

Regional Career Pathways **STRATEGIC PLAN** West Central Texas



2024 - 2029



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Executive Summary.....	3
Regional Overview.....	4
Role of the Convener.....	6
Role of the Partners.....	6
Implementation Plan.....	7
Metrics.....	12
Communications.....	14
Challenges.....	14
Action Plan.....	14
Data.....	16
Challenges.....	16
Action Plan.....	17
Conclusion.....	19

Executive Summary

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas (WFSWCT) envisions a future where individuals confidently navigate career pathways, supported by integrated systems that prioritize experiential learning and access to training for quality jobs. As the regional convener, WFSWCT leads collaborative efforts to align education, industry, and community stakeholders, fostering a unified strategy to address workforce challenges and opportunities. Focused on building and sustaining high-quality career pathways, WFSWCT emphasizes early career exploration, meaningful work-based learning experiences, and credentialing opportunities aligned with industry needs.

Central to these efforts is the Pathways Leadership Team, a cross-sector group convened by WFSWCT to guide the development and implementation of the strategic plan. The Pathways Leadership Team includes representatives from regional Education Service Centers, institutions of higher education, economic development organizations, industry representatives, and community members. This broad representation ensures alignment with the diverse needs of West Central Texas and fosters collaboration across sectors. Team members serve as liaisons to their sectors, ensuring sustained engagement and effective communication. WFSWCT connects partners to shared priorities and ensures the strategic plan remains adaptive to regional needs through sustained investment and broad stakeholder engagement. Together with the Pathways Leadership Team and cross-sector partners, WFSWCT is dedicated to transforming the regional workforce system to create a thriving future for all residents of West Central Texas. This plan serves as a roadmap to strengthen career pathways and equip individuals with the skills essential for economic success. The following goals outline the critical priorities for achieving this vision in the region's targeted industries of healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and education:

- Ensure access to high-quality education and training programs across the region by 2029.
- Increase quality work-based learning opportunities by 10% by 2029.
- Increase quality engagement in career pathway development among K12, higher education, industry, and community partners by 10% by 2029.

To achieve these goals, the plan identifies key strategies that address regional needs and build on the strengths of existing systems:

- **Assess Accessibility and Program Gaps:** Evaluate the geographic and capacity limitations of current education and training programs to identify areas for expansion and improvement.
- **Program Coverage and Capacity Building:** Identify high-priority areas for new program development and build the capacity of existing programs, particularly in underserved regions.
- **Enhance Career Exploration:** Develop infrastructure and opportunities for job shadowing, industry tours, and early career exploration to engage students in high-demand industries.
- **Increase Paid Internship Opportunities:** Scale paid internship programs, focusing on increasing employer participation and aligning internships with academic and career goals.
- **Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships between K-12, higher education, industry, and community stakeholders to align and coordinate career pathways.

Regional Overview

The Goals, Metrics, and Implementation Plan discussed in further sections are all informed by previous work done by Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas (WFSWCT) in the role of Tri-agency Regional Convener. Initial [Pathways Landscape Mapping](#) was performed to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the current state and dynamics of the labor market within the West Central Texas Workforce Development Area, alongside aligned educational pathways at the secondary and postsecondary level. Desk-based research, existing reports, labor market data, and guidance from the Pathways Leadership team was used to identify targeted industry sectors and key occupations within each sector during Q3 2023. Ongoing conversations and analysis throughout the planning process led to a narrowing of the targeted occupations as reflected below.

Table 1. Target Industries and Key Occupations for West Central Texas WDA

Industry: Healthcare			
Occupation	Employed	Avg Hourly Wages	2-yr Projected Growth
Nursing Assistant	1,429	\$15.29	1.64%
Licensed Vocational Nurse	895	\$25.10	0.55%
Registered Nurses	3,362	\$38.08	0.92%
Industry: Manufacturing			
Occupation	Employed	Avg Hourly Wages	2-yr Projected Growth
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	531	\$23.65	2.44%
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	514	\$27.40	3.89%
Industry: Construction			
Occupation	Employed	Avg Hourly Wages	2-yr Projected Growth
Maintenance and Repair Workers	1,339	\$18.99	1.68%
Electricians	797	\$24.76	4.83%
Industry: Education			
Occupation	Employed	Avg Hourly Wages	2-yr Projected Growth
Elementary Teachers, Except Special Education	1,727	\$26.15	0.95%
Secondary Teachers, Except CTE and Special Education	1,256	\$27.88	1.05%

Source: JobsEQ, 2024Q1 Data



An [Asset Map & Gap Analysis](#) was performed during Q4 2023 to fulfill the following purposes:

- Assembling baseline demographic and labor market data;
- Identifying and assessing assets and gaps;
- Providing a cross-sector perspective;
- Laying the groundwork for a strategic plan.

The following gaps were identified through the process, organized by the Texas Regional Pathways Network seven components of quality career pathways:

- **Alignment with Labor Market Data:** Districts must balance utilization of labor market information while also meeting other demands of the educational system, with the current landscape revealing a lack of alignment between the two.
- **Cross-sector Partnerships:** Partners working on talent pipeline development lack the capacity of personnel, resources, or time to add intermediary functions.
- **Credentials with Value in the Labor Market:** There is no formalized ecosystem of credentialing that holds value for both education and industry.
- **Links between Secondary and Postsecondary Education:** Challenges exist for secondary and postsecondary educators offering dual credit, particularly technical dual credit, including access to a qualified instructor, equipment, cost, transportation, and number of students.
- **Integration of Rigorous Core Academics and Career-focused Learning:** Very few districts have fully implemented a connection between core academics and career and technical education.
- **Effective Advising:** There is a need for increased awareness of high-wage, middle-skill occupations available to students through career advising opportunities PK-12.
- **Continuum of Work-based Learning Experiences:** There is a lack of work-based learning experiences implemented with collaboration between employers, secondary educators, and postsecondary educators, specifically in the “Learning through Work” area of the continuum.

Based on the data and information presented in both the Pathway Landscape Map and the Asset Map and Gap Analysis, Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas arrived at the following focus of future work:

- Secondary and postsecondary education institutions continue creating and supporting programs of study aligned with labor-market demand.
- Increase cross-sector collaboration in a way that enables stakeholders to align and coordinate work and ensure broad access to data, information, and resources.
- Grow collaboration across sectors to create quality work-based learning opportunities for students aligned to the skills required for jobs in high demand industries.



Role of the Convener

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas, with the support and advisement of the Pathways Leadership Team, will play four primary roles:

- Trusted source of information and data – WFSWCT will be the leading source of labor market and career pathway data and information in the region.
- Facilitator – WFSWCT will serve as the primary facilitator among sector partners, finding opportunities to align and advance shared priorities between industry and education.
- Initiator – WFSWCT will initiate strategy implementation and activities in the region, building the capacity across partners to take on leadership over time.
- Sustainer – WFSWCT will maintain the necessary investment of time, capabilities, and financial resources for quality career pathways with continued support from the various stakeholders.

Role of the Partners

Collaboration and buy-in from cross-sector partners are vital for the successful implementation of quality career pathways across West Central Texas. Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas convened a Pathways Leadership Team to represent the entire geographic scope of the region consisting of representatives from Education Service Centers, institutions of higher education, economic development organizations, independent school districts, industry representatives, community representatives, and the workforce development board. Pathways Leadership team members dedicate time and effort, subject matter expertise, and sustained commitment to the research, development, and implementation of the regional strategic plan. Members serve as primary liaisons to their respective sectors. Member organizations have the responsibility to ensure sustained representation on the Pathways Leadership Team, even if the individual representing the organization changes.

The Pathways Leadership Team will be supported by four committees, each devoted to one of the identified target industries. The committees will be led by a member of the Pathways Leadership Team and include representation from education, industry, and community partners. Committee leaders have the responsibility of communicating to the Pathways Leadership Team and serving as the primary liaisons for the work of the committees. All actions recommended by the committee will be vetted and approved by the Pathways Leadership Team.

Implementation Plan

Based on the five-year goals established by the Pathways Leadership Team, a detailed two-year implementation plan was developed with scaffolded strategies, corresponding activities, necessary partners engaged, and a timeline. Completion of each activity propels the work forward and is essential to achieving the overall objective. The established steps with sequential timelines provide benchmarks for Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas and the Pathways Leadership Team to gauge progress, incorporate feedback, and regularly assess effectiveness of identified strategies for quality career pathway development at a regional level.

Ensure access to high-quality education and training programs aligned to targeted industries across the region by 2029.			
Objective	Strategy	Partners	Start Date
Evaluate access to high-quality education and training programs aligned to target industries at each entry point in the identified career pathways.	Develop a definition for accessibility considering geography and program capacity.	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q1 2025
	Review Asset Map and Gap Analysis to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locations of existing programs within 30 miles of population centers. - Capacity analysis of existing programs within 30 miles of population centers, understanding where additional enrollment space may be needed. (includes secondary and postsecondary programs) 	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q2 2025
	Supplement existing data to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pipeline analysis to understand where currently enrolled learners are coming into programs (workforce development, high school, employers, etc.) - Retention and completion analysis to determine highest performing programs. - Correlation between inequities and outcomes. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q2 2025
	Identify highest priority areas for program coverage and capacity building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine short-term solutions, including online coursework, to support learners. - Determine options for funding program development, including public, employer, and/or philanthropic sources. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry Philanthropy	Q3 2025
Ensure programs exist with the capacity to meet the economic and labor market	Using best practices from highest-performing existing programs, support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of new programs in K12 and IHE partners. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry Philanthropy	Q3 2025

needs in under-represented areas.	- Capacity building, including faculty development and physical capacity in existing programs.		
	Based on pipeline analysis: - Implement efforts to support improved pipeline into high-quality programs through marketing, articulation agreements, employer partnerships, scholarship programs, and other means determined through analysis of best practices.	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry Philanthropy	Q1 2026
Evaluate and implement a teacher apprenticeship model to mitigate shortages in the education field.	Evaluate existing teacher apprenticeship approaches to determine the best fit for rural districts with limited human resources capacity. - Includes district-led, provider-led, or “grow your own” models.	WFSWCT K12	Q2 2025
	Identify effective technical and implementation assistance models based on determined model(s).	WFSWCT K12	Q3 2025
	Identify funding sources for registration and implementation, including WFS, state agencies, federal government, philanthropic.	WFSWCT K12	Q4 2025
	Identify availability and gaps in educator credentialing programs in the region, including availability of CBE models, applied baccalaureate programs, alternative credential programs, online models. - Identify and pursue policy implications resulting from assessment. - Identify and pursue institutional practice implications resulting from assessment. - Identify and pursue alternative/online provider partnerships resulting from assessment.	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q4 2025
	Determine the best approach for pursuing registered apprenticeship, specifically by joining existing sponsor or pursuing new sponsorship.	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q1 2026
	Determine pilot structure based on findings from analyses, identifying ready K12 and postsecondary partners, as well as other RTI and EPPs that may better serve apprentices.	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q2 2026
	Determine and develop a structured strategic plan for apprenticeship implementation based on analyses.	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q3 2026
	Increase quality work-based learning opportunities aligned to targeted industries by 10% by 2029.		
Objective	Strategy	Partners	Date

Increase career exploration opportunities aligned to targeted industries.	<p>Create program infrastructure, including management and administration, funding, legal/compliance, and partnership, to support job shadowing and industry tour opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine needed capacity within partner organizations required to ensure students in every K12 district in the region can participate in at least one career exploration activity before graduation. - Determine needed funding to provide scaled career exploration. - Determine any legal and compliance issues needed for career exploration in targeted industries. - Determine partnership infrastructure required to administer scaled career exploration activities, identifying best practices for solicitation of employers, coordination of activities, and onsite practices to minimize disruptions to the workday. - Ensure program administration enables and encourages teacher involvement and participation in career exploration activities. 	WFSWCT K12 Industry	Q4 2024
	<p>Analyze baseline data to determine which districts are currently supporting career exploration activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify districts that are supporting minimal activities, or activities only for certain student populations. - Identify districts that do not support any career exploration activities. - Determine primary reasons for limited activities. 	WFSWCT K12	Q1 2025
	<p>In districts with minimal career exploration activities, prioritize career exploration programming, using determined program infrastructure.</p>	WFSWCT K12 Industry	Q2 2025
Increase paid youth internship opportunities aligned to	<p>Scale 2024 WFSWCT Work-Based Learning Pilot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase number of students participating in paid internship experiences. - Increase number of districts participating in paid internship experiences. 	WFSWCT K12 Industry	Q3 2024

targeted industries.	<p>Identify issues, barriers, and inefficiencies in program administration, ensuring smooth experiences for students, employers, and teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support ongoing program evaluation. - Prioritize inefficiencies to address and correct. 	WFSWCT K12 Industry	Q3 2025
	<p>Support outreach and promotion of paid internships among employers, increasing number of employers providing paid internship experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with employer intermediaries (chambers, economic development, etc.) to share information about the program. - Conduct a benefits analysis to determine business value for supporting paid internships. (including potential ROI, hiring pipeline, etc.) - Develop resource with employer best practices from regional employers who have successfully implemented paid internships. - Support storytelling and elevation of benefits to students to show employers the impact of their participation. 	WFSWCT Industry	Q4 2025
	<p>Support targeted assistance and intervention among K12 teachers and administrators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better align regionally supported paid internship experiences with career practicum and career prep requirements. - Ensure paid internship experiences are integrated into training plans. - Support teacher education to understand jobs and employers available in the region. - Support ongoing technical assistance for teachers and administrators over time. 	WFSWCT K12	Q3 2025
Increase postsecondary credit opportunities for work-based learning.	<p>Explore opportunities for increased recognition of work- based learning for credit toward postsecondary credentials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support a feasibility assessment of recognizing internships for college credit. - Conduct a landscape analysis of employers with existing postsecondary recognition of work-based learning policies in the region and scale of student employment related to targeted industries. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE	Q1 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As appropriate, identify technical assistance needed to enable learning gained through work to apply at scale toward credit for credentials at community colleges and regional comprehensive universities. 		
Increase quality engagement in career pathway development among K12, higher education, industry, and community partners by 10% by 2029.			
Objective	Strategy	Partners	Date
Improve cross-sector collaboration in support of career pathway development.	Review Asset Map and Gap Analysis to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine existing venues for connections across sectors. - Evaluate those existing venues and programs for alignment with metrics and standards for high-quality sector partnerships. - Determine gaps between existing and ideal programming. 	WFSWCT PLT	Q2 2025
	Create a targeted, specific plan for improving industry engagement in cross-sector partnerships in the region.	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry Community	Q2 2025
	Support personal and strategic connections between K12, higher education, industry, and community partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement plan, with attention paid to differences in capacity, culture, and industries within different parts of the region. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry Community	Q1 2026
Implement an improved advisory board structure to ensure aligned and effective career pathway development.	Understand what is and is not working about current advisory board structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine the primary objectives of advisory boards from both higher education and employer perspectives to understand where objectives align and diverge. - Assess existing advisory boards from multiple perspectives, including education and employers, to determine successes and failures. - Determine “best practices” within existing advisory board missions and structures. - Determine “new practices” required to improve advisory board missions and structures. 	WFSWCT IHE Industry	Q1 2025

	<p>Develop a detailed framework for effective advisory boards, articulating mission, structures, responsibilities, commitments, and outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vet the framework with all stakeholders. - Determine incentives and/or consequences for adoption and uptake. - Develop an evaluation model to enable data collection and ongoing determination of the model works. 	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry	Q3 2025
	<p>Develop an implementation plan for scaled uptake of the improved advisory board structure across the region including benchmarks that differentiate engagement targets based on differing starting points and sectors.</p>	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry	Q1 2026
	<p>Determine and develop technical assistance for education and industry partners needed for implementation of advisory boards at the K12 and higher education level.</p>	WFSWCT K12 IHE Industry	Q2 2026

Metrics

Table 2. Metrics to Measure Progress Related to Program and LMI Alignment Goal

Goal: Ensure access to high-quality education and training programs aligned to targeted industries across the region by 2029.		
Metric	Current source	Future source
Percent of districts with adequate access to programs of study aligned to targeted industries.	Regions 14 and 15 ESC report compiled from TEA Program of Study Mapping Application.	Program-level data will be obtained through ESC staff from Region 14 and Region 15.
Percent of counties with adequate access to postsecondary programs aligned to targeted industries.	THECB Data- Program Inventory for 2022-2023 school year.	THECB Data- Program Inventory, along with data provided directly by IHE partners.
Proportional percent of student segments enrolled in secondary programs of study aligned to targeted industries.	No current data-tracking system.	Student-level data will be obtained as an aggregate number per district as part of a report compiled by Region 14 and 15 ESC.
Proportional percent of student segments enrolled in postsecondary programs aligned to targeted industries.	THECB Data Bridge undergraduate enrollment reports for 2022-2023 school year.	Student-level enrollment will be requested from IHE partners once data-sharing agreements are established to supplement THECB Data Bridge undergrad enrollment reports.

Table 3. Metrics to Measure Progress Related to Work-based Learning Goal

Goal: Increase quality work-based learning opportunities aligned to targeted industries and pathways by 10% by 2029.		
Metric	Current source	Future source
Percent of students engaged in worksite tours aligned to targeted industries.	Internal data tracking mechanism for organization-specific activities.	Internal data, along with data provided by external partners when data-sharing agreements are established.
Percent of students engaged in job shadowing aligned to targeted industries.	Internal data tracking mechanism for organization-specific activities.	Internal data, along with data provided by external partners.
Percent of students engaged in internships aligned to targeted industries.	Internal data tracking mechanism for organization-specific activities.	Internal data, along with data provided by external partners.
Percent of internships aligned to targeted industry that are paid by employers.	Internal data tracking mechanism for organization-specific activities.	Internal data, along with data provided by external partners.

Table 4. Metrics to Measure Progress Related to Partner Engagement Goal

Goal: Increase quality engagement in career pathway development among K-12, higher education, and community partners by 10% by 2029.		
Metric	Current source	Future source
Number of industry partners engaged in quality career pathway activities.	Internal tracking and survey responses from 75% of regional districts.	Internal tracking to be supplemented by reports from external partners.
Percent of secondary partners utilizing advisory boards with cross-sector representation.	Survey responses from 75% of regional districts.	Direct surveys of district partners; supplementation of data using CLNA information aggregated by Region 14 and 15 ESC every two years.

Communications

To support strategic goals, a Communications Task Force comprised of stakeholders in secondary, postsecondary, community development, and workforce development met to evaluate existing barriers and determine mechanisms for effective communication supporting quality career pathway development.

Challenges

The following messaging miscues and inconsistencies hamper advancement of career pathways in targeted industries across the region:

- 1) Persistent narrative around skilled trades
 - a. Students face stigma from educators and peers for going into trades training and occupations.
 - b. National narratives around skilled trades have created “buzz words” instead of best practices and specific information for students.
- 2) Gender bias in career pathways
 - a. Jobs in construction, trades, welding, etc. are still “boy jobs” and girls are being stigmatized for opting into these career tracks.
 - b. Teachers may inadvertently or intentionally track boys and girls into traditional roles.
- 3) K12 educator bias and mindset
 - a. Teachers generally have bias toward which path (academic or career) is better.
 - b. Teachers generally have bias toward “what they know” when it comes to career guidance, which may be limited or incorrect, and particularly damaging for students from different backgrounds.
- 4) Misaligned/misdirected communication
 - a. Information that guides systems level change is not always reaching decision makers across partner audiences.
 - b. Information that guides implementation is not always reaching the individuals making direct contact with students.

Action Plan

Ongoing and future communication efforts will be informed by the identified challenges and strategies for implementation prioritize efforts that will:

- 1) Enable a broader swath of adult influencers in students’ lives to speak from a more informed and less biased perspective about:
 - a. The full range of education, training, and career opportunities available in the region.
 - b. The kind of preparation that is needed to work in targeted industries and occupations.
 - c. The opportunities available to students from all backgrounds to work in targeted industries and occupations.

- d. The economic and work results arising from education and training, rather than the prestige of the education provider.
- 2) Equip priority stakeholders with the tools and information to execute at the appropriate level
- 3) Create a shared vocabulary and understanding across the region
- 4) Utilize existing channels and mediums already embraced by partners in career pathway development including:
 - a. WFSWCT website with robust subsite to support information, data sharing, storytelling, and assistance.
 - b. WFSWCT newsletter is delivered monthly in an effort to bridge priority stakeholder audiences and reduce redundancies.

Table 5. Communications Objectives, Strategies, and Platforms

Communications Priorities			
Objective	Strategy	Audience	Platform
Support the delivery of impactful technical assistance to priority stakeholders.	Develop a global career pathways calendar that is related activities at a glance.	K12 IHE Industry Community	CivicEngage CMS
	Develop a technical assistance calendar with upcoming opportunities that include targeted trainings and cross-sector convenings.	EDC WFSWCT	CivicEngage CMS
	Develop a Work-Based Learning hub with guidance documents, calendar, forms, and processes for participation.	Students K12 Educators Industry	CivicEngage CMS
Disseminate information on quality career pathways and related activities.	Embed data visualizations, success stories, activities, and opportunities for partners in career pathway development into monthly newsletter.	K12 Administration IHE Industry Community EDC WFSWCT	Mailchimp
	Supply all districts with career posters and career pathway maps highlighting targeted industries and occupations with the 14 CTE programs of study.	Students K12 Educators	Print

	Develop quarterly impact report.	K12 Administration IHE EDC WFSWCT	Infogram
	Convene cross-sector priority stakeholders to support information sharing.	K12 IHE Industry Community EDC WFSWCT	Meeting/Event
	Deliver updates to K12 superintendents via standing RAC engagements and forums coordinated by regional ESC partners.	K12 Administration	Meeting
Make meaningful data on quality career pathways widely available for reference and decision making.	Identify key indicators and relevance to priority stakeholders.	K12 IHE Industry Community EDC WFSWCT	Excel/Power BI
	Create interactive visuals that engage audiences.		Infogram
	Embed and update quarterly in resource hub within career pathways web subsite.		CivicEngage CMS

Data

A Data Task Force is charged with the broad data collection, analysis, and capacity-building required to advance strategic goals, enable metrics reporting, and support continuous improvement. The Data Task Force has identified systemic challenges to data collection and analysis:

Challenges

Single points of contact also mean single points of failure. The most effective data collection strategies rely on individuals within organizations who understand the goals, objectives, and parameters of the data collection activity. Small organizations will be less likely to have the time and capacity necessary to collect and report new data. Sustainability plans are needed to ensure that data-sharing persists when key individuals churn, especially in the K12 sector.

Multi-sector, student-level reporting is a complex problem with no easy solution. Aggregate reports produced by state-level entities such as TEA, THECB, and TWC are lagging in nature and do not always capture student-level metrics such as enrollment within specific programs of study. To provide required, accurate data as close to real-time as possible, data will need to be at the student level and would rely on the direct flow of data from districts, institutions of higher education, and workforce partners to enable near-time analysis and progress measurement. While publicly available data sources may complement student-level data, they will not be relied on for analysis of progress and public reporting. Existing relationships, such as programmatic establishments and institutional connections through Pathways Leadership Team members will be leveraged to obtain student-level data when possible as a proxy to establishing direct data-pipelines with individual external partners.

There is no standardized system of data-sharing agreement development that spans across sectors and produces the required programmatic and student-level data needed for this designation. Systems will need to be established and expanded, both internally to Workforce Solutions and across external partners to allow data collection and analysis across the K12, higher education, employer, and workforce systems. Creating a system of establishing, reviewing, and renewing data-sharing agreements as regional convener will reduce redundancies of multiple, program-specific MOUs with entities, increase the direct flow of timely information, and increase internal and external partner’s confidence in reported metric progress. Additionally, establishing a formalized data-sharing agreement template that can be shared with external partners will help to establish a network of connected, real-time data-sharing across the region, driving informed decision-making.

Action Plan

To address the above challenges and to support the broad goals of the strategic plan, the Data Task Force is prioritizing efforts that will enable the sustainable collection of high-quality student level data which will allow for measurement against metrics and continuous improvement of strategic plan activities. These strategies, required actions, and their predicted outcomes are outlined in the table below.

Table 6. Data Collection and Management Objectives, Actions, and Outcomes

Data Collection and Management Priorities			
Objective	Actions	Outcomes	Cadence
Common, intelligible, and adequate data sharing agreements that support comprehensive data collection while protecting	Create standardized templates for data-sharing agreements, including terms of use, data security measures, and compliance with legal regulations, and outline a formal sustainability plan.	Formalized system of data collection and management that is easily replicated by external partners and does not depend on a single point of contact within organizations.	One-time creation.

students and organizations.	Develop a formal internal process for reviewing, approving, tracking, and renewing data-sharing agreements.	Increased confidence in data-sharing agreements, reduced redundancies, and improved access to timely data.	Annual review.
Identification of gaps in data availability and collection with focus on creating effective solutions and/or proxies for key data that is impossible or impractical to collect.	Conduct a gap analysis on existing data collection and infrastructure as it aligns to Strategic Priority goals and associated metrics.	A clear understanding of existing data gaps and opportunities for improvement.	One-time analysis with annual review.
	Engage relevant multi-sector parties in identifying critical data that is either missing or impractical to collect	A prioritized list of data gaps with stakeholder input, ensuring that all relevant perspectives are considered.	One-time analysis with annual review.
	Develop data collection agreements with emphasis on existing partnerships, particularly within the Pathway Leadership Team.	Increased data completeness and reliability, enabling more comprehensive analysis and decision-making.	One-time creation with annual review.
Creation of communication tools/reports that publicly share baselines, progress measurement, and continuous improvement.	Collect and establish baseline data for key metrics and distribute initial reports to all relevant stakeholders.	A clear starting point for measuring progress and assessing the impact of strategic actions.	One-time baseline collection.
	Development of digital communication tool/dashboard that allows stakeholders to monitor progress and key metrics in near time, facilitating ongoing assessment and adjustment.	Enhanced ability to track progress, identify trends, and make timely adjustments.	Annual update.
	Regular cadence of updating and reviewing data, generating progress reports, and identifying opportunities of adjustment.	Ongoing insights into performance, leading to continuous improvement and proactive decision-making.	Ongoing, with initial update 12 months from baseline report.



The purpose of performance measurement is to determine whether the system strategies have been successfully executed and to establish their contributions to the achievement of system objectives and goals. Each goal and associated strategies have performance measures and metrics defined in the previous sections of this plan. Several of these goals rely on student-level data gathered from external partners. As such, data-sharing agreements between stakeholders, including IHEs, ESCs, and relevant industry partners, will be established. The Tri-agency Model Data Sharing Agreement will be used as a basis for developing sector-specific agreements as necessary.

As indicated in the action plan above, it will be necessary to develop a robust internal infrastructure that supports seamless collaboration and data sharing, including collecting, storing and managing data from various agencies, using tools and technologies to facilitate data integration and interoperability, standardizing data formats, and conducting periodic reviews of the data infrastructure to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the system.

Identified IT tools required for this data collection and maintenance are Excel spreadsheets with internal sharing capabilities, Microsoft Power BI for required in-depth analysis of data and Infogram for effective visual communication of data to external partners. All tools are determined to be accessible and usable without significant cost to the organization; Microsoft tools are available to all internal partners for no additional cost, and Infogram has been purchased for a year-long period using Tri-agency funds. Sustainability of this tool will be a focus for future fiscal planning.

Conclusion

Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas is committed to transforming career pathways to ensure that all individuals can access high-quality education and training aligned with the demands of our evolving economy. Through strategic collaboration with regional partners, we are dedicated to building a robust system that emphasizes experiential learning and equitable access to opportunities.

The above outlined goals and strategies serve as a roadmap for the next three to five years, focusing on improving accessibility, enhancing work-based learning, and fostering cross-sector partnerships. These elements are crucial to building a sustainable framework that meets the current labor market and prepares the regional workforce for future challenges. Educators, industry leaders, and community stakeholders are essential in this mission of empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and driving economic development across West Central Texas. It takes a collaborative effort to create a future where everyone has the resources they need to succeed in their career journey.