

An Inventory of Apprenticeship and Internship Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

As required by House Bill 1,
Article VII, TWC, Rider 49



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Introduction

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) prepared this report in response to House Bill 1 (HB 1), Article VII, Rider 49, Apprenticeships and Internship Opportunities for People with Disabilities, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2023). Rider 49 directs TWC to conduct an inventory of all current apprenticeship and internship opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The inventory shall be made available to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas and the legislature by October 1 of each even-numbered year.

As outlined in HB 1, the inventory must include the following:

- The number and type of apprenticeship opportunities currently available
- The number and type of internship opportunities currently available
- The length of the internship and apprenticeship programs
- The age ranges of program participants
- Whether participating employers are public or private entities
- The geographic distribution of the programs
- How the programs are funded
- How the opportunities are publicized
- The number of individuals with disabilities that obtained full-time employment as a result of internship or apprenticeship programs

Overview

This inventory provides information on apprenticeship and internship opportunities available to all job seekers, including those with disabilities, as well as opportunities that are specifically for individuals with disabilities and offered to Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) customers. It is organized into the following main sections:

- Apprenticeship Overview
- Internship Overview
- Promoting Apprenticeship and Internship Opportunities

The data reported in this inventory were obtained from multiple sources, including TWC and the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (DOL OA). It reflects the best available information to fulfill the Rider 49 requirement. The first two sections provide apprenticeship and internship

program descriptions, as well as information on funding. The concluding section illustrates how TWC promotes apprenticeships and internships to ensure that all Texas job seekers are aware of available opportunities and how to access them. An [appendix](#) is included at the end of the report that provides a list of opportunities specifically for students and adults with disabilities. These opportunities are cohort based and are a subset of all opportunities available to individuals with disabilities.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

General	Meaning or Definition
CIE	Competitive Integrated Employment
DOL OA	Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship
LEA	Local Education Agency
Pre-ETS	Pre-Employment Transition Services
RFA	Request for Application
TEC	Texas Education Code
ATAC	Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee

Apprenticeship	Meaning or Definition
DOL OA	Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship
FY	Fiscal Year
LBB	Legislative Budget Board
OA	Office of Apprenticeship
RAP	Registered Apprenticeship Program
RAPIDS	Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Management Data System
SAEEI	State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission
US DOL	The United States Department of Labor
USMAP	United Services Military Apprenticeship Program
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area

TIRA	Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship
Board	Local Workforce Development Board

Internship	Meaning or Definition
FY	Fiscal Year
SEAL	Summer Earn and Learn
SFY	State Fiscal Year
STEP	Skills Training to Employment Project
WBL	Work-Based Learning
TIC	Texas Internship Challenge
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission
TWC-VR	Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation
TTC	Texas Talent Connection
TEA	Texas Education Agency
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
TWIC	Texas Workforce Investment Council
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

SECTION ONE: APPRENTICESHIP OVERVIEW

As defined by DOL, apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway in which employers can develop and prepare their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential.¹

Individuals seeking apprenticeship opportunities are typically looking for opportunities to fast-track their career goals, avoid debt, and earn competitive wages. An apprentice is a full-time, paid employee who is compensated while they learn. Currently, Texas apprentices range in age from 18 to 52. Registered apprenticeship programs, or RAPs, usually last four years, depending on the employer or occupation, although they may

¹ [Apprenticeship | DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

last as little as 12 months or as many as five years. The length of apprenticeship programs vary depending on the employer or industry, the complexity of the occupation, and the type of program.

In alignment with DOL standards, TWC's Office of Apprenticeship (OA) supports apprenticeship programs that include the following core components:²

1. Paid Careers: Apprentices work the same as regular employees and get paid while they learn important skills that businesses need.
2. On-the-Job Learning: Apprentices learn by doing real work in a structured way. On-the-job learning develops skilled workers through structured learning in a work setting.
3. Related Instruction: Apprentices attend classes (in person or online) to improve their skills.
4. Mentorship: Skilled workers guide and support apprentices during their hands-on learning.
5. Credentials: When an apprentice successfully finishes the program, they earn a special certificate from DOL³ that is recognized across the country.

Employers with high-demand occupations have integrated industry-driven apprenticeship programs into their workforce development strategies to raise skill levels, prepare workers, and meet hiring needs. DOL OA recognizes leading industries that are adopting and adapting apprenticeship programs, including the following⁴:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agricultural
- Construction
- Cybersecurity
- Education
- Energy
- Financial Services
- Healthcare
- Hospitality

² [ApprenticeshipTexas | Texas Workforce Commission](#)

³ The certificate is referred to as a "Certificate of Completion of a Registered Apprenticeship."

⁴ [Apprenticeship Industries | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

- Information Technology
- Telecommunications
- Transportation

DOL OA collects deidentified individual data from 48 states and the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP) in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Management Data System (RAPIDS) and posts the collected data on its Data and Statistics web page. The RAPs and Apprenticeship Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities sections of this inventory contain DOL OA data specific to Texas.⁵

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

A RAP is a type of apprenticeship program that enhances apprenticeships with high-quality standards and additional benefits. It is a proven model of apprenticeship that has been validated by DOL OA. Employers who successfully complete the DOL OA registration process earn the RAP distinction designating that their programs meet the national standards for quality and rigor and include the five core components listed above. RAPs enable participating employers to create pipelines of skilled workers who have been trained for entry-level to management positions. RAPs also provide additional incentives for employers, including technical assistance, tax credits, access to federal funding and other resources, and recruiting incentives.⁶

From January 2018 to December 2023, 1,177 new RAPs were developed in Texas because of collaborations between TWC OA and employers, increasing the number of both RAP industries and high-demand occupational titles. Leading RAP industries in Texas align with DOL OA leading industries and are specific to the state’s economic needs.

Leading RAP industries in Texas include the following⁷:

RAP Industries in Texas	Number of RAPs
Educational Services	355

⁵ Complete data extract through FY’22 Q1 may be downloaded at [FY 2021 Data and Statistics | Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

⁶ [Registered Apprenticeship Program | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

⁷ Office of Apprenticeship | Department of Labor

Construction	316
Health Care and Social Assistance	88
Manufacturing	80
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	77
Other Services (except Public Administration)	66
Public Administration (not covered in economic census)	41
Utilities	40
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	26
Retail Trade	19
Transportation and Warehousing	19
Information	14
Wholesale Trade	13
Accommodation and Food Services	7
Finance and Insurance	7
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	5
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1
Total	1,177

A RAP sponsor is any employer, association, committee, or organization that operates a RAP. This entity assumes the full responsibility for administering and operating the apprenticeship program. Sponsors may be a single business or a consortium of businesses. Community colleges and community-based organizations may also serve as RAP sponsors. Alternatively, the sponsor may be a workforce intermediary, such as an industry association, labor-management organization, or a Local Workforce Development Board (Board).⁸

From January 2018 to December 2023, 24 of the 28 local workforce development areas (LWDAs) across Texas had one or more RAPs based within their boundaries. Additionally, a RAP based in one LWDA may work with individuals located in another LWDA. Below is the number of RAPs in Texas organized by LWDA.

⁸ Office of Apprenticeship | Department of Labor

LWDA	Number of RAPs
Alamo	48
Borderplex	65
Brazos Valley	8
Cameron	6
Capital Area	69
Central Texas	9
Coastal Bend	14
Deep East Texas	6
East Texas	6
Golden Crescent	3
Greater Dallas	100
Gulf Coast	557
Heart of Texas	5
Lower Rio Grande Valley	22
North Central Texas	90
North Texas	2
Panhandle	7
Permian Basin	33
Rural Capital Area	33
Southeast Texas	20
South Texas	5
Tarrant County	59
Texoma	1
West Central Texas	9
Grand Total	1,177

At registration, a RAP sponsor is not required to indicate whether it is a public or private entity. However, the sponsor is required to indicate its entity type. Below is the number of RAPs by the type of sponsors in Texas.⁹

Type of Sponsor	Number of RAPs
Business Association	70
Business Association, Intermediary	2
City/County Agency	17
Community-Based Organization	122
Community College/University	145
Employer	587
Employer, Community-Based Organization	2
Employer, Community College/University	1
Employer, Intermediary	10
Employer, Intermediary, State Agency	2
Foundation	23
Intermediary	78
Other	101
State Agency	6
Union/Labor	4
Unreported	7
Grand Total	1,177

Geographic Locations of Apprenticeship Programs

As noted above, as of December 2023, 24 of the 28 local workforce development areas (LWDAs) across Texas had one or more RAPs based within their boundaries. In addition, the Commission recently published a [Report on Available Apprenticeships in Texas](#). The report lists numbers of active RAPs and apprentices by Workforce Development Area and includes maps highlighting locations of programs.

While there are no requirements for a statewide distribution of apprenticeship programs, TWC promotes growth of programs and opportunities for individuals in all areas of the state.

⁹ Office of Apprenticeship | Department of Labor

Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeships

The 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2023) allocated \$10 million for each year of the FY'24/25 biennium to support the launch of TWC's Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship (TIRA) program. Funding from TIRA supports apprenticeships that address immediate workforce needs resulting from the impact of hurricanes, other natural disasters, and overall workforce shortages. Unlike RAPs, which are federally funded and administered by DOL, the TIRA grant program draws on state funding for apprenticeships that meet the immediate needs of Texans. At the beginning of the 2024 calendar year, TWC began promoting and accepting applications from private-sector employers for the inaugural round of TIRA funding. Grants awarded will help create and expand apprenticeships in the state's top 25 targeted occupations.

Under the TIRA model, apprentices:

- complete training within the first 26 weeks of employment,
- transition from entry- to mid-level skills as a result of the training, and
- earn an industry-based certification or other credential.

Apprenticeship Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

Qualified individuals, including those with disabilities, may seek apprenticeship opportunities by applying directly with the employer or RAP sponsor. Apprentices with disabilities must meet the same qualifications and performance expectations as apprentices without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may be provided to help an apprentice or applicant meet the apprenticeship requirements, and RAP sponsors are prohibited from discriminating based on disability.

RAP sponsors with five or more apprentices are required to develop affirmative action programs and must invite applicants for apprenticeships, as well as current apprentices, to self-identify whether they have a disability.¹⁰ If an apprentice has a visible physical disability (that is, someone is missing a limb) or if an apprentice requests a reasonable accommodation, a sponsor may include that person as an individual with a disability within its workforce analysis. Otherwise, a sponsor must rely on self-identification to

¹⁰ [Which Sponsors Are Required to Have an Affirmative Action Program? | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

record disability status within its apprenticeship workforce. Sponsors are required to invite apprentices to update their disability status annually, as their statuses may change over time. Apprentices and applicants may choose not to identify their disability, and sponsors must not require individuals to do so.

From April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, DOL OA reported 31,996 active apprentices in Texas. Of these active apprentices, 371 indicated the presence of a disability. Because disclosure of a disability is completely voluntary, data representing apprentices identified as having a disability is likely underrepresented.

TWC-VR and Apprenticeships

TWC-VR funding provides support for VR customers participating in apprenticeship training programs as part of a broad array of training and other services available to help VR customers meet their employment goals. VR services are guided by a customer's employment goal and are consistent with the customer's strengths, resources, interests, and capabilities. If an eligible VR customer is interested in an apprenticeship, the VR counselor will explore apprenticeship opportunities and requirements with the customer. The VR counselor will help the customer review those requirements to determine basic eligibility for the specific apprenticeship of interest.¹¹ The VR counselor and customer may also explore apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with LWDAs.

Explore Apprenticeships 2.0

In addition to supporting participation in apprenticeship training for adults with disabilities, TWC-VR offers Explore Apprenticeships 2.0 (EA 2.0), a semester-long pre-apprenticeship exploration program launched in 2022. EA 2.0 provides in-depth career exploration to students with disabilities, ages 14–22, in various high-demand industries accessed through RAPs. In some cases, customers are given the chance to earn professional certifications that will help them in their journey to employment. These certifications can range from Occupational and Health Safety Administration (OSHA) certifications to food handling, that will aid them in their journey to employment. EA 2.0 is currently available at Dallas College and San Jacinto College, allowing up to 15 customers per cohort. VR customers in the program receive industry-

¹¹ [Vocational Rehabilitation Services | Texas Workforce Commission](#)

specific instruction, participate in workshops and hands-on activities, experience live demonstrations, visit work sites, and interact with professionals in the field. At the end of the semester, customers have an opportunity to participate in a work-based learning (WBL) experience in an industry they learned about.

In FY'22, 25 customers completed a cohort of EA 2.0, and 23 completed the program in FY'23. TWC-VR expended \$59,617 in VR funding in FY'22 and \$76,285 in FY'23 for this service. Additional VR services were also provided to participants as needed to facilitate their participation in the EA 2.0 program. Dallas College focused on the industries of Construction and Trades, Information Technology and Robotics, Hospitality, Food Services, and Health Care. San Jacinto College focused on Information Technology, Health Care, Construction and Trades, Transportation, Aerospace, Petrochemical Engineering, and Maritime. Eighteen customers moved into post-exploration activities that allowed them to continue to pursue their chosen apprenticeship field. A new cohort will begin in September 2024.

Apprenticeship Funding

TWC's apprenticeship work and support of the apprenticeship training model are funded primarily through the following:

1. Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 133¹²
2. TIRA Grant Program¹³
3. DOL Expansion Grants

TEC Chapter 133

As authorized in TEC Chapter 133, TWC grants funds to local public educational institutions and apprenticeship committees to support the costs of related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. Local Education Agencies (LEAs)—public school districts or state postsecondary institutions—and apprenticeship committees act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs. To qualify for funds, apprenticeship training programs and apprentices must be registered with DOL OA.

¹² [Chapter 133, Apprenticeship System of Adult Career and Technology Education | Texas Education Code](#)

¹³ [Apprenticeship Initiatives - Texas Workforce Commission](#)

The Texas legislature appropriates General Revenue funds for the support of apprenticeship training programs authorized under TEC Chapter 133. TWC allocates funds to sponsoring LEAs and independent apprenticeship committees that operate apprenticeship training programs.

Additionally, since FY'10, TWC has contributed more than \$1 million in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds each year to support the increasing number of apprentices receiving training. Funding streams include General Revenue, WIOA, and Noncustodial Parent Choices Funding.

TIRA Grant Program

As noted above, the 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2023) allocated \$10 million General Revenue for each year of the FY'24/25 biennium to support the launch of TWC's TIRA Grant Program. Funding for this program allows the employer to be reimbursed up to \$10,000 per apprentice upon successful completion of training and maintenance of ". . . suitable employment for at least 12 consecutive months immediately following completion of the training program."¹⁴

Because the TIRA Grant Program is a state program, TWC's 3-member Commission is able to direct funding to industries and areas in which there is an immediate need—whether in response to a natural disaster or to a workforce shortage. During the inaugural year of the TIRA Grant Program, the Commission approved funding to address the state's 25 target occupations and, more specifically, to address the state's healthcare shortages.

¹⁴ [TAC Chapter 838.2\(4\)\(B\)](#)

Apprenticeship Funding

Method of Funding Summary	2020 Budgeted	2021 Budgeted	2022 Budgeted	2023 Budgeted	2024 Budgeted
General Revenue Fund	\$3,347,784	\$3,732,785	\$3,732,785	\$3,732,785	\$3,647,247
TANF	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
WIA/WIOA	\$1,650,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,000,000
DOL Expansion Grant	--	--	--	--	\$2,227,600
TIRA Grant Program	--	--	--	--	\$10,000,000
Total Apprenticeship Budget	\$5,147,784	\$5,532,785	\$5,532,785	\$5,532,785	\$17,024,847

DOL Expansion Grants

Since 2016, TWC has been awarded grants from DOL to expand existing RAPs, create new RAPs, and serve underrepresented populations.¹⁵ In turn, TWC issues requests for application (RFAs) to subgrant the funds to various applicants, including Boards and public community and technical colleges in Texas. Currently, TWC manages the following three expansion grants:

- Apprenticeship State Expansion (2019–2023)
 - \$5.4 million awarded to TWC
 - Purpose: To increase the number of apprentices in RAPs; ensure that apprenticeship is a viable career path for youth, adults, and career seekers and a valuable workforce development strategy for businesses; and support and encourage RAP diversification
- State Apprenticeship Expansion (2020–2024)
 - \$9.45 million awarded to TWC
 - Purpose: To support activities that improve the state’s ability to serve, improve, and expand the RAP model by strengthening the national apprenticeship system, promoting system alignment and partnership, and improving data sharing and data integrity
- State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation (SAEEI) (2021–2025)

¹⁵ [Active Grants and Contracts | Apprenticeship.gov](#)

- \$10 million awarded to TWC
- Purpose: To bolster the state’s efforts to expand programming and inclusive recruitment strategies to attract a diverse workforce; develop partnerships with new industries and nontraditional occupations, including industry sectors hardest hit by the pandemic; and align RAPs with other WBL opportunities within state education and workforce systems
- The majority of SAEEI funds have been dedicated to the statewide health care and critical skills apprenticeship initiatives.¹⁶

SECTION TWO: INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

According to WIOA guidelines,¹⁷ internships and work experience opportunities are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period. Internships or work experience may be arranged within the private for-profit, nonprofit, or public sector. Internships and work experience may be paid or unpaid and are offered to students or youth and adult workers. Interns may range from high school and postsecondary students and recent graduates to veterans and adult learners who are transitioning into the workforce.

In FY’23, the ages of WIOA intern participants who participated in internships and work experience ranged from younger than 19 to 65 and older; however, some opportunities may require a minimum age that is older than 16. Internships and work experience are typically seasonal and often aligned with postsecondary education semesters—spring, summer, and fall—and may range from several weeks to several months.

Internship and work experience opportunities include the following:

- Internships or employment opportunities not limited to summer months
- Summer employment or summer internship
- Pre-apprenticeship
- Other work experience opportunities

¹⁶ [Apprenticeship Initiatives - Texas Workforce Commission](#)

¹⁷ [Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Program | Texas Workforce Commission](#)

Internships can be mutually beneficial to employers and interns in several ways. Internships offer employers a workforce development strategy to recruit staff members who possess relevant interest and experience, explore talent, teach target occupation skill sets, and train candidates for full-time employment. Internships provide interns the opportunity to explore career pathways, gain professional work experience, develop target occupation skill sets, and become more competitive in the labor market to increase employability.

Internship Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

Qualified individuals, including those with disabilities, may seek internship opportunities by applying directly with employers. Interns with disabilities must meet the same qualifications and performance expectations as interns without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may be provided to help an intern or applicant meet internship requirements. Employers are prohibited from discriminating based on disability. Like RAP sponsors, employers who offer internships rely on self-identification as the method for documenting disability status within its internship workforce. Although interns are not required to disclose their disability status, they may choose to disclose their status at any point in the employment process.

Individuals with disabilities may participate in internship opportunities available through all WIOA programs as well as those specifically available to individuals with disabilities through TWC-VR, which is funded under WIOA Title IV. Boards and their contractors provide employment and training programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth, as funded under WIOA Title I. In FY'22-'23, TWC funded services for 3,078 WIOA participants with internships and work experience opportunities. Of these, 228 indicated the presence of a disability.¹⁸

VR customers have a wide array of paid or unpaid internship and work experience opportunities. Work experience services are available for students or youth with disabilities and adult customers who would benefit from work experience to gain employment skills and develop their work history. Work experiences are intended to be short-term (12 weeks or fewer) and part-time activities. Work experience services place customers at a business or agency within the community to learn skills for long-term competitive

¹⁸ [Texas Internship Challenge | txinternshipchallenge.com](https://txinternshipchallenge.com)

integrated employment (CIE). CIE is defined as employment that ensures both competitive hiring practices and a fully integrated work environment. This means that employers hire and give advancement opportunities to individuals with disabilities in the same manner as employees without disabilities, and all employees work together in a nonsegregated setting.¹⁹

A VR customer may participate in several work experience placements if multiple placements are necessary to help the customer gain the experience and skills to achieve their employment goal. In FY'22-'23, TWC-VR internship and work experience placements took place across 688 for-profit and 122 nonprofit employers, with an additional 116 employers who did not identify their status. Additionally, 8,299 VR customers in FY'22-'23 participated in work experiences, and 6,921 of those participants were transition students. Of the total number of students and adult participants, 982 obtained employment after completing their work experiences.

TWC-VR internship and work experience placements are ongoing and occur in coordination with other VR services needed by the participant to explore careers while they are in school or, for those not in school, to achieve their employment goal. Additionally, some internship opportunities are provided in the form of WBL. WBL experiences may include in-school or after-school opportunities or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that are provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible. Examples of WBL include Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL), Project SEARCH, and group skills training programs for students and Skills Training to Employment Projects (STEP) for adults.

Summer Earn and Learn and Project SEARCH

SEAL and Project SEARCH are examples of TWC-VR-funded programs that provide internship and WBL opportunities to students with disabilities. Known as Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), these programs are designed to support students with disabilities, ages 14–22, with career exploration counseling, work readiness training, counseling on postsecondary (college) opportunities, WBL experiences, and self-advocacy instruction. Students who participate in SEAL exit high school and/or college with a foundation of knowledge related to career pathways and occupations aligned with their strengths, resources, interests, and capabilities.

¹⁹ [Competitive Integrated Employment \(CIE\) | Department of Labor](#)

The SEAL program provides work-readiness training and paid work experience to students with disabilities during the summer months. The program is a partnership between TWC-VR and TWC's 28 LWDAs. In 2023, 2,952 students participated in SEAL, where they connected with employers, including Texas Tech University's Lubbock Lake Landmark, the Humane Society of Central Texas, and Bedford Movie Tavern. More specifically, 2,282 students completed work readiness training, and 2,323 students completed the five-week site work experience. TWC-VR expended over \$9.1M in VR funding for this service in 2023. Additional VR services were also provided to participants as needed to facilitate their participation in SEAL.

Project SEARCH is a well-established and nationally recognized internship model that consistently achieves successful outcomes for VR customers who are fifth-year high school students or students enrolled in the independent school districts (ISDs) 18+ Special Education Program, ages 18–22. Project SEARCH is an innovative, business-led, one-year school-to-work international model that features partnerships among employers, local ISDs, employment service providers, and other entities that serve individuals with disabilities. Project SEARCH promotes the successful long-term employment of students with disabilities in jobs that are stable, meaningful, integrated, and competitively compensated. TWC-VR and its ISD and employer partners currently have 29 active Project SEARCH sites across Texas.

Project SEARCH programs take place in a business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates teaching and learning and enables enrolled students with disabilities to develop competitive, marketable, and transferable skills that increase their employability. Each VR customer may participate in three internships during the academic year to explore a variety of career pathways. Employment planning meetings are held twice per internship for each VR customer to discuss employment goals and progress on skill development. The customer's team, which includes family and partnering agencies, helps the customer create an employment goal and supports the customer's transition from school to work. For the 2022–2023 school year, 191 TWC-VR customers completed the Project SEARCH program statewide, and 141 (73.82%) of those obtained employment after completing the program. TWC-VR expended over \$1.3M in VR funding for this service in during the 2022-2023 school year. Additional VR services were also provided to participants as needed to facilitate their participation in Project SEARCH.

Skills Training to Employment Project

The Skills Training to Employment Project (STEP) is a TWC-VR-funded program that creates a pipeline of talent for employers actively hiring, particularly for entry-level openings. This initiative develops partnerships to provide WBL opportunities that may lead to employment for adults with disabilities. Launched in FY'22, TWC-VR collaborates with businesses and VR-contracted employment service providers to offer work skills training and employment opportunities to cohorts of three to six adult VR customers interested in positions available with a host employer. STEP participants receive vocational adjustment training and paid work experience for up to 12 weeks, helping them obtain essential skills on the job. If performance goals are met, they may be hired by the host employer.

Current STEP sites include Nacogdoches Memorial; McLane Company, Inc.; Walgreens Distribution Center; City of San Antonio; Toyotetsu Texas; University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; University of Texas Health in Tyler; Caterpillar; Enterprise Holdings; and Harris Health Systems. Additional STEP sites are being developed with the Courtyard by Marriott. To date, 105 VR customers have completed a STEP initiative, and 52 of those have obtained employment with the assigned worksite or with another employer.

Internship Funding

Providing valuable work experience, internships are one example of the numerous services available through WIOA-funded programs. Funding for programs authorized under WIOA Titles I–III is provided in part through grants received from the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA). These funds are designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and help match employers with the skilled workers who they need to compete in the global economy. TWC administers WIOA funding in Texas and provides services through its 28 Boards, their contractors, and community partners. The funding for various WIOA services provided by Boards comes from a combination of state and federal funding distributed through various TWC programs.²⁰

TWC's VR program, authorized under WIOA Title IV, is funded through a grant from the US Department of Education Rehabilitation Services

²⁰ [Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Program | Texas Workforce Commission](#)

Administration. TWC-VR funding helps eligible individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in CIE. TWC-VR services include physical and mental restoration services, postsecondary education and training, rehabilitation and assistive technology, employment, and self-employment services and Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. In FY'23, TWC-VR expended over \$10.4M in VR funding to support internships through SEAL and Project SEARCH.

Texas Talent Connection Internship Grants

[Texas Talent Connection \(TTC\) Grants](#) program, funded by Wagner-Peyser 7(b) federal funds, empowers Texas students to thrive in STEM careers. Every July 1, the governor's office receives funds to support workforce training and job placement. In partnership with the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC), TWC awards these grants, creating opportunities for high school and community/technical college students. For FY'23, four grants totaling \$342,863 were awarded.

TTC grants fund work-based internships in high-demand STEM fields, allowing students to earn class credit, industry certifications, and invaluable on-the-job experience. This fosters an environment of innovation and growth for both individuals and businesses. Applicants can include various combinations of Boards, employers or employer organizations, institutions of higher education, faith-based organizations, local ISDs, and nonprofit community-based organizations.

TTC prioritizes grant applications that incorporate the following:

- **Lead to tangible results:** Projects should result in job placements, wage increases, and improved job retention.
- **Embrace innovation:** Projects should seek creative and efficient approaches to workforce development.
- **Support diverse needs:** Services should cater to workforce populations facing unique challenges.

In FY'23 alone, TTC enrolled 3,267 participants with valuable training and education programs, demonstrating its significant impact on the Texas workforce. Of the total participants, 1,674 students earned industry-based certifications, and 884 gained employment through the certifications.

Geographic Locations of Internship Programs

As with apprenticeship programs, there are no requirements for a statewide distribution of internship programs. TWC promotes growth of programs and opportunities for individuals in all areas of the state. The FY'23 TTC Grants referenced above were awarded in the West Central, Heart of Texas, Coastal Bend, and Cameron County WDAs. In addition, internship opportunities can be searched by location at TWC's website designed to list and promote internship opportunities—[Texas Internship Challenge](#).

TWC-VR must make work-based learning activities available statewide to students with disabilities. Internship is one type of work-based learning activity. TWC-VR work-based learning opportunities are available to students with disabilities in all 28 WDAs.

SECTION THREE: PROMOTING APPRENTICESHIP AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

TWC remains strategic and forward thinking in its commitment to promoting and expanding apprenticeship and internship opportunities that provide a pipeline of skilled and talented workers to meet employer needs. In promoting these opportunities, TWC focuses on creating programs and platforms to connect talented young people and adults with industry-leading employers around the state. These valuable connections give employers the opportunity to recruit work-ready job seekers they can train for careers in target occupations. Job seekers can explore career pathways, gain new skills, earn credentials in target occupations, increase their labor market value, and improve their ability to earn higher wages.

Specifically, TWC and its partners in the Texas workforce system promote apprenticeship and internship opportunities through various means, such as TWC and Boards' social media channels, press releases to media outlets, live events, program conferences, presentations, and a team of education outreach specialists. One such partner, TWIC, through its Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee (ATAC), promotes apprenticeship programs by producing an apprenticeship brochure for students, employers, and LEAs to increase program awareness. A representative of TWC-VR also serves on the ATAC to provide information on the VR program and opportunities to connect VR participants to registered apprenticeship.

Additionally, Student HireAbility Navigators work directly with ISDs to provide programs and services to students via in-person and virtual presentations; career exploration opportunities; print and electronic promotional materials disseminated to schools, students, and parents; and youth career exploration events hosted by Boards in conjunction with ISDs, colleges, community colleges, and universities. TWC also focuses on reaching employers through social media outlets, events, and outreach initiatives designed to encourage more employers to offer apprenticeship and paid internship programs.

ApprenticeshipTexas Conference

TWC will host the eighth annual [ApprenticeshipTexas Conference](#) in the fall of 2024. This conference supports a diverse group of employers, workforce development partners, and educational institutions interested in learning more about how apprenticeships can strengthen their business, industry, and the Texas workforce. Those in attendance can engage in sessions that will support their goals of creating or expanding RAPs. Increasing the availability and innovation of Registered Apprenticeships in Texas will increase the opportunities students have to develop careers in industry-leading, high-demand occupations. Each year the agency promotes this through a series of “Save the Date” and “Register Now” event messaging and graphics, directed toward employers through the web, social media, and targeted emails.

Texas Internship Challenge

As part of the Tri-Agency Initiative challenging industry and employer partners to offer more paid internships for Texas students, the Texas Internship Challenge (TIC) was established following a recommendation from TWC, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to the Office of the Governor. The campaign allows TWC, TEA, and THECB, in conjunction with workforce partners, to raise awareness of internship programs and encourage [TXInternshipChallenge.com](#) registration and participation by employers and our state’s young workforce. The website lists employer internship positions and provides information on the internship application process. In addition to offering free access to internship postings available throughout the state, the site meets accessibility guidelines, offers preference hiring for veterans, and supports both technical and nontechnical positions. Internship information

and resources for students and employers can also be found on [TWC's TIC page](#). The agency promotes this initiative with seasonal emphasis around the spring, summer, and fall standard school semesters, emphasizing the summer intern season. The spring 2024 outreach campaign led to record high click-throughs from the TWC home page and new "individual" or intern registrations on the site.

Texas Interns Unite!

TWC's [Texas Interns Unite!](#) is an initiative linked to the TIC and created in partnership with THECB and the Texas Working Off-Campus: Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills Internship Program (TXWORKS). Texas Interns Unite! connects interns across the state with each other and Texas employers through virtual and in-person events, including an annual conference series. In July 2024, TWC and THECB cohosted National Intern Day: Connect, Learn, and Network Together in San Antonio as part of the Texas Interns Unite! conference series. The event was held to provide interns with networking opportunities and valuable resources for career advancement. In addition, the [Texas Interns Unite! LinkedIn page](#) offers employers and interns a digital platform for networking, connecting, and receiving the most up-to-date news on possible internship opportunities.

Jobs Y'all

In 2018, TWC launched a youth-oriented career exploration site, Jobs Y'all, which offers information about high-demand industries and occupations in Texas. The Jobs Y'all site connects users to TWC career tools, such as Texas Reality Check, Texas Career Check, TIC, and other statewide initiatives.

In FY'24, research was conducted to evaluate how best to expand the Jobs Y'all website based on outreach to target audiences. The research included a comparative site analysis to assess current career exploration resources as well as focus groups in which Texans suggested improvements to the site based on their career exploration needs. Research results will support a planned content and functionality expansion, including information about apprenticeships and internships and resources for individuals with disabilities. Development of this content is anticipated to begin in FY'25, with a roll out and potential outreach campaign to follow.

Conclusion

Apprenticeship and internship programs provide valuable opportunities for job seekers and employers in leading industries with high-demand occupations across Texas. While some opportunities are specific to individuals with disabilities, individuals with disabilities can participate in any apprenticeship or internship opportunity for which they qualify. TWC is committed to providing and promoting apprenticeship and internship opportunities to all job seekers, including those with disabilities. In addition, TWC will continue to offer and promote VR services designed specifically to assist individuals with disabilities.

Appendix: List of Apprenticeship and Internship Programs for Individuals with Disabilities

The table beginning on the following page provides a list of opportunities specifically for students and adults with disabilities. These opportunities are cohort based and are a subset of all opportunities available to individuals with disabilities, as described in the narrative section of the report.

Program Name ²¹	Program Type	Population Served	Employers/Host Sites	Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)	Age Range	Funding Source	Program Length	Entity Type	Completed Program
Explore Apprenticeship 2.0	Pre-Apprenticeship Exploration	Students	Dallas College	Greater Dallas	14–22	TWC-VR	Semester	Public	17
Explore Apprenticeship 2.0	Pre-Apprenticeship Exploration	Students	San Jacinto College	Gulf Coast	14–22	TWC-VR	Semester	Public	27
Extended Pre-Transition Camp at Texas School for the Deaf	Internship	Students	37 Employer Sites	Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	4 weeks	Both	66
Job Opportunities for Blind Students (JOBS)	Internship	Students	9 Employer Sites	Capital Area	14–22	TWC-VR	3 weeks	Private	14
Project Search	Internship	Students	Ascension Seton Hays	Rural Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	4
Project Search	Internship	Students	Ascension Seton Northwest	Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	7
Project Search	Internship	Students	Ascension Seton Williamson	Rural Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	5
Project Search	Internship	Students	Baylor Scott & White Medical Center–Lakeway	Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	1
Project Search	Internship	Students	Baylor Scott & White Healthcare–Brenham	Brazos Valley	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	2
Project Search	Internship	Students	Baylor Scott & White Healthcare–College Station	Brazos Valley	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	8
Project Search	Internship	Students	CHRISTUS Children's Hospital of San Antonio	Alamo	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	7
Project Search	Internship	Students	CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System	Deep East Texas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	10
Project Search	Internship	Students	Cintas	Tarrant County	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	8
Project Search	Internship	Students	City of Garland	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Public	4
Project Search	Internship	Students	Dell Seton Medical Center at the UT of Austin	Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6
Project Search	Internship	Students	Dow Chemical	Gulf Coast	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6

²¹2024 academic school year and 2023 summer program events

Program Name ²¹	Program Type	Population Served	Employers/Host Sites	Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)	Age Range	Funding Source	Program Length	Entity Type	Completed Program
Project Search	Internship	Students	Dow Chemical	Golden Crescent	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	8
Project Search	Internship	Students	Embassy Suites Dallas–Frisco Hotel	North Central Texas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	9
Project Search	Internship	Students	Epiroc	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6
Project Search	Internship	Students	Gaylord Texas Resort and Convention Center	Tarrant County	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	9
Project Search	Internship	Students	Highland Springs Retirement Community Center	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	5
Project Search	Internship	Students	Houston Dow Center	Gulf Coast	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	5
Project Search	Internship	Students	Kalahari Resorts	Rural Capital Area	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6
Project Search	Internship	Students	Northwest Texas Hospital	Panhandle	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	9
Project Search	Internship	Students	Providence Hospital East	Borderplex	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6
Project Search	Internship	Students	Renaissance Dallas Richardson	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	5
Project Search	Internship	Students	SanMar Corporation	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	7
Project Search	Internship	Students	Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center	Brazos Valley	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	4
Project Search	Internship	Students	Texas Children's Health Plan	Gulf Coast	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	6
Project Search	Internship	Students	Texas Health Dallas	Greater Dallas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	10
Project Search	Internship	Students	Texas Health Plano	North Central Texas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	8
Project Search	Internship	Students	The City of Lewisville	North Central Texas	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Public	11
Project Search	Internship	Students	The Hospitals of Providence Memorial	Borderplex	18–22	TWC-VR	9 months	Private	9
SEAL	Internship	Students	33 Employer Sites	Panhandle	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	43
SEAL	Internship	Students	58 Employer Sites	South Plains	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	43
SEAL	Internship	Students	22 Employer Sites	North Texas	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	24
SEAL	Internship	Students	117 Employer Sites	North Central Texas	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	198
SEAL	Internship	Students	43 Employer Sites	Tarrant County	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	131
SEAL	Internship	Students	18 Employer Sites	Greater Dallas	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	145
SEAL	Internship	Students	29 Employer Sites	Northeast Texas	14–22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	29

Program Name ²¹	Program Type	Population Served	Employers/Host Sites	Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)	Age Range	Funding Source	Program Length	Entity Type	Completed Program
SEAL	Internship	Students	48 Employer Sites	East Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	79
SEAL	Internship	Students	25 Employer Sites	West Central Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	21
SEAL	Internship	Students	22 Employer Sites	Borderplex	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	77
SEAL	Internship	Students	28 Employer Sites	Permian Basin	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	41
SEAL	Internship	Students	15 Employer Sites	Concho Valley	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	21
SEAL	Internship	Students	19 Employer Sites	Heart of Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	38
SEAL	Internship	Students	36 Employer Sites	Capital Area	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	100
SEAL	Internship	Students	57 Employer Sites	Rural Capital	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	87
SEAL	Internship	Students	17 Employer Sites	Brazos Valley	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	28
SEAL	Internship	Students	33 Employer Sites	Deep East Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	44
SEAL	Internship	Students	34 Employer Sites	Southeast Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	62
SEAL	Internship	Students	26 Employer Sites	Golden Crescent	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	24
SEAL	Internship	Students	53 Employer Sites	Alamo	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	152
SEAL	Internship	Students	29 Employer Sites	South Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	41
SEAL	Internship	Students	65 Employer Sites	Coastal Bend	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	55
SEAL	Internship	Students	72 Employer Sites	Lower Rio Grande Valley	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	142
SEAL	Internship	Students	30 Employer Sites	Cameron County	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	85
SEAL	Internship	Students	33 Employer Sites	Texoma	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	41
SEAL	Internship	Students	38 Employer Sites	Central Texas	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	68
SEAL	Internship	Students	39 Employer Sites	Middle Rio Grande	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	52
SEAL	Internship	Students	268 Employer Sites	Gulf Coast	14-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Both	452
STEP	Internship	Adults	Caterpillar	Heart of Texas	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	6
STEP	Internship	Adults	City of San Antonio	Alamo	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	2
STEP	Internship	Adults	Courtyard by Marriott	West Central	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Private	--
STEP	Internship	Adults	Enterprise Holdings, Inc. IAH	Gulf Coast	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Private	11
STEP	Internship	Adults	Harris Health Systems	Gulf Coast	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	15
STEP	Internship	Adults	McLane Company, Inc.	South Plains	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Private	12

Program Name ²¹	Program Type	Population Served	Employers/Host Sites	Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)	Age Range	Funding Source	Program Length	Entity Type	Completed Program
STEP	Internship	Adults	McLane Company, Inc.	Tarrant	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Private	6
STEP	Internship	Adults	Nacogdoches Memorial	East Texas	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	2
STEP	Internship	Adults	Toyotetsu Texas	Alamo	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Private	7
STEP	Internship	Adults	University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	Lower Rio Grande Valley	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	22
STEP	Internship	Adults	University of Texas Tyler Medical Center	East Texas	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	5
STEP	Internship	Adults	Walgreens Distribution Center	North Central	18 and up	TWC-VR	12 weeks	Public	7
Summer Work Experience in Austin, TX (SWEAT)	Internship	Students with VI	Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)	Capital Area	16-22	TWC-VR	4 weeks	Public	7
Work-Based Learning Initiative (Texas A&M)	Internship	Students	61 School Sites	Multiple LWDA's	14-22	TWC-VR	School year	Public	--
Work and College Opportunities (WACO) Program at Texas A&M	Internship	Students	10 Employer Sites	Brazos Valley ²²	18-22	TWC-VR	5 weeks	Private	44
Work and Living in the Community (WALIC)	Internship	Students with VI	Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)	Capital Area	16-22	TWC-VR	4 weeks	Public	37

²²Referrals are submitted from across the state.



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Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice).