



## Texas (TX) WIOA Matrix

### Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)

At the federal, state, and local levels, TWC continues to make great strides toward a streamlined and coordinated one-stop delivery system serving adults and youth with disabilities and employers that employ these individuals. TWC's executive director and the commissioner of assistive and rehabilitative services (transferred to TWC as of September 2016) participate as ex officio members of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. TWC also serves on state-level interagency councils and workgroups supporting gateways for individuals with disabilities, such as the Employment First Task Force and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services' (DADS) Promoting Independence Advisory Council. Other memberships have included the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services' (DARS) Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Council, and HHSC's House Bill 1230 Workgroup on Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities. TWC will also continue to coordinate with the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to serve mutual consumers who need employment assistance as well as assistance with independent living resources. In this vein, TWC has collaborated with a number of agencies in developing guidance, such as a transition and employment guide for Texas students with disabilities. (Page 72)

- DRS co-chairs and participates in the legislatively mandated Employment First Task Force charged with writing and making recommendations to implement an Employment First statewide policy, and providing information and/or training to providers, stakeholders, and the general public on employment as the first option for any publicly funded service.
- Membership and participation in Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE).
- Representation on:
  - The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
  - The Council for Advising and Planning (CAP) for the Prevention and Treatment of Mental and Substance Use Disorders
  - Texas Clubhouse Coalition
  - Texas Alliance for the Mentally Ill
  - Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services (TCCVS)
  - Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council (TBIAC)
  - HHSC Office of Acquired Brain Injury (OABI)
  - State Independent Living Council (SILC)
  - Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
  - DADS Consumer Direction Workgroup
  - HHSC Medicaid/CHIP CRCG
  - Texas Technology Access Program Advisory Council (Page 244)

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Also, DARS co-chairs the Employment First Task Force (EFTF), which was created as a result of SB 1226 and was passed by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature (2013). The EFTF consists of 26 members (seven represent state agencies) appointed by the HHSC executive commissioner. The purpose of the EFTF is to promote competitive employment of individuals with disabilities, with the expectation that individuals with disabilities are able to meet the same employment standards, responsibilities, and expectations as any other working-age adult.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> legislature established Employment First Policy for Texas, which makes competitive employment and earning a living wage a priority and the preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who receive public benefits.

The EFTF's responsibilities include designing an education and outreach process, developing recommendations for policy, procedure, and rule changes necessary to implement the employment first policy, and providing reports to the governor's office, Texas legislature, and HHSC executive commissioner. The first report was submitted in Fall 2014. The next report is due in the fall of 2016. (Page 300)

## Customized Employment

DRS ensures that staff are well-qualified to assist individuals with disabilities. There is emphasis of educational requirements at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, in fields related to rehabilitation. However, the degree field may include other degrees that prepare individuals to work with consumers and employers. For example, bachelor degrees might include not only vocational rehabilitation counseling, but also social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with consumers and employers. For individuals hired at the bachelor's level, there is a requirement for at least one year of paid or unpaid experience related to direct work with individuals with disabilities. (Page 258)

- Continued focus on the foundations of the VR process for counselors and RSTs, including accurate eligibility determination, inclusion of consumers in planning for service delivery, thorough assessing and planning practices, models for vocational counseling, informed consumer choice, service to culturally diverse populations, good purchasing practices, supported employment, customized employment and other strategies for quality employment assistance, service delivery, and effective case note documentation;
- Training in working with employers and consumers to increase knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the Olmstead decision, available independence initiatives, and VR participation in the Workforce Investment Act to enhance employment options and employment knowledge; (Page 260 All)

## Braiding/Blending Resources

No specific disability related information found.

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### Section 188/Section 188 Guide

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Achieving excellence in accessibility is based on three core principles:

- ensuring that all customers can effectively use workforce products and services;
- creating a workspace accessible for individuals with disabilities; and
- complying with all federal and state legal requirements (Page 127)

Determine compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA §188. Both programmatic and physical accessibility are addressed during an EO compliance review.

As recipients of WIOA funding, Boards are monitored on-site based on a three-year rotation schedule, as referenced in the State Methods of Administration (MOA) maintained on file with DOL's Civil Rights Center (DOL-CRC). All 28 Boards are scheduled for an EO review within a designated three-year period. Dates for EO monitoring reviews generally align with those of the TWC's annual Board monitoring review. (Page 128)

### DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

No specific disability related information found.

### Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment

DRS program specialists provide the following training:

- Annual training on VR and independent living services to DADS Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) waiver utilization review nurses, Private Provider Association of Texas members, community center staff, including consumer benefits officers, and the Statewide Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Consortium;
- Training on VR services and benefits and work incentives to HHSC Managed Care Organization (MCO) service coordinators and management, STAR+PLUS, and other service providers and Medicaid waiver case managers;

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- Training on DARS employment services and benefits and work incentives to members of the seven statewide mental health peer-operated support groups;
- Training on benefits and work incentives every six months for DRS and DBS staff, long-term supports and services providers involved in the MFP employment pilot grant, and DADS and DSHS central office staff. The providers and DADS/DSHS staff get monthly follow-up training via teleconference and written materials, as well as ongoing technical assistance on specific benefits and work incentives issues;
- A four-hour benefits overview to CRPs statewide, and currently planning with UNT to provide this overview via webinar;
- Overview of benefits and work incentives to DADS staff, providers, and other community stakeholders throughout the year;
- Overview to DADS service coordinators, case managers, private providers, and other staff on DRS VR services and best practices for mutually served consumers;
- Overview of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) to community partners;
- Training to CRPs statewide on best practices in the provision of employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- Training on Assistive Technology to community partners. (Page 251)

Result in competitive integrated employment outcomes for VR consumers by:

- Developing and implementing agency-wide business strategies with a regional focus that creates a unified comprehensive approach to business development, including working with DRS on a new statewide joint Business Relations Team, the formation of regional Outreach Services and Coordination Teams, and the development and joint use of a new business database tracking tool;
- Providing Employment Assistance Training to staff, to instruct on how to best contact and meet the needs of our business partners;
- Identifying and accessing higher wage employment opportunities by aligning DBS/DRS business development activities and consumer service provisions to maximize high wage opportunities. This is the goal of the current DBS Work Matters project; and
- Aligning counseling critical thinking processes around employment opportunities and data to engage consumers in defining their optimal vocational opportunities. During FFY 2015, DBS began a pilot project within the Austin Regional Office in an effort to begin initiating this particular strategy.

Success will be measured by:

- An increase of employers being served by DARS;
- An increase of successful employment outcomes for DBS consumers;
- A positive impact on consumer salaries by increasing weekly wages;
- Maximizing consumer potential and capabilities based on their job readiness; and
- Increasing job placement vendor effectiveness in matching consumer abilities with employment opportunities. (Page 425)

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A pilot program in the Austin region teaches a systematic decision-making process to staff, which includes tools to provide consumers with accurate labor market data and jobs in their geographic area. This process helps consumers make a decision using criteria set forth by the consumer based on data from several resources.

S&I Measure 1.2: Of the individuals exiting the VR program after receiving services, a minimum of 68.9 percent will have achieved an employment outcome.

- Performance: In 2015, 75.20 percent of the individuals exiting the DBS VR program after receiving services achieved an employment outcome. (S&I Report)

To maintain satisfactory performance on this indicator, DBS continues training and reinforcement of the appropriate use of

1. Extended evaluation to serve consumers with the most significant disabilities and
2. A thorough comprehensive assessment before VR Counselors develop the individualized plan for employment. DARS is also developing additional tools for counselors to use during situational assessments to improve the information obtained to inform eligibility decisions. (Page 453)

## Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

TWC plans to continue to emphasize the availability of a variety of financial literacy activities into the service-delivery strategy within the one-stop delivery system. Under WIOA, states are encouraged to develop and implement strategies for workforce areas to use to coordinate financial literacy services to participants and provide financial literacy activities to youth. TWC agrees with the need for services that foster financial education and literacy services, including financial capability, and encourages partnerships and contracts between Boards and the agencies delivering them.

Comment 6: The Texas State Independent Living Council (SILC) supports the state plan with the following additions.

- a. A Coordination of Independent Living section should be added, with the role of SILC and Texas' Centers for Independent Living (CIL) expressly stated. ( Page 135)

TWC allocates youth formula funds to Boards, that in turn contract with service providers to deliver services to youth in their respective workforce areas. Boards are required to meet all federal and state programmatic requirements. TWC maintains a rigorous performance and accountability system, holding Boards accountable for their performance as it pertains to the youth program as it does with other workforce programs, and Boards have rigorous standards in place for their contracted service providers. Boards must ensure that all 14 program elements—including new WIOA program elements such as financial literacy and services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in workforce areas—are available to youth participants. (Page 163)

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### Benefits

Approximately 12 percent of the Texas population is estimated to have some type of disability. TWC is committed to providing services to this population; TWC promotes competitive employment of individuals with disabilities coupled with the expectation that they are able to meet the same employment standards and responsibilities as other working-age adults. All working-age individuals with disabilities, including young adults, are offered factual information regarding employment as an individual with a disability, including the relationship between an individual's earned income and the individual's public benefits.

The VR program—currently housed at DARS, but moving to TWC on September 1, 2016—helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep jobs, and helps students with disabilities plan the jump from school to work. Work-related services are individualized and may include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services. (Page 44)

- Custodial parents are 21 percent less likely to receive TANF benefits; and
- More than \$191 million in child support was collected through August 2015, some of which was used to repay TANF, Medicaid, foster care, and child support collections programs. (Page 64)

Helping customers with disabilities in a Workforce Solutions Office environment;

- Resources and funding sources for support services and employment accommodations; and
- The effects that employment may have on Social Security disability benefits. (Page 129)

Workforce areas that provide quality services will have access to additional resources to meet the employers' needs, job seekers, and incumbent workers. Additionally, the waiver will allow TWC to continue to promote the cost benefits of improved administrative efficiencies, encouraging the increased leveraging of resources within the workforce areas. As a result, TWC will increase services such as enhanced education, employment, and training opportunities for disadvantaged populations and individuals with multiple barriers to employment. (Page 174)

DRS develops partnerships with schools and community organizations to help students with disabilities make a smooth transition to adulthood and work. DRS has counselors throughout the state that have a role in preparing students with disabilities for entry into the workplace. VR counselors coordinate closely with high schools to ensure appropriate students are referred to the VR program. Counselors work with schools to identify students receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as early as possible in the process to address concerns regarding impact of employment on benefits and to provide resources for benefits counseling.

VR counselors have flexible work schedules that allow them to participate in school activities, parent meetings, community forums, summer skill-building activities, job clubs, etc. (Page 238)

DARS is currently in the process of collaborating with TEA to update the Letter of Agreement, including the addition of pre-employment transition services as defined in §361.48 and other requirements of WIOA, operationalizing a referral process of students with the highest needs, and a process for invitations to Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings. The final agreement

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will be between TEA and TWC following the transfer of the VR program in FFY'17 as required by SB 208. Counselors work with schools to identify students receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as early as possible in the process to address concerns regarding impact of employment on benefits and to provide resources for benefits counseling. DRS has specialty TVRCs and VRCs who are liaisons for high schools and partner with the educational system to more appropriately serve transition-age students seeking assistance to access adult vocational services. Partnering with ISDs allows counselors to use office space on campus to ensure that student consumers have access to resources available through the workforce investment system, community, businesses, and other partners necessary to build a network of support. VR counselors use various tools and strategies in their coordination with schools. The School Plan is a tool available to counselors for planning with their assigned schools. It provides an outline for open communication about each party's expectations and goals for the school year. Counselors are encouraged to develop a School Plan with each assigned school before that school year begins, and update it as necessary throughout the year. (Page 240)

DRS works with DADS and HHSC Medicaid/CHIP to ensure service definitions in the 1915(c) home- and community-based waivers accurately reflect Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Rehabilitation Services Administration regulations. This partnership allows services that result in competitive employment to be delivered efficiently and timely through the payor of first resort.

- DRS provides annual training to DSHS Community Benefits Officers on SSI and SSDI benefits and work incentives and offers free intensive training and technical assistance to DADS staff and providers to become Benefits Subject Matter Resource staff.
- DRS co-chairs and participates in the legislatively mandated Employment First Task Force charged with writing and making recommendations to implement an Employment First statewide policy, and providing information and/or training to providers, stakeholders, and the general public on employment as the first option for any publicly funded service.
- Membership and participation in Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE).
- Representation on:
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  - Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council (TBIAC)
  - HHSC Office of Acquired Brain Injury (OABI)
  - State Independent Living Council (SILC)
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The Business Relations Team also developed and disseminated additional resources to Texas businesses, including a new Business Services web site, available at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/services/servicesforbusiness.shtml>. This web site provides information about the benefits of partnering with DARS, including available services and business testimonials, as well as resources such as the GUIDE FOR HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES and helpful websites.

The Business Relations Team is also increasing coordination with other state and federal entities that administer employment training programs. The result of this coordination is a growth in the number of jointly held business symposia and job fairs in communities across Texas. The team's efforts to partner with TWC, Local Workforce Development Boards, and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs will help ensure that local businesses and Texans with disabilities seeking competitive employment have the greatest level of support, resources, and services available to help them succeed. (Page 246)

Annual training on VR and independent living services to DADS Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) waiver utilization review nurses, Private Provider Association of Texas members, community center staff, including consumer benefits officers, and the Statewide Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Consortium;

- Training on VR services and benefits and work incentives to HHSC Managed Care Organization (MCO) service coordinators and management, STAR+PLUS, and other service providers and Medicaid waiver case managers;
- Training on DARS employment services and benefits and work incentives to members of the seven statewide mental health peer-operated support groups;
- Training on benefits and work incentives every six months for DRS and DBS staff, long-term supports and services providers involved in the MFP employment pilot grant, and DADS and DSHS central office staff. The providers and DADS/DSHS staff get monthly follow-up training via teleconference and written materials, as well as ongoing technical assistance on specific benefits and work incentives issues;
- A four-hour benefits overview to CRPs statewide, and currently planning with UNT to provide this overview via webinar; (Page 251)

Concern over loss of benefits is a barrier identified through multiple surveys. Staff reported low levels of knowledge of how work impacts Social Security benefits. Both staff and stakeholders expressed that concern over loss of benefits is a disincentive to work.

### Areas for Improvement

While the consumer survey reported that consumers were satisfied with their jobs and wages, the stakeholder survey indicated dissatisfaction that was echoed in the town hall meetings. Customer service issues such as responsiveness were noted as issues. The lack of and quality of service providers (CRP providers) in some areas of the state was also a stated concern. In general, there appears to be a perception that there is too much bureaucracy that impedes the rehabilitation process, particularly related to the eligibility process. (Page 270)

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DRS has a liaison with the American G.I. Forum that targets the needs of Hispanic veterans and has assigned a bilingual counselor who has completed the Social Security work incentive training to work with significantly disabled veterans drawing SSDI benefits but who want to work.

- A number of counselors are participating in training to learn to speak other languages and attending sign language classes.
- DRS establishes specialized caseloads for certain disabilities to help develop the expertise needed to most benefit the consumers served. (Page 286)

DRS will improve consumer employment outcomes for target populations by:

- Strengthening and expanding collaboration, outreach, and education with various partners to efficiently and effectively use existing resources.
- Assessing business processes, policy, training, and organizational capacity on an ongoing basis to make consistent improvements in employment outcomes.
- Increasing employer knowledge and awareness regarding the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Increasing consumer knowledge and awareness of DRS services and benefits offered to individuals with disabilities in target populations to obtain or retain employment. (Page 291)

## School to Work Transition

The VR program—currently housed at DARS, but moving to TWC on September 1, 2016—helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep jobs, and helps students with disabilities plan the jump from school to work. Work-related services are individualized and may include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services.

TWC additionally promotes partnerships with employers to overcome barriers to meeting workforce needs with the creative use of technology and innovation. TWC takes steps to ensure that the staff of public schools, vocational service programs, and community-based organizations are trained and supported to assist all individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive employment. TWC also promotes the availability and accessibility of individualized training designed to prepare an individual with a disability for the individual's preferred employment. To this end, individuals with disabilities are given the opportunity to understand and explore options for education and training, including postsecondary, graduate and postgraduate education, vocational or technical training, or other training, as pathways to employment. (Page 44)

Project SEARCH is a pre-employment training program that is a business led, one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. The program includes a combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. Project SEARCH serves students with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities. Typically, these are students who are on an IEP and in their last year of high school eligibility. The goal for these consumers is competitive employment within the business where the worksite rotations occur or at another business.

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Project SEARCH has expanded from one original program site established in 1996 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Ohio, to over 340 sites internationally. Project SEARCH in Texas began in 2007 with Seton Healthcare Family in Austin. As of fall 2015, Texas has 17 Project SEARCH sites. Each site is led by a host of businesses and includes key partners, including DARS VR, ISDs, and CRPs. The expansion of this program in Texas is due in part to a five-year grant awarded by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD). The grant pays for technical assistance from the Project SEARCH staff in Ohio that may be needed to start any new sites, as well as supporting the collaborative effort from all agencies involved. In its first year, the grant started three sites in the 2013-2014 school year, in addition to the three sites that already existed in Austin. In the 2014-2015 school year, five additional sites were added, which brought the total number of Project SEARCH sites in Texas to 17. Each Project SEARCH site typically has 8-12 participants per year. The total number of consumers participating in Project SEARCH for the 2015-2016 school year is 144. The 17 Project SEARCH sites. (Pages 247-248)

Expand initiatives like Project Search, a school-to-work internship program that provides work experience to help young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22 transition to employment. One example of Project Search is the collaboration between Austin Independent School District, DARS, and the Seton Health Care family that provides internships for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- The 28 Workforce Development Boards (WDB) work closely with DARS and it is anticipated that the transfer of VR to TWC will enable an enhanced team approach that will benefit consumers and increase their employment outcomes.
- For persons with IDD, they may need more time to get adjusted to the job.
- Each activity for transition-age students should be geared to prepare them for employment and should include activities such as summer work experience opportunities. (Page 337)

## Data Collection

TWC provides the main automated systems used by the local Boards and other grantees for job matching, data collection, and case management, including adult education and vocational rehabilitation, as well as child care assistance. In addition, the Boards and other grantees use a financial reporting system developed by TWC.

WorkInTexas.com - WorkInTexas.com is Texas' Labor Exchange System, as mandated by the Wagner-Peyser Act, and operated in cooperative effort with JobCentral, the National Labor Exchange system. WorkInTexas.com is a comprehensive online job search resource and job matching system developed and maintained by TWC, and provides: (Page 82)

TWC operates a collection of different IT systems to capture participant information, services, and outcomes. Many of these systems were legacy systems that were transferred to TWC as programs were moved to the agency. TWC supports efforts to increase efficiency while maintaining quality levels of service through judicious use of resources and adhering to policy (local, state, and federal). To these ends, TWC is currently evaluating workforce system solutions in other states to better unite the case management and job search functions of our programs. As successful systems are identified, TWC and Texas Workforce Solutions look to demo their delivery with Boards. While TWC is exploring ways to either integrate or replace these systems, such changes would not be completed during the life of this plan. ( Page 118)

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### Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

DRS and DBS conduct ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys in order to assess how VR consumers feel about the services they have received or are receiving. Consumers in the eligibility, in-plan, and closed phases of services are surveyed separately. The surveys are extensive, and approximately 7,500 DRS consumers and 1,024 DBS consumers completed the consumer satisfaction surveys. The reports from the 2013 surveys were submitted to DARS and RCT in January 2014. While including all of the results from the consumer satisfaction surveys does not fit the scope of this CSNA, several of the questions were particularly relevant and helped inform it. (Page 226)

While the CSNA provides insight into the needs of individuals with disabilities, there are multiple limitations in the methods that should be considered when using the findings. First, the samples used were convenience samples that cannot represent the views of any group. Second, it is unknown how technology issues impacted the completion of online surveys by screen reader users. Several individuals did call to complete phone surveys, but others may have refrained due to concerns over confidentiality. Also, given the constraints of the data collection methods used, assessment findings related to the geographical location of unserved and underserved populations in the state are limited. DRS has plans to expand the capacity and use of various data collection methods, which is expected to yield valuable information throughout the next three fiscal years. (Page 268)

The next CSNA will be the product of an ongoing data collection and assessment process that will culminate with a comprehensive report to be published in 2017.

DRS and DBS are continuing their collaboration with the Child and Family Research Institute of the University of Texas School of Social Work and RCT to engage in a continuous process of collecting and analyzing data for a robust and effective assessment of the needs of Texans with disabilities. In recognition of WIOA's focus on students with disabilities and youth, pre-employment transition services, and supported employment, and in addition to the methodology used in the most recent CSNA, efforts going forward have been enhanced to include surveys and/or focus groups throughout the state with staff, transition-age consumers, families, TEA representatives, home-school networks, and other stakeholders. (Page 272)

The data collection and assessment process is underway for the next CSNA that will culminate with the publication of a comprehensive report in 2017. In recognition of WIOA's focus on students and youth with disabilities and pre-employment transition services, CSNA efforts going forward have been enhanced to assess needs in these areas.

### State Rehabilitation Council Support

The RCT is the state rehabilitation council for DRS and DBS. RCT assists DARS in fulfilling the requirements of the federal Rehabilitation Act for the delivery of quality, consumer-responsive VR services. Its stated mission is: "The Rehabilitation Council of Texas, partnering with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, advocates for Texans with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process." Funds are allocated for the operation of RCT to meet the goals and objectives set forth in its resource plan. RCT is a valued and active partner in the development of VR goals, priorities, and policies. RCT reviews, analyzes, and advises DARS about performance

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related to VR eligibility; the extent, scope, effectiveness of VR services; policy changes related to service delivery to VR consumers; and other functions related to the VR program performed by DARS. RCT also reviews and analyzes consumer satisfaction with VR services provided and assists DARS in developing VR State Plans and in conducting the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. (Page 288)

During fall 2013 through spring 2014, DRS, DBS, and RCT collaborated with the Child and Family Research Institute of the University of Texas School of Social Work to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The CSNA findings were initially summarized in the DRS and DBS FY 2015 State Plans for VR. They inform the 2015-2017 State Plans for VR. The next CSNA will be the product of an ongoing data collection and assessment process that will culminate with a comprehensive report to be published in 2017. DRS and DBS are continuing their collaboration with the Child and Family Research Institute of the University of Texas School of Social Work. In recognition of WIOA's focus on students and youth with disabilities and preemployment transition services, efforts going forward have been enhanced to assess needs in these areas. (Page 293)

Development of the next CSNA has begun with an ongoing data collection and assessment process that will result in the 2017 report. DBS and DRS are continuing their collaboration with the Child and Family Research Institute of the University of Texas School of Social Work and RCT to accomplish a more robust and effective assessment of the needs of Texans with disabilities. In response to WIOA's focus on students and youth with disabilities and pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), the current data collection focuses on the needs of those consumers. In addition to the methodology used in the 2014 CSNA, data collection for the 2017 CSNA includes surveys and/or focus groups throughout the state with staff, students and youth with disabilities, families, Texas Education Agency (TEA) representatives, homeschool networks, and other stakeholders. (Page 391)

Development of the next CSNA has begun with an ongoing data collection and assessment process that will result in the 2017 report. DBS and DRS are continuing their collaboration with the Child and Family Research Institute of the University of Texas School of Social Work and RCT to accomplish a more robust and effective assessment of the needs of Texans with disabilities. In response to WIOA's focus on students and youth with disabilities and pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), the current data collection focuses on the needs of those consumers. In addition to the methodology used in the 2014 CSNA, data collection for the 2017 CSNA includes surveys and/or focus groups throughout the state with staff, students and youth with disabilities, families, TEA representatives, homeschool networks, and other stakeholders. (Page 402)

### LIMITED ACCESS TO COMPUTERS

A second resource in short supply that hinders rural SCSEP services is access to computers and the Internet. Low-income older job seekers often have limited or no computer skills. These skills are not only required by employers but important for participants to access the Internet, register in [WorkInTexas.com](http://WorkInTexas.com) and other online job search databases, and develop Internet search skills. Grantees' field staff members, including participant staff, need access to computers for data collection and communications in a state with such extensive rural areas. Improving access to computers in rural areas will increase the amount of computer and online training available for participants. To address rural technology needs, grantees will contact local businesses, governmental agencies, public libraries, and community- and faith-based organizations regarding ongoing computer and Internet access for participants on an ongoing basis. (Page 501)

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### Small Business/Entrepreneurship

No specific disability related information found.

### Career Pathways

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans. (Page 4)

### Employment Networks

DRS coordinates with the Social Security Administration to encourage CRPs to become Employment Networks (ENs) under the Ticket to Work Program. DRS and select CRPs participate in the Partnership Plus program.

Currently there are 39 active ENs in Texas that are DRS CRPs, and 30 who are Workforce Solutions Offices. Of the 3,554 tickets received by these 69 ENs, 61 percent were assigned to DRS CRP ENs. (Page 250)

### Coordination with Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program

DBS coordinates with state agencies and private providers functioning as employment networks under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Programs by:

- Cooperating with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to encourage Community Rehabilitation Program providers (CRPs) to become employment networks (ENs) under the Ticket to Work Program; and

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- Providing advanced payments to CRP-ENs through the Ticket to Work Partnership Plus Program, which allows CRP-ENs to provide ongoing support or job retention services that advance employment or increase earnings after a consumer's VR case is closed. (Page 347)

DBS uses its current partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to encourage Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) providers to become employment networks (ENs) under the SSA Ticket to Work Program. DBS offers incentive payments to CRP-ENs that provide

1. Supported employment or job placement services during the provision of VR services, and
2. Extended supports to Ticket to Work consumers after VR case closure in order to advance employment or increase consumer earnings. (Page 368, 369, 370, 415)

\* All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of February 23, 2017

Find your local state plans here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>