



## **STRATEGIC COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES**

Workforce Solutions Alamo  
100 N. Santa Rosa St., Suite 120, Boardroom  
San Antonio, TX 78207

**February 2, 2024**

**10:00 AM**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Eric Cooper (Chair), Leslie Cantu, Anthony Magaro, Lowell Keig, Angelique De Oliveira, Mitchell Shane Denn

**STAFF:** Adrian Lopez, Adrian Perez, Angela Bush, Christine Dever, Chuck Agwuegbo, Jeremy Taub, Kristen Rodriguez, Rebecca Espino Balencia, Teresa Chavez, Vanessa McHaney, Victoria Rodriguez, Gabriela Horbach, Manuel Ugues, Roberto Corral, Brenda Garcia, Ramsey Olivarez, Sylvia Perez, Vanessa Garcia, Janice Berechi-Onyejiako, Alfred Salazar, Caroline Goddard, Dr. Ricardo Ramirez, Gabriela Navarro Garcia, Gabriela Ore, George Mazariegos, Marty Pena, Sandra Rodriguez, Trema Cote

**PARTNER STAFF:** Mike Ramsey

**LEGAL COUNSEL:** None

**GUESTS:** Adrain King – TVC, Anna Baker – TVC, Dawn Natalino-White – TWC, Ricardo Rendon – TWC, Melinda Paninski – TWC, Mike Rivas – SA Food Bank

### **AGENDA**

*Agenda items may not be considered in the order they appear.*

Citizens may appear before the Committee to speak for or against any item on the Agenda in accordance with procedural rules governing meetings. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes on each topic (6 minutes if translation is needed) if they register at the beginning of the meeting. Questions relating to these rules may be directed to Caroline Goddard at (210) 322-6296.

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**During the Public Comments portion of the meeting (Agenda Item 4), the public may type their name into the chat box or unmute themselves and state their name. The meeting host will call each member of the public for comments, in the order their names were submitted.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**At 10:01am, Chair Eric Cooper called the meeting to order.**

II. ROLL CALL AND QUORUM DETERMINATION

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**The roll was called, and a quorum was declared present.**

III. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**None.**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**None.**

V. CONSENT AGENDA (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

a. Meeting Minutes – November 6, 2023

**Upon motion by Mitchell Shane Denn and seconded by Anthony Magaro, the Committee unanimously approved the Consent Agenda item a. Meeting Minutes – November 6, 2023.**

VI. TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION UPDATE

Presenter: Adrain King, Veterans Employment Services, South Texas District Manager, Texas Veterans Commission. Anna Baker, Director for Veterans Employment Services, Texas Veterans Commission also presented.

- Mission: To advocate for and provide superior service that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

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- Connect veterans and their families to the benefits they have earned. This includes a wide range of benefits and services, from disability compensation claims to healthcare, and employment to education benefits. TVC is an agency of the State of Texas.
- TVC services include claims, healthcare advocacy, education, employment, entrepreneurship, mental health, women veterans' program, and grants for non-profit organizations.
- Claims: VA accredited Claims Benefits Advisors assist veterans with filing service-connected disability compensation claims with the VA, help vets navigate the VA process and help to ensure claims are filed correctly, assist veterans' families and survivors, has more than 45 offices across the state, and assists in making appointments online.
- Healthcare Advocacy: Healthcare Advocates provide veterans free one-on-one assistance in resolving VA medical care issues such as appointments, medications and pharmacy, treatment and labs, referrals, and filing paperwork. There are 24 Healthcare Advocates in VA facilities across Texas.
- Education: Connects Texas veterans to higher education and technical training opportunities, serves as State-Approving Agency that approves education, training, and work programs under the G.I. Bill, assists schools and students in understanding the Hazlewood Act Tuition Exemption, and responds to phone and email inquiries from veterans, their dependents, and schools.
- Entrepreneur: Veteran business consultants work one on one with veterans, spouses, and family members who wish to own their own business. Subjects covered include business plans, access to capital, market research, tax id's and permits, and resource library.
- Women Veterans: Encourages women who served to identify as veterans and claim the benefits they have earned, addresses women veteran issues, Women Veterans Professional Network, Women Veterans Registry, and special events including Women Veterans Day on June 12.
- Mental Health: Provides free training, certification, and technical assistance on veteran culture, military trauma, and military culture to licensed mental health providers, community and faith-based organizations, veteran service organizations, and Texas justice system and first responders. Mental Health works with partners to address suicide prevention and intervention, veteran homelessness, military related trauma, military cultural competency, peer support services, justice involved veterans, re-entry programs, and veteran treatment courts.
- Military Veteran Peer Network: Composed of Peer Service Coordinators (PSC), TVC trains and supports these coordinators who are all veterans, TVC recognizes that some veterans may be more forthcoming with their veteran peer, and PSC connects the veteran with mental health support and other services in the veteran's local area.
- Grants: The Fund for Veterans' Assistance awards grants to non-profits and government agencies which provide direct support and services to veterans such as financial assistance, family support services, home modification,

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transportation, legal aid, and much more. The Texas Lottery Commission provides most of the funding for these grants with \$2 scratch offs designated “Supporting Texas Veterans”. Since 2009, the Fund for Veterans Assistance has awarded over \$200M in grants to non-profit organizations, local government agencies, and Veteran County Service Offices, benefiting over 350,000 Texas Veterans and their families.

- Veteran County Service Officer: TVC trains VCSOs in VA disability claims and pension processing, spousal and dependent benefits, and other veteran services, VCSOs are well informed about community resources that provide aid and comfort to veterans and their families, and most VCSOs are veterans themselves.
- U.S. Citizenship: U.S. service members, veterans, and their families may be eligible for certain immigration benefits on the path to U.S. citizenship, and surviving family members of deceased U.S. military service members and veterans may also qualify.
- Veterans Employment Services: Mission is to provide veterans with significant barriers to job entry and other eligible persons access to long-term and meaningful employment.
- Employment: Staff in over 90 locations across Texas including 70 American Job Centers. Veterans Career Advisor services include employment planning, resume and application assistance, job search techniques, transition assistance, VA Vocational Rehabilitation, and work opportunity tax credit pre-certification. The Family Career Advisor provides employment services to active duty Wounded Warriors, veteran spouses, and family members. Veterans Employer Liaison services include veterans’ preference program assistance, hiring authorities’ training, career fairs, job posting development, and hiring events.
- Partnerships: Partner collaboration ensures veteran success which includes Veterans Administration – VR&E, Texas Veterans Network (Combined Arms), OBBT – Off-base Transition Training, Recruit Military, American Legion, Goodwill, and Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.
- Accomplishments: Customer satisfaction – 93.9% in FY23 (1,289 responses), JVSG expansion in Midland, Missouri City, and Pearland AJCs, American Legion and Disabled American Vets (DAV) State and National Recognition, and TVC employee recognitions.
- Chair Eric Cooper asked if TVC’s data is published and the impact of their strategy. Anna Baker responded that the agency publishes their strategic plan and an annual report. There is a separate report focusing on women veterans. Chair Eric Cooper also asked if there are ways for TVC and WSA to strategically collaborate. Anna Baker stated that TVC works closely with TWC’s Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) to ensure that veterans that are outside the scope of TVC are being served. Therefore, TVC is open to ideas and solutions to get veterans served.

## VII. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION UPDATE

Presenters: Dawn Natalino-White, Deputy Regional Director, Texas Workforce Solutions, and Ricardo Rendon, Business Relations Coordinator, Texas Workforce

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## Solutions

- TWS-VR is an eligibility-based program that aims to assist individuals with disabilities in Texas by providing them with the necessary services and support to prepare for, obtain, retain, or advance in employment. VR serves Texans with disabilities starting at the age of 14 and adults of all ages. The types of disabilities supported are mental health condition, physical disability, hearing loss or deafness, chronic health condition, learning disability, and low vision or blindness.
- Partnership: VR staff relocated to workforce solution centers in the 2016 transition from DARS to TWS-VR. This move advanced synergy and positioned VR to seamlessly provide workforce solutions to Texans. Their concerted efforts have been dedicated to expanding partnerships, leveraging resources, and empowering Texas with disabilities to achieve their employment aspirations.
- Partner Collaborations: Key collaborative programs include SEAL and year-round PWE. Beyond these, partnerships extend to ensuring seamless communication in joined efforts to serve both job seekers and employers such as NDEAM Events Alamo HIREs, Toyotetsu internship, WIT contributions, paid work experience, inter-agency referral, Summer Earn and Learn, increasing accessibility, consultations and disability awareness, Workforce Academy participation.
- 2024 Partnership Goals: Collaborative efforts will be directed towards augmenting co-enrollment rates, aligning outreach initiatives, and fortifying joint projects which includes a seamless referral system and coordinated cross trainings.
- Texas Talent Experts: Dual Customer Focus – Leveraging services allows to create a holistic ecosystem where both job seekers and employers benefit from a comprehensive range of services, Optimizing Systemic Solutions – By aligning strategies and resources, they can address challenges at a systemic level, creating a more resilient and adaptable workforce, and Maximizing Services for Disability Talent – Collaborative efforts contribute to advancing diversity and inclusion in the workforce, creating pathways, removing barriers, and ensuring that disability talent has an effective pipeline to employment.
- Angelique De Oliveira asked if assisting employers to assess their jobs and identifying ways to make them more accessible to individuals with disabilities is part of their scope of work. Ricardo Rendon stated that this is something that they provide such as job analysis. Leslie Cantu added that they helped Toyotetsu in customizing their program, providing guidance, and is there to help the employer and the employee.
- Anthony Magaro stated that most employers, such as his at Southwest Research Institute, are unaware of this kind of service and would like to be involved in the future.
- Adrain King with TVC stated that he was aware of VR being in the New Braunfels, Datapoint and South Flores locations. He asked if they have any staff in the Walzem/O'Connor, East Houston, and Marbach/Port SA locations. Dawn Natalino-White responded that there are staff in East Houston, staff going into

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the O'Connor location, but none in the Marbach/Port SA location. She stated that their counselors are mobile and can go out into the community if needed.

#### VIII. READY TO WORK UPDATE

Presenter: Mike Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development Office, City of San Antonio

- As of December 12, 2023, 12,768 have been engaged in the intake process, 10,029 completed intake process, 8,613 officially admitted to Ready to Work, 5,482 enrolled in education and training, 808 completed education and training, and 398 placed in quality jobs.
- Expenses to date are \$27.5M from FY21 to FY24.
- Demographics: 65% are female and 35% are male, 64% Hispanic, 21% African American, 9% White, and 6% other.
- Age at Intake: 4% aged 15 to 19, 36% aged 20 to 29, 32% aged 30 to 39, 18% aged 40 to 49, 8% aged 50 to 59, and 2% aged 60 to 79.
- Equity Lens: Intentional outreach to target populations, 612 persons with disabilities, 526 military involved, 843 justice involved, 197 foster involved, and an annual median household income of \$13,492.
- Training Types Selected to Date: 78% certifications, 15% associate's degrees, and 7% bachelor's degrees.
- Training Industries Selected to Date: 42% healthcare, 18% IT/cybersecurity, 17% transportation/logistics, 9% professional services/other, 5% finance/insurance, 5% construction/skilled trades, 3% education, and 1% manufacturing/aerospace.
- Pay It Forward Internships: Paid internships for IT training completers without experience, pilot program for USAA, CPS Energy, City of San Antonio, and Credit Human, and if an employer hires the candidate after the six-week internship, then it will repay the wages of about \$5,000 to the city to fund another intern.
- RTW asked employers to pledge and apply for the Pilot Incumbent Worker Training Program and On-the-Job Training Program. Each will receive either a \$100,000 or \$150,000 grant to upskill employees. Awardees will enter into a funding agreement with the COSA Workforce Development Office. Awards will be announced on February 16.
- Additional Job Placement Strategies: Greenlight Job Board, job verification funding for partners, and a \$10 background check report.
- SA Ready to Work Summit is on February 20 and 21. Powered by National League of Cities Good Jobs Great Cities and Department of Labor Women's Bureau.

#### IX. PROCUREMENT UPDATE (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Jeremy Taub, Director of Procurement and Contracts

##### a. Procurement Diversity Update (SMWVBE)

- Successful Highlights: Outreach to current vendors has increased the number of SMWVBE classifications, which resulted in expenditures to be at 18.8%, WSA

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has issued payments to 86 vendors for the purchase of goods and services with 15 identifying as HUB, attending Bexar County HUB Expo in December, encouraging SMWVBE participation at pre-bid conferences, promoting use of Electronic Purchasing Notices and Document Distribution System, and providing demographic information on the childcare providers received from the contractor COSA.

- Total SMWVBE's By Classification: 15 of 86 total vendors classified as SMWVBE and some vendors may be in multiple classifications. Fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, WSA was at 42.35% of total expenditures.
- Total corporate expenditures are \$1,098,408.00 with \$206,476.48 being SMWVBE payments. Total African, Asian, and Hispanic ethnicity payments are \$153,395.01 and total small, veteran, and women owned payments are \$53,081.47.
- SMWVBE Classification and Expenditures for Childcare Providers: Total providers are 586 with 250 being SMWVBE. Total expenditures are \$123,246,999.87 with \$63,135,994.36 being SMWVBE.

b. Facility Updates

i. Kerrville

- The existing 5,000 square foot facility lease is expiring April 30, 2024, and a new procurement was completed in 2023.
- This will be a full-service lease with an estimated monthly rent of \$9,000 to \$9,900 and an estimated annual rent of \$108,000 to \$118,900.
- Next steps are to negotiate a new agreement with an anticipated contract term of five years with three five-year renewals.
- Chair Eric Cooper asked if there is any co-locating and what the growth is in the next five years. Jeremy Taub responded that all of this information was included in the evaluation. In addition, VR is at this location and will continue to reside there. CEO Adrian Lopez added that Kerr EDC is also in this location and the location has lots of visibility and traffic.

**Upon motion by Angelique De Oliveira and seconded by Mitchell Shane Denn, the Committee approved to move forward with the Kerrville lease, with Lowell Keig abstaining from the vote.**

ii. Port SA

- The tentative opening is May 2024. Weekly progress meetings are being conducted. Construction remains on schedule and is at 65% completion. The monthly rent will be \$28,365, with 5% annual escalation.

iii. Mobile Unit

- The tentative opening is July 2024. Periodic progress meetings are being conducted. Construction remains on schedule and is at 15% completion.

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X. LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Adrian Perez, CIO

a. Sector-Based Model Update – Sector-Based Score Cards & Strategic Partnership Manager Update

Presenters: Rebecca Espino Balencia, Interim Director of Workforce Services & Caroline Goddard, Strategic Community Partnerships Manager

- Scorecard for Overall Impact: 2,421 enrolled, 409 successful completions, 219 placements, and 53.54% employment rate.
- Rural and Urban Total Impact: 2,663 employers, 28,553 job orders, 49,838 openings, 129,643 applicants, 301 key accounts, 220 hiring events, 19,440 hiring event participants, 775 training worksites, and 4,705 confirmed hires.
- Partnership Updates: Perkins Postsecondary CTE & Community Service Block Grants, 100 Black Men: Youth Build, Off Base Training Opportunities, Youth: Seguin EDC & Lytle ISD and Youth Internship Application, Hondo Apartments, Opportunity Home: Jobs Plus Matched Partnership, Gary Job Corps, YMCA, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Partners: Sentencing Foundation, CVS.
- Letters of Support: Catholic Charities applied for \$325,000 for the Refugee Resettlement Career Pathway Program Grant and The Children's Shelter applied for \$500,000 from the HHSC Thriving Texas Families program pilot.
- An MOU was signed with Bexar County Office of Criminal Justice for Reentry Center Services. This will facilitate access to services through a service delivery model/workflow, implement strategies that augment traditional service delivery and increases access to services and programs, leverage resources and capacity to assist the formerly incarcerated individuals re-enter back into society so they do not recidivate, and collaborate to develop and implement a variety of special initiatives that benefit returning citizens, including the Reentry Center's Second Chance Job Fair.
- WSA is involved with two coalitions. First is with Culturingua who has a grant for Pathways to Prosperity working with immigrants and refugees, and second is with American Indians in Texas who has a grant for Mission of Motherhood working with the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative. Both of these grants have moved towards the third cohort, which means they have received additional funds for their programs.
- Workforce Academy: This is going into year two and the Area Foundation has furthered the funds. There are 586 participants with 346 graduates. The goal was 500 participants.
- Workforce Leadership Academy: Fellows pitched their ideas to stakeholders in December on partnership, educate and train employers, engagement and outcomes, and strategic navigation.
- Community Conversations: The final community conversations are being held on February 14 and 21. The outreach and action plan is to

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prioritize outreach to partners, secure Letter of Intent or MOU that defines roles and responsibilities, creation of Workforce Councils, continue to deepen partnership, attend chamber and EDC events, attend interagency meetings, table at community events, host a job fair, and identify and connect the ISDs and community agencies to increase referrals.

b. Ready to Work Analysis

Presenter: Rebecca Espino Balencia, Interim Director of Workforce Services

- Annual Goals: Intake/interview mid-year target is 50%, interviewed 48%, enrolled in training 59%. Training completion and job placement target is 70% and performance is at 66%. Placed in quality jobs within six months target is 80% and performance is at 45%.
- Data Driven Strategies: More focused coordination with training providers and sub-agencies regarding individual contributions towards overall outcomes. Need to address barriers, look and see if training providers are impacting placements, and review over-performing occupations.
- A Placement Committee was formed on January 4, 2024, made up of all sub-agencies and will meet twice a month. This committee will focus on placement outcomes, share employer leads and relationship building, provide participant advice for those harder to place, build support, and continue consortium presence at Housing Trust sites and JBSA 2024.
- Employer Initiatives: Utilize employers with internship opportunities, utilize COSA Pay-It-Forward campaign, share all events with Placement Committee, and coordinate graduation events with training providers.
- Signify to SYNC Transition: Delay in ability to assign incoming 311 referrals, reassign clients when asking to move to a new sub-agency, no report capability currently available, understanding SYNC usage, and temporary staff would help in referral distribution, spot checking for errors, and event planning.
- Marketing: Develop phone messaging with COSA, new logos and branding, and developing signs for computers and buttons for staff.

XI. CEO REPORT

Presenter: Adrian Lopez, CEO

a. WSA Internship Program Report

- Reported on successes and lessons learned. \$57,000 has been paid out to the six interns.

XII. CHAIR REPORT

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**None.**

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XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Pursuant to Chapter 551 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Committee may move into Executive Session for discussion on any issue for which there is an exception to the Act as set out in section 551.071 et. seq. including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Government Code §551.072 – Discussions Regarding Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property if Deliberation in an Open Meeting Would Have a Detrimental Effect on the Position of Workforce Solutions Alamo in Negotiations with a Third Party;
- b. Government Code §551.071 – All Matters Where Workforce Solutions Alamo Seeks the Advice of its Attorney as Privileged Communications Under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas;
- c. Pending or Contemplated Litigation;
- d. Government Code §551.074 – Personnel Matters Involving Senior Executive Staff and Employees of Workforce Solutions Alamo; and
- e. Government Code §551.089 – Discussions Regarding Security Devices or Audits.

**None.**

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

**Upon motion by Mitchell Shane Denn, Chair Eric Cooper adjourned the meeting at 11:37am.**