assist in meeting the needs of customers for training and employment.

2(c). Improve activities leading to postsecondary credential or industry recognized credential:

The availability of short-term training options that can lead to occupations in demand is limited in the PWDA. Working with postsecondary institutions to develop more training opportunities will involve identifying training needs of employers, assisting colleges with grant applications

to generate funding for curriculum development, and covering tuition expenses for eligible students.

Integrated language, basic education and occupational skills training are also limited in the region. Most of the occupations that have been targeted for training require a relatively high level of basic education for successful completion of certificates and degrees. However, Amarillo College has piloted instructional programs for Limited English speakers in the In-Demand Occupation of Certified Nurse Aide, and the Target Occupations of Machinist and Auto Mechanics. Additional funding will be needed to sustain these programs and expand training for more occupations. WSP staff will assist postsecondary providers in pursuing these opportunities.

3. Local workforce development area policies and procedures ensure that priority in coordinating programs and delivering services for targeted populations, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, at-risk youth, individuals with barriers to employment, and workers at all skill and occupational levels is paramount, so that these groups receive the resources to be successfully employed, become self-sufficient, and prepared for long-term career growth, and comprise a qualified labor pool available for local employers. Information and training received from VR Services staff will enhance and improve the strategies developed and applied for individuals with disabilities.

Strategies and Services Used in the Local Area

4(a). Engagement of employers:

The staff and Business Service team at WSP focus on activities that help small, medium and large employers find qualified workers. Employer-serving staff members meet monthly to share information about employers, marketing activities and upcoming events. Information from these meetings may be shared among WSP managers, provided to Board staff for planning and policy development, or incorporated into training for other staff members.

A large part of employer services involves recruitment of qualified workers, and includes the following key components:

- Training employers to effectively use WorkInTexas.com and fully utilize services available in the workforce system;
- Assisting employers with the development of job descriptions and posting openings in WorkInTexas.com;
- Promptly generating automated and staff-referred matching of applicants to openings;
- Ensuring virtual availability of staff to provide personal assistance to employers by phone or email;

- Advertising job openings through social media;
- Conducting job fairs, both general and targeted to one or more employers;
- Screening applicants, including collection and review of paper or online applications, and administer employer-specified assessments (in compliance with TWC policy);
- Providing interviewing and testing space at no cost to employers;
- Educating employers about and promote the use of Work Opportunity Tax Credits, and assist employers with documentation when appropriate;
- Providing businesses with short-term, “tryout” placements of potentially qualified workers eligible for such placements, to reduce the risk to employers of hiring entry-level workers;
- Increasing training and education opportunities and utilize innovation partnership grants to upgrade skills and earning potential for incumbent workers, and to meet the changing needs of local business and industry;
- Funding employer-specific training to bring a candidate’s skills up to the level needed by the employer, including subsidized OJT, customized training or off-the-shelf college coursework;
- Placing priority on marketing and providing services to small- and medium-size businesses without dedicated human resources professionals; and
- Collaborating with employers on layoff aversion strategies to reduce potential loss of jobs and reduce unemployment.

Labor market information and assistance with economic development activities, and identifying and meeting business and employer hiring needs is a priority, and a critical part of enhancing economic development, in the Panhandle region. The Board has engaged a labor market information specialist to coordinate information gathering and efforts on the delivery of workforce services to business, public, and educational partners, in conjunction with workforce development program service delivery staff, and include business services staff. This individual will actively support and advance collaboration between these entities, conduct market research and analysis, and develop and implement a regional business engagement plan to create and improve opportunities for developing and implementing skills development initiatives, especially among small employers, and employers in demand industries and occupations.

Continuing to develop business intermediaries, such as non-profit organizations, industry alliances, and labor unions, will enhance business services and activities to employers and job seekers. Working with these One-stop partners to develop training initiatives in response to

current demand and growing trends will better meet employers' needs. Priorities for achieving these aims include the following:

- Providing information about economic conditions and labor market data to assist employers and economic developers with workforce planning, recruitment and competition;
- Developing customized labor market reports to meet specific needs of employers and economic developers;
- Teaching employers and economic developers how to utilize labor market information tools available through TWC and other sources;
- Supporting business expansion and location in the region in coordination with economic developers, including assistance in packaging labor market information and workforce services to be offered to business prospects;
- Reviewing human resource needs with small- and medium-size employers without human resource professionals and provide needed services;
- Informing educational institutions of the skill needs of employers that are gained through labor market analysis and direct employer input;
- Participating in the activities of chambers of commerce throughout the region;
- Visiting business sites to market employer services, assess needs and provide customized solutions; and
- Providing or refer employers to information about employment law.

Training assistance provided to employers includes the following:

- Funding employer-specific training through the employer or a postsecondary provider, where the employer agrees to hire that eligible worker upon successful completion (OJT or customized training);
- Funding employer-specified training for groups of adults and dislocated workers, where the employer agrees to interview every completer for potential hire;
- Informing educational institutions of the skill needs of employers to encourage the development of applicable training programs;
- Promoting state-operated programs that support training, including Skills Development and Self-Sufficiency Funds and Skills for Small Business; and

- Supporting community colleges in the development, application for and implementation of Skills Development, Self-Sufficiency and federal training grants, including assistance in building employer consortia.

4(b). Needs of Businesses:

Employer engagement is the key to meeting regional workforce needs. A Business Advisory Committee has been established to assist and inform the Board regarding the design and delivery of services based on business and industry needs, as well as enhancing employer engagement, and to support industry partnerships under WIOA. Comprised of Board and non-Board members, private sector, Board staff, and WSP staff, this industry partnership will:

- Facilitate and increase employer engagement;
- Pursue creative ideas and methods to improve program service delivery design;
- Identify skill needs;
- Develop and validate career pathways;
- Collaborate to create youth initiatives such as apprenticeships to connect youth with careers in demand;
- Align educational curriculum to meet industry needs;
- Identify and develop cost-effective training solutions for companies involving employers and the new Business Advisory Committee as incumbent worker intermediaries to leverage Skills Development Grant funds;
- Provide work-based learning opportunities;
- Identify barriers to “entry level employment” and develop strategies to remove those barriers;
- Identify and address organizational and Human Resource challenges;
- Increase productivity;
- Promote communication networks between companies, between managers and workers, and between companies and their communities and educational institutions;
- Identify and develop business intermediaries to facilitate identifying and meeting employers’ immediate hiring and training needs; and

- Expand the utilization of high-quality work-based training by collaborating with Board staff in revising policies for customized and OJT, and providing training to workforce and including business services staff on methods of seeking opportunities for these types of training situations which offer the highest potential for success. This would include developing training contracts which produce highly desirable outcomes in the shortest amount of time and with the least expenditures.

4(c). Coordination with workforce development programs and economic development:

In alignment with the State WIOA Plan, the Board is actively participating in a Regional Workforce Network (RWN), collaborating with five other Board areas in West Texas for the purpose of sharing information to further build capacity for seamless One-stop operations and service delivery to workforce to customers.

Topics discussed in face to face meetings range from best practices for developing and fostering successful working partnerships with local entities, to cost sharing, procurements, and budgets, as well as special projects to identify opportunities to leverage critical resources designed to promote economic development in our region.

This RWN developed a project focused on identifying best practices for assessing skills training of job seekers and employers to pinpoint relevant credentials necessary for successful job placement and retention, which included the participation of several employers and multiple local colleges. Three Board areas in this RWN have collaborated to support the workforce needs resulting from the declining oil and gas industry in the Permian Basin/Cline Shale areas.

In addition, the RWN is working to develop new partnerships with out-of-state partners in adjacent states such as Oklahoma and New Mexico, to share “labor sheds”, develop a strategic approach to producing regional labor market information, and host combined regional job fairs and other events which support workforce development, respond to economic development challenges, and ultimately better serve the workforce customers in these adjacent areas.

4(d). The one-stop system and unemployment insurance programs:

Efforts to develop and strengthen linkages between the one stop system and unemployment insurance programs include establishing the Business Advisory Committee to assist the Board in designing and delivering services based on business and industry needs, including those of customers recently separated from employment.

5. Services for employer customers:

Services for the Board's employer customers include recruitment assistance, labor market and economic information, support for economic development activities, and analysis and training to address skills gaps in the labor force. Alternative paths to economic self-sufficiency will include leveraging federal assistance programs and identifying local resources which foster and support microbusiness development and creates new jobs, and encouraging entrepreneurship to reach financial security, such as tapping into an existing business incubator program at a local university for technical support and creating joint ventures.

Description of the one-stop delivery system

6(a). Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers:

The Board adopted local performance requirements for the determination of initial eligibility of Eligible Training Provider (ETP) program applications per TWC's annual publication of state performance standards that meet the PY15 state performance standards. PY16 Board performance standards will be addressed and determined when the state standards are released for PY16.

A training provider may apply for certification for any of its programs. However, if the program does not prepare students for employment in an occupation on the Board's Target Occupations list, the school must justify inclusion by demonstrating that the occupation is indeed in demand. Appropriate documentation demonstrating a projected minimum of ten total openings in the 26 counties of the PWDA in each of the next five years must be submitted to the Board.

Schools are encouraged to submit validating information for Board review. Such documentation must consist of at least three sources, including, but not limited to:

- Recent economic statistics;
- Information provided by employers, e.g. letters;
- Posted job openings;
- Newspaper articles;
- Information provided by professional organizations related to the occupation or industry;
- Local employer-based, industry-specific advisory groups; and/or
- Other appropriate information verifying demand.

WIOA emphasizes the importance of providers of training services to provide the highest quality of training services and be responsive to In-Demand and emerging industries. Training provider evaluation criteria must include documentation of partnerships with employers related to the particular training program, WIOA Section 122(b)(4)(D)(ii). To comply with this requirement, documentation must take the following forms, and will be maintained by the Board:

- A letter of support from a local employer or employers;
- Evidence of the existence of an employer-based advisory committee; or
- Other means acceptable to the Board as set forth in policy adopted in a public meeting.

Providers must also document financial stability through submission of the most recently completed financial statements to the Board. Submissions must include Balance Sheets, Income Statements (Profit & Loss), and Auditor's Notes.

The Board uses several strategies to increase the number of providers and training options for customers, and to assure that local training is available, including the following:

- Training providers are solicited annually through publication of a legal notice;
- The inclusion of public training providers in the membership of the Board's Labor Market Information (LMI) Committee and public notice of those sessions (considered public meetings) assures communication to local providers of training gaps and potential employer collaborations;
- Positive relationships are sustained in the PWDA with all local providers that offer training in target and in-demand occupations. Various standing agreements exist, including the options of provider application to the ETP System (1) for all programs that prepare students for the target occupations, (2) when a student is interested in a particular program, thereby limiting the demand on the provider's staff time, or (3) not at all, but other resources may be leveraged to allow customers to receive training (e.g., apprenticeship programs); and
- Maximum flexibility is provided to training providers that wish to certify programs for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker customer training. At application, training providers "certify" that their programs lead to specified occupations, including those targeted by the Board. Programs that consistently produce student completions that lead to training-related employment are retained on TWC's ETP list.

Those programs with at least five WIOA-enrolled participants per year are evaluated for this outcome. If a substantial percentage of the WIOA participants do not complete the program or cannot obtain training-related employment after graduation, Board staff will conduct an

evaluation with the provider and the WSP staff to determine what improvements, if any, are necessary to increase the program's WIOA student success rate.

To ensure continuous improvement of ETP-certified programs, labor market information is provided to training providers, including input from employers and other workforce customers. In addition, periodic meetings are held with training providers and employers to discuss labor market skill and training needs, prior to the submission to the Board for updates to the Target Occupations list.

To ensure that training is available and the need for skills is communicated to the public, skilled trades occupations with workers who are expected to retire faster than they can be replaced are included on the Target Occupations list. These occupations include high-demand opportunities in Construction trades such as Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators, Carpenters, Electricians and Plumbers; repair workers such as Auto Mechanics, Diesel Mechanics, Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics, Industrial Machinery Mechanics, and Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics; Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators, and manufacturing technicians such as Machinists and Welders. Registered apprenticeship provides some of the local training for these occupations, including those in Construction. Referrals are made to apprenticeship opportunities by WSP staff.

6(b). Remote areas and technology:

Due to the prior closing of WSP offices in all the rural locations, there had been no permanent staff based outside of Amarillo in several years. Subsequently one office was reopened in Borger and a satellite location was established on the campus of Amarillo College in Hereford. Many rural employers and job seekers still do not realize our services are available to them, however. To continue to address this issue, the following strategies will be implemented or expanded in the next three years:

- Market workforce services to the public through multiple electronic sources, primarily web based media. This will include the continued development of social media utilization, to promote services and provide immediate responses to customer needs, and increase social media presence on the most popular websites and web applications that appeal to and will reach the younger population as well;
- Maintain personal contact through the WSP Business Services team with employers in those communities, assessing needs and developing customized solutions which address recruiting challenges and skill gaps;
- Fully utilize a recently acquired mobile workforce unit and provide computer access with Internet connectivity to rural customers for activities such as registration, online job search/job matching, and resume preparation in WorkInTexas.com, as well as providing information and access to career services, employment and training services, and child care;

- Regularly update the WSP website with more interactive and easily accessed resources, such as job search training videos, and maintaining relevant content;
- Continue to host successful hiring events at rural WSP locations; and
- Expand the quality and quantity of focused job fairs and career fairs in the rural communities, including involving specialized education programs as hosts.

Continued analysis and local wisdom gained through practical experience enhances the set of operational strategies for serving rural communities to be implemented during this planning cycle. Investments will be made to market services to the public through multiple technologies and electronic media. Procurement of a social media specialist to guide the development and utilization of this resource, in collaboration with the WSP Business Services team, and promote workforce services throughout the region will be conducted. Targeted social media will be further identified and developed to provide an additional venue for customers—both employers and job seekers—to communicate needs and generate appropriate staff responses.

Hiring events for job openings, career fairs, and job fairs will focus on rural communities, although Amarillo will also be included in those communications. The WSP website will be redesigned to provide remote users services that are like those offered in the Amarillo office. New resources available on the website will include an improved user interface, more interactive activities such as job search training videos, and additional methods for direct, real-time communication to obtain staff assistance, and a fresh new approach to reach and engage disconnected youth using appealing smartphone web applications that offer youth the same multitude of services available on the website, and at the WSP offices.

WSP Business Services representatives and other key WSP staff will continue to visit employers in our rural communities, assessing needs face-to-face and develop customized solutions which address recruiting and skill gaps. Now that workforce services are available once again in reopened rural office locations, rural One-stop partners will continue to provide itinerant locations for WSP staff to meet with customers throughout the region, including community-based organizations such as PCS, as well as libraries, colleges, independent school districts and public offices. Regularly scheduled staff visits to these locations utilizing a recently acquired mobile unit, offering computer access with Internet connectivity for accessing WorkInTexas.com and other employment services, will assure rural customers that WSP still has a presence and can provide services in their communities.

6(c). WIOA §188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Our workforce staff has been given a unique opportunity to better serve the workforce needs of individuals with disabilities, and ensure compliance with WIOA §188 and the ADA, through the ongoing transition of Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR Services) programs and staff to TWC and the WSP offices.

VR Services include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services to assist individuals with disabilities prepare for or maintain their independence. Integration of these services affords the local workforce system with increased opportunities to better serve individuals with disabilities in our region, and will improve overall employment outcomes for the employers and the potential for self-sufficiency for the individuals served.

VR Services staff will provide:

- Information on program eligibility;
- Assessment for referrals from WSP staff to determine eligibility for VR Services;
- Delivery of vocational rehabilitation services, including diagnostics, guidance and counseling, adaptive skills training, vocational training, and pre- and post-employment services;
- Consultation on rehabilitative technology for WSP customers;
- Training of WSP staff on disability sensitivity and awareness;
- Assessment of adaptive technology needs at WSP offices;
- Information about all programs and services available; and
- Information and assistance with compliance with all Federal laws and regulations regarding individual with disabilities.

The Board and WSP will:

- Advertise and promote VR Services as part of the entire array of services offered;
- Integrate VR Services staff into workforce service delivery;
- Improve and streamline the referral process for individuals with disabilities;
- Coordinate with VR Services in providing information on the full range of employment services offered including job matching services utilizing WorkInTexas.com;
- Share timely labor market information and provide a critical link to employers including job leads, job fairs, and hiring events;

- Coordinate with VR Services staff on co-hosting or supporting VR Services special events;
- Provide intensive and training services under WIOA as appropriate and applicable, and move towards jointly managing common case files and staffing customers;
- Actively identify and promote opportunities for co-enrollment to maximize funds and create shorter pathways to achieving training and employment goals;
- Provide disability sensibility and awareness training to Board and WSP staff;
- Request consultation on appropriate rehabilitation technology for WSP customers with disabilities;
- Provide additional adaptive equipment as determined necessary; and
- Inform VR Services staff of scheduled Board meetings.

While physical co-location of VR Services and TWC staff is a daunting challenge to overcome, the Panhandle region's WSP offices and itinerant sites will grow in the capacity to serve individuals who have disabilities by common appointment scheduling and regular visits to rural locations. Through continued collaboration and joint planning with VR Services and TWC on an effective transition plan reflecting the shared goals of providing a seamless approach, access to integrated workforce services, literacy education, vocational rehabilitation, and in-demand workplace skills that lead to self-sufficient employment and advancement for individuals with disabilities, and promoting partnerships with employers and system stakeholders which overcome barriers to meeting workforce needs through creative use of technology and innovation, are achievable by the projected target date of August 31, 2018.

6(d). One stop partners' roles and resource contributions:

The Board coordinates with hundreds of public agencies, nonprofit organizations and private sector businesses in the region to carry out its mission. Following is a brief description of those which contribute the most financial support:

- The region's three community colleges and the public university are essential, as these institutions provide most postsecondary education supported by the Board and numerous methods of support to help students be successful;
- The Board supports the community colleges' Skills Development Fund and Self Sufficiency Fund applications that support key industries and those associated by cluster relationships, and training for occupations in demand and/or essential to those industries. In addition, staff collaborates with schools and local employers to develop training solutions that meet specific training needs;

- Amarillo College houses the region’s adult basic education program, overseeing ABE, GED and ESL instruction throughout the area, delivered both by onsite teachers and distance learning. ABE services include assessment of WSP customers with limited English skills;
- Region 16 Education Service Center (ESC) is responsible for the area’s Head Start program;
- The Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s (HHSC’s) Texas Works Program provides financial support to welfare and SNAP families and supports WSP staff efforts to help these customers locate, enter and retain employment;
- The Independent School Districts collaborate with the Board to help at-risk youth complete their high school diplomas, prepare for careers and transition to postsecondary education. Alternative secondary school, tutoring, career exploration and assessment, child care and other services may be provided;
- Literacy councils play an essential role in workforce development by helping extremely low-skilled readers gain a level of proficiency that will allow them to improve their employment prospects and benefit from further adult education offered by the community colleges;
- The Panhandle’s EDCs and related organizations may provide financial support for occupational training and related equipment, and business development that leads to increased numbers of jobs. EDC involvement in the development of this Plan assures workforce system alignment with local economic development goals to the extent possible; and
- Many other local organizations and agencies, such as PCS, Catholic Family Services, Inc., the Salvation Army, Panhandle Independent Living Center, and Amarillo’s Downtown Women’s Center, provide significant employment and related services. The staff at the WSP offices coordinate with over 100 faith- and community-based, governmental and private organizations in the region to leverage resources on behalf of customers.

7. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities:

Per WIOA, individualized training, career, and education services will be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to public assistance recipients, other low-income adults, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Veterans and eligible spouses will continue to receive first priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. To ensure priority service is given, WSP staff will be thoroughly trained and will maintain proficiency in the following areas:

- Initial identification of customer status and information gathering;
- Assessment of customer information including employment and training needs;
- Determination of appropriate workforce services, including co-enrollment;
- Suitable referral and timely follow up; and
- Documentation of entire process in the Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), and WorkInTexas.com as appropriate.

Despite funding cuts, we will continue to focus on training as a successful method to help individuals become self-sufficient and ensure that employers have the qualified pool of skilled local workers they need to succeed in a highly competitive business climate. To sustain and improve training and education services, the following strategies will be implemented or expanded in the next three years:

- Increase the number and quality of work-based training opportunities for job seekers and students, including youth internships, work experience, and customized OJT training;
- Provide increased work-readiness training options to job seekers;
- Continue to develop and facilitate innovative partnerships with community colleges, businesses, and other stakeholders, assisting them with planning and preparation for training grants that will increase workers' skills and build educational capacity in the region, including utilization of the Skills Development Fund to develop customized job training, and other such opportunities;
- Maintain collaborations with regional employers and colleges to increase training and education opportunities and utilize innovative partnership grants to upgrade skills and earning potential for incumbent workers, and to meet the changing needs of local business and industry; and
- Close the information gap and promote where the jobs are by focusing primarily on industries that are net exporters of goods and services, and include occupations that provide a broad range of high-demand career opportunities for eligible adults and dislocated workers.

8. Rapid Response Activities:

The WSP Business Services team provides Rapid Response services to employers considering or planning a layoff or closure. Services are designed to minimize the cost of the layoff to the employer, encourage customized training or other services to limit or prevent job losses, or quickly transition workers into other employment. Services are delivered onsite or in a convenient location for workers, and may include a broad range of services, including but not limited to: unemployment insurance information and referral, assistance with accessing customized training to help workers adjust to technical advances and prevent layoffs, seminars to assist workers to manage their dislocation and find other employment, and worker referral to training resources.

The Panhandle's designated Rapid Response Coordinator is also the lead Business Services staff member, ensuring that any employer that has announced a layoff or closure will receive business-focused support. The Coordinator ensures that the employer receives needed services, and facilitates communication between the employer, TWC, and WSP staff in serving affected workers. Once services are initiated for workers, WIOA program staff are available to assist in providing assessment, reemployment planning, and connection to the local Adult Basic Education provider if language skills, adult basic education and GED preparation are needed, as well as providing career guidance and occupational skill development, and to access job development and supportive services, as determined appropriate for each worker.

Rapid Response activities in rural areas may require temporary, onsite or local offices where WSP staff can meet the needs of affected workers. Both employers and job seekers will have access to "back office" staff who can respond quickly to telephone and electronic communications, in order to provide services to customers who prefer not to go to the WSP office or who are not based in Amarillo. We will continue to explore paperless recordkeeping options, to effectively utilize staff time while providing customer services outside the WSP offices.

9. Youth Activities:

The PWDA's Youth program is primarily focused on Out-of-School youth who need postsecondary education and/or work experience to achieve self-sufficiency. Disconnected youth, parenting youth, first-generation college students, and youth who have other barriers to employment, are the priority youth populations determined most likely to benefit from local workforce services.

Increasing the number and quality of work-based training opportunities for at-risk youth such as internships for college students and graduating high school seniors that are directly related to students' career interests. Many youth served in workforce programs must be engaged in an occupational component, so internships will offer competitive wages to encourage participation. These internships will include mentoring by supervisors trained by workforce staff to provide appropriate encouragement and career exploration.

WSP and Board staff fully support and are committed to being engaged as a community partner in and working together to foster growth of the Gates Foundation supported initiative called “No Limits, No Excuses” which assists students in the local school districts with accessing information on colleges and universities, and mapping out a plan for success after high school graduation. This project is building community partnerships that result in an increase in the number of low-income, young adults who complete employer-recognized and valued certificates and degrees, and has led to the implementation of two major youth-serving strategies in which workforce resources have been committed.

WSP staff are based on the Amarillo College campus at a Career Center that offers career counseling, financial aid, and tuition assistance for eligible youth and adults. Because transitioning low-income students from high school to college has been found to be not as difficult as retaining them in postsecondary training until they successfully complete, WSP Youth Program staff provide case management and mentoring to help current students address barriers that arise during their studies, to facilitate college retention and completion.

WSP staff continues to coordinate and expand efforts between schools and businesses to offer job fairs and career fairs, preferably held in the morning and in the afternoon on the same day in rural locations, maximizing the available audience for youth and the employers, and resulting in highly increased attendance and participation by both parties.

One excellent example of collaboration is the one between WSP staff and the Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning (AACAL) program on an event hosted by AACAL, which proved to be the kind of targeted, well-prepared approach to conducting meaningful youth job/career fairs that was the missing link. The nearly unanimous positive comments from employer surveys received demonstrated the event was most valuable for two primary reasons: 1) the AACAL program director effectively used social media to promote the event prior to the date, and live streamed the event on Periscope the day of the event, and 2) the director’s exceptional preparation of the students to meet employers, including presenting a highly professional appearance and attitude.

In addition to continuing to serve low income youth, homeless youth, youth who have disabilities, and youth who have barriers to employment, refocusing efforts to outreach and engage out of school youth in successful work based training opportunities is the primary goal of the Board related to youth services. This cannot be accomplished without employing innovative and imaginative current technologies to reach this population. One immediate example is using existing or creating inventive new smartphone applications to engage disconnected youth with the local job market and promote successful job seeking. Critical to this process is soliciting input and feedback from youth for these projects, as well as ideas for updating the WSP website in a way that appeals to them and creates interest in using the website as a source for job market information. Local IT staff must have the skills to keep this approach fresh and relevant to youth.

WIOA youth program redesign in the PWDA includes developing career pathways which lead to self-sufficiency, while meeting required performance measures. The fourteen WIOA youth program elements are key to the overall success of youth program participants. WSP staff will determine which elements would be most effective for youth through initial assessment, developing individualized service plans, and identifying career pathways. Staff will identify and engage local resources which provide access to, or directly offer, services related to the youth elements.

Creating a meaningful attachment to the workforce is a critical factor for success and will be accomplished through fostering relationships with community based organizations which serve local youth, and creating new connections to local employers who have the desire and the labor needs that will afford youth with meaningful work based training opportunities. Collaboration with the WSP Business Services team to identify these employers will help facilitate this process.

10. Training assistance for job seekers includes the following:

- Financial aid information and referral to training providers, including registered apprenticeship programs;
- Career and training plan assistance for eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment, developing successful career pathways and program co-enrollment wherever appropriate and beneficial;
- Adult literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), basic education, and GED preparation—either by referral or intensive short-term classes for eligible individuals;
- Adult literacy, integrated ESL, and occupational skills instruction through community college programs;
- Activities leading to achievement of post-secondary, recognized credentials;
- Work-based training—either OJT or customized to fit specific employers’ needs;
- Innovation partnership grants to upgrade skills and earning potential for incumbent workers;
- Industry-Recognized Skills Certification Initiative Grants which provide short term courses through local colleges leading to certification completion and enhanced job placement opportunities; and
- Postsecondary occupational skills training at community colleges, career colleges or universities.

11. Transportation and Other Supportive Services:

Supportive services for eligible job seekers utilizing appropriate program funds for eligible individuals required to obtain or retain employment, or to enter and complete subsidized training, include the following:

- Residential assistance with rent, mortgage, and utilities,
- Transportation assistance in the form of fuel cards, mileage reimbursement, or auto repair, for personal vehicles, and bus tickets for accessing public transportation;
- Assistance with work or training related items or services; and
- Subsidized child care.

12. Customer Services for Job Seekers under Wagner Peyser:

Many Panhandle job seekers need job search assistance, career and labor market information, training in skills that make them more employable, support services such as child care, and referral to community resources. Job seekers include the unemployed, underemployed, and recently laid off workers, as well as special populations such as disabled individuals, and individuals with barriers to employment and literacy skills deficiencies, who may need additional, more specialized assistance in securing employment leading to self-sufficiency.

Workforce services for job seekers focus on activities that lead to finding and retaining self-sufficient employment. Successful delivery of one stop services and linking job seekers to employers remains the PWDA's most important function, including improving access to services for individuals receiving unemployment benefits, individuals with barriers to employment. Individuals whose skills are not likely to generate employment or self-sufficient wages may be provided training assistance or referrals. Supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance are offered to eligible job seekers and students to facilitate their efforts to enter and retain employment that meets their families' needs. Such services include:

- Information provided to job seekers about available workforce services and programs;
- Train job seekers to effectively build a record in WorkInTexas.com and complete job matches based on their profile;
- Staff-directed matching of applicants to job openings, using WorkinTexas.com;
- Virtual personal assistance for job seekers through phone, email or online access;

- Seminars and workshops to help job seekers find and retain employment, such as general job search, resume writing and interviewing;
- Work readiness preparation;
- Public access computers, software, fax machines, copiers and phones for job search;
- Assessment resources for self-evaluation of labor market information and options;
- Maintaining current information on availability of services from and referral to local community resources whenever and wherever possible to maximize WIOA funds and prevent duplication of services;
- Individualized placement services for eligible job seekers, including job development, by building on existing employer relationships and using electronic tools such as job aggregators, which collect job openings from multiple sources and makes them available to be searched all in one location;
- Provide information about Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) to individuals who are target group members, to promote themselves to prospective employers;
- Employment planning, by mapping successful career pathways which include the steps needed to prepare for and/or enter employment;
- Rapid Response services for workers after a layoff announcement and/or closure, including all the above services and assessment of transferable skills, reemployment planning and referral to training/training assistance as needed;
- Financial assistance needed by eligible job seekers to find and retain employment, including support for transportation, child care and other services; and
- Increased utilization of public transportation as it exists now, and taking advantage of increased capacity once the City of Amarillo's planned reorganization and expansion of bus routes is implemented.

Career and labor market information provided to job seekers includes the following:

- Self-assessment tools for determining transferable skills and work preferences;
- Information about occupations in demand;

- Information about local employers and their skill need;
- Referral to personalized career planning assistance—either internal for eligible job seekers or external;
- Seminars for dislocated workers (Rapid Response); and
- Work-based career exploration for eligible youth and adults.

High-quality child care has many positive impacts on children, such as increased safety and school readiness, as well as impacts on the parents in obtaining and keeping a job, or completing job training. To address this issue, the following strategies will be implemented or expanded in the next three years:

- Seek out additional opportunities to further expand classroom capacity;
- Continue to phase in increases to the maximum reimbursement rates paid with workforce resources to providers caring for eligible children;
- Sustain efforts to support training and professional development for child care administrators and workers;
- Provide follow up training and monitor delivery of recently purchased child care curricula intended to provide an organized and managed approach to promoting critical areas of development;
- Ensure monitors and assessors continue regular observation and review of providers to identify areas which need improvement, and assist providers to initiate or improve TRS star rating levels thus continually improving quality of care and potentially increase reimbursement rates; and
- Look for and invest in projects which improve child care quality.

13. Adult Education and Literacy (AEL):

The Board will continue to develop, facilitate, and expand innovative partnerships between the Board and employers, community colleges, AEL providers, WSP, and other stakeholders, to leverage resources for the provision and integration of an array of workforce and AEL services.

The Board has had an excellent ongoing relationship with Amarillo College in collaborating on skills development initiatives, incumbent worker training, and achievement of industry recognized credentials, as well as traditional classroom based occupational training programs.

Building on this relationship, AEL staff from the college meets with Board and WSP staff to exchange information, improve referral processes, and methods to assist AEL students with arriving at appropriate and effective career pathways and subsequent enrollment including co-enrollment whenever determined beneficial or necessary to completion. One key to the success of this collaboration is designated WSP staff co-located at Amarillo College and the WSP office to streamline and improve the referral process and track customer participation and success.

The Board will identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the local adult education competition based on Agency guidance.

Other important strategies include:

- Improve data collection methods which streamline customer intake and assessment processes, and which efficiently and accurately pinpoint intrinsic needs of eligible adult customers;
- Identify and develop career pathways and integrated employment plans that create data driven career choices that are aligned with demand, and deliver appropriate and necessary services under WIOA;
- Enhance AEL customers' educational and career advancement through the organization of appropriate AEL activities, work readiness and job preparation activities, occupational training, and other services specifically designed to meet the identified needs of adult individuals;
- Strengthen coordination and collaboration on partnerships which increase access to essential services for adults who are basic skills deficient, low income, have other barriers to employment, and are otherwise unprepared and ill equipped to enter employment or successfully retain employment;
- Increase the number of low-income customers and individuals with barriers to employment who engage in short-term training leading to employment, and increase the number and quality of work-based training opportunities including work experience and customized OJT;
- Close the information gap and promote where the jobs are by focusing primarily on industries that are net exporters of goods and services, and include occupations that provide a broad range of high-demand career opportunities for eligible adults;
- Increase potential for customer success by ensuring AEL activities are integrated with and relevant to workforce training, are aligned with common learning objectives and activities identified, and will enhance successful personal outcomes and program completion rates for work based and occupational training;

- Concentrate focus on completion of a recognized postsecondary credential in an In-Demand or Target Occupation, to assist an individual in entering or advancing within a specific In-Demand or Target Occupation, or In-Demand Industry, as determined by the Board, and aligned with local and regional economic and labor market analysis;
- Utilize co-enrollment and simultaneous participation in basic skills education and occupational training to accelerate customer progress on a pathway to successfully entering a high demand occupation and ultimately achieving self-sufficiency;
- Develop innovative methods for using current technology to increase customer access to AEL services, including virtual learning and online classes; and
- Design and deliver educational services that meet the particular needs of individual adults, such as accommodating schedules with multiple entry and exit points, flexible non-semester based scheduling, and alternative class times and locations.

14. Executed Cooperative Agreements:

This is not applicable (N/A) per TWC as no Boards in Texas have these cooperative agreements in place, therefore, an answer to this planning element is not required.

15. Disbursal of Grant Funds:

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) is the grant recipient and administrative entity for the Board and its partner group of chief elected officials, the Panhandle Workforce Development Consortium's Governing Body.

16. Competitive Process for Awarding Contracts:

PRPC's Procurement Manual is aligned with TWC's Financial Manual for Grants & Contracts, to ensure that competitive processes are used to award grants and contracts. The contractor that staffs the WSP office and delivers associated workforce and child care services is procured through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. RFPs are also utilized to solicit consulting and professional services.

Training procured outside the ETP System is solicited through a RFP process. Respondents are selected to match the needs of individual customers, with price comparisons when more than one provider offers the same training. Vendors which offer other services and items determine to be required to complete training or obtain/retain employment are procured through competitive methods that are tailored to the service(s) or item(s) to be purchased.

PRPC makes payments directly to training providers and other vendors for goods and services authorized by the WSP contractor on behalf of workforce customers. These payments include training costs, supportive services, and child care fees.

17. Performance:

The Board's methods for evaluating program performance involve review of local, state and federal expectations on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. While TWC continues to define and determine the applicable state performance measures under WIOA, the following methods for measuring and tracking performance are ongoing.

Monthly performance reviews include the evaluation of information shown below, which is provided to the Board after staff analysis of successes and shortcomings:

- Number of employer, job seeker and program customers served;
- Number of workforce program customers served by activity;
- State-reported actual performance compared to expectations;
- Funds expended compared to budgeted resources;
- Locally established measures' actual performance compared to expectations;
- Performance goals with which private sector contractor profit is associated; and
- Board monitoring results.

The following performance measures were set in accordance with WIOA § 116(c):

Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit
Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit
Adult Credential Rate
Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Credential Rate
Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit
Youth Credential Rate

Quarterly evaluations of trends in the areas listed above, as well as special grants and strategic objectives, receive additional analysis by staff. Results of these reviews are reported to the Board upon completion or incorporated into future plan or policy changes submitted to the group for approval.

Annual evaluation of contract results and progress toward achieving strategic objectives are also reported to the Board upon completion or incorporated into the Plan or policies submitted to the group for approval.

18. The Board will continue refining ongoing successful efforts and practices to remain a high-performing workforce development board, including:

- Proactive analysis and implementation of state and federal rules and regulations;
- Complete review/update of current board policies compliant with WIOA requirements;
- Development and implementation of clear, concise, and substantive new local policies;
- Provision of guidance for achieving state mandated program performance standards;
- Development of media directed opportunities for job seekers to access workforce services;
- Enhancement of WSP website and development of more effective user interfaces;
- Development and implementation of innovative and productive ways to utilize the mobile workforce unit and expand workforce services to rural customers;
- Maximization of opportunities through VR Services integration to provide the complete package to job seekers who have disabilities, and eliminate barriers to employment;
- Development and implementation of creative plans to engage disconnected youth, remove barriers to employment, and produce successful career pathways;
- Increase in short term work based training opportunities leading to employment;
- Continuation of improvement of business services team capabilities to assess employers' skill needs and match capable workers with job openings;
- Engagement with local business leaders on a personal level to pinpoint employment needs;
- Reinvigoration of alliances with educators, economic developers and community partners to further mutual goals including developing apprenticeship initiatives;

- Further cultivation of partnerships and collaborations with local colleges and universities, and pool resources for occupational skills training opportunities;
- Collaboration with existing programs and funds to provide increased AEL skills;
- Encouragement, creation, and support of labor market driven decisions for developing skills training and addressing labor force challenges;
- Strengthening of board monitoring oversight focus to identify and address high risk areas;
- Sustainment of efforts to effectively place veterans, individuals with disabilities, and high-risk population groups in employment and to retain employment;
- Identification of emerging In-Demand Industries and Occupations, and Target Occupations in local job markets;
- Continuation of maintaining and improving two way open lines of communication with WSP management and staff;
- Provision of active support to WSP management and staff;
- Communication to foster creative approaches to existing challenges and encourage inventive, unique ideas;
- Deliverance of WSP staff training that is timely, current, and relevant; and
- Obtainment of training for Board staff to fill in program management and knowledge gaps.

19. Individual Training Account (ITA):

Adults, dislocated workers, and Out of School youth ages 18-24 who have been determined eligible for WIOA and need occupational training may access training with an ITA, which enables them to choose among available training providers. Training and ITAs are handled in a tiered approach following specific steps. Generally, individuals are expected to contribute toward their own support and/or educational costs, as much as possible. Job seekers that have tested the labor market for employment without success are identified by employment services staff in the WSP office, and may be referred to case management staff within the office.

Initial assessment and objective assessment is conducted, and the information documented and entered into the TWIST system. Staff and customers collaborate on development of an individualized service plan. Customers deemed in need of basic skills are referred to literacy programs, adult basic education, GED, and adult educational cooperatives. Referrals for

occupational skill classroom training may be made directly to the community colleges and university.

Customers eligible for workforce services that cover all or part of training costs are referred only after comprehensive assessment and individual service plans document the need for training/employment. WSP staff maintains a cooperative relationship with the Panhandle community colleges' business and industry programs to ensure that training provided meets local employers' needs.

An ITA can only be used for training that leads to employment and is limited to training in a "targeted field" as defined by Board staff. Board staff compiles a list of training providers certified by TWC through the Training Provider Certification System (TPCS). The TPCS website which provides information about these providers is made available to each customer in WSP offices to provide maximum opportunity for customer choice. An ITA covers tuition, fees, books and supplies. An ITA does not include the cost of supportive services (based on assessment). Case managers decide the appropriate total value of each ITA, based on the customer's assessment and employment plan, and the certified training provider's published costs.

The key issues with an ITA are:

- Customer choice, including increased information about eligible training programs made available through the ETP System;
- Eligibility and suitability for an ITA determined accurately and effectively;
- Training in occupations targeted by the Board most likely to offer local employment, career growth, and self-sufficiency;
- Consistently high performance and completion rate for eligible training providers;
- Cancellation/forfeiture of an ITA and recovery of unused funds; and
- Exceptions that allow non-ITA training.

20. Integrated Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management System:

Mastering current technology, and exploring emerging technology, the keys to creating and conducting an effective technology based integrated system for customer intake and case management, will enable the following:

- Greatly improve availability of integrated One-stop core program and services throughout the region through innovative technology application, coordination

with regional and local organizations, and other effective, efficient methods of service delivery;

- Virtual services readily available through upgrading the WSP website, and marketing the availability of all workforce resources through social media;
- Complete understanding and application of current capabilities enables full utilization of existing tools, primarily WorkInTexas.com, and TWIST. Adopting and adapting additional, more efficient technologies, such as a real-time customer tracking system, supplies WSP staff with the means to quickly and accurately assess customer needs and provide seamless service delivery, while maintaining service priority requirements; and
- Critical to this process is engaging the services of individuals with the newest, most relevant computer programming and coding skills to create and implement new systems and applications, conduct staff training and ongoing technical assistance to maintain high levels of staff performance.

21. Ensuring that priority for adult individualized career services and training services is given to recipients of public assistance and other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient is outlined under Board policy consistent with WIOA §§134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations, and TWC WD letter 12-15 regarding WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. Board staff monitors and verify that WSP staff training has been provided in the subject area.

22. Limits on Duration and Amounts of ITA's and coordination with other resources to maximize customer choice include:

- Established monetary limits for the total WIOA funded cost per participant for training and support services combined;
- No limit on the amount for an ITA based on individual training provider cost;
- Duration limited to the shortest length of time necessary to complete the level of occupational education and training required to begin entry level employment in the chosen field; and
- Exceptions regarding how ITA's are handled on an individual basis, per local policy.

23. The overall goal of the Youth programs in the PWDA is to create the means for Youth program participants to first arrive at data-driven choices, and then develop appropriate and successful career pathways for youth that align with demand. Combining classroom occupational training with short-term work experience opportunities or internships, with an occupational education component, and utilizing all applicable Youth program elements,

provides a vital connection to the job market and employers, leading to enhanced performance, successful outcomes, and preparing youth to succeed in the job market and in life. Youth providers in the region are the three community colleges, two career colleges, West Texas A&M University, and local employers that provide work-based training such as career-related internships.

Ensuring the WIOA Youth elements available include linking youth with the appropriate sources, partner agencies, and community providers:

- Focusing on outreach and engagement of Out of School and youth disconnected from the workforce, including a streamlined approach to eligibility, identifying appropriate services and career pathways, and developing effective service strategies encompassing educational and employment goals;
- Transitioning low-income youth from high school to college to prepare for many of the jobs being created in Texas and nationally for “middle-skill” occupations, including those that require postsecondary education leading to attainment of certificate and associate degrees;
- Accessing alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services where determined appropriate and necessary to keep youth engaged and connected;
- Tutoring, remedial skills training, and instruction for dropout prevention and leading to attaining a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent;
- Retaining low-income youth in postsecondary training until completion, and providing short term work experience and paid internship opportunities that enhance completion and transition;
- Providing paid and unpaid short-term work experience opportunities with an occupational education component resulting in a vital connection to the job market and employers, leading to enhanced performance and successful outcomes;
- Ensuring appropriate supportive services which assist youth in completing program activities, including work based or occupational training, and obtaining and retaining employment are provided under WIOA;
- Providing adult mentoring during and after program participation for a period of at least 12 months to prevent youth from falling through the gaps or becoming disconnected;
- Arranging leadership development opportunities such as community service and other similar activities which encourage youth to give back to their community, and builds confidence, maturity, and self-esteem;

- Affording appropriate guidance and referrals for counseling including drug or alcohol abuse to address and resolve individual needs of youth program participants;
- Providing ready access to current relevant labor market information including PWDA specific demand occupations and industries, and career counseling and exploration;
- Assisting youth with improving and increasing financial literacy by providing relevant and relatable online instruction geared towards youth participants; and
- Exploring and tapping into local entrepreneurship ventures including a university sponsored small business incubator program.

24. The Board is committed to reenergizing and refocusing efforts to create and utilize Registered Apprenticeship programs to train individuals for skilled trades in high demand and high wage occupations, while they earn wages. The best opportunities for apprenticeship training in the Panhandle are in the fields of wind energy, industrial manufacturing, and industrial machinery repair.

WSP staff and the Business Services team will collaborate to develop and implement a detailed plan of action which includes determining and applying effective methods to identify potential apprenticeship candidates, especially veterans, actively seek out potential employers who would benefit from this partnership, and create successful matches.

Staff will strongly encourage and assist employers with new or existing local apprenticeship training programs to register in the ETP System so that WIOA funds may be leveraged to assist with training costs.

25. The Boards' strategy and commitment to Apprenticeship Texas is based on detailed information and guidance personally provided by TWC Apprenticeship staff. WSP staff and the Business Services team are collaborating to develop a strategic approach which involves:

- Working to identify and actively outreach potential employers in both traditional and non-traditional industries to participate in the Apprenticeship Texas initiative;
- Connecting employers with TWC Apprenticeship staff when appropriate and beneficial;
- Providing complete Apprenticeship Program information including tapping into available funds; and
- Remaining in communication with and guiding employers through the entire apprenticeship process through successful completion.

Part C: Public Comment

On December 23 and 30, 2016, public notices of the PWDA Plan’s availability were published in the Amarillo Globe-News and the Texas Register stating that the Plan would be published on the PRPC website, beginning on January 3, 2017. On December 30, 2016, email notifications were sent to media contacts for Amarillo radio outlets and rural newspapers and publications. Beginning on January 3, 2017, public comment was sought for the development of the PWDA PY 2017-2020 Integrated Plan through public notices, open meetings, and discussions with workforce partners. No public comments have been received to date.

Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) Requirements Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

Part 1- Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

System Goal and Rationale:

Focus on Employers:

By accessing critical education and labor data sets, employers can better find and plan for skilled workers to meet their needs in both the immediate timeframe and the future. Through greater engagement with employers, education and training providers can better design career and technical education content and delivery options that are more aligned with industry needs. Providers can make adjustments in program content to benefit employers and students, as well as address both state and regional economic needs.

Board Strategies / Actions / Anticipated Outcomes / Targets:

Employer engagement is the key to meeting our regional workforce needs. Identifying appropriate operational strategies that lead to attainment of the goals of this PWDA Integrated Plan involves examining local labor market skills and service gaps. To understand those challenges, PWDA Board staff conducts analyses of local, state and national data that identify demographic, industrial and employment trends and potential skill shortages, using a variety of economic tools provided by TWC, other state agencies, and federal, local, and private resources. The WSP Business Services team utilizes monthly surveys sent to local employers to and compiles their responses on the technology and employment trends in their industries, skill shortages, recruiting challenges, and suggestions for services that could help them address their labor force needs.

System Goal and Rationale:

Engage in Partnerships:

Through collaborative and transparent processes, workforce system partners focus on outcomes that improve the employability of all program participants—from across a wide spectrum of capabilities and experiences—to meet employer needs. The leveraging of partnerships to enhance system alignment and outcomes depends on trust, a culture of collaboration both within and external to the workforce system, deep working relationships, and technical capacity to communicate to share needs, data, and information. Partnerships can provide for common planning, intake, and reporting on outcomes, as well as ensuring a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

Board Strategies / Actions / Anticipated Outcomes / Targets:

A Business Advisory Committee has been established to assist the Board in designing and delivering services based on business and industry needs, as well as enhancing employer engagement, and to support industry partnerships. Comprised of Board and non-Board members, private sector, Board staff, and WSP staff, the goals of this endeavor are described in the operational section of the Integrated Plan.

System Goal and Rationale:

Align System Elements:

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

Board Strategies / Actions / Anticipated Outcomes / Targets:

Positive relationships are sustained in the PWDA with all local training providers that offer training in target and in-demand occupations. Board staff facilitates provider application to the ETP System for programs that will prepare students for the Target Occupations. WSP staff provides connections to other resources that may be leveraged to allow customers to receive training other than in a traditional classroom setting (e.g., apprenticeship programs). Well-trained and committed case management staff delivers front line services including individual assessment and collaborate with customers on the development of quality service plans that create career pathways that lead to success.

System Goal and Rationale:

Improve and Integrate Programs:

Accelerate employment and improve efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders. By addressing high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels is improved and system service delivery is enhanced. The changing economic and educational landscapes provide opportunities to share relevant data through appropriate “push” mechanisms in an organized manner to key stakeholders who rely on information generated by system partners.

Board Strategies / Actions / Anticipated Outcomes / Targets:

Mastering current and emerging technology are the keys to creating and conducting an effective technology based integrated system for customer intake and case management. Complete understanding and application of current capabilities enables full utilization of existing tools, primarily WorkInTexas.com, and TWIST. Adopting and adapting additional, more efficient technologies, such as a real-time customer tracking system, provide WSP staff with the means to quickly and accurately assess customer needs and provide seamless service delivery, while maintaining service priority requirements.

Participation in the Regional Workforce Network as previously described in this Plan will promote and develop critical partnerships necessary for the successful application of the strategies for workforce development outlined.

Part 2 – Identifying Industries of Significance to the Regional Economy

Descriptions of the top three industry clusters/sectors and occupations.

1. The three key industry clusters or sectors within our workforce area are identified, including an explanation as to why those clusters or sectors are the key to our region, and the regional economy, are:
 - A. Production Support and Industrial Machinery Sector- Nearly every manufacturing industry in the region has machinery for a multitude of diversified products that requires skilled technicians to maintain, repair, and replace.
 - B. Distribution, Transportation and Logistics Sector- Investments in road infrastructure and distribution capabilities make the region uniquely equipped for continued economic development in this area. The region remains a vital transportation hub, and an epicenter for manufacturing and distribution to foreign and domestic markets.
 - C. Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences, and Medical Sector- the Panhandle is the central location for medical services in tristate area. This sector has sustained growth

over time, in part due to retiring worker replacement, and to expansion of technically advanced services offered.

2. For each cluster/sector identified in Question 1, the top five occupations where employer demand exceeds the pool of available workforce or education program graduates or skilled applicants are identified, and labor market information data including job numbers, wages, and education required, and projected growth is provided:

A. Production Support and Industrial Machinery Sector:

- Industrial Machinery Mechanics- Avg. Employment: 800; Hourly Wage: \$23.07; HS Diploma or equivalent required; Projected Growth: 40%

B. Distribution, Transportation and Logistics Sector:

- Heavy & Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers- Avg. Employment: 4110; Hourly Wage: \$19.91; Post-secondary non-degree award required; Projected Growth: 19.2%

C. Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences, and Medical Sector:

- Registered Nurses- Avg. Employment: 3230; Hourly Wage: \$27.96; Associate's degree required; Projected Growth: 25.4%;
- Nursing Assistants- Avg. Employment: 1620; Hourly Wage: \$12.54; Post-secondary non-degree award required; Projected Growth: 25.3%;
- Personal Care Aides- Avg. Employment: 2460; Hourly Wage: \$8.50; Less than high school required; Projected Growth: 40.2%;
- Home Health Aides- Avg. Employment: 610; Hourly Wage: \$10.95; Short-term on-the-job-training required; Projected Growth: 42.6%; and
- Medical Assistants- Avg. Employment: 810; Hourly Wage: \$12.50; Post-secondary non-degree award required; Projected Growth: 32.1%.

3. Strategies planned to address those occupations identified in Question 2 to reduce any worker shortages must include a successful approach to reducing a shortage of workers in any of the identified sectors, which necessitates utilizing a labor market program specialist at the Board level who will conduct market research and analysis, and develop and implement a regional business engagement plan that creates and improve opportunities for developing and implementing skills development initiatives among employers in demand industries and occupations. Additional key strategies for these projected growth areas include:

A. Production Support and Industrial Machinery Sector Strategy: Create alliances with new and existing industrial manufacturing employers to provide work-based or occupational training opportunities for industrial machinery mechanics utilizing WIOA funding as appropriate.

B. Distribution, Transportation and Logistics Sector Strategy: Foster collaboration between employers and local colleges to provide required training through Industry-Recognized Skills Certification Initiative Grants, and occupational training utilizing WIOA funding as appropriate.

C. Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences, and Medical Sector Strategy: Continue to engage medical industry employers to facilitate development of partnerships utilizing skills development grant funding to improve incumbent workers skills to increase earning potential and enhance worker retainment, and tap into WIOA funding to train new workers to enter the field.