

Untapped Populations / Workforce Opportunity Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

July 16th, 2026 3 pm

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/232293816226841?p=pQZd7RZ8YU7JzXvoFR>

Meeting ID: 232 293 816 226 841

Passcode: eQ2Y6Z8U

Committee Members:

Member	Attendance
Eben Riggs	x
Frank Leonardis	X
Leslie Abbott	
Lisa Stewart	
Marco Cruz	
Paul Fletcher	
Sean Miller	X
Rhonda Estelle	
Nikki Stallings	X

Welcome & Introductory Activity (10 minutes) Activity: "What Surprised You?"

- What statistic or trend from the spreadsheets surprised you the most, and why?

Review Regional Data (10 minutes)

- Which counties have the highest concentration of need?
- Which counties may have the greatest opportunity for workforce engagement?
- Are we serving these populations effectively?

Caldwell county has the most strategic opportunity signals to serve older workers and young adults with the need for improved access to services and foundational skills for success.

What is telling are the data gaps where additional information is needed regarding foster youth / youth aging out of foster care, justice-involved individuals, and homeless individuals / families. Diane will work on connecting with the Texas Homeless Network and other sources to fill in the data gaps.

The next step is to look at gateway jobs and living wage pathways for these communities to create pathways into sustaining-wage employment.

From Ideas to Action (20 minutes)

- Digital Literacy & Financial Capability
- Workforce Readiness in a technology-driven environment
 - Industry Ecosystem Upskilling and the impact of gateway occupations
 - Flowchart of what Careers actually do
- Transportation access
- Family Stability considerations / Priority population data
 - Additional data sources needed: HeadStart, Re-entry

Chair Recruitment Update (10 minutes)

- Vote for subcommittee chair – push to September meeting.

Next Steps: Establish Committee Work Plan (10 minutes)

- Make Policy Recommendations – based on data analysis.
- Improve Referrals – develop feedback loop for referrals inside organization and across community partners to determine the conversion of referrals into services.
- Pursue Grant Opportunities – Rapid Reskilling NDW grant or other opportunities that allow flexibility in definitions of eligible populations to be served and will allow for more intensive assistance to move participants into sustaining wage employment.
- Influence Employer Practices – forum for Rural Capital employers to learn about accommodations / benefits of hiring older workers, etc., including tax benefits. Human connection of hiring Untapped Populations (if you want to go fast – go alone, if you want to go far, go together). It's the value-add to the team even if there is a physical limitation. Ex: tax credit availability but is the burden of paperwork worth the outcome.

- Recommend Board Initiatives – skilled trades, manufacturing especially supporting AI and tech sector, apprenticeship, pay for performance projects.

Next Meeting: September 17, 2026 at 3 pm

Purpose and Charter Overview:

Untapped Populations Committee - This committee will work to increase the number of people using WSRCA and/or partner services to increase employment within identified untapped populations. Currently the untapped populations are identified as: ex-offenders, people with disabilities, foster youth, limited English, and literacy, homeless, 2nd career/retired/aging.

Committee Goals:

1. Advise on service design standards that reduce barriers and promote universal access.
2. Promote alignment across partners to ensure consistent access to services for untapped populations (No Wrong Door / "One Workforce").
3. Use data to identify system gaps where populations are underserved and recommend focused strategic responses to increase services.
4. Use data and research to prioritize untapped populations by county, ensuring targeted and effective use of resources.
5. Expand self-employment and entrepreneurship pathways through partnerships community organizations.
6. Promote access to financial literacy education and supportive services that address employment barriers and support economic self-sufficiency.
7. Promote inclusive hiring strategies at the sector and regional level, including employer engagement strategies that expand opportunities for untapped populations.
8. Shape the narrative around the value of inclusive employment through publicly championing success stories and system-level progress, encourages a system culture that views untapped populations as talent, not risk, and reinforces the dignity of work.

One Workforce Initiative:

One Workforce unites workforce organizations to streamline services, align outcomes, and braid funding, creating a seamless, customer-centered workforce system that maximizes impact.

WSRCA will collaborate with the following organizations: Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas, Texas Workforce Commission - Vocational Rehabilitation, Texas Veterans Commission, Texas Veterans Leadership Program, Workforce Network, Inc., American YouthWorks, Career Tracks.

Each organization will have representation on the Leadership Council for One Workforce and will work to align and streamline eligibility, services and outcomes to reduce duplication and create opportunities to braid funding and increase enrollments for reskilling and upskilling opportunities and create more pathways into in-demand, middle skills jobs. Additionally, each partner will commit to:

1. Aligned Referrals
 - Build a universal referral system so customers don't "fall through the cracks."
 - Cross-train staff across organizations to ensure consistent knowledge of all available services.
 - Implement a "warm handoff" process to promote trust and continuity of care.
2. Unified Eligibility
 - Develop shared eligibility protocols to reduce redundancy in verifying income, residency, and barriers.
 - Explore common intake tools and shared databases where allowable.
 - Ensure compliance with program regulations while reducing customer burden.
3. Shared Performance Outcomes
 - Establish a common outcomes framework that blends performance outcomes into unified reporting.
 - Track both individual progress (employment, credential attainment, wage growth) and system-wide impact (employer satisfaction, reduction of service duplication).
 - Create joint dashboards for transparency among partners and stakeholders.

Initiatives for Justice Involved Individuals:

PROWD (Partners for Re-Entry Opportunities in Workforce Development) – partners include the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI), which is a federal prison in Bastrop, the Austin Residential Re-Entry Center in Del Valle (commonly referred to as a “halfway house”) where services are provided through two contractors – RARE Academy and an independent contractor.

Through this work, WSRCA has brought a CDL training onto the FCI in Bastrop as well as starting a pre-apprentice training in electrical and working to transition into apprenticeship training with the FCI acting as the apprenticeship sponsor and employer for apprentices.

Initiatives for Individuals with Disabilities:

- Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)
- HireAbility Navigator
- NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month)

Initiatives for Veterans / Transitioning Military and Spouses /Family:

- Hiring Red, White and You!
- Military to Civilian funding supporting a Military Manufacturing Pipeline

Initiatives for Opportunity Youth, including Foster Youth:

- Central Texas Youth Alliance
- American YouthWorks / YouthBuild
- “E3 – Employer, Educate, Employ” WIOA Youth programming

Initiatives for individuals with Limited English Proficiency or Limited Literacy:

WSRCA conducts an annual assessment of languages spoken in the nine-county area to ensure resources are available in appropriate languages and formats. Additionally, we use this information to support outreach efforts in each county to engage individuals needing assistance. Partners include:

- Community Action, Inc., of Central Texas
- Literacy Coalition of Central Texas

Initiatives for families who are homeless:

WSRCA ensures families who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless have priority in receipt of child care services, so adults may focus on job search and upskilling to support opportunities for housing. Partners include:

- Community Resource Centers
- STARRY / Texas Baptist Children's Home
- Shepherd's Heart Ministries

