

REVIEWING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
FROM FY 2019-2020.

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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FRANCISCO ALMARAZ



Remaining Resilient and Responsive Amidst Global Pandemic

Amidst an unprecedented public health crisis where communities and businesses across the globe are navigating the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Workforce Solutions (WFS) remains steadfast and committed to providing critical solutions and services to both job seekers and employers within the service delivery region. WFS's mission has always been to provide job seekers the skills, and business the talent they need to be successful. WFS remains at the forefront of workforce development in Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties, striving to continue fostering a talent pipeline of an educated and skilled workforce for the economic prosperity of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

This year WFS focused on maintaining a comprehensive approach to leveraging community partnerships with education, government, business, economic development corporations, and chambers of commerce to build a well-trained workforce. Highlighted in this report are the programs and initiatives conducted during Fiscal Year 2020 (October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020) that solidifies WFS as one of the best performing boards in the State of Texas.

WFS's highest priority remains the health and safety of our customers, staff, partners, and communities. WFS will continue to adapt to the changing environment and is confident its decisions remain consistent with maintaining its mission and core values.

On behalf of the WFS Board of Directors and our staff, thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francisco Almaraz".

WHO WE ARE



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

HIDALGO • STARR • WILLACY



CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY

INNOVATION

INCLUSION

IMPACT

WFS is one of 28 local workforce development boards in the State of Texas, operating in coordination with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and led by the WFS Board of Directors (Board).

The Board is community-focused, with 25 members representing private sector businesses, education, and community-based organizations. Through the on-going support of community stakeholders and local partners, WFS works to align and provide a wide range of services to employers and job seekers in Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties.

With the emergence of COVID-19 this past year, job seekers and employers were able to rely on WFS for assistance in receiving up-to-date information on workforce development issues. Job seekers were assisted with finding employment, education and training opportunities, and provided with available support services for a successful transition to the workplace. Employers were kept informed of the resources available to assist with adapting to the ever-changing business environment.



WFS's mission statement is: to provide job seekers the skills, and business the talent, they need to be successful. Moreover, WFS is guided by three Key Strategic Imperatives:

1

Understand the needs of the business community to ensure a demand-driven system.

**2**

Prepare a job-ready workforce and foster external partnerships that promote educational and skill attainment.

**3**

Build strategic partnerships to leverage resources that benefit WFS customers.



OUR COMMUNITY

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Tri-county Area

JOBS

332,863

Jobs grew by 24,047 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 29,793 over the next 5 years.

The 7.8% increase in jobs that our service area experienced from 2015-2020 outpaced the national growth rate of 6.2% by 1.6%.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Workforce Development

PEAK %

55.5%

AVG. %

54%

In FY 2020, the labor force participation rate experienced record breaking heights of approximately 55.5%.

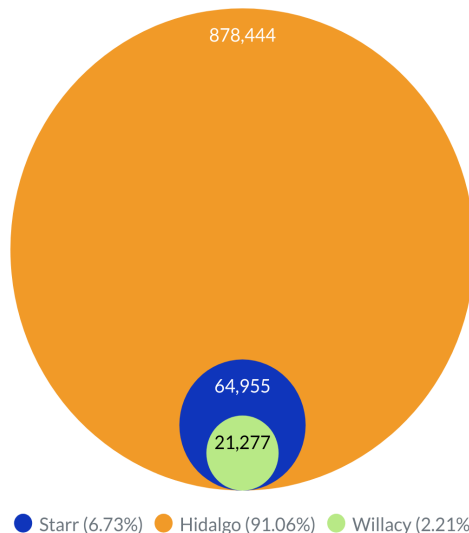
Throughout the year, the labor force participation rate in our community averaged 54%, amounting to 342,975 people employed.

SERVICE AREA

And Population by County

WFS provides workforce development services to the residents of Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties.

The stacked venn diagram below shows the population per county through FY 2020:

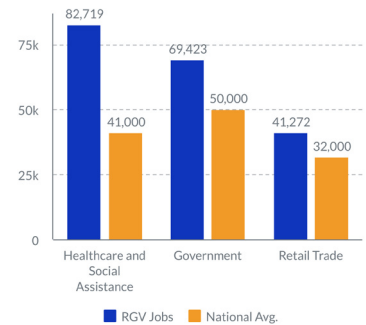


“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”

- César Estrada Chávez

LARGEST INDUSTRIES

Surpassing the National Average



Actively fostering workforce development is crucial to industry growth.

Industries within the tri-county area that surpass the national average include, but are not limited to, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Government, and Retail Trade.

TRI-COUNTY POPULATION

FY 2020 (October 2019 - September 2020)

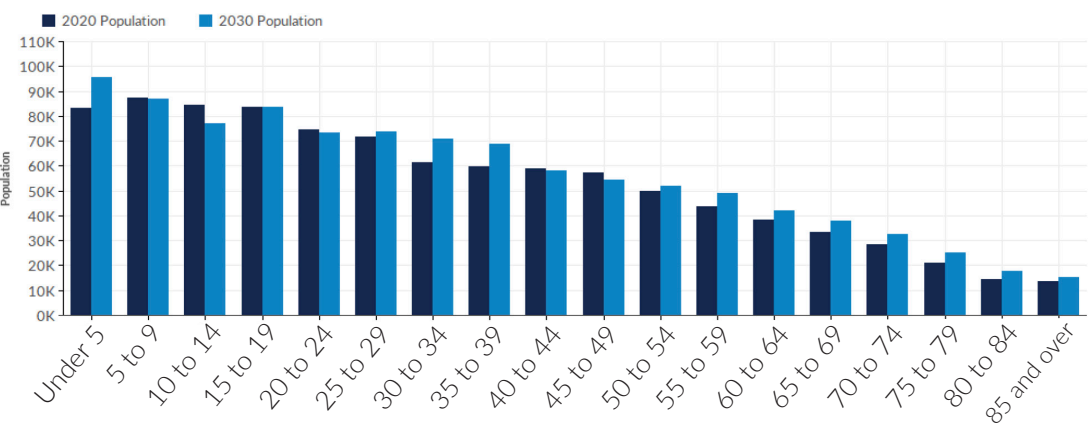
TOTAL

964,676

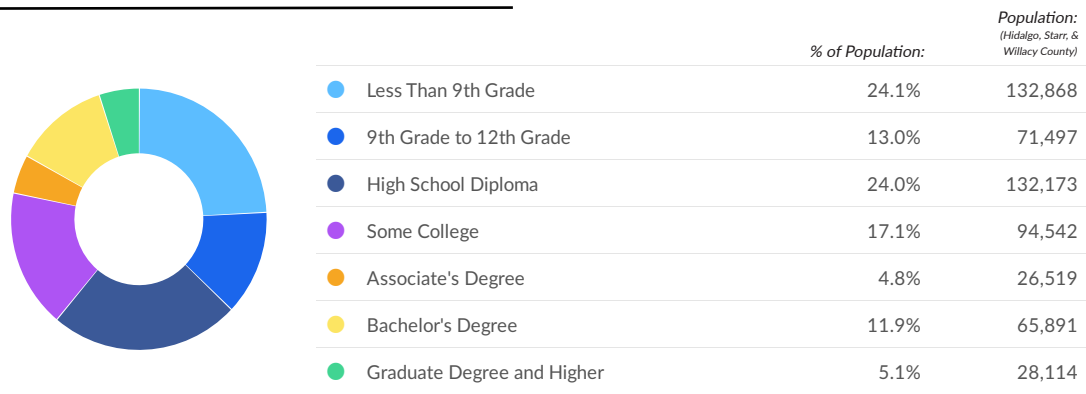
Over the last five years, the population has grown by 39,668, amounting to 964,676 for FY 2020.

The population is expected to increase by 3.7% between 2020 and 2025, adding 35,681.

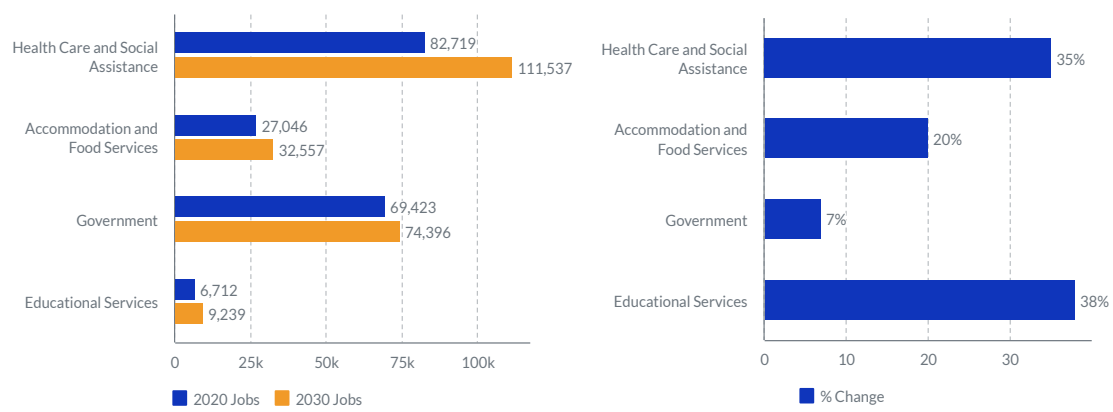
POPULATION BY AGE



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRIES



SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALIST INTERNATIONAL, 2020

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

WFS identifies specific jobs within the service delivery area that pay a self-sufficient wage, require a training or educational component, and have a substantial number of job openings in the region. Featured below are the nine fastest-growing target occupations in Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties:



1. REGISTERED NURSE

INDUSTRY: HEALTHCARE
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 3,219
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$30.76



2. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

INDUSTRY: EDUCATION
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 2,800
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$22.94



3. HEAVY & TRACTOR TRAILER TRUCK DRIVERS

INDUSTRY: TRANSPORTATION, TRADE
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 2,339
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$14.13



4. CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

INDUSTRY: ALL
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,874
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$10.47



5. TEACHER ASSISTANTS

INDUSTRY: EDUCATION
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,569
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$10.40



6. SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

INDUSTRY: EDUCATION
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,544
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$24.19



7. SECRETARIES & ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

INDUSTRY: ALL
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,479
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$11.38



8. MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

INDUSTRY: EDUCATION
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,349
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$23.68



9. LICENSED PRACTICAL & VOCATIONAL NURSES

INDUSTRY: HEALTHCARE
10 YEAR JOB GROWTH: 1,260
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE: \$21.73

Target and In-Demand Occupation lists are approved by the WFS Board of Directors. For the latest data on the region's fastest-growing regional occupations and the associated training, visit the Workforce Intelligence (WI) page at www.wfsolutions.org/workforce-intelligence. Visit the WI page for access to additional useful resources such as High Demand Middle-Skill STEM Occupation lists, labor market information, economic profiles, and more.

SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALIST INTERNATIONAL, 2020

HOW WE HELP

WFS serves the public at no-cost via three core areas of services:



Child Care Services

WFS strives to improve the quality and accessibility of child care services in the WFS service delivery area. Child Care Services (CCS) funding helps parents pay for child care while they work, go to school, or participate in job training.



Job Seeker Services

Services such as job search assistance, career counseling, and virtual employment strategy sessions are only some of the ways WFS helps job seekers secure employment.



Employer Services

Employers can rely on WFS's team of specialists to help meet their business needs. Services include recruitment assistance, information on potential funding opportunities, labor market information and more.



In FY 2020, WFS provided 671,424 services to 83,896 customers.

SOURCE: WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS PULSE REPORT, 10/19 - 9/20



COVID-19 ONLINE RESOURCES

WFS took initiative at the onset of the pandemic to reassess the delivery of crucial information to the public.

A result of this reassessment was the development of a COVID-19 Resource webpage on the WFS website:

workforce SOLUTIONS

[COVID-19 Resources](#) ▾ [Home](#) [Who We Are](#) ▾ [How We Help](#) ▾ [Connect](#) ▾ [My WFS](#) ▾ [Q](#)

COVID-19 Resources

[Home](#) > [COVID-19 Resources](#)

[Go to Employer Resources](#) [Go to Job Seeker Resources](#) [Go to Child Care Resources](#) [Go to Disability Resources](#)
[Go to Community WiFi Hotspots](#)

Workforce Resources in Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Workforce Solutions is committed to providing services to our community in these difficult times.

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2020, ALL CUSTOMERS MUST SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT BEFORE VISITING ANY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS CENTER. Protecting the health and safety of our staff and customers is our priority at this time. We are observing the situation as it unfolds and responding accordingly. Please refer back to this page or our social media pages for more updates.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF SERVICE DELIVERY ARE AVAILABLE. Call us at (888) 261-3286 for assistance from a workforce professional. Prefer to email a center near you? See below for center emails by location:

E-Mail:	Phone:
WFSSTARR@wfsolutions.org	(956) 487-9100
WFSWILLACY@wfsolutions.org	(956) 689-3412
WFSSEDINBURG@wfsolutions.org	(956) 380-0008
WFSMISSION@wfsolutions.org	(956) 519-4300
WFSWESLACO@wfsolutions.org	(956) 969-6100

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

If you are a business facing a layoff or closure as a result of COVID-19, we can offer proactive, business-focused intervention and layoff aversion support at no cost*. Call us at (888) 261-3286 for more assistance.

**We currently cannot offer direct financial assistance or legal counsel to employers.*

Designed to inform customers of our response to the pandemic, the webpage also provides access to resources ranging from pandemic unemployment assistance for job seekers to small business loans for employers.

WFS also developed a COVID-19 Safe Service webpage highlighting the WFS's commitment to the following five priorities to consistently ensure a safe visit to all WFS Offices:



[COVID-19 Resources](#)
[Home](#)
[Who We Are](#)
[How We Help](#)
[Connect](#)
[My WFS](#)

[Home](#) > [COVID-19 Resources](#) > [COVID-19 Safe Service](#)

COVID-19 Safe Service

Safety is Our First Priority

To ensure the safety of our staff and customers, Workforce Solutions centers are operating with the following priorities in mind:



Face Covering

All staff and customers entering Workforce Solutions centers are required to wear face coverings.

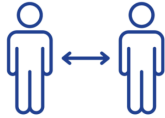
[Learn More](#)



Staff Hygiene

Our team members are provided with sanitation stations to keep their workspace germ free.

[Learn More](#)



Social Distancing

Staff and customers are encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines.

[Learn More](#)



Deep Cleaning

Centers undergo a deep cleaning daily to disinfect high frequency areas.

[Learn More](#)



Online Service Delivery

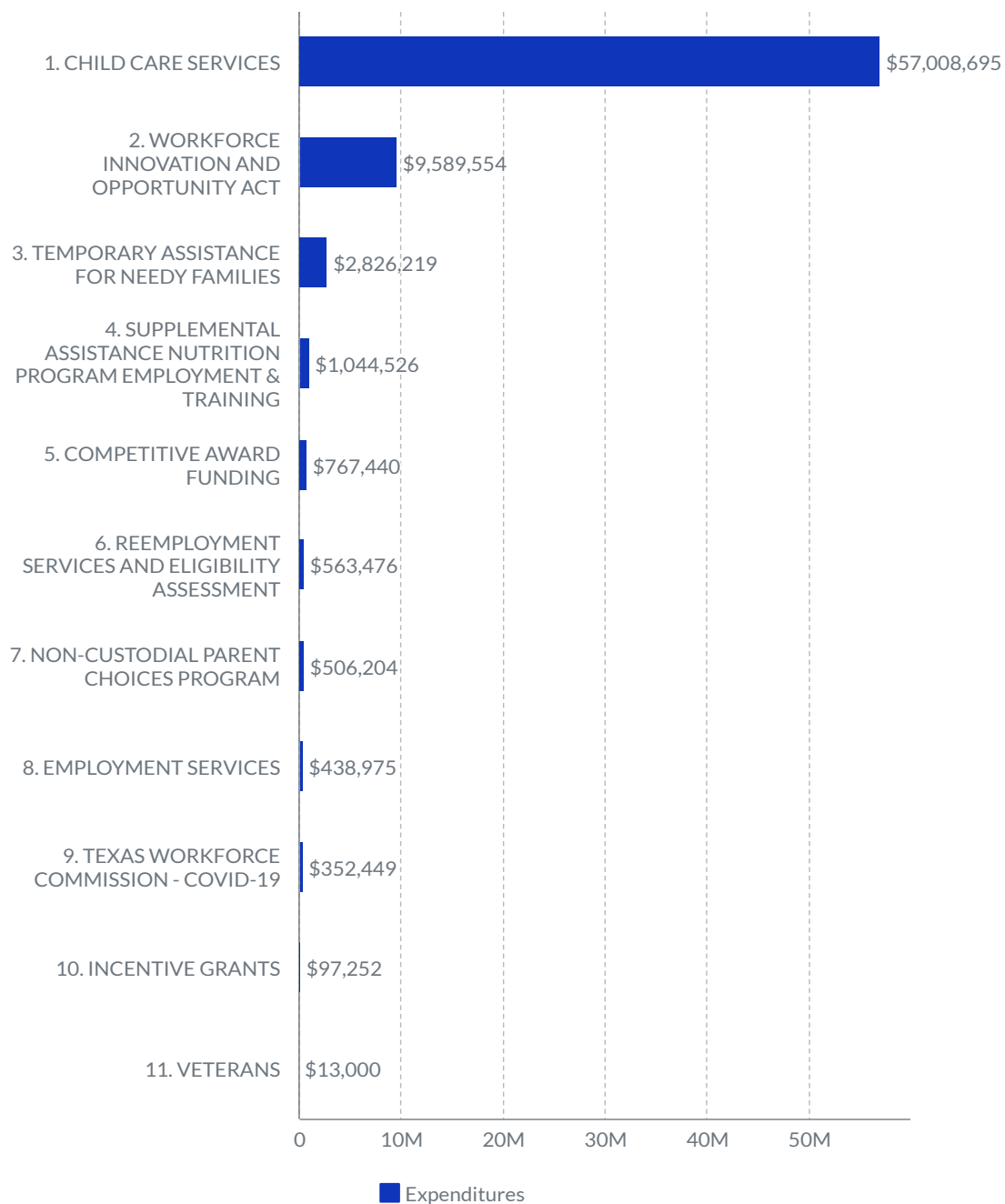
Can you be serviced online? Our staff are available to help you online via our new chat feature.

[Learn More](#)

FUNDING OVERVIEW

TWC administers and provides funding to local workforce development boards.

Below are the expenditure totals for funds administered to WFS for the implementation of program services and other workforce initiatives throughout FY 2020.



SOURCE: UNAUDITED EXPENDITURES FY ENDED 09/30/2020

WFS secured approximately \$2.1 million dollars in grant awards to expand the following programs and services during FY 2020

COVID-19
RESPONSE STATEWIDE:
\$743,246



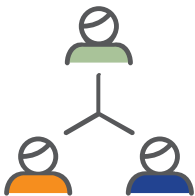
Workforce Career & Outreach Specialist
Pilot Program (Renewal):

\$339,354

Skills Development
Fund – COVID-19:
\$287,500



National Disaster
Worker – COVID-19:
\$245,638



Student HireAbility
Navigators (Renewal):
\$200,000

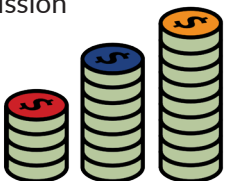
ADDITIONAL
FUNDING



Texas School Ready
(Renewal):
\$160,256

Texas Workforce Commission
Performance Incentive
Awards:

\$135,000

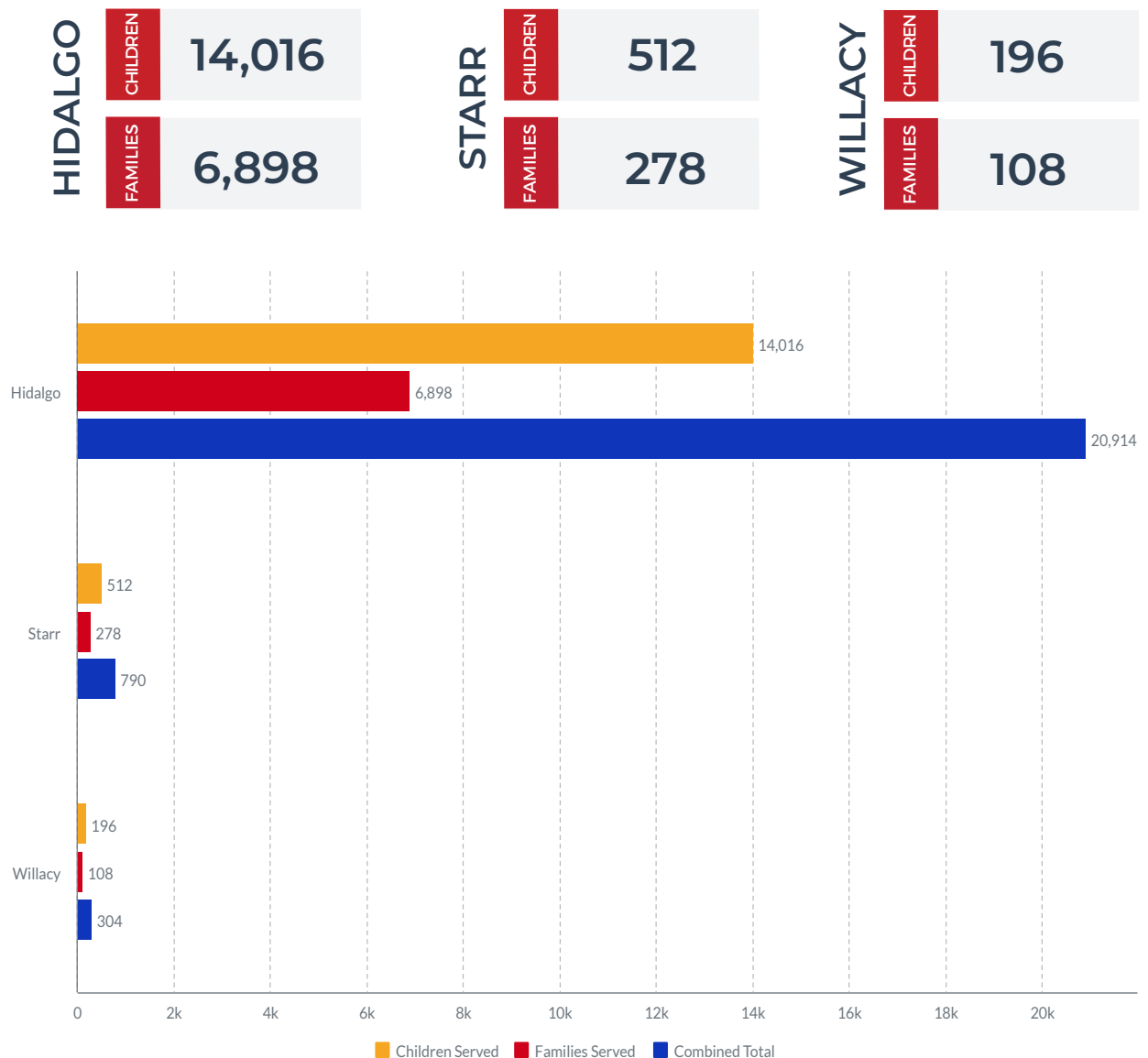


SOURCE: UNAUDITED EXPENDITURES
FY ENDED 09/30/2020

CHILD CARE SERVICES

CHILD CARE SERVICES PROGRAM

Child care services are crucial in supporting parents while they attend school, work, and/or career training. The Child Care Services Program (CCS) assists eligible families by covering the cost of child care. In FY 2020, a total of 14,724 children were served, representing 7284 families. The WFS child care budget, which represents almost 75% of the total WFS budget, was spent on direct child care, quality initiatives, and operational expenses. Per county, WFS served:

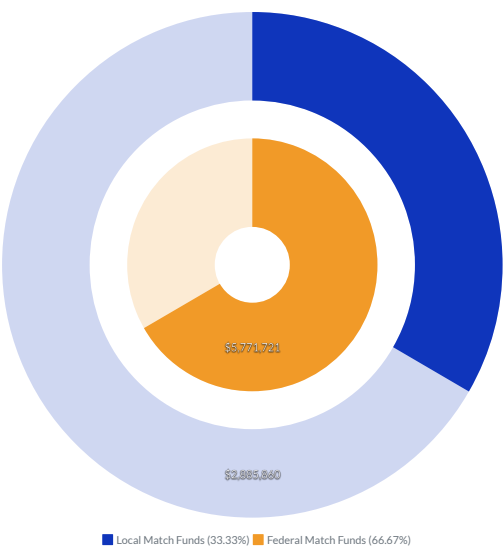


SOURCES: THE TEXAS WORKFORCE INFORMATION SYSTEM (TWIST),
2020 REPORT 245 - CHILD CARE PAID CLAIM (12/2020)
TWIST FUND ALLOCATION SUMMARY FOR 2020

CHILD CARE LOCAL MATCH

The Child Care Local Match program provides participating school districts and public entities the opportunity to help maximize federal funding for child care subsidies for eligible low-income families. In FY 2020, \$2,885,860 in local match funds were secured by WFS through certified expenditures from public entities. WFS was able to leverage \$5,771,721 in federal match funds for the amount certified.

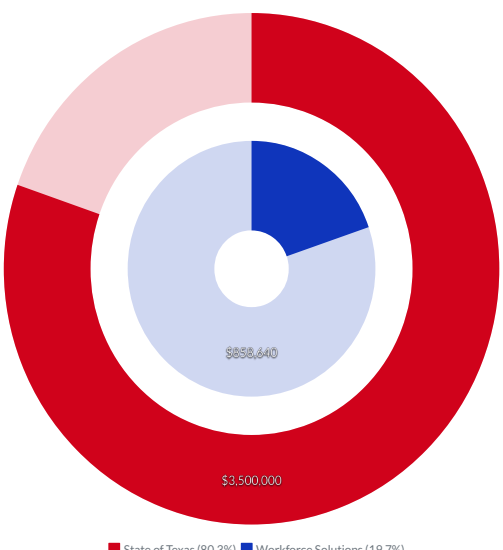
Additional state funding enabled WFS to provide subsidized child care services to an additional 669 families and 1,345 children.



NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT CHOICES PROGRAM

The Non-custodial Parent Choices Program (NCP) is a collaborative effort between the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, family court judges, and WFS. The program assists low-income, unemployed or underemployed, non-custodial parents overcome substantial barriers to employment and career advancement. The goal of the program is to help non-custodial parents become economically self-sufficient, enabling them to make consistent child support payments.

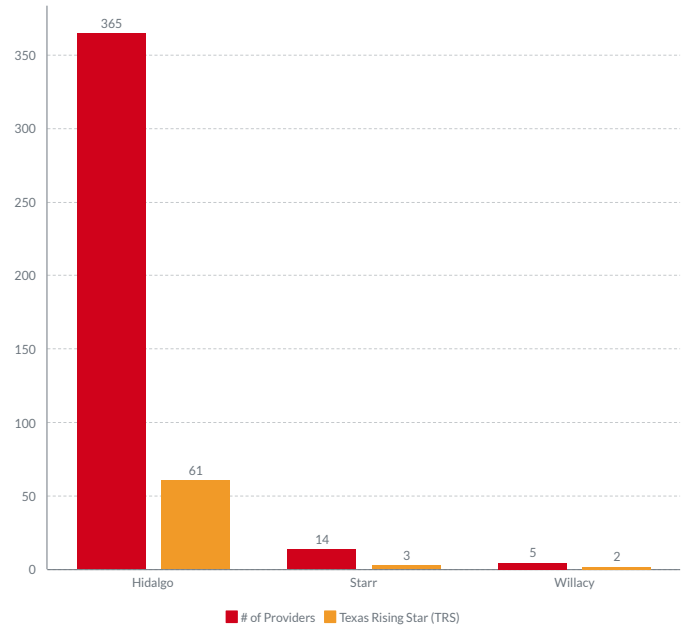
As per NCP Choices FY 2020 End of the Year Report (Sept. 1, 2019 – Aug.31, 2020), the State of Texas ordered 2,423 NCP's into the program and as a result collected more than \$3.5 million from those individuals ordered into the program. WFS assisted in the collection of \$858,640 in outstanding child support payments throughout FY 2020.



CHILD CARE QUALITY

The COVID-19 public health crisis significantly impacted the lives of working parents. WFS optimized the child care service delivery model in March 2020 in efforts to enhance the quality and availability of childcare services.

Adaptations included supplying providers with virtual professional development opportunities and specialized resources promoting stress management, interactive materials to support learning, and personal protective equipment to continue fostering a safe nurturing environment. Thus, WFS staff worked with childcare providers to become Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers which require higher quality standards than other child care programs.



SOURCES: TWIST REPORT 245 - CHILD CARE PAID CLAIM (12/20)
TWIST FUND ALLOCATION SUMMARY FOR 2020

During FY 2020:

A total of 67 child care providers met the TRS designation criteria on 9/30/20. This was an increase of 15.5% from the previous year. Moreover, a total of 1,741 child care professionals attended 26 employee development training sessions.



“The Virtual training sessions were helpful in keeping our staff updated on safety policies and other important information...WFS even provides training in Spanish, which is a benefit for my Spanish speaking staff. The virtual trainings have been a great addition... because they're able to engage with instructors and involve with the subject matter especially since we can't do these trainings in person”

- Kimberly Hess, iKids Academy

A total of 58 TRS child care providers received Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

“The financial relief and PPE provided by WFS came at a time when we were really struggling and helped us focus on maintaining our business during the pandemic... As the boss and owner of a daycare, the unknown of what's going to happen... and the stress of trying to keep everyone safe and remain in compliance with everything going on with the new policies, licenses, and recommendations - WFS was a huge relief.”

EMPLOYER SERVICES

THE WFS BUSINESS SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES TEAM

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the U.S. business market, forcing many companies to temporarily close, reduce capacity, furlough employees or make operational changes. The WFS Business Service Representatives (BSR) provided critical business services to local employers in efforts to hire or maintain a labor force.

In FY 2020, WFS BSRs assisted 4,122 unique employers within the service delivery area.

Employers relied on BSRs to provide services such as recruitment assistance, candidate referrals, and/or Work In Texas assistance. WFS was able to build a strong rapport with employers by increasing accessibility during these difficult times. BSRs made themselves available via phone, email, online audio, and web conferencing platforms when appropriate. Through these means, BSRs continued to assist employers with staffing goals, provided information on potential funding opportunities, and assisted with setting up virtual hiring events. Thanks to platforms such as Premier Virtual, employers had the ability to host job fairs and engage with potential job candidates by utilizing the text and internal video chat for live “real-time” interviews.



THE BUSINESS RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVES TEAM

The Business Relations Representatives (BRR) Team utilizes a consultative business services approach to assist businesses

recruitment, training, and labor market needs. By way of working relationships with businesses and industries, the BRR team is able to gain vital insight and work towards bridging gaps and leverage resources to assist the business community.

Additionally, the BRR team provides vital business intelligence services to help guide employer's efforts to meet their goals. The BRR team has hosted webinars and boot camps to share vital information regarding small business loans and aid available to businesses in response to the impact of the pandemic.

JOB SEEKER SERVICES

WFS shifted rapidly to prioritize virtual service delivery accessibility in response to COVID-19.

Although in-person assistance remained available when necessary, new methods of service delivery were adapted and utilized such as:



*Availability of
virtual live chat
on wfsolutions.org*



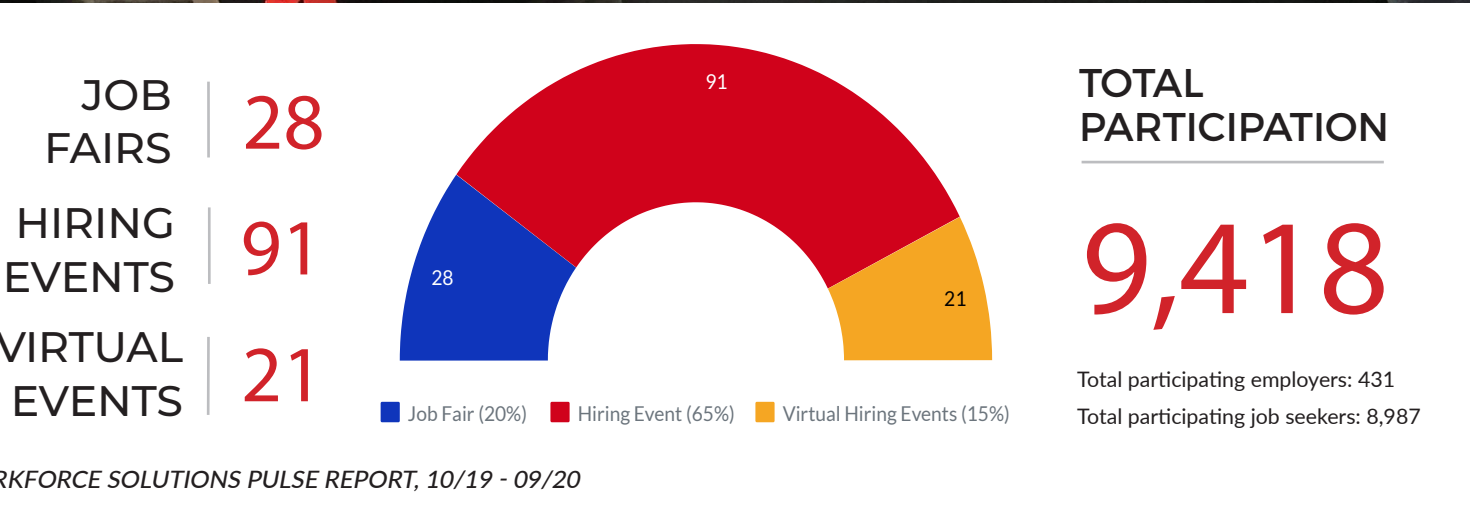
*Online appointment
scheduling*



*Virtual interview
& virtual job fair
platforms for
employers &
job seekers to
foster networking
opportunities*

HIRING

SOURCE: WOR



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

HIRING RED, WHITE & YOU!

11/5/2020

The 9th annual Hiring Red, White, & You! (HRWY) job fair was held virtually on November 5, 2020. A total of 1,461 job seekers registered, engaging with 72 registered employers, community based organizations, & educational institutions.

The event was also open to the general public. The HRWY job fair was heavily promoted through local media outlets, via email, and social media. Texas veterans and eligible spouses were connected with employers that value the experience, discipline, and other exceptional qualities inherent in a military background. Veterans and their spouses had priority access to employers from 9 AM - 10 AM, affording them an exclusive opportunity to virtually network with employers.

SOURCE: TEXAS WORKFORCE
COMMISSION, 2020



**Hiring
Red, White
& You!**
VIRTUAL JOB FAIR
NOVEMBER 5, 2020 ★ 9 AM - 1 PM

We strongly encourage transitioning service members, military spouses, National Guard, Reserve, veterans and their family members to register for this event.

Job seekers in the tri-county area can join us for access to over 50 employers representing various industries across the Rio Grande Valley. Event participation is open to the general public!

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
workforce SOLUTIONS
A proud partner of the American Job Center

Equal Opportunity Is The Law
Equal Opportunity Employer
Disabilities: Try/Ret

1,461

REGISTERED
JOB SEEKERS

72

REGISTERED
EMPLOYERS

**VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES
GET EXCLUSIVE TIME WITH
EMPLOYERS FROM 9 AM TO 10 AM**

**REGISTER FOR THIS
EVENT ONLINE AT:
WFSOLUTIONS.ORG/RWY**

**FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL:
MANDO@WFSOLUTIONS.ORG**

**Scan with your
smartphone camera
to register online!**

workforce SOLUTIONS TMC TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

This program is funded in whole or in part with federal funds. 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. For More Information Call 1-800-735-2988 (Voice) or 1-800-735-2988 (Voice) or 1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

75

VETERANS IN
ATTENDANCE

QUICK REACTION FORCE: REMOVING BARRIERS

12/10/2020

**ONLY TWO DAYS
LEFT TO REGISTER**

**REGISTER ONLINE:
HTTPS://RB.GY/T85YML**

**QUICK
REACTION
FORCE:
REMOVING BARRIERS**

**SAVE THE DATE
DECEMBER 10, 2020
9:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.**

**JOIN US FOR THE
QUICK REACTION FORCE:
REMOVING BARRIERS EVENT!**

**THE GOAL OF THE WEBINAR IS TO
REMOVE BARRIERS TO HELP
VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE SPOUSES
SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION TO
WORK. THIS VIRTUAL EVENT BRINGS
TOGETHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES
THAT OFFER SERVICES SUCH AS
RENTAL, TUITION AND UTILITY
ASSISTANCE.**

**HOSTED VIA ZOOM!
VISIT
HTTPS://RB.GY/T85YML
TO REGISTER FOR
THIS VIRTUAL
EVENT**

**OR SCAN THIS
QR CODE WITH
YOUR SMARTPHONE
CAMERA TO SIGN UP
CONVENIENTLY FROM
YOUR PHONE:**

The inaugural Quick Reaction Force (QRF) webinar was designed to help veterans and eligible spouses overcome barriers and lead them towards a successful transition to work by convening community agencies that offer financial assistance with rent, tuition, and utilities. In order to participate in this event, organizations were required to have funding available to immediately assist local veterans and their spouses without the need to be placed on a waitlist.

A total of 55 veterans and 6 local community-based organizations registered for the event.

Participating community based organizations included Veterans Upward Bound, Endeavors, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley, Hidalgo County Community Service Agency, and TX Serves-RGV Program. The QRF webinar was simultaneously broadcasted via Facebook Live, reaching nearly 600 viewers.

SOURCE: TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION, 2020

600 LIVE
VIEWERS55 REGISTERED
VETERANS6 REGISTERED
COMMUNITY-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

STRONG ENTREPRENEUR

The virtual Strong Entrepreneur Boot Camp webinar series was hosted in partnership with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Small Business Development Center (UTRGV SBDC), area chambers of commerce, EDCs, and WFS. The series of business webinars hosted by WFS helped business partners stay informed about the latest resources available to adapt their businesses to the ever-changing environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinars focused on topics such as Safety and Cleaning Protocol, Plan for Employee Retention, Accessing Loan Funds including federal loan programs, Financial Management, and Building a Marketing Plan.

11/13/19

Part of the Strong Entrepreneur series of events, *The Women in Business Boot Camp* was held in-person on November 13, 2019 at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Boot camp content was presented in Spanish and was specifically designed for Spanish speaking female business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

06/25/20

The Strong Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge: Small Business Resiliency webinar was hosted virtually via Zoom on June 25, 2020. The webinar was open to all business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Partners for this event included WFS, UTRGV SBDC, Lift Fund, People Fund, U.S. Small Business Administration, Monarch International Design, and UTRGV Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC)



09/24/20

A second *The Strong Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge: Small Business Resiliency* webinar was hosted online via Zoom on September 24, 2020. The webinar was open to all business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Partners for this event included WFS, UTRGV SBDC, Lift Fund, People Fund, U.S. Small Business Administration, Monarch International Design, UTRGV TMAC, Rio Grande City EDC, Starr County Industrial Foundation

11/19/2020

The third and final webinar in *The Strong Entrepreneur Boot Camp, Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge: Small Business Resiliency* webinar series was hosted online via Zoom on November 19, 2020. The webinar was open to all business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Partners for this event included WFS, UTRGV SBDC, Lift Fund, People Fund, U.S. Small Business Administration, Monarch International Design, UTRGV TMAC, and the Raymondville Chamber



WORKFORCE OUTREACH SPECIALISTS

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to view a video overview of the achievements made by the WOS throughout FY 2020.

YOUTH INITIATIVES DURING COVID-19

In 2020, school districts were compelled to switch to online distance learning in response to COVID-19. Distance learning fueled the need for virtual learning software, tools, and resources. Thus, with keeping pace with the need, Workforce Outreach Specialists (WOS) re-evaluated their service delivery methods and adapted to the changes in education. After careful strategizing, researching and developing, the WOS team implemented new methods and tools to assist teachers with their distance learning needs.



WOS began utilizing Google Workspace, which includes Google Meets, Google Classroom and Google Drive to create and upload information accessible to teachers upon request.

In addition to Google Workspace, the team enhanced their online presentation skills by becoming proficient in ZOOM, GoTo Meeting, Google Meets, and Microsoft TEAMS.



Interview Stream Prep:

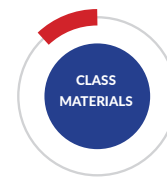
An online tool that allows students to take mock video interviews where they can share with teachers, parents and/or friends to receive feedback and hone in on their interviewing skills. This platform allows teachers to assign interviews as assignments to incorporate into their curriculum.

Kahoot Trivia: Kahoot is a "Quiz Show" interactive learning platform that assists with engaging students during virtual meetings. Students can participate in groups remotely or in the classroom.



Resource Tutorials: Video tutorials for tools such as Texas Reality Check and Texas Career Check were recorded and broken into two segments that could be used by educators and assigned to students.

Employer Video Interviews: WOS interviewed employers that represented the high demand occupations in the area and created an online video library to promote virtual career exploration. These videos are readily available to all districts and are accompanied by a Kahoot Trivia quiz.

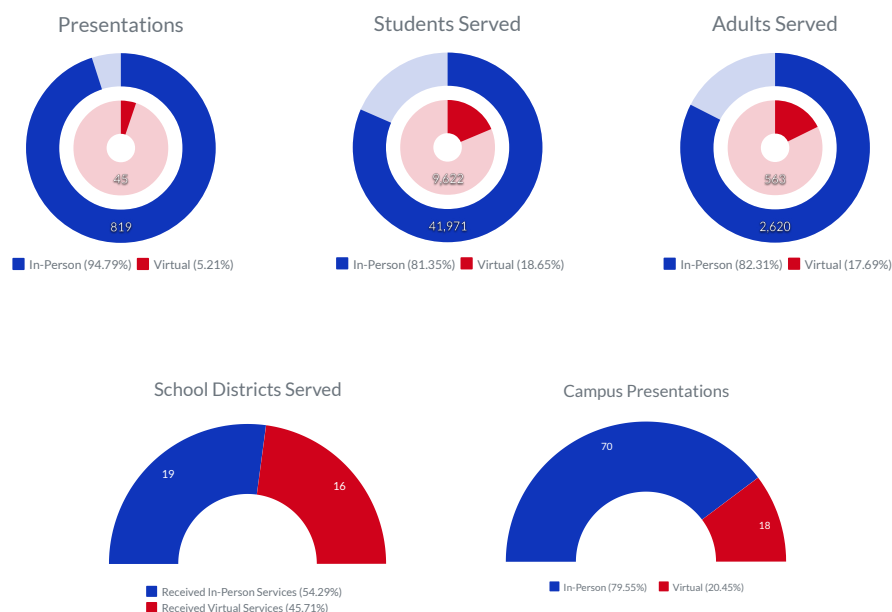


Resource Assessments: Assignments and quizzes were developed to strengthen information retention and assist teachers in integrating tutorials into their curriculum.

Job Readiness Curriculum (JRC): The JRC developed by WFS consists of 13 modules focusing on improving soft skills to help prepare individuals for success in the workplace. The skill-set many employers emphasize is a hire ability trait.

These new tools, strategies, and methods have enabled WOS to apprise students, educators, and parents with information about high demand occupations in the area, while also empowering youth to make informed decisions about their career pathway.

During FY 2020, the WOS team's impact on local school districts is as follows:



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

VIRTUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

10/12/2020 - 10/25/2020

WFS virtually hosted the 2020 Youth Career Conference in the span of four days. Each day highlighted a specific industry such as Healthcare, Law Enforcement, Education, and Construction. Students were provided three tracts in which they could attend, Career Exploration, Parental Engagement, and Soft Skills.

Career Exploration:

For this tract, WOS interviewed local employers representing different high demand occupations. These recorded interviews were presented across the four days of the conference.

Parental Engagement:

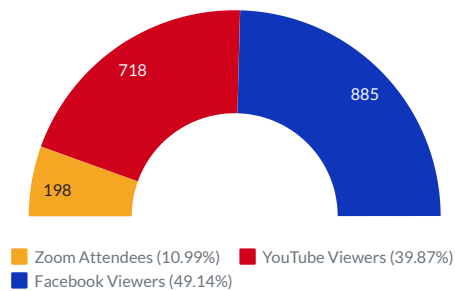
The Parental Engagement tract focused on important topics to parents and their children such as Financial Aid, Time Management, Social Media, and Financial Literacy.

Soft Skills:

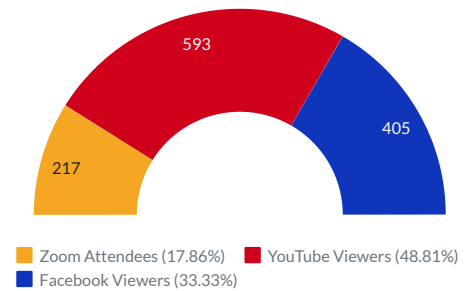
The Soft Skills tract highlighted skills and information valuable to those entering the workforce, such as Interview Skills, Resume Writing, and information on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

A unique feature of the conference was that the Career Exploration Tract streamed live via YouTube and the Parental Tract streamed live via Facebook. The livestreaming strategy increased access to sessions allowing WFS to keep a video library of the event to share with districts upon request.

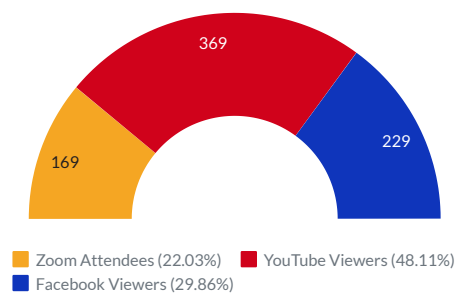
DAY 1 AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN



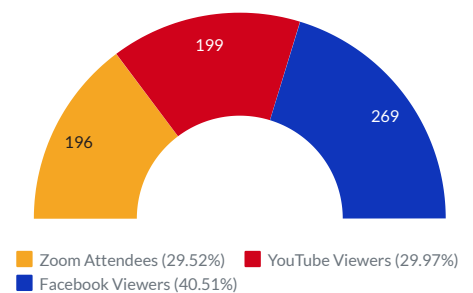
DAY 2 AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN



DAY 3 AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN

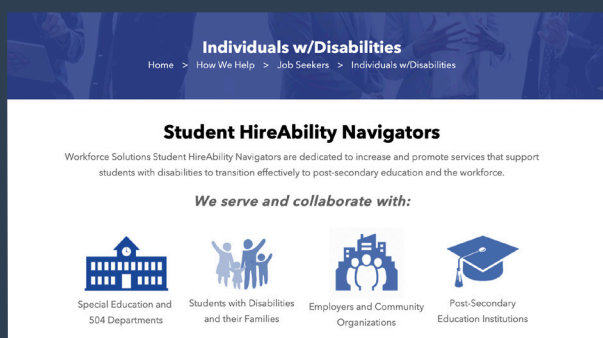


DAY 4 AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN



INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

WFS is an equal opportunity organization that actively monitors the operation of auxiliary aids and strategizes solutions that enhance accessibility and visibility of services. Student HireAbility Navigators (SHNs) are dedicated to advancing this mission, and have established a strong partnership with Texas Workforce Solutions - Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) to identify additional auxiliary aids and services that would increase accessibility to individuals with disabilities.



Each of the six WFS offices have been equipped with a Sorenson Video Relay Phone and Pocketalker (a Speech Amplification Device).

SHNs coordinated training with WFS staff in an effort to increase awareness of the auxiliary aids available. Monthly center visits were also conducted to ensure functionality and accessibility of equipment.

The WFS website was updated to highlight the ble and pertinent resources for disability stakeholders.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY DURING COVID-19

Adapting to change is not always easy; therefore, providing opportunities and resources to individuals with disabilities has been more crucial than ever. Participating in resource fairs and presentations has been the most effective strategy in raising awareness on transition services; however, the sudden shift from in-person services to solely virtual resulted in challenges connecting with disability stakeholders. As a result, the Student HireAbility Navigators assessed the needs and preferences of the community to identify solutions. The team made the following efforts in FY 2020 to provide services, information and resources to the community:

- To ensure that students exiting high school were connected to post-secondary education services available to them, SHNs coordinated a Virtual Transition Fair in April, 2020. Participating organizations presented information on relevant resources to nearly 200 virtual attendees. Partners included: WFS, South Texas College Counseling and Student Accessibility Services, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Student Accessibility Services, TWS-VRS, and The Valley Association for Independent Living.
- Partnerships were enhanced during COVID-19 to plan events such as the Disability Chamber of Commerce DisAbility Employer Awareness Pre-Conference. A total of 45 local employers participated and learned about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities.
- In October 2020, during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the SHNs coordinated a virtual hiring event for individuals with disabilities. A total of 17 employers engaged with 75 participating job seekers.
- The SHNs organized a webinar series (streamed live on the WFS Facebook page) to inform the community about local organizations that provide services to individuals with disabilities. Since the beginning of September 2020, the SHNs have held ten 15-minute sessions which have also been made available on the WFS website.

The SHNs continue to promote, convene, collaborate, connect and coordinate with community agencies, parents, students, educators and other stakeholders via e-mail, phone calls and virtual presentations.

HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

WFS has been actively involved with the healthcare industry through various initiatives to leverage resources and foster growth within the industry. Through TWC industry initiatives such as the Skills Development and Texas Industry Partnership grants, WFS has been able to gain vital industry insight and assist with industry growth. Below are some of the healthcare industry



WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS HEALTHCARE TASKFORCE

WFS recognizes that the healthcare industry in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) to be amongst the fastest growing in the region, with a projected growth of 32.1% by the year 2030. Established in 2015, the WFS Healthcare Taskforce is composed of major healthcare employers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders within the RGV to identify and address healthcare industry challenges, support recruitment and training needs, and serve as a forum to explore partnership opportunities.

The taskforce works collaboratively to cultivate learning, leverage resources, explore solutions to common challenges, and build capacity within the healthcare industry to meet the needs of South Texas. These efforts have earned the WFS Healthcare Taskforce the Texas Workforce Commission's Industry Outreach Award, resulting in various healthcare skills development fund grant awards.

SOURCE: EMSI INDUSTRY OVERVIEW REPORT, 1/19/21

TEXAS INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP GRANT

WFS and the Rio Grande Valley Partnership were awarded a \$7,000 TWC Texas Industry Partnership Grant to commission an economic impact study by UTRGV's Data and Information Systems Center (DISC) examining the workforce needs of the local healthcare and bioscience industry.

The study measured the regional impact to the healthcare industry, with a focus on high-demand, middle-skilled occupations. The information collected is critical to understanding the workforce readiness needs of future healthcare workers and upskilling needs of the existing workforce through demand driven education and training initiatives. Additionally, the study collected wage and salary data on select high growth occupations within the industry and identified career opportunities to maintain and repair industry equipment. The vital business intelligence collected through this study will be shared with stakeholders to help guide industry efforts.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

CONT.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANTS

The TWC Skills Development Fund (SDF) Grant Initiative assists businesses with training their workforce in order to meet industry demands. As a response to the rapidly growing healthcare industry and the need for skilled healthcare professionals, WFS has collaborated with industry employers in order to help build a talent pipeline.

Through the SDF Grant Initiative, TWC awarded the largest skills development grant (amounting to \$2.6 million) to the partnership of STC and DHR Health. The funding provided training to 2,961 individuals, with 144,360 hours of specialized training for registered nurses and other healthcare professionals. Upon completion of the grant, trainees received an average hourly wage of \$20.49, and the economic impact of SDF training in the region would inject over \$50 million to the local economy.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

The WFS IT Industry Initiatives aim to foster the continued growth of IT jobs in the region. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in computer and information technology (IT) occupations is projected to grow 11% from 2019 to 2029, a rate much faster than the average for all occupations. As of 2020, the RGV has 3,366 IT jobs, with the median annual wage being \$91,913 which is significantly higher than the median annual wage of \$58,637 in the RGV. FY 2020 Initiatives include:

THE HIGH DEMAND JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

WFS has collaborated with Mission EDC and Edinburg EDC to fund and provide training on information technology. The High Demand Job Training Program is intended to support boards in partnering with local EDCs that use their local economic development sales taxes for high-demand job training. Through the program, WFS funds training for industry recognized credentials for jobs on the high-demand training list.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) TASKFORCE

In order to initiate strategic discussion within the RGV IT Industry, WFS reached out to local industry leaders in IT fields to assemble an IT Taskforce. Taskforce goals include improving the talent pipeline, producing skilled IT talent and attracting a larger pool of IT employers. The first meeting was virtually held on November 17, 2020, and featured presenters from WFS, Netsync, STC and UTRGV.

CYBERMISSION CAREER EXPO

WFS participated in Mission EDC's CyberMission Career Expo in March, 2020. The career fair was dedicated to current students in CyberMission as well as job seekers looking for jobs within the computer and IT fields. Employers in attendance included UTRGV, STC, McAllen Independent School District, and CompTIA.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The IT Registered Apprenticeship Program expands opportunities for employers to develop registered apprenticeship programs. Through apprenticeships, employees have the capability to learn crucial career skills on the job. The program is a new TWC initiative scheduled to start Spring 2021.

COVID-19 SPECIAL TRAINING INITIATIVE: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF)

This special initiative is in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Grant funds awarded under this initiative are used to address priority training needs in direct response to the pandemic. Additional priority is given to business partners and those industries responding directly to the COVID-19 pandemic such as healthcare, manufacturing and information technology. The SDF program pays for the training up to \$2,000 per trainee with some employers eligible to apply and receive Personal Protection Equipment for their businesses. The WFS Business Outreach team worked with various businesses interested in Information Technology trainings such as assessing cybersecurity risks, cybersecurity risk management for business, and information technology disaster recovery.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2020 BOARD AWARDS

In February 2021, WFS was recognized at the 2020 Board Awards Ceremony for our commitment to serving local youth and efforts in providing them with the tools to make informed career path decisions. The Texas HireAbility Award recognizes local Workforce Development Boards that successfully promote employment opportunities for talented and dedicated Texans with disabilities. Additionally, WFS was awarded the Workforce Career and Innovation Act (WIOA) Career Pathways - Board Performance Incentive Award for placing a larger percentage of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth participants in training, including training-related employment.

In addition to the two Board Performance & Board Incentive Awards secured, WFS was rewarded three Competitive Awards: Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Award, Statewide Large Employer of the Year Award, and Statewide Texas HireAbility Award.



24TH ANNUAL TEXAS WORKFORCE CONFERENCE EMPLOYER AWARDS

Nominated by WFS, DHR Health was recognized by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as the Large Employer of the Year at the 24th Annual Texas Workforce Conference Employer Awards virtual ceremony on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. The Large Employer of the Year Award honors a large, private-sector employer whose efforts and initiatives have had an extraordinary effect on the state of Texas, other employers, workers, and the communities in which the employer does business.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The year 2020 emphasized the importance of community partnerships. The RGV came together in many instances to help those in need, by providing assistance to overcome challenges brought upon by COVID-19. Below are several community partners who collaborated with WFS to make a positive impact in people's lives:

AARP FOUNDATION	RGV DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ABLE N GONZALEZ COMMUNITY CENTER	RGV FOCUS
ADVOCACY RESOURCE CENTER FOR HOUSING	RGV LEAD
ALABAMA-COUSHATTA INDIAN TRIBAL COUNCIL	RGV LITERACY CENTER
ALAMO EDC	RIO GRANDE CITY EDC
ATTORNEY GENERAL NONCUSTODIAL PARENT PROGRAM	RIO GRANDE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY
CESAR CHAVEZ FOUNDATION	RIO GRANDE VALLEY ELECTRICAL
CITY OF MCALLEN MAYOR'S OFFICE	SAN JUAN EDC
COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS HIDALGO COUNTY	SER-JOBS FOR PROGRESS NATIONAL
COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL OF SOUTH TEXAS	SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
EASTER SEALS	SOUTH ALAMO COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
EDINBURG EDC	SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE
EDINBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENT COUNCIL	SOUTH TEXAS LITERACY COALITION
ENTRAVISION	SOUTH TEXAS MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION
EXPERIENCE WORKS	STARR COUNTY INDUSTRIAL FOUNDATION
GARY JOB CORPS	STARR COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE
HIDALGO COUNTY HEAD START PROGRAM	STARR COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
HIDALGO COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE	STARR COUNTY SELF HELP CENTER
HIDALGO COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICE	TELEMUNDO 40
HIDALGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	TELEVISA
IHEART RADIO	TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COLONIAS PROGRAM
KGBT-TV	TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
KRGV-TV	TEXAS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
KVEO-TV	TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES
MCALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
MCALLEN PUBLIC LIBRARY	TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
MERCEDES MEMORIAL LIBRARY	TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
METRO MCALLEN	TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION
MISSION EDC	TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
MOTIVATION EDUCATION TRAINING	TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION
MUJERES UNIDAS	THE MONITOR
NORTH SAN JUAN COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER	TROPICAL TEXAS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
PHARR EDC	UNITED WAY
PSJA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY
RAYMONDVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	VALLEY ASSOCIATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
RAYMONDVILLE EDC	VALLEY METRO
REBER MEMORIAL LIBRARY	VIDA
REGION ONE EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER	WESLACO EDC
RIO GRANDE VALLEY GUARDIAN	WILLACY COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE
RGV COUNCIL	WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS CAMERON



LEADERSHIP

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

2020 Lead Chief Elected Official – Honorable Eloy Vera, Starr County Judge
 Honorable Richard Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge
 Honorable Jim Darling, McAllen City Major
 Honorable Aurelio 'Keter' Guerra, Willacy County Judge

BOARD OFFICERS	SECTOR	MEMBER SINCE
Sonia Falcon <i>Chair, City of McAllen</i>	Private Sector	2016
Martha Rebeles <i>Vice Chair, Willacy County</i>	Private Sector	2016
Federico Lopez <i>Secretary, Starr County</i>	Community Based Organization	2012
Dalinda L. Guillen <i>Treasurer, Starr County</i>	Economic Development	2007

HIDALGO COUNTY

BOARD MEMBERS	SECTOR	MEMBER SINCE
Dr. Ida Acuña-Garza	Literacy	2011
Dr. Luis Daniel Buentello	Labor	2016
Anabel Chavez	Private Sector	2018
Eduardo Garcia	Education	2018
Sara P. Garza	Public Employment	2006
Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez	Private Sector	2019
Rebeca Hernandez	Public Assistance	2016
Carla Herrera	Private Sector	2018
Francisco Lugo, Jr.	Private Sector	2017
Lorissa Luna	Vocational Rehabilitation	2019
Cristina Rivera	Private Sector	2015
Cristina Trejo-Vasquez	Community Based Organization	2018
Laura Treviño	Adult Basic Education	2016

STARR COUNTY

BOARD OFFICERS	SECTOR	MEMBER SINCE
Noel Benavides, Jr.	Private Sector	2016
Rose Benavidez	Education	2008
Cesar Vera	Private Sector	2016

WILLACY COUNTY

BOARD OFFICERS	SECTOR	MEMBER SINCE
Ricardo Salinas	Community Based Organization	2018
Dr. Roy Sheneman	Private Sector	2010

CITY OF MCALLEN

BOARD OFFICERS	SECTOR	MEMBER SINCE
Lorena Castillo	Private Sector	2018
Rebecca Guerra	Private Sector	2014
Roberto Luciano	Private Sector	2017

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smartphone camera.*

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

For the purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Workforce Solutions Annual Impact Report was developed and distributed using 100% WIOA federal funding.
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).