

**Results for America: Evidence-Based Grant-Making**

Fiscal year 2023 marked the third year of implementation of the tiered framework for evidence-based grant-making that Texas initially introduced in two discretionary grant programs. Participating agencies have been able to examine learnings, improve processes, and extend the model to other programs. Joining the Building and Construction Trades and Texas Talent Connection grant programs, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board introduced the evidence framework to the Carl D. Perkins Excellence Access and Opportunity Program request for applications, adding to the list of grant programs in Texas that have incorporated the evidence framework. The agency revised its request for applications with an incremental introduction of the evidence framework and trained evaluators on the evidence tiers and scoring criteria. The program launched a new application and selection process using the evidence framework developed in collaboration with system partners and the Results for America State and Local Workforce Fellowship. The evidence framework of clearly defined tiers encourages innovative but less tested program models while building evidence of effective workforce interventions. This graduated method ensures that grants remain broadly accessible to programs at all levels of the evidence continuum.



**Building Evidence and Using Evidence**

Embedding evidence-based and performance-based practices in grant programs helps the state learn about the implementation, effectiveness, and cost of various approaches. Supporting continuous data-driven improvement serves as a foundational element for building the evidence base. The evidence tiers were designed to allow program participants to learn how to incorporate the evidence framework into their work; understand the value of tracking program outcomes; develop procedures to collect data; and build the required documentation of evidence to report outcomes. At the same time, state agencies are learning to incorporate and consider evidence in decision making through planned evaluations, timelines, and milestones in discretionary workforce grant programs. Evidence and data gathered will inform decision-making about program funding and may be used to further test or scale capacity-building programs and interventions that support long term career mobility in target populations.

**Program Improvement and Decision Making**

Evidence-based grant-making produces data and information so that funders have the confidence that grantees will achieve the intended outcomes of a given grant program and the insight to focus future funding on methods proven to produce effective results that benefit the workforce system. The Texas workforce fellowship state team engaged



broad agency representation through task groups comprised of state and local grant programs and contract managers. This collaboration among system partners facilitated the adoption of the evidence framework and training that focused on grant outcomes, supported implementation, and improved grant management processes and reporting of promising practices.

In FY 2023, two task groups were created to build on these achievements. A strategic communications task group will develop a plan and resources to support continuity and expand implementation. An active contract management work group will design and implement standard processes for implementation across grant programs to improve outcomes and inform better decision making. In support of this initiative phase, the Texas fellows team applied for and was accepted into the Results for America Alumni Cohort, which will provide network convenings and technical assistance to build upon current momentum.

**Texas Workforce System Partners and Programs**

Texas workforce system partners collaborate to better align, leverage, and integrate system services to develop a world-class workforce and ensure a higher quality of life for all Texans through educational, employment, and economic success. Eight state agencies, local workforce development boards, community and technical colleges, local adult education providers, and independent school districts actively contribute to statewide programs and those highlighted in this report.

The table below shows the partners and primary and supporting programs that constitute the Texas workforce system:

FY 2023 Texas Workforce System Partners and Programs	
<p><b>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postsecondary Academic and Technical Education</li> <li>Windham School District Secondary Academic Education Secondary Technical Education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Texas Juvenile Justice Department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary Academic Education</li> <li>Secondary Technical Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Texas Education Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary Schools Academic Education Career and Technical Education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Texas Veterans Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterans Employment and Training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training</li> </ul>	<p><b>Texas Workforce Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Education and Literacy</li> <li>Apprenticeship Training, Chapter 133</li> <li>Choices Program for TANF Adults</li> <li>Employment Services</li> <li>Rehabilitation Services</li> <li>Self-Sufficiency Fund</li> <li>Senior Community Service Employment Program</li> <li>Skills Development Fund</li> <li>Trade Adjustment Assistance/NAFTA</li> <li>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Dislocated Workers Youth</li> </ul>
<p><b>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and Technical Colleges Academic Education Technical Education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Development and Tourism, Office of the Governor</b></p>



**Texas Workforce System Program Directory (Revised February 2023)**

This report provides basic information about the many programs constituting the Texas workforce system in one publication. A companion document to the system strategic plan and the annual evaluation report, it details workforce development programs and related academic programs administered by the state's workforce system partner agencies. A concise reference for policy makers and stakeholders, the directory is distributed to system partners and stakeholders and is posted on the Council's website.

For more information on the Texas Workforce Investment Council and its authority, please visit Texas Government Code, Section 2308.



**Annual Report  
Fiscal Year 2023  
September 1, 2022–August 31, 2023**

**About the Council's Role in the Texas Workforce System**

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) was created in 1993 by the Governor and the Texas Legislature to promote the development of a well-educated and highly skilled workforce in Texas. The Council assists the Governor and the legislature with strategic planning, research, and evaluation to support continuous improvement of the Texas workforce system. In addition to its responsibilities in state law, the Council functions as the State Workforce Investment Board under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Council does not operate programs but works to foster collaboration and a systems perspective among its partners and their programs. Its impact is demonstrated through initiatives that improve outcomes for workforce customers—employers and current and future workers of Texas—every one of whom is critical to Texas' economic success.

The Texas workforce system delivers programs, services, and initiatives administered by eight agencies, local workforce development boards, school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. The Council's eight partner agencies are: Economic Development and Tourism within the Office of the Governor, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the Texas Veterans Commission, and the Texas Workforce Commission.

There are 19 members on the Council. The Governor appoints 14 members representing business, organized labor, education, and community-based organizations. The remaining five members are ex officio representatives of the Council's member state agencies.

The Council produces this annual report, which offers highlights of the Council's work during the past fiscal year (FY). Included in this year's report is information on the seventh year of *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update)* and the Council's evaluation of system programs.

The Texas workforce system strategic plan and other Council products referenced in this report are posted on the Council's website at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic>.

**Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031**

The Council is charged with promoting a highly skilled and educated workforce for Texas. Texas Government Code (TGC), Section 2308.104, mandates the Council to develop a single strategic plan that establishes the framework for the budgeting and operation of the workforce development system. In September and December 2021, the Council initiated system planning with a series of partner agency listening sessions that helped to identify key issues and opportunities over the next five-to-eight-year timeframe. The information gained in those sessions provided the foundational elements of the plan architecture for the new eight-year workforce system strategic plan for fiscal years 2024–2031. In FY 2023, the Council completed the system plan architecture and continued collaboration with its partner agencies to develop agency action plans that will guide the implementation of the system strategic plan to achieve the Council’s vision and mission.

**Texas Talent Connection**

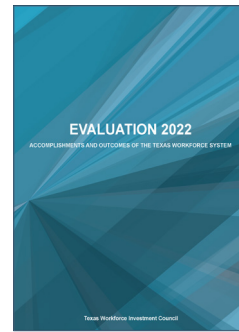
In April 2023, the Texas Talent Connection grant program, funded by Wagner-Peyser 7(b), released its annual request for applications. The program encourages workforce system partners to identify and develop innovative and evidence-based workforce

interventions that address unmet or emerging local and regional needs. With this offering, the Council introduced a fully digital application submission, evaluation, and scoring process. In July 2023, Governor Abbott announced over \$6.5 million in workforce grants awarded to 21 workforce skills training and job placement programs throughout the state. One program success story highlights the outcomes of Skillpoint Alliance, a 501(c)3 workforce development organization that provides in-demand workforce training to vulnerable members of the Central Texas community. May 2023 graduate Amber Davila is a single mother of two who worked for over a decade in the food industry until her son was diagnosed with cancer. She worked multiple jobs to pay for his medical treatments and also completed a six-week certified production technician (CPT) program in search of better career opportunities. She earned all four of the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council certifications and other industry-recognized credentials to become a CPT and is now working at Samsung, where she has been recognized as one of the top-performing recruits in her hiring class.



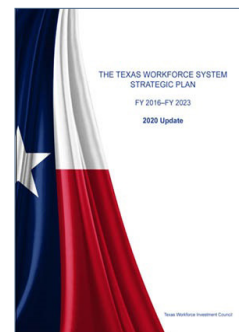
**Apprenticeship Funding Formulas**

Texas Education Code, §133.006, requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to adopt formulas for the distribution of available funds to apprenticeship training programs on the recommendation of the Council. In March 2023, the Council’s Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee recommended that the contact hour rate for apprenticeship training programs for FY 2023 be set at a rate not to exceed \$4.25 per contact hour and that five percent of available funds be used to fund new or established apprenticeship programs that did not receive Chapter 133 funds in FY 2023. The contact-hour rate formula is the method used for the distribution of apprenticeship training funds to public school districts and state postsecondary education institutions that act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs. Funds are used only for job-related classroom instruction costs such as instructor salaries, instructional supplies and equipment, and other operating expenses. The final contact-hour rate is determined each year by dividing the total available funds statewide by the total number of contact hours of apprenticeship training instruction statewide. The Council endorsed the Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee’s recommendation regarding FY 2023 funding formulas for apprenticeship training programs and directed the recommendations to TWC for implementation.



As required under TGC, Chapter 2308, the Council reports annually to the Governor and the legislature on the degree to which the system is achieving the goals and objectives of the Texas workforce system strategic plan. The Council is also required to report annually on adult education, work development programs that focus on welfare to work initiatives, and the Council’s duties related to skill standards development. Each year, Texas comprehensively evaluates its workforce system for performance across programs and system partner alignment with the strategic plan. The Council’s seventh annual evaluation report for the eight-year plan period, *Evaluation 2022: Accomplishments and*

*Outcomes of the Texas Workforce System* (December 2022), presents a system perspective of progress and achievement. Six partner agencies submitted program-level data for 23 programs for four formal measures: educational achievement, entered employment, employment retention, and customers served. Through the delivery of multiple workforce education and training programs, state and local system partners served more than 4.1 million individuals in the last reporting year. Of those participants, more than 650,000 individuals completed a degree, certificate, or other measure of educational achievement. Nearly 900,000 Texans who participated in a workforce program found a job, stayed in a job, and/or enrolled in further education or training. The report also includes data associated with 23 action plans that are specific to the agencies’ implementation of the partner strategies and demonstrate success over time. Of significance, agencies achieved over 150,000 industry-based certifications completed by program participants, with a year-to-year increase of over 42,000 certifications attained.



*The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update)* advanced the system-level approach that the Texas workforce system partners use to achieve system alignment and integration by elevating the partner agency action plans to align with system strategies. The plan focused on high-level system objectives—many of which required multi-partner collaboration or alignment of programs, initiatives, and outcomes. The plan is also focused on three strategic pillars to strengthen foundational elements across the workforce system, which included customer service and satisfaction, data-driven program improvement, and continuous improvement and innovation. FY 2023 is the final

year of the implementation period for the plan, and partner agencies have collaborated to successfully expand licensures and industry-based certifications in the state, build partnerships to enhance participant outcomes, and enhance program and service delivery methods

**Local Workforce Development Board Plan Modifications**

Local workforce development boards perform a critical role in the implementation of the strategic vision for the Texas workforce system. Texas has strategic planning requirements for local boards, and the Council is charged with recommending to the governor approval of local board plans and two-year plan modifications under WIOA and TGC, Chapter 2308. Each board is required to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local workforce development plan to the state and to review and modify the plan at the end of the first two-year period. The local plans must identify strategies and local activities consistent with the WIOA state plan and the workforce system strategic plan. During FY 2023, each board was required to prepare a two-year plan modification. Updates include changes due to labor market, economic conditions, and other factors that affect the target occupations and implementation of the plan. In the Council’s FY 2023 review of the plan modifications, all 28 local board plans demonstrated alignment with the workforce system strategic plan. The local board plan modifications illustrated increased collaboration across system partners, alignment of programs and services, integration of core programs, and improved employment outcomes. The Council endorsed and recommended, and the Governor approved, the plan modifications on June 30, 2023.

The Council supports system planning, implementation of the system strategic plan, and evaluation through a suite of research products and updates that are distributed to members, system partners, and workforce stakeholders. Available on the Council’s website, the Council’s primary products include the strategic plan for the workforce system, evaluation reports, resource publications, reports on critical and emerging issues, and recommendations to the Governor.

**System Plan Architecture and Agency Action Plans**

In FY 2023, the Council completed its strategic planning process to develop a new eight-year workforce system strategic plan. Using the key issues and opportunities identified by partner agencies in the early stages of planning, the Council developed the plan architecture and continued to collaborate with partner agencies to craft system objectives and strategies. The strategic plan architecture includes four goal areas: employers, learners, partners, and policy and planning. Within these four goal areas, system objectives and strategies were defined and approved by the Council in December 2022. Working from the system strategies, the Council met with partner agencies to determine which agencies would play an essential role in the implementation of each strategy and also to develop the 37 action plans required to implement the plan. Each agency created a draft action plan for each system strategy for which the agency would be responsible. Examples of system objectives and strategies outlined within the plan include an expansion of upskilling and reskilling programs, work-based learning, and apprenticeship programs in both traditional and non-traditional areas. The Council approved and posted the plan for public comment in June 2023.

**State Legislative Update**

The 88th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature convened on January 10, 2023, and adjourned on May 29, 2023. During each session, the Council tracks workforce-related bills that are filed to provide members and stakeholders with information about the Texas Legislature and developments in state legislation that affect the Texas workforce system. Of the over 8,000 bills filed during the 88th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, the Council tracked 49 workforce-related bills. Each bill was assigned to one of three categories: priority, direct, or indirect, based upon the potential of its impact to the Council, agency partners or programs, or the Texas workforce system. Among the priority bills, two were signed into law. House Bill 1755 creates the Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund grant program, to be administered by TWC. Under this program, TWC will provide grants to eligible entities that align workforce training programs with in-demand skills. House Bill 4451 requires TWC to prepare an annual report on apprenticeship opportunities in the state and to submit that report to the legislature. TWC will collaborate with the Council’s Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee to develop recommendations.

**Opportunity Youth Panel**

During the strategic planning process, the Council heard several presentations from workforce system partners that included information and data on essential target populations, current research, programs and services, and innovative practices and models. In September 2022, the Council received a presentation from the Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative, which provided information and data and moderated a panel of several opportunity youth to share their early career experiences and inform members about the employment barriers faced by this target population. Opportunity youth are individuals aged 16 to 24 years not currently engaged in school or the workforce. Understanding the needs of opportunity youth is critical to overcome barriers to their employment. Council members heard from advocates and service providers and were able to receive first-hand stories from several of the youth who had participated in the opportunity youth program and successfully attained employment.