

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
Workforce Development Letter

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| ID/No: | WD 05-21, Change 3 |
| Date: | August 29, 2022 |
| Keyword: | TANF/Choices; WIOA |
| Effective: | Immediately |

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Courtney Arbour, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists Program—Update**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this WD Letter is to provide Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with updated guidance on the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists program, including the following:

- Funding and expenditure reporting
- Board responsibilities
- Reporting tool
- Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists' basic duties
- Removing the annual work plan (Attachment 2, Annual Work Plan)

RESCISSIONS:

WD Letter 05-21, Change 2

BACKGROUND:

In July 2018, the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) three-member Commission approved the Workforce Career and Technical Education Outreach Specialist Pilot Program using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) statewide reserve funds. This two-year initiative was designed to provide Texas students with information about educational opportunities, local labor market demand, career information, and available workforce services to help them make sound career decisions after graduation.

Outreach of this kind had been taking place at the state level, led by a small education outreach team in TWC's Outreach and Employer Initiatives Division. This team helped onboard and train the local Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists and their team leads.

By the end of the first year of the pilot grant award, Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists conducted 4,859 presentations for Texas students and provided

1,591 partner/teacher presentations. These efforts resulted in 223,086 students attending a career event, and, of those students, 122,552 received hands-on career engagement. In the second year, the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists also diversified their scope by providing virtual presentations, career fairs, and other virtual services.

The two-year Workforce Career and Technical Education Outreach Specialist Pilot Program ended in August 2021. Currently, TWC does not anticipate issuing any additional competitive funding for these activities. However, due to the success of the program, TWC is publishing this WD Letter to inform Boards about how to implement and operate a Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists program and expand the reach of the program beyond public schools to include additional audiences such as charter schools, private schools, the Windham School District, foster youth transition centers, and group homes.

PROCEDURES:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”

LF: Subject to the requirements in this WD Letter, Boards may establish a Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists program to hire Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists to provide career guidance, career preparation, and workforce information regarding:

- local in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- opportunities and training in middle-skill jobs;
- pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs);
- internships;
- technical and/or community colleges; and
- career-readiness preparation services.

Funding

LF: Beginning October 1, 2022, for Board Contract Year (BCY) 2023 funding, Boards may use a mix of available programs to fund Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist activities, as allowable. Programs under which all or some of the activities may be allowable include, but are not limited to, the TANF Choices program and WIOA Title I programs.

NLF: Before hiring outreach staff, Boards must email the TWC Education Outreach program at outreach.specialist@twc.texas.gov to coordinate appropriate onboard training and provide contact information for the Board staff members who will be managing data for the program.

NLF: Boards must ensure that costs charged to a particular program for Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist activity are necessary and reasonable as well as allocable to and allowable in accordance with applicable cost principles and program rules. Costs must also conform to the terms and conditions of the respective program's grant award. Activities jointly benefiting two or more programs must be charged to the benefiting programs in accordance with the relative benefit received.

LF: Boards that hire Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists may use Board staff members to fill this role or grant a subaward to or contract with another entity to perform the activity.

NLF: Beginning October 1, 2022, for BCY'23 grants, Boards will no longer report the programmatic expenditures for this activity in the Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system. However, TWC may request ad hoc reports of expenditure data for this activity, and Boards must be able to provide that data if requested. Expenditures that may be included in ad hoc requests are as follows:

- Salary or wages and benefits for one or more Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists and other program staff members who support the activity (for example, supervisors)
- Direct in-state travel costs
- Direct outreach and associated printing costs
- Direct communication costs, if any
- The purchase of additional computing devices and related direct costs necessary to carry out this activity, such as the purchase of additional laptops or Wi-Fi hotspots
- Costs associated with in-state events and site visits held or conducted to carry out this activity
- Other direct costs to carry out the program, including, but not limited to, direct costs for office supplies and necessary and reasonable furniture

Board Responsibilities

NLF: Boards must ensure that the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists program model includes:

- providing information on opportunities and training requirements for in-demand industry sectors and making well-informed postsecondary decisions using TWC resources and other existing tools, including:
 - Texas Reality Check;
 - Texas Career Check;
 - Texas Consumer Resource for Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS);
 - Texas OnCourse;
 - Texas Internship Challenge;
 - AutoCoder;
 - Texas Skills to Work; and
 - Jobs Y'all;

- organizing training workshops on using TWC resources, such as the LMI website, for employment and education;
- coordinating with independent school districts (ISDs) to ensure that needed background checks are conducted before employees work in the school;
- exposing individuals to a variety of career pathways, including pre-apprenticeship and RAPs, technical and/or community colleges, and employment, through presentations, TWC tools, job fairs, and site visits;
- coordinating with local and state workforce services, employers, and educational institutions to build pathways into pre-apprenticeship and RAPs and encourage local employers to offer pre-apprenticeship and RAPs;
- providing career support workshops for students, parents, and guardians;
- fostering employer–ISD collaboration and encouraging employers to provide internship opportunities and serve as mentors;
- encouraging partnerships between ISDs and technical and/or community colleges;
- collaborating on annual workshops with subject matter experts within TWC, local business and industry leaders, chambers of commerce, and technical and/or community colleges to build a network of partnerships among local organizations and support local delivery of integrated career and education services;
- organizing job exploration and career fairs; and
- attending monthly and annual trainings provided by TWC staff to all Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists.

NLF: Boards must ensure that formal letters of agreement are developed with ISDs and any other partners (for example, community colleges and educational service centers). These entities must maintain those letters in their records to be available upon request during TWC on-site reviews or visits.

NLF: Boards must ensure that these letters of agreement include, at a minimum:

- a point of contact at the ISD, the Board, and all schools with whom the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists will be working;
- a description of the process that the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists and the schools and/or ISDs will use to amend the on-site schedule for the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists;
- an assurance that the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists will serve solely in the roles listed in this WD Letter (that is, the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists will not be expected to serve in other roles such as substitute teacher or testing facilitator);
- an assurance that the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists will be required to adhere to a partnering ISD’s policies and procedures; and
- information on how the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists may outreach students, including distributing flyers, handouts, and announcements and outreach to parents.

NLF: Boards must ensure that there is coordination with the TWC Education Outreach program staff to onboard Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists, who will then be

trained on all TWC and non-TWC resources used for career and postsecondary education exploration.

NLF: Boards must ensure participation in monthly meetings (either virtually or in person) with TWC’s Workforce Development Division and TWC Education Outreach program staff.

LF: Boards may use software, tools, or resources such as SurveyMonkey, Google forms, Microsoft forms, or email to conduct the survey.

Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists’ Basic Duties

LF: Boards may allow Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists to travel within the local workforce development area (workforce area) with limited overnight travel to attend regional or state conferences, workshops, meetings, or trainings.

NLF: Boards must be aware that Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists may:

- coordinate with any TWC program personnel to ensure the appropriate coordination of resources: for example, with the Vocational Rehabilitation regional Student HireAbility Navigators, whose primary role and responsibility is the system planning, coordination, and promotion of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities within their workforce area who are age 14 to 22 and are enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education;
- work in coordination with school counselors and administrators;
- maximize availability to students through a published schedule that includes virtual and on-site office hours for each location and structured meeting times for students;
- conduct an orientation for school staff at each participating school to explain the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist’s role and the resources to be provided;
- develop a multifaceted communication and support service model for connecting professional development services with students, including, but not limited to:
 - on-site and virtual visits;
 - strategic planning meetings;
 - mentoring; and
 - phone and text communications (if allowed by the ISD);
- become familiar with TWC programs such as Adult Education and Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, Foster Youth, Career Signing Day, and Apprenticeship; and
- do the following:
 - Provide classroom presentations, virtually or on-site, in the assigned ISDs that have agreed to partner in the program to provide career information, career awareness, career readiness, and career resources to students in grades 6–12, their parents or guardians, and district staff
 - Serve as a primary resource to the assigned ISDs for labor market information, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations at the county, region, and state levels

- Engage assigned ISDs by offering opportunities to establish partnerships and connect with industry and postsecondary training providers, especially those leading into in-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Engage and train district staff members on using career tools and resources
- Develop and maintain community partnerships with businesses, educational organizations, and community stakeholders that align with current and future Texas Workforce Solutions projects and initiatives
- Foster employer–ISD collaboration and encourage employers to provide internship opportunities and serve as mentors
- Establish strong working relationships with employers and invite them to connect with the classroom through classroom presentations or encourage them to offer industry tours, job-shadowing opportunities, internship or apprenticeship opportunities, and so forth, at their place of business
- Support other activities such as statewide initiatives, local job fairs, and special events

Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists’ Experience, Education, and Other Requirements

LF: Boards may use the following preferred experience, education, and other requirements to develop the job description for the Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists or may modify these to meet their needs:

- A bachelor’s degree in human services, business, education, or a related field from an accredited four-year college or university (One year of qualifying experience may be substituted for each year (30 semester hours) of college, up to a maximum of two years.)
- Experience in workforce development or Career and Technical Education (CTE), preferably in gathering and reporting outcomes
- ISD experience as a teacher or counselor working with at-risk middle or high school populations
- A valid driver’s license and access to reliable transportation (Local, in-state, and out-of-state travel is required.)

Other Reporting Requirements

NLF: Boards must submit to TWC:

- quarterly performance reports (see Attachment 1, Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists Reporting Spreadsheet—Updated); and
- ad hoc reports, as requested

INQUIRIES:

Send inquiries regarding this WD Letter to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists Reporting Spreadsheet—Updated

Attachment 2: Revisions to WD 05-21, Change 2, Shown in Track Changes

REFERENCES:

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Part 200

TWC Request for Applications 32019-00049, issued November 9, 2018