



2023 Impact Report

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas



WORK SOLUTIONS
FORCE *** HEART OF TEXAS ***
Linking Jobseekers and Employers

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Our Vision

A highly valued workforce system that meets the economic demands of the Heart of Texas communities.

Our Mission

To provide a well-trained workforce for employers in order to ensure the economic growth of the region.



Where We Serve

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas proudly serves the six-county region of Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan.

Letter from the Board Chair & Executive Director

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

The Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas 2023 Impact Report is a testament to our collective efforts in bringing about positive change in the communities we serve. Through our customer-centered services, we have made significant strides in enhancing employer talent acquisition and recruitment efforts, providing high-quality child care services for working families, closing skills gaps with training opportunities, increasing wages for hard-working individuals, and empowering youth to explore viable career options. We invite you to read this report and join us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of our region.

Notable achievements include:

- Assisted **1,934 employers** in finding and recruiting qualified talent
- Provided quality child care to **3,306 children**
- Assisted **16,907 job seekers** with employment services
- Launched the **region's first** early childhood educator registered apprenticeship

Successful workforce development is always the result of collective action. The visionary leadership and guidance of our Chief Elected Officials and Board of Directors is unmatched. Our regional chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, post-secondary institutions, independent school districts, and other agency partners are driving forces in achieving our mission. We express our heartfelt gratitude to all our partners for their unwavering support and commitment to building a better future for us all.

Sincerely,

Russ Foster

Russ Foster
Board Chair
Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc.

Anthony Billings

Anthony Billings
Executive Director
Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas

Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc.

Chief Elected Officials

Judge Justin Lewis
Lead Chief Elected Official
Hill County

Judge Richard Duncan
Limestone County

Judge Jay Elliott
Falls County

Judge Scott Felton
McLennan County

Judge Linda Grant
Freestone County

Mayor Dillon Meek
City of Waco

Judge Cindy Vanlandingham
Bosque County

Board of Directors

Russ Foster
Board Chair
Resource Pro

Valerie Parker
Chair-Elect
KWTX-TV

Alvin Pollard, Sr.
Secretary/Parliamentarian
McLennan Community College

Shirley Crockett
Treasurer
Central Texas Literacy Council

David Fowler
Past Chair
Heritage Title & Abstract

Paige Key
At-Large Member
Clifton Chamber of Commerce

Clyff Curry
Oversight Committee Chair
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union 529

Linda Calhoun
Main Street Antiques
& Interiors

Howard Childs
Texas State Technical
College

Warren Davis
Fairfield Economic
Development Corporation

Justin Dyer
Friends of the
Hillsboro City Library

Jessica Ford
Falls Community Hospital
& Clinic

Stephanie Garza
Rogers Manufacturing Corporation

Laura Harborth
Gate Precast Company

Bruce Hardt
Time Manufacturing Company

Dr. Susan Kincannon
Waco ISD

Scott Laws
AbbVie

Ruben Lee Salazar
L3 Harris Technologies

Craig Miller
International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers Local Union 72

Roy Nash
NeighborWorks Waco

Janise Ochoa
Capstone Mechanical

Deidre Sanders
Sanders Academy
for Excellence

Ronda Swaim
Texas Health and Human
Services Commission

Mark Vera
Packaging Corporation
of America

Casey Wade
Texas Workforce Commission

Kelly Yarbrough
Texas Workforce Commission
Vocational Rehabilitation Division



154
Veterans
Served

Impact Means

Helping Veterans Achieve their Career Goals

Veterans have a wealth of experience, skills, and leadership abilities to offer the civilian workforce. By connecting Veterans with hiring employers, Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas is helping Veterans achieve their career goals and strengthen our workforce.

Levi (pictured left) is a U.S. Army Veteran who attended a hiring fair at our McLennan County Workforce Solutions Center in hopes of finding gainful employment.

“I’ve always wanted to work in the justice system but never knew where to start.”
- Levi, U.S. Army Veteran and job seeker

At this event, Levi secured an interview and received a job offer from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, all before stepping out the door.

\$9,201

Median wage for Veterans six months after receiving services



99

Employers directly connected with Veterans through Veteran hiring events



\$8,949

Median wage for disabled Veterans six months after receiving services

Impact Means

Helping Employers Find and Attract Quality Candidates

From hosting hiring events and pre-screening potential candidates to posting job openings and spotlighting employers, Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas provides a range of services to help employers find the right fit for their team.

Workforce Solutions made a remarkable impact in the past year by hosting **74 hiring events** that connected **448 employers** with **3,431 job seekers**. These events provided a platform for showcasing **6,565 job openings**, giving job seekers access to a wide range of opportunities. By bridging the gap between employers and job seekers, Workforce Solutions is playing a vital role in building a stronger local economy.

1,934 Employers Served

We are dedicated to providing the resources and tools our employers need to enhance their recruiting efforts. Our **Employer Spotlight** has proven to be an effective way to showcase businesses in our region across multiple platforms. By doing so, we provide employers with a valuable tool to recruit qualified candidates.

EMPLOYER
SPOTLIGHT

Watch our Time Manufacturing Company Employer Spotlight



L.B. Foster connecting with potential job candidate at the 2023 Hillsboro Hiring Fair.



AND THE REGION'S 2023 LOCAL EMPLOYER OF EXCELLENCE AWARD GOES TO...

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas was proud to recognize Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) as the region's 2023 Local Employer of Excellence. PCA accepted the award at the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) 26th Annual Texas Workforce Conference. PCA is recognized as a local employer who has made a positive impact on workers, the community, and the state through their partnerships with Texas Workforce Solutions.

Pictured below (left to right): Joe Garzonie - General Manager, PCA/Lux, Alberto Treviño III - Commissioner Representing Labor, TWC, Mark M. Vera - General Manager, PCA/CTC



PACKAGING CORPORATION OF AMERICA
2023 Local Employer of Excellence

Impact Means

Preparing and Connecting Job Seekers with Hiring Employers

Over the course of 2023, Workforce Solutions helped **3,431 job seekers find promising employment opportunities** by directly connecting them with over 400 employers at our hiring events. Our hiring events open doors and create pathways to success for job seekers like Christopher, who attended our Make Your Winning Move Hiring Fair and Suit Up Event.

88%

of job seekers remained employed one year after receiving services

\$8,098

Median wage for job seekers six months after receiving services

Workforce Solutions equips and empowers job seekers with the knowledge, resources, and confidence needed to overcome employment barriers and excel in their job search. Among the 28 workforce development boards in Texas, Workforce Solutions **ranked third in the state in helping job seekers remain employed** one year after receiving services. From providing professional attire and work readiness workshops to offering direct job referrals and access to training and thousands of job openings, we're committed to connecting job seekers with meaningful employment opportunities. Our services provide lasting benefits for job seekers and the region's economy.

16,907

Job Seekers Served

Helping job seekers like Christopher become interview-ready by providing guidance and professional attire.



Impact Means

Creating Career Pathways Through Apprenticeship Opportunities

Improving the skills of our workforce is vital to bridging the skills gap between employers and employees. This year, Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas played a significant role in fulfilling this need by establishing and promoting child care and skilled trades apprenticeship training programs.

The new **Early Education Apprenticeship (EEA)** program, created in partnership with McLennan Community College (MCC) and the Department of Labor, is the **first registered apprenticeship of its kind in the Heart of Texas region**. EEA establishes career pathways for early childhood educators and enables them to earn wages while gaining industry-recognized credentials and on-the-job mentoring. This year, 12 early childhood educators, are benefiting from the program. The Texas Association for the Education of Young Children covers the cost of tuition and books and provides substitute pay to child care directors so apprentices can spend time with mentors.

The **Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship training program** is equally impressive, having trained and graduated 13 individuals who are now first-year apprentices in the skilled trades. This program is nationally recognized and approved by the North America's Building Trades Unions. It is offered in partnership with Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas, MCC, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 72, and Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 529.



MC3 pre-apprentices receive hands-on training as part of the program.



2023 MC3 Graduation and Signing Day.



Watch the the Early Education Apprenticeship Video



Schmyra embarks on her career pathway as one of the first 12 apprentices in the Early Education Apprenticeship program.

\$319,320

In grant funds and non-profit donations secured to expand apprenticeship programs

Impact Means

Providing Career Exploration and Skill Development Opportunities for Youth



McKenzie, one of 39 SEAL participants, that received paid on-the-job training.

89%

Of youth served gained employment or enrolled in college

4,012

High school students participated in career exploration opportunities

“This summer work experience will really help to prepare me for the Healthcare industry and the job I’ll be doing in the next 4-5 years.”
-McKenzie, 2023 SEAL Participant

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas is empowering the next generation and setting them up for success by providing youth with opportunities to participate in a variety of career exploration and paid work experiences.

This year, Workforce Solutions **served 221 youth** through our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and through our Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program. In addition, we provided career exploration opportunities for **4,012 high school students** through our Career Education Outreach program and our YES! Expo career exploration event. Our YES! High School Student Welding Internship program provided high school students with paid welding internships that allowed them to gain hands-on welding experience and enhance their classroom learning. And this past summer, **56 youth** gained valuable paid summer work experience while **earning \$63,293 in wages**.



High school students exploring careers at the 2023 YES! Expo.



Impact Means

Empowering Families Through Quality Child Care

Continuously improving the quality of our child care programs ensures children are better equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive and provides parents with the support they need to pursue their career, training, and educational goals. Child Care Services (CCS) works diligently with our child care partners to meet increasing quality standards, and this year, **89.7% of children enrolled** in CCS were able to attend a Texas Rising Star (TRS) quality rated program.

The LENA Grow program is an innovative early literacy and school readiness program that helps teachers of infants and toddlers improve classroom quality and increase interactions. By implementing LENA Grow in four TRS quality rated programs, seven teachers and 50 infants and toddlers benefited from a **24% increase in conversations** and an overall increase in quality. Surveys also showed an increase in teacher confidence, and all seven participating teachers successfully pursued LENA certification. This is a great testament to the effectiveness of the program and its ability to make a meaningful impact on children's lives.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a developmental screening tool for parents and professionals to check a child's development. This year, **76 teachers and directors** learned to administer, score, and interpret the results. Steps for making a referral for detected developmental delays or disabilities was included in the training. Klaras Center Early Childhood Intervention was a key project partner.



232

Teachers/Directors certified in CPR/first aid safety training

20

Early learning programs achieved initial TRS certification

Parent and child from our 2023 ChildOne Calendar.

3,306

Children Served



Impact Funds

Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act:

\$2,725,817

Employment Services & Other:

\$1,308,826

Trade Adjustment Act:

\$39,039

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
Program/ Employment & Training:

\$225,886

Child Care:

\$17,881,452

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families:

\$1,294,574

\$23,475,594

In program funds administered during the 2022-2023 fiscal year

Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas is funded by federal and state funds and through private grants.

Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc. Board Staff

Anthony Billings
Executive Director

Aquanetta Brobston
Quality Assurance Coordinator/
Equal Opportunity Officer/504 Coordinator

David Davis
Project Support Specialist

Erin Doshier
Workforce Grants & Initiatives Manager

April Dossey
Digital Communications Specialist

Eunice Fernández
Director of Strategic Planning

Elizabeth Estrada
Administrative Assistant

Sugey Jaimes
Project Support Specialist

Kary Kuecker
Contract Manager

Nancy Maldonado
Accountant

José Palacios
Manager of Business & Industry Initiatives

Linda Stanford
Project Coordinator

Julie Talbert
Contract Manager

Vicki Williams
Budget & Contract Officer



WORK SOLUTIONS
FORCE *** HEART OF TEXAS ***
Linking Jobseekers and Employers

www.hotworkforce.com



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A proud partner of the **AmericanJobCenter** network

The Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer/program and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TTY/TDD via RELAY Texas service at 711 or (TDD) 1-800-735-2989 / 1-800-735-2988 (voice).