

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**  
NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES. BETTER JOBS. NO CHARGE.

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# VISION

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas is the recognized leader in building tomorrow's workforce.

# MISSION

To advance business-driven solutions that promote economic growth, opportunity and a skilled workforce.

# VALUES

## Trust

**Operate with integrity and respect.**

We say what we mean, keep our promises and stay open minded to new ideas.

## Leadership

**Courage to shape a better future.**

We lead by example because everyone has the ability to pursue excellence and make a positive impact.

## Inclusion

**Leverage our collective genius.**

We value diversity and believe inclusion drives innovation and connects us closer to the communities we serve. We are building a culture where difference is valued and respected.

## Community

**We're in this together.**

We create positive opportunities by collaborating with our partners to transform the social and economic vitality of those we serve.



## Contents

From the Chairman .....	4
From the Executive Director .....	5
<b>Our Performance</b>	
Region Demographics.....	6
FY2021 Funding .....	6
Impact.....	7
Virtual Hiring Events .....	7
<b>Our Programs</b>	
Workforce Overview.....	9
Workforce Centers .....	10
Adult and Youth Services.....	11
Adult Education & Literacy .....	11
Virtual Hiring Events .....	12
Summer Earn & Learn .....	14
Student HireAbility Navigators .....	15
<b>Our Priorities</b>	
<b>Career Exploration</b> .....	17
iWork Youth Career Exploration.....	17
Loteria .....	18
Registered Apprenticeships.....	19
<b>Child Care Quality</b> .....	20
<b>Community Partnerships</b> .....	22
Employer and Economic Development Organizations.....	22
Educational Partners.....	24
Partner Grant Collaborations .....	24
United Way of Denton County Partnership .....	25
<b>Our Partners</b>	
Awards of Excellence.....	27

# From the Chairman



Texas offers a wealth of opportunity for all those who choose to call this great state home, and residents and businesses are moving to North Central Texas in record numbers. Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) is a linchpin in the region, as it sits at the intersection of business, economic development, education and the betterment of our working population. The organization's mission – to advance business-driven solutions that promote economic growth, opportunity and a skilled workforce – is more vital than ever as we continue to attract top talent and companies to North Central Texas.

The organization's commitment has remained steadfast throughout the past few years, which have been some of the most difficult in recent memory. Although pandemic challenges remain, the North Central Texas economy is recovering rapidly. WSNCT is an integral part of that recovery; in fiscal year 2021, the organization brought nearly \$100 million into North Central Texas. This influx of funding bolstered our local employers through grants for worker upskilling, apprenticeships and other business benefits, and opened doors for career seekers by funding scholarships for education, training and child care for those who need it most.

Overall, WSNCT served more than 51,000 career seekers and 8,400 employers in fiscal year 2021. Its 12 Workforce Centers delivered services across our wonderfully unique 14-county region, from urban and suburban cities to vital rural and agricultural areas. In addition, the team strategically expanded existing partnerships and forged new ones to provide the necessary wrap-around services that increase our customers' level of success. The organization has also invested internally in staff and resources to ensure that it remains well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We appointed a new Executive Director of WSNCT at the end of fiscal year 2021. Please join me in extending a heartfelt welcome to Phedra Redifer. She brings a wealth of public sector experience to WSNCT and is working closely with the Texas Workforce Commission and her peers across the state to make our workforce system stronger. The positive impact of her expertise and influence is already being felt within the organization and throughout our workforce board area.

On behalf of my fellow Board members, I applaud the team at WSNCT for their resilience and dedication. We are beginning to see the signs of a more stable workforce environment on the horizon. The Board acknowledges the sacrifice and fortitude it took to get here. We're eager to continue our important work and make great strides for North Central Texas, together.

Roger Harris  
**Chairman**  
North Central Texas Workforce Development Board

## Board Officers

**Roger Harris**  
Chairman  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**David Bristol**  
Vice Chairman  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**Mickey Hillock**  
Past Chairman  
Private Sector  
Navarro County

**Dr. Gae Goodwin**  
Board Secretary  
Private Sector  
Denton County

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Workforce Development Committee Chair  
Education  
Rockwall County

**Carlton Tidwell**  
Oversight & Accountability Committee Chair  
Private Sector  
Kaufman County

**Kenny Weldon**  
Strategic Leadership Committee Chair  
Community Based Organization  
Erath County

## Board Members

**Bindu Adlakha**  
Public Employment  
Services, TWC  
At-Large

**Meera Ananthaswamy**  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**Barbara Batista**  
Community Based  
Organization  
Collin County

**Tony Curry**  
Private Sector  
Ellis County

**Chip Evans**  
Literacy Council  
Parker County

**Kristin Grammar**  
Economic Development  
Collin County

**Gary Henderson**  
Community Based  
Organization  
Denton County

**Mike Hinojosa**  
Organized Sector  
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**Robert Hill**  
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TWC - Vocational  
Rehabilitation Services  
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**Shea Hopkins**  
Private Sector  
Hood County

**Dr. William King**  
Education  
Collin County

**Roselyn Lane**  
Private Sector  
Hunt County

**Rolanda Macharia**  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**Jenny Morris**  
Adult Basic and  
Continuing Education  
Parker County

**Ken Peters**  
Private Sector  
Somerville County

**John Rattan**  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**Rhodie Rawls**  
Community Based  
Organization  
Ellis County

**Aaron Thibault**  
Private Sector  
Collin County

**Jacqueline Womble**  
Health and Human  
Services  
At-Large

# From the Executive Director



A pathway to unlimited possibilities. That's what we strive to bring to every resident, family and community in North Central Texas. Although the world of work is evolving rapidly, we remain informed and intentional in how we align our programs, services and resources to meet the needs of those we serve.

My journey with Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) began just a few months ago, and I am excited and encouraged about the work that we have ahead of us. I can't think of a better legacy for our organization than being the stepping stone for our residents to earn a livable wage, fulfill a rewarding career and realize that anything is possible.

The impact we have on our region is far-reaching, and it starts by changing one life. That person is now empowered to change their family, community and the next generation. You'll read about a few of these phenomenal people in this report. Heather, who received college scholarships and Child Development Associate training from WSNCT, is working on her second degree and plans to provide quality early childhood education as a pre-K teacher in our region (page 21). Jackson, a student with disabilities who participated in our 2019 Summer Earn and Learn program, was hired by his employer after the program ended and continues to be a significant contributor to the company (page 14).

This type of effective and lasting change cannot be accomplished in isolation. We are fortunate to have employer partners, economic development organizations, workforce alliances and other community stakeholders who work in concert with us to accomplish great things. This past fiscal year alone, nearly 900 employers participated in our virtual hiring events, making more than 20,300 job opportunities more accessible to career seekers. Our strategic plan further leverages the power of our partnerships. Its three pillars – career exploration, quality child care and community partnerships – bring to bear our collective wisdom and resources to effect innovative change in 2022 and beyond.

The past two years have taken a great toll; our lives and livelihoods have been affected more than anyone could have imagined. However, we have not lost our energy and passion for helping people get back on their feet and into the workforce. Our Workforce Centers are open, and we continue to assist people virtually as we have done throughout the pandemic. We know times are difficult, and people are hurting. We are determined to make a difference by reaching anyone who needs our services, wherever they are in our region.

Our strategy is in place, our goals are achievable, and our motivation is in the faces we see and serve daily. WSNCT is poised for unprecedented development and impact. The pathway to success is straight ahead. We invite you to take the journey with us.

Phedra Redifer  
**Executive Director**  
Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas

# Our Performance

## Region Demographics

**Population**  
3,221,029

**Employed**  
1,509,616

**Year**    **Population**

2021    3,221,029

2020    3,078,688

2019    2,979,086

Source: Emsi, Q1 2022

**Year**    **Employed**

2021    1,509,616

2020    1,512,805

2019    1,539,942

Source: Texas Labor Market Information, Sept 2021

## FY2021 Funding

Child Care ..... **\$67.7 Million**

Workforce ..... **\$21.1 Million**

Grants ..... **\$7.8 Million**

Other ..... **\$3 Million**



# Impact

**Employers Served**

**8,452<sup>(1)</sup>**

**Career Seekers Served**

**51,232<sup>(2)</sup>**

- In-person 12,222<sup>(2)</sup>
- Virtual 39,010<sup>(2)</sup>

**Youth Served**

**647<sup>(2)</sup>**

**Children Served Per Day Through Child Care Scholarship (Average)**

**6,360<sup>(3)</sup>**

## Virtual Hiring Events

**154 Virtual Hiring Events**

**10,844 Career Seekers Served**

**896 Employers Attended**

**20,318 Job Openings**

<sup>(1)</sup> TWC MPR, September 2021 Year End Report  
<sup>(2)</sup> TWC Statewide Greeter Report FY21  
<sup>(3)</sup> TWIST Report 230



# Workforce Overview

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas leads the way in developing today's workforce and anticipating the occupations and skills needed for tomorrow. We help our local economy thrive through our talent development strategies, workforce programs and network of strategic partnerships in our 14-county region.

Through 12 Workforce Centers, our staff serves customers in-person and virtually through every stage of their career journeys, whether customers are searching for their first job, re-entering the workforce, considering a new career, or transitioning from military to civilian employment. We also provide scholarships for child care services to eligible participants as well as services to businesses of all sizes.

Recognizing there are challenges that can hinder a prosperous workforce and economy, we also place great emphasis on these strategic priorities:

- Forging strategic partnerships to create innovative solutions, build awareness of programs, share information, and better leverage public and private resources.
- Connecting youth and adults to in-demand jobs by broadening career exploration opportunities and equipping them with the skills and knowledge required for success in a rapidly changing and digitally driven economy.
- Improving the quality of child care to increase school readiness and long-term education attainment, and support parents in their own learning and development to achieve 2-generation economic prosperity.

Our esteemed Board of Directors oversees the planning, oversight, policy guidance and design of services to ensure we fulfill our vision, mission and values.

## Achievement of Excellence in Procurement® Award

For the 11th year in a row, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas has received the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement® Award from the National Procurement Institute. The AEP Award is earned by public and non-profit agencies that demonstrate a commitment to procurement excellence. This annual program recognizes procurement organizations that embrace Innovation, Professionalism, Productivity, Leadership and e-Procurement.

# Our Programs



## Workforce Centers

Our ecosystem of partners and resource agencies are crucial to our ability to meet the needs of our career seekers. We work steadily to remove complexity that may make it difficult for our customers to access the support services they need. To that end, we have been integrating Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWC-VRS) staff into our Workforce Centers. TWC-VRS provides important services to help eligible individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in competitive, integrated employment.

In February 2021, we completed the integration in our Terrell Workforce Center, followed by the Stephenville Workforce Center in June 2021. The final integration for FY21 was our Denton Workforce Center. This effort included the integration of 24 TWC-VRS staff into our new 27,000 sq. ft Denton location. Our ongoing efforts to incorporate TWC-VRS resources are designed to create a seamless customer-focused workforce delivery system. To date we have fully integrated eight of our 12 Workforce Centers.

## Adult and Youth Services

Our staff continued to connect with and serve customers throughout the region, both virtually and in-person at one of our 12 Workforce Centers. Our programs and services are designed to assist career seekers no matter where they are in their career journey – searching for a first job, re-entering the workforce, considering a new occupation or transitioning from military to civilian employment. During fiscal year 2021, we helped 51,232 career seekers find employment or progress in their careers.

### New Youth Initiative

We introduced a new initiative this past fiscal year to encourage participation in our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program. These “Peer-to-Peer” virtual events feature youth program participants who give testimonials to their peers and answer questions regarding the services received and successes achieved by working with Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT).

One Peer-to-Peer testimonial was shared by a current participant who was homeless when she first connected with WSNCT. She was so pleased with the services she received that she recommended a friend to the program. Both are now enrolled in Certified Nurses Training and are strong advocates for the services we provide.



## Adult Education & Literacy

Advances in technology create abundant opportunities for our region’s economy, businesses and workforce. According to The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, it’s predicted that technology will replace around 20% of workers with the lowest literacy. To remain competitive in the future, the organization estimates that the Texas labor force will need 60% of all 25- to 34-year-olds – almost 2 million people – to hold industry-recognized certificates and college degrees by the year 2040. Today, only 35% currently have those qualifications. We are determined to provide services and programs that help our North Central Texas residents develop the skills they need to thrive now and in the future.

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas offers Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) programs through Denton Independent School District (ISD), Grayson College, Navarro College, Paris Junior College and Weatherford ISD. These educational partners provide adult basic academic classes, such as High School Equivalency preparation and English as a Second Language, as well as job readiness skills programs to help position North Central Texas residents for success. In fiscal year 2021, we served 2,648 people through our AEL partners’ programs.

# Virtual Hiring Events

We work diligently to help career seekers in our region prepare for, enter and excel in our region's workforce. From October 2020 through September 2021, we held 154 virtual hiring events that safely connected career seekers and employers who had immediate openings. Career seekers who attended these events were able to virtually visit employer booths to view open positions, submit resumes, speak to representatives and schedule follow up interviews.

## **Virtual Hiring Events in FY21:**

- 10,844 Career Seekers Attended
- 896 Employers Participated
- 20,318 Available Jobs

## **Hiring Red, White & You!**

Our Ninth Annual Hiring Red, White & You! career fair was held on November 5, 2020. This statewide event connects veterans and their spouses with employers that value the experience, discipline and other exceptional qualities inherent in a military background. While the event caters to Veterans, it is open to the general public.

Results from our most recent Hiring Red, White & You! event include:

- 1,788 Career Seekers Attended, Including 344 Veterans
- 147 Employers and 9 Resource Agencies Participated
- 891 Available Positions Representing 5,387 Job Opportunities



# Summer Earn & Learn

We're advocates of inclusive environments and equal opportunity, and so are our employer partners. That's what makes our Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) Program such a success. In 2021, 96 employers in our region participated in the statewide SEAL program, which provides students with disabilities employability skills training and paid work experience for five weeks during the summer.

Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWC-VRS) worked with us to identify and refer 342 students to this year's program, and 295 of them attended the workforce orientation. Employability training was completed by 272 students, and 163 successfully completed five weeks of paid work experience between May and August 2021. At the end of the program, 21 students were offered full-time employment with various employers throughout our region.

*"Thank you for introducing us to the SEAL program! We really enjoyed all our interns this summer. It was rewarding to watch them on their first jobs as they learned the tasks but, most importantly to watch how their personalities blossomed. Many were very anxious and shy in the beginning. After a little time had passed, they seemed to feel right at home with our other team members and were very comfortable doing the assigned jobs with minimal supervision. I did hire Xavier as one of our employees for a permanent position!"*  
– Angela Barifield, Supervisor – Holiday Inn Express

*"Jacob improved greatly throughout the program. He had very low self-confidence when he first started the program, but gradually started doing his assigned tasks without being asked."*  
– Afua Tweneboah, Supervisor – The Harvest House

*"We love providing people the opportunity to grow and have a chance at a career. The SEAL program was a great fit for our passions of giving back to our community. I can't imagine Jackson not floating around the building, making everybody smile. The SEAL program was super easy, everything was set up for us, we just had to be willing to give somebody a chance. It worked out fantastic."*  
– Kimberly Perryman,  
Director of People Operations – Nextlink



For more information about our SEAL program and to learn how you can become involved, visit [www.dfwjobs.com/SEAL](http://www.dfwjobs.com/SEAL).



In the summer of 2019, Jackson Lambert was placed at our employer partner, Nextlink, as part of the statewide Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program for students with disabilities. What began as a part-time, temporary assignment turned into a permanent part-time position with the company at the end of the program. Two years later, Jackson is a full-time team member at Nextlink and is making his mark on the organization.

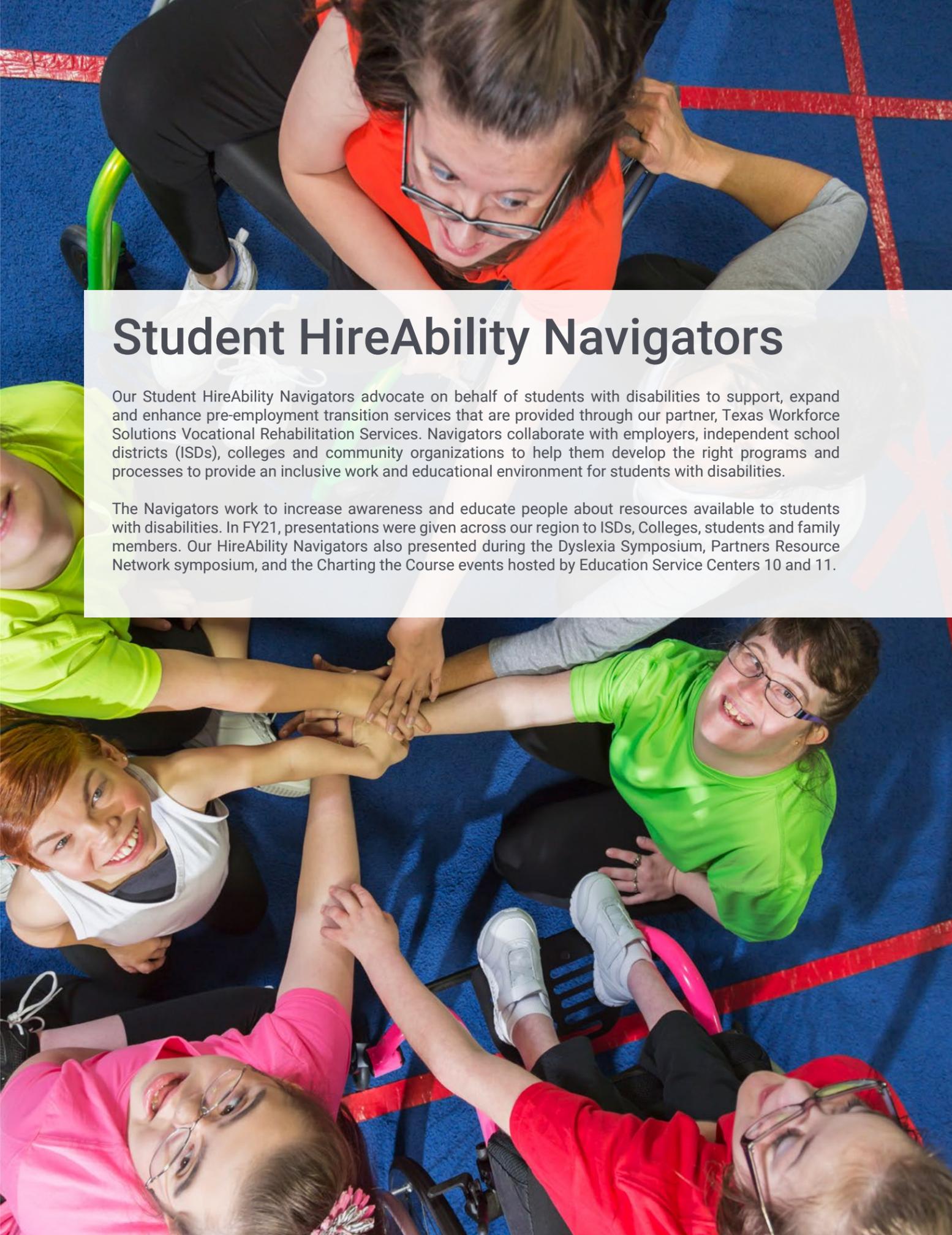
Jackson works in the Fleet and Facilities department and in the warehouse. His everyday duties include testing equipment, loading firmware, assisting technicians, building new furniture, stocking water and delivering mail. He is a positive influence on his coworkers, and Jackson's dedication and embodiment of Nextlink's core values earned him the title of Company MVP in July of 2021.

"I feel great, happy and love having a job here," Jackson said. "I want to keep working until I get old. I love helping people out."

## Student HireAbility Navigators

Our Student HireAbility Navigators advocate on behalf of students with disabilities to support, expand and enhance pre-employment transition services that are provided through our partner, Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Navigators collaborate with employers, independent school districts (ISDs), colleges and community organizations to help them develop the right programs and processes to provide an inclusive work and educational environment for students with disabilities.

The Navigators work to increase awareness and educate people about resources available to students with disabilities. In FY21, presentations were given across our region to ISDs, Colleges, students and family members. Our HireAbility Navigators also presented during the Dyslexia Symposium, Partners Resource Network symposium, and the Charting the Course events hosted by Education Service Centers 10 and 11.



# Our Priorities

1

## Strategic Priority #1 Career Exploration

Connecting youth and adults to in-demand jobs by broadening career exploration opportunities and equipping them with the skills and knowledge required for success in a rapidly changing and digitally driven economy.

2

## Strategic Priority #2 Child Care Quality

Improving the quality of child care to increase school readiness and long-term education attainment, and support parents in their own learning and development to achieve 2-generation economic prosperity.

3

## Strategic Priority #3 Community Partnerships

Forging strategic partnerships to create innovative solutions, build awareness of programs, share information, and better leverage public and private resources.

# Career Exploration

1

## iWork Youth Career Exploration

When you think of locations prone to extreme weather events, Texas may not be top of mind. According to a recent research report from Texas A&M University's Office of the Texas State Climatologist, our state is vulnerable to a wide range of natural hazards, most of which are associated with weather and climate events.

Our Virtual iWork Youth Career Exploration event, held on November 20, 2021, provided 80 students with a glimpse into the intersection of weather and workforce. We teamed with STEMBrains, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect communities, inspire young minds, and to expose students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) careers. As part of this virtual learning experience, STEMBrains inspired students in our region as they learned about careers related to extreme weather events. We provided each student with a book on pioneers in science as well as a Climate and Weather Science Kit that included 23 hands-on experiments related to weather phenomena to extend their learning beyond the virtual program limitations.

Three guest speakers shared information about STEM principles, their expertise, education and how their personal journeys led them to the role they currently hold. After each presentation, students engaged in a question and answer session to learn more. The guest speakers were:

- Dr. Sim Aberson, Research Meteorologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory;
- Dr. Aisha Sexton-Sims, Environmental Engineer with the Environmental Protection Agency; and
- Ms. Allison Prater, Forecast Meteorologist with NOAA's National Weather Service at the Fort Worth/Dallas Weather Forecast Office.

The event culminated in an interactive challenge to break out of a custom built Digital Extreme Weather Escape Room. Student teams used what they learned during the presentations to find clues, solve extreme weather STEM challenges and escape the game in less than 40 minutes.



iWork student scholarship winners from TECC-East STEM. Photo credit: TECC-East STEM

More than \$4,600 in scholarship awards were given to the first-, second- and third-place student teams (17 students overall) that completed the Escape Room challenge in the least amount of time.



## iWORK FUTURÍA Career Lotería

Lotería, the Spanish word for “lottery,” is a bingo-like game that originated in Italy during the 15th century and was brought to Mexico in 1769 where it became – and continues to be – wildly popular. Steeped in vibrant Mexican culture and colors, Lotería uses images, words, descriptions or riddles about everyday subjects instead of Bingo’s letters and numbers.

Knowing people of all ages enjoy playing Lotería, we were inspired to create an adaptation of the game to give students a fun and fresh way to engage in career exploration. Our version of the game, **iWork Futuria: Career Lotería**, remains true to the original concept but incorporates custom-designed graphical representations of occupations instead of traditional images.

# A 15<sup>th</sup> Century Game Inspires 21st Century Career Exploration

We initiated a soft launch of the game in fiscal year 2021 for educators and those who work with the youth population in our area. From the unique game boards, playing cards and tokens to the brightly-colored packaging and instructional video, **iWork Futuria: Career Lotería** is a turnkey solution for educators who wish to expose students to in-demand occupations available in North Central Texas.

To date, educators from more than 30 schools in our region have received the game. The **iWork Futuria: Career Lotería** game was also used in our foster youth outreach efforts and was a highlight of the “On The Right Track” week-long summer camp for students with disabilities hosted by Weatherford College in June 2021.

**iWork Futuria: Career Lotería** is available in both English- and Spanish-language versions.



## Registered Apprenticeships

Registered Apprenticeships (RA) are recognized as a strong workforce development tool among employers, and we are educating and partnering with businesses to further the adoption of this training model. Using grant funds awarded in October 2020, we continued our partnership with Texas State Technical College and Bombardier Aviation in 2021 to supplement training expenses and expand Bombardier’s Aircraft Assembler RA program.

Partnering with the Department of Labor, we established two additional RA programs in our region during FY21: Freshpet (Ellis County) and The Greenville Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (Hunt County). We worked closely with both employers to create programs that would further the skills of their respective manufacturing occupations. Freshpet is currently building a facility in Ennis and has been partnering with us since July 2021 for hiring events and recruitment support.

# 2 Child Care Quality

## Early Childhood Development

According to the LENA Foundation, early talk is one of the most important factors shaping children's brain development during the first few years of life. LENA is a national nonprofit organization focused on transforming children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs.

In 2021, we launched a pilot project through the LENA Foundation using the LENA Grow Professional Development system. The LENA Grow project provides coaching to teachers based on data gathered using the LENA devices (language pedometers) that analyze the amount of talk and conversational turns that Early Learning Programs (ELPs) use when interacting with young children in the classroom. On average, our ELPs saw a 9% increase per child in conversation turns between the teachers and children in the classroom over the course of the pilot project.

## Early Childhood Conference

The Annual "Bright From the Start" Early Childhood Conference was held virtually in June 2021. More than 200 early learning professionals attended 29 sessions across four conference learning tracks: Administrative, Infant/Toddler, Preschool/School Age and Special Topics. Participants earned up to 5.5 clock hours of training related to early childhood education, child development, business and leadership.

## Texas Rising Star Mentoring

Our team of Early Childhood Specialists provide one-on-one mentoring support for aspiring and existing Texas Rising Star (TRS) early learning programs. In FY21, the team provided more than 430 virtual and in-person mentoring sessions to 113 ELPs in our region, and brought 23 new programs into the TRS program. Our staff worked with each ELP to create goals for improving early learning practices and environments in correlation with TRS standards. Implementation was ensured through classroom observations, modeling, and one-on-one feedback sessions with directors and teachers.

In addition to mentoring support services, in FY21 we provided more than \$76,000 in grants to Texas Rising Star programs. These grants allowed TRS ELPs to enhance their programs with new equipment and materials specific to learning environments, such as natural playground enhancements for outdoor learning and indoor gardens to promote nutrition and enhance curriculum.

## Elevating Quality Early Learning Practices Through Training and Tools

- 51 Early Childhood Professionals graduated from the 120-hour Child Development Associate (CDA) Preparation course. So far, 12 have completed the process and achieved their CDA Credential.
- 41 Early Childhood Professionals were awarded an Early Childhood Management Institute Administrator's Credential.
- 10 Early Childhood Professionals, who were employed at Texas Rising Star (TRS) facilities, were awarded scholarships to take classes in early childhood education and child development at colleges or universities.
- 33 trainings were offered throughout the region and over 1800 early childhood professionals benefitted from quality trainings in early childhood education and child development.
- 59 TRS programs were given access to Texas Child Care Tools through a collaboration with Child Care Associates, Inc. to help strengthen business practices.



*Heather Salas' journey with WSNCT began nearly five years ago after her director presented her with the idea of growing professionally as an early childhood provider. Through the benefits of the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program, Heather participated in the Child Development Associate training program offered by WSNCT. In 2018, she earned her Child Development Associate Credential, at no cost, and decided to keep furthering her career.*

*In August 2021, Heather, who is a Pre-K Lead Caregiver at Virginia Gallian Child Development Center, graduated with a bachelor's degree in Child Development after receiving several scholarships from WSNCT. In the fall of 2022, she is expected to graduate with a Master of Education degree with a specialization in Early Childhood Education. The support WSNCT has given Heather, through*

*scholarships and mentorship, is what has driven her to keep going.*

*"Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas and TRS gave me the opportunity to be a better early childhood educator which, in turn, helps make the world a better place for children," Heather said. "If I could speak to anyone who is considering a career in early childhood education, regardless of their age, I would tell them to seek the support of Workforce Solutions and don't wait. Whatever excuse you are thinking of, it's not going to be as big of a hurdle as you think it is."*

# 3

## Community Partnerships

### Employer and Economic Development Organizations

Employers are facing unprecedented times – times that call for tenacity, agility, innovation and collaboration with partners who can solve today’s problems and anticipate tomorrow’s challenges. That’s the value we bring to our employer partners. In addition to helping employers make better business decisions by providing counsel on workforce dynamics and critical labor market information, our Business Development team educates employers and economic development partners on the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas services and business benefits available to them.

We served more than 8,400 employers in last year, which includes an increase of 200 employers who worked with us for the very first time in 2021. The Business Development team also partnered with economic development organizations on more than 20 prospect visits throughout the year (both in-person and virtually) to share information on services and tax breaks available to employers looking to move to our 14-county region.

WSNCT supported several economic development events throughout the fiscal year. One such event was the Weatherford Economic Development Conference held in August 2021. This forum educates employers on local and regional resources that can help grow and sustain their businesses. Along with the Office of the Governor’s Economic Development and Tourism, Weatherford College, and the Small Business Assistance Center, we presented to the 60 employers in attendance. The resulting one-on-one meeting requests gave our Business Development team opportunities to follow up with employers to best determine how our workforce services could best benefit them.



## Educational Partners

Labor Market Information (LMI) remained a priority for our educational partners during the 2021 fiscal year. Staying knowledgeable about in-demand careers supports with program planning and grant applications for funding technical training. LMI also guides partners to program choices that result in high-return opportunities for students. WSNCT has a reputation as a recognized and trusted source for current and reliable labor market reports and information to Career and Technical Education Leaders within Community Colleges and Technical Colleges, as well as School Districts. We researched and delivered 46 reports to our educational partners in FY21.

## Partner Grant Collaborations

This past fiscal year, we helped our educational partners bring \$7.8 million in grant awards to our region to help increase the skills of our North Central Texas workforce. We supported the following partner grant submissions:

- 4 Jobs and Educations for Texans grant applications
- 4 Collaborative programs for the TEA Perkins Reserve funding
- 3 Texas Talent Connection Grants
- 2 Dual Credit Grant applications
- 2 Building and Construction Grant applications

### Skills Development Fund Grants

The Skills Development Fund (SDF) Grant provides employers with the funding they need to create customized training programs that lead to a more skilled and capable workforce. In FY21, Collin College was awarded a SDF Grant in the amount of \$436,194 to provide training for 206 workers from four employers, two of which are new to our workforce ecosystem: U.S. Medical I.T. and Encore Wire. In addition to collaborating on the grant, we are assisting these new employer partners with recruiting, hiring staff and exploring additional workforce development opportunities, such as registered apprenticeships.

This SDF Grant included several training components to meet the employers' needs, including IT certification training, project management, leadership, hydraulics, maintenance, and quality. We will continue to promote and share SDF Grant opportunities with employers throughout the region as a means of increasing workforce strength and closing skill gaps.



## United Way of Denton County Partnership

An efficient referral system is key to a strong network of support services for our customers. In June 2021, we established closer ties with United Way of Denton and Denton Friends of the Family to further that goal. Our organizations convene to share information and best practices, improve the referral process and align on how we can best support common initiatives, such as the Hiring Red, White & You! career fair, the child care Service Industry Recovery Program, and youth work-based learning initiatives.

# Our Partners



## The Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas Award of Excellence

### Employer Partner of the Year

We honored Sysco North Texas as the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas Employer Partner of the Year. Sysco's ongoing partnership and collaboration have created opportunities for career seekers to work and be successful in their organization. From utilizing our workforce service offerings to recruit and provide opportunities for candidates from diverse populations, to engaging with our Board and partners to discuss talent development solutions, Sysco proved its dedication to being a reputable and strong employer in their community. Sysco's efforts demonstrate its dedication to providing sustainable workforce opportunities to all.

### Economic Development Partner of the Year

We selected the Frisco Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as our Economic Development Partner of the Year for its continued partnership and advocacy. The Frisco EDC collaborates with us on opportunities for workforce development and innovation, as well as to ensure its community of employers is connected to our services and resources. The Frisco EDC has positively impacted how WSNCT works in the community and helps address immediate workforce needs. Throughout FY21, the Frisco EDC demonstrated their commitment to excellence in their communities.

### Early Learning Program of the Year

The Bridge Enrichment and Learning Center of Aubrey was named as our Early Learning Program of the Year. The 4-star Texas Rising Star (TRS)-certified provider has created an enriching and safe environment to prepare the children they serve for school while developing them socially, emotionally, physically and academically. This dedicated team worked tirelessly with their Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas TRS Mentor to establish new policies and practices to ensure the Center always provided the highest quality of care. The Bridge Enrichment and Learning Center continue to set new goals to maintain and exceed their own expectations to be the best they can for the children and families in their care.

### Community Investment Partner of the Year

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas recognized United Way of Denton County as the Community Investment Partner of the Year. United Way was instrumental in implementing the Denton County Community Partner meetings (the vision of the organization's President and CEO, Gary Henderson) to help the area's agencies share knowledge, leverage resources and collaborate on solutions that will benefit all. The work United Way does everyday embodies its mission statement by empowering groups to invest in the Denton County community by identifying critical needs, and implementing collaborative and innovative solutions to improve lives in Denton County.

### Educational Partner of the Year

Collin College has been chosen as the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas Educational Partner of the Year. Collin College's team has a strong commitment to meeting business needs, and its work through consistent Skills Development Fund grants aligns with WSNCT's focus on developing a skilled workforce. Collin College is committed to their students' needs and providing opportunities for their advancement. Collin College remains a consistent partner in career exploration activities and events.





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