

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to personally welcome you and thank you for your interest in Workforce Solutions. For more than 26 years, it has been my privilege to serve alongside dedicated board members, staff, employers, educators, and community partners who share a commitment to creating stronger opportunities for the people and businesses of Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties.

During this time, I have seen firsthand the meaningful impact of workforce programs through employer partnerships, training initiatives, student events, and community investments that continue to make a real difference in lives across our region.

Our Board remains committed to supporting a workforce system that is responsive, innovative, and focused on results. Whether we are recognizing and building new partnerships, celebrating training achievements, or working directly with employers and job seekers, our goal is to help open doors to education, employment, and economic growth for our communities.

We are grateful for the continued support of our partners and look forward to working together to build even stronger opportunities for the future.

Dr. Ricardo R. Gonzalez

Workforce Solutions
Board Chair

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm excited about our journey in workforce development. We're in a constantly changing world, so it's extremely important to continue striving for excellence and seeking innovative solutions. Our mission to provide job seekers with resources and essential skills they need and businesses with the exceptional talent necessary for their success has been our driving force that empowers individuals and strengthens our community.

At Workforce Solutions, we understand the transformative power of investing in people. Each day, we witness the resilience, determination, and potential within our workforce. At the heart of our mission lies the belief that investing in people is the most powerful tool we have to combat poverty and create lasting change. By providing individuals with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to develop their skills and realize their full potential, we can break the cycle of poverty and build a more equitable society. Together, let us work tirelessly to empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome adversity and thrive.

As we look to the future, I am filled with a sense of optimism and possibility. Together, we can shape a brighter, more inclusive future for all as we work towards building a more resilient workforce for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Francisco Almaraz

Workforce Solutions
Chief Executive Officer

Mission

To provide the job seekers with resources and essential skills they need and businesses with the exceptional talent necessary for their success.

Vision

To pioneer workforce solutions that drive prosperity and growth for all in the Rio Grande Valley.

Purpose

Leading Change, Connecting People, Improving Potential.

Core Values



Inspirational



Inclusion



Ingenuity



Integrity



2025 Strategic Planning Board Workshop

Overview of Service Area

Hidalgo, Starr, & Willacy County



Population (2025)
1,006,707



Labor Force
445,774



Unemployment Rate
6.6%



Median Household Income
\$51,325



Poverty Rate
27.7%



Projected Job Growth
The region is projected to add roughly **27,000** jobs by **2030**

Lightcast Economy Overview Oct 2024- Sept 2025



Hidalgo County



Population (2025)
920,491



Labor Force
409,591



Unemployment Rate
6.4%



Median Household Income
\$54,300



Poverty Rate
27.2%



Projected Job Growth
The region is projected to add roughly **26,287** jobs by **2030**

Lightcast Economy Overview Oct 2024- Sept 2025



Starr County



Population (2025)

66,607



Labor Force

26,288



Unemployment Rate

10.10%



**Median Household
Income**

\$37,600



Poverty Rate

33.5%



Projected Job Growth

The region is projected to
add roughly **726** jobs by
2030

Lightcast Economy Overview Oct 2024- Sept 2025



Willacy County



Population (2025)

19,844



Labor Force

9,013



Unemployment Rate

6.9%



**Median Household
Income**

\$54,200



Poverty Rate

24.6%



Projected Job Growth

The region is projected to
add roughly **465** jobs by
2030

Lightcast Economy Overview Oct 2024- Sept 2025



Funding

Grant / Contract	Funds Expended
Child Care Services	\$84,962,941
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	\$15,314,874
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families / Choices	\$ 3,449,300
Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program Employment & Training	\$ 788,827
Non-Custodial Parent Choices Program	\$ 417,085
Employment Services	\$ 384,961
Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment	\$ 894,305
TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Services	\$1,286,951
Workforce Commission Initiatives	\$ 41,042
Veterans	\$13,001
Competitive Grant Awards	\$ 688,948
Total	\$ 108,242,236

Source: Fiscal Year 2025 Expenditures (Unaudited); HB1 Budget FY2025



48,884

**JOB SEEKERS
SERVED**

Behind every number is a life impacted. From helping job seekers find employment and supporting local employers, to assisting veterans, families, and at-risk individuals, Workforce Solutions continues working to create stronger pathways to opportunity and economic success across our communities.



Community Impact



1,045

**VETERANS
SERVED**



229

**CREDENTIALS
ATTAINED**



2,082

**EMPLOYERS
SERVED**



10,778

**UNEMPLOYMENT
CLAIMANTS SERVED**



11,185

**CHILDREN IN
CARE SERVED**



431

**CHILD CARE
PROVIDERS IN
THE SYSTEM**



1,773

**JUSTICE
INVOLVED
SERVED**



22,446

**AT-RISK
CUSTOMERS
SERVED**



163

**IN-PERSON
HIRING EVENTS**



13,214

**JOB SEEKERS
ATTENDED**



1,053

**EMPLOYERS
ATTENDED**

Connecting Partnerships to Funding and Opportunity

Strong partnerships developed by Workforce Solutions helped secure more than **\$2.6 million** in additional grant funding during FY 2025. These collaborative efforts created training, internship, and career opportunities for an estimated **769 participants** while supporting the workforce needs of local employers and high-demand industries.

Grant Type	Funding Amount	Estimated Participants	Partner(s)
Skills Development Fund	\$262,944	317	Lone Star National Bank
Healthcare Internship	\$100,000	120	Mission Consolidated Independent School District, South Texas Health Systems, Mission Regional Hospital
U.S. Department of Labor Grant	\$2,000,000	272	Workforce Solutions Cameron
Texas Industry Partnership	\$244,000	60	Valley Grande Institute / Rio South Texas Education and Community Development Foundation
Total	\$2,606,944	769	

Workforce Solutions pays local Child Care Providers directly to help parents pay for the cost of quality childcare.

Total Direct Child Care Payments

\$57,437,811

Return on Investment

268%

268% is more than three times the investment.



Average Monthly Parents Earning Total

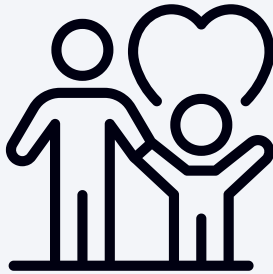
\$12.8 MILLION

Average Yearly Parents Earning Total

\$154.1 MILLION



11,185
Children Served



5,229
Families Served



431
Providers Served



362
Texas Rising Star
Providers Served



\$1,661,000
Texas Rising Star
Staff Retention
Initiative

Child Care Services

Investing in Quality Early Childhood Education

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a powerful driver of excellence in early childhood education across our region. As Texas' official quality rating system, TRS empowers child care providers to elevate classroom environments, enrich teacher-child interactions, and enhance overall program standards — giving young children the strong foundation they need for school success and lifelong learning.

Supporting Quality Through Workforce Stability: Texas Rising Star Staff Retention Incentive Initiative

Recognizing the need to retain skilled and experienced early childhood educators, the Texas Rising Star Staff Retention Incentive Initiative was created to strengthen workforce stability within high-quality child care programs. By helping reduce turnover, the initiative ensures that children continue to receive consistent, nurturing care from trained professionals.

In Fiscal Year 2025, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio invested **\$1,661,000** to support **1,332 child care staff** across the region. This funding was directed toward training, professional development, and retention incentives—key strategies that not only improve program quality but also help educators stay engaged and supported in their roles.



Sources: TX3C Payment Matrix, 10/1/24-9/30/25
C2 Master Provider List as of 10/1/2025
C2 Master Provider List; Total TRS Providers as of 10/1/2025

Youth Services

Connecting Students to Careers, Opportunity & Success

The Education Relations team helps students prepare for future careers by connecting schools, families, and community partners to workforce opportunities and resources. Workforce Outreach Specialists provide career readiness training, labor market information, and job preparation skills, while Student HireAbility Navigators support students with disabilities through career guidance, work-based learning opportunities, and connections to education and employment resources.

26

School
Districts

19,218

Students
Participated

3,697

Parents
Involved

513

Student &
Partner
Sessions



Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)

The SEAL program in 2025 helped **68 students** with disabilities gain real work experience and build important job skills to prepare them for future employment. Students had the chance to learn about different careers, grow their confidence, and developed skills to help them succeed after high school. SEAL also benefits the community by creating more opportunities for youth with disabilities and helped **43 local employers** connect with talented young people ready to work and contribute.

Outstanding Events

Healthcare Internship Fund grant



Workforce Solutions proudly presented a **\$100,000 Healthcare Internship Fund grant** to Mission CISD to expand hands-on healthcare training opportunities for local students.

120 certified high school students enrolled in health science programs will participate in a **6-week clinical internship**, gaining real-world experience in patient care, administrative duties, and exposure to healthcare careers.

Mission Regional Hospital and Rio Grande Regional Hospital are partnering as host sites, offering mentorship and professional supervision to help shape the next generation of healthcare professionals.

This initiative is a high-impact investment in talent, patient care, and the long-term strength of the Rio Grande Valley workforce.



Outstanding Events

Workforce Development Ecosystem



The Workforce Development Ecosystem, organized in partnership with Workforce Solutions Cameron was a great success. With the theme “Building the Workforce of Tomorrow,” the conference emphasized aligning educational opportunities with industry needs to foster a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The event brought together key stakeholders from education and economic development organizations to discuss strategies and foster new connections crucial for advancing workforce development in South Texas.



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Lone Star National Bank

Awarded \$262,944 for Skills Training.

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Workforce Solutions secured a **\$262,944** Texas Workforce Commission Skills Development Fund grant to provide industry-specific training for **317 Lone Star National Bank employees** across the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio. The training, delivered in partnership with local educators and professional trainers, will strengthen skills in financial operations, customer service, cybersecurity, and regulatory compliance benefiting staff at all levels.

Outstanding Achievements



2025 Large Employer of the Year

DHR Health, was awarded the Large Employer of the Year Award at the 28th Annual Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Conference. This prestigious recognition highlights DHR Health's exceptional commitment to patient-centered care, world-class clinical expertise, and its continued leadership in healthcare innovation across the region. The Large Employer of the Year Award honors businesses that create opportunities through workforce partnerships, invest in employee development, and contribute significantly to the economic vitality of their communities. Through its close collaboration with Workforce Solutions Lower Rio, DHR Health has continued to expand training pipelines, advance skills development, and elevate healthcare standards across the Rio Grande Valley.



2025 Local Employer of Excellence

Atlas Electrical, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration & Plumbing Services, Inc. has been recognized as the Local Employer of Excellence during the 28th Annual Texas Workforce Conference. The Local Employer of Excellence Award honors employers who actively engage with the Texas Workforce Solutions network and demonstrate a meaningful, positive impact on workers, businesses, and the community. Atlas Electrical, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration & Plumbing Services, Inc. has distinguished itself through its commitment to growing career pathways, investing in employee training, and supporting economic vitality throughout the region.

Success Stories

MELISSA GALLEGOS

LIMITED MEDICAL RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST



Melissa Gallegos, a determined 26-year-old and single mother of two, transformed her life through the support of Workforce Solutions' WIOA program. After facing financial hardships and job loss, she sought assistance to pursue her dream of becoming a Limited Medical Radiologic Technologist. With financial aid for tuition and support services, Melissa completed her training at The College of Health Care Professions and successfully passed her LMRT exam. Now employed with Texas Health Care Imaging, Inc. at a starting pay of \$17.00 an hour, Melissa celebrates her newfound financial stability and is deeply grateful for the guidance and resources that helped her achieve her career goals and provide for her family.

Wage Change: \$0 to \$17

MIKE TORRES MOLINA

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER



At just 19, Mike Torres Molina faced the daunting challenge of securing stable employment due to his limited experience in the fast-food industry, home care, and ranch work. Determined to build a better future, he sought help from the Willacy Workforce Solutions office. Guided by Career Counselor Delia Romo, Mike enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, which provided him with invaluable training and work experience. Starting in a maintenance role with the City of Raymondville, Mike earned \$10.00 per hour and quickly demonstrated his dedication and growth. His hard work paid off when he was offered a full-time position as an Animal Control Officer, earning \$15.00 per hour. Thanks to his perseverance and the support of the WIOA program, Mike successfully transitioned to a stable career with promising prospects.

Wage Change: \$10 to \$15

MARCO A. GUERRA

RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICIAN



Marco A. Guerra, a dedicated husband and father of two, sought assistance from the Workforce Solutions office to enhance his career prospects. With the support of the WIOA Program, Marco enrolled in RGV Technology Institute and successfully completed his Residential Electrician certificate. Thanks to this training, he secured a position as a Construction Electrician at Directional Services Inc, earning \$24.00 per hour. Marco is thrilled with his new role and is grateful to Workforce Solutions for their invaluable support in helping him build a brighter future for his family.

Wage Change: \$0 to \$24

Leadership

Chief Elected Officials



Hidalgo County
Judge Richard Cortez



Starr County
Judge Eloy Vera



Willacy County
Judge Aurelio Guerra



City of McAllen
Mayor Javier Villalobos

Board Executive



Dr. Ricardo R. Gonzalez
Board Chair



Rosa E. Gonzalez
Vice Chair



Lorissa K. Luna
Treasurer



Dalinda L. Guillen
Secretary

Board of Directors

Hidalgo County

Dr. Ida H. Acuña-Garza
Marissa Y. Cano
Kane Dawson
Araceli De La Garza
Dr. Ricardo R. Gonzalez
Marsha Gonzalez
Katherine Karshis
Jaime Longoria
Francisco Lugo, Jr.
Lorissa K. Luna
Jose A. Ortiz
Leo D. Saenz
Dr. Judith M. Solis

Starr County

Rose Benavidez
Rosa E. Gonzalez
Dalinda L. Guillen

Willacy County

Ricardo Salinas
Patrick J. McDonnell
Criselda M. Santana

City of McAllen

E. Rubi Cantu
Lorena Castillo
Sonia A. Falcon
Maurice Welton

Office Locations

Edinburg Office

2719 W. University Dr.
Edinburg, TX 78539
Tel: (956) 380-0008
Fax: (956) 316-2626

McAllen Office

2101 S. 2nd St.
McAllen, TX 78503
Tel: (956) 302-0800
Fax: (956) 627-5239

Weslaco Office

2290 W. Pike Blvd, Ste. 100
Weslaco, TX 78596
Tel: (956) 969-6100
Fax: (956) 969-6190

Starr County Office

5408 Brand St., Ste. 1
Rio Grande City, TX 78582
Tel: (956) 487-9100
Fax: (956) 487-9190

Mission Office

901 Travis St., Ste. 7
Mission, TX 78572
Tel: (956) 519-4300
Fax: (956) 519-4388

Willacy County Office

700 FM 3168, Ste. 3
Raymondville, TX 78580
Tel: (956) 689-3412
Fax: (956) 690-0285

Corporate Office

3101 W. Business 83
McAllen, TX 78501
Tel: (956) 928-5000
Fax: (956) 664-8987



WFS Website



WFS Facebook



Available Jobs



Jobs Facebook



A proud partner of the American Job Center network

 www.wfsolutions.org    [@wfsolutions](https://www.instagram.com/wfsolutions)

Equal Opportunity Is The Law, Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board dba Workforce Solutions Is An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program And Auxiliary Aids And Services Are Available Upon Request To Individuals With Disabilities. Tty/Tdd Via Relay Texas Service At 711 Or (Tdd) 1-800-735-2989/1-800-735-2988 (Voice).

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