Workforce Development

FY 2020 Community Impact Report

Travis County Health and Human Services

Research & Planning Division

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TRAVIS COUNTY
HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES

PURPOSE

Who we are:

A Department of Travis County that serves the community under the guidance of the Commissioner's Court

What we do:

Address community needs through internal and external investments and services

What we strive to accomplish:

Maximize quality of life for all people in Travis County

- Protect vulnerable populations
- Invest in social and economic well-being
- Promote healthy living: physical, behavioral, and environmental
- Build a shared understanding of our community

VALUES

We value helping people.

- We provide accessible, person-centered services with respect and care.
- We work to empower people through our service to them, always honoring the strengths and differences of the individuals and families of Travis County.

We value the accountability and integrity of our staff.

- We value the diversity of our staff and the experience each of us brings to HHS.
- We honor our collective service to the public, including the careful stewardship of public funds.
- We value the quality services we provide to the community in a spirit of shared responsibility.

We value cooperation and collaboration in the community at large and within HHS.

- We are interdependent and connected.
- We treat one another with respect and value effective communication and teamwork.
- We honor our partners in the community and engage with them to more efficiently and effectively serve our clients.

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Introduction

The Travis County Commissioners Court, through the Travis County Health and Human Services Department (HHS), annually invests nearly $22 million in community-based social service programs using one-time and ongoing funding structures. These Department investments align with and supplement our direct services to meet the needs of County residents. Community-based organizations are frequently geographically and culturally embedded in the communities they serve and are often best positioned to provide needed services.

Purpose of Report

The annual Community Impact Report provides an overview of HHS investments in health and human services. The *FY 2020 Community Impact Report* details investment, programmatic, and performance information on the Department's social service contracts. This information allows policy makers, program managers, and others to better understand these investments, recognize accomplishments, identify areas for improvement, disseminate lessons learned, and highlight areas warranting further research.

Organization of Report

This report addresses nine issue areas—Access to Basic Supports, Behavioral Health, Child and Youth Development, Housing Continuum, Planning and Evaluation, Public Health, Safety Intervention Services, Supportive Services for Community Living, and Workforce Development—as well as investments through Austin ISD Interlocals. The Executive Summary aggregates financial, demographic, and geographic information for all issue areas, and offers a discussion of poverty as a framework for HHS investments. In this year's report, the Executive Summary also provides an overview of COVID–19's impact across all issue areas.

Each issue area section provides demographic, geographic, and performance highlights. Each program is classified into the issue area most closely aligned to its goals and objectives. The report provides detailed information about each program covered by an issue area, including an overview of program goals, services provided, eligibility criteria, and funding. Also captured are each program's performance results, compared to its contractual performance goals, and explanations of notable variance (+/- 10%) between the performance results and goals.

Notes on Methodology

The majority of the social service contracts included in the report followed a fiscal year calendar (October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020) unless otherwise noted. Program and performance highlights are drawn from contracts and reports provided by contracted service providers.

Considerations When Reading This Report

Performance results provide only a starting point for understanding the impact of these programs. These summary statistics are not necessarily an indication of the programs' overall performance, but rather a snapshot of their performance over a one-year period. Within these reports, service providers offer explanations for variance in performance, which provides context and meaning to summary results.

Performance results do not reflect programs' full value to and impact on the community. Therefore, it is important to keep the following considerations in mind when reviewing program performance.

Readers should use caution when comparing output and outcome results across programs, as participant characteristics can significantly influence a given program's performance goals and results. For example, performance results may be lower for programs with clients who face considerable challenges (e.g., serious mental illness or addiction issues) and have little social support.

Factors beyond the program's control may also impact the program's performance. For example, the relative scarcity or abundance of jobs in the local economy will impact client employment rates for a workforce development program, regardless of the quality of training and support provided. In addition, the community is facing additional economic impacts due to the COVID–19 pandemic, which has globally impacted performance across issue areas. Without controlling for these factors, the true impact or efficacy of the program on outcomes cannot be discerned.

Readers should also use caution when examining outcome results for programs with less than 30 clients, in which the outcome of just a few clients can greatly affect the program's total outcome result. In these instances, examining percentages may be less helpful than examining raw numbers.

Finally, this report captures a selection of performance measures, which may not reflect the program's full impact on participants and their families, peers, and neighborhood. Performance measures may not all be equal in importance or value to the community.

Investment Overview

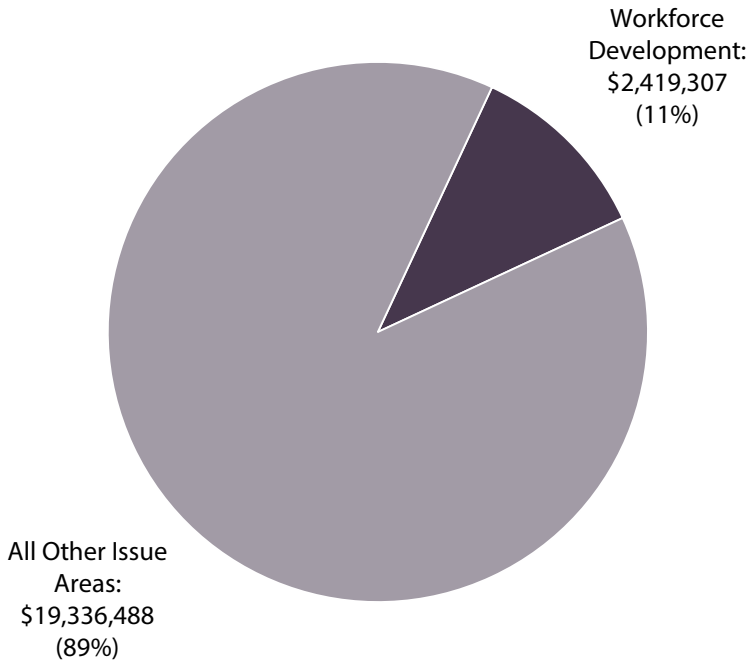
Community Context

Issue area sections usually begin with an overview of relevant community context. Due to the COVID–19 pandemic, and its significant impact on the community across all issue areas, the *FY 2020 Community Impact Report* instead provides an overview of these impacts in the Executive Summary. For a summary of FY 2019 community context, please see https://www.traviscountytx.gov/health-human-services/research-planning/cir-2019.

Goals and Services

Programs and services within this issue area provide a continuum of employment, training, and adult education services to help individuals improve workplace skills, obtain employment, succeed in the workplace, and help employers secure a skilled workforce. Services may include: literacy, High School Equivalency (HSE), and adult basic education; English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; job readiness and occupation-specific training (including, but not limited to, vocational certification and formal higher education opportunities); job search and job placement assistance; and related instruction, coaching, or counseling leading to employment and earnings gain.

Investment in Workforce Development and Other Issue Areas, FY 2020



Funding Summary

The FY 2020 Funding Amount reflects 12–month funding (October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020) unless otherwise noted.

Agency Name	Program Name	FY 2020 Funding Amount
American YouthWorks	Travis County Metro Parks Program	$100,000
American YouthWorks	YouthBuild Workforce Development	$145,000
Capital IDEA	Long-Term Training	$760,800
LifeWorks	Workforce Development	$241,196
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas	Career Development	$241,196

Agency Name	Program Name	FY 2020 Funding Amount
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas	Literacy Illuminates	$30,000*
Skillpoint Alliance	Gateway	$270,800
Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board	Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum – Travis County	$630,315

*Funding from December 9, 2019 through September 30, 2020

Client Demographics

The table below summarizes the demographics for clients served across Workforce Development service providers. Client demographics are not included for the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas' Literacy Illuminates program, given its program design of a public awareness campaign. Note that clients participating in more than one program are counted multiple times.

Gender	Num.	Pct.
Female	2,447	62%
Male	1,434	36%
Other	26	1%
Unknown	24	1%
Total	*3,931*	*100%*

Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	2,014	51%
Not Hispanic or Latino	1,779	45%
Unknown	138	4%
Total	*3,931*	*100%*

Age	Num.	Pct.
15 to 17	133	3%
18 to 24	1,387	35%
25 to 39	1,472	37%
40 to 54	709	18%
55 to 64	149	4%
65 to 74	37	1%
75 and over	6	0.2%
Unknown	38	1%
Total	*3,931*	*100%*

Race	Num.	Pct.
American Indian and Alaska Native	59	2%
Asian	123	3%
Black or African American	1,001	25%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	9	0.2%
White	2,174	55%
Some other race	278	7%
Two or more races	96	2%
Unknown	191	5%
Total	*3,931*	*100%*

Income	Num.	Pct.
<50% of FPIG	1,954	50%
50% to 100%	604	15%
101% to 150%	583	15%
151% to 200%	534	14%
>200%	158	4%
Unknown	98	2%
Total	*3,931*	*100%*

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

See Appendix for specific income guideline levels.

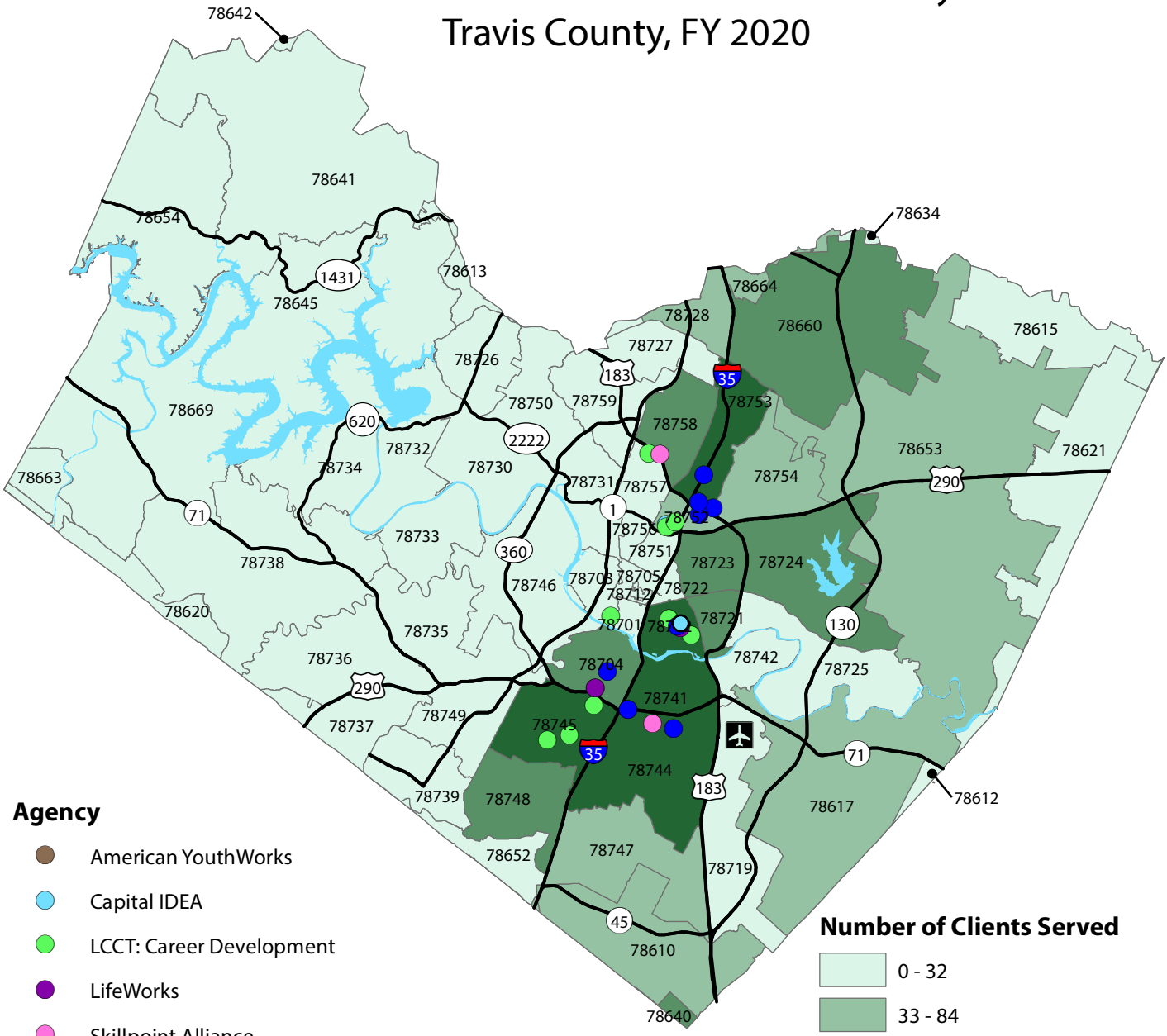
Performance Summary

The table below aggregates performance into roll-up measures that draw from programs in this issue area. These roll-up measures align with the goals for the issue area and are intended to provide a more global picture of the Department's progress towards these goals. Readers should note two considerations regarding methodology: 1) most roll-up measures do not reflect all programs in the issue area, but rather a subset of programs that apply to that measure, and 2) roll-up measures, individually and as a whole, may not reflect the entire service continuum of the issue area.

Roll-up Performance Measures	Issue Area Performance
Outputs	
Number of clients served	3,931
Outcomes	
Percent of individuals obtaining employment	48%
Percent of individuals maintaining employment for 6 months	66%
Percent of individuals earning a wage of at least $12/hour	85%

Workforce Development

Service Provision Locations and Clients Served by ZIP Code
Travis County, FY 2020



Agency

- American YouthWorks
- Capital IDEA
- LCCT: Career Development
- LifeWorks
- Skillpoint Alliance
- Workforce Solutions

Number of Clients Served

- 0 - 32
- 33 - 84
- 85 - 174
- 175 - 305

Notes: This map shows 3,299 clients by ZIP code. 632 clients (16% of the total) from all service providers were not included because their ZIP codes were unknown or outside of Travis County boundaries or they were homeless.

Source data: Contracted service providers, FY 2020. TxDOT: Roadways, U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Area: Water, ArcGIS Online: Zip Code Areas, CAPCOG: Counties.
Created by: Travis County HHS, Research & Planning Division, 2020.

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American YouthWorks

YouthBuild Workforce Development

Program Description

The goal of the YouthBuild Workforce Development program is to connect Opportunity Youth to employment and education. Participants gain hands-on experience while earning industry-recognized certificates, college credits, and college scholarships in addition to a high school diploma or equivalency. As a full-time program, students attending academic classes spend 16-20 hours/week in vocational training, while participants who have completed their HSE or Diploma spend up to 40 hours per week in vocational training programs. Training includes some classroom instruction, but mainly features hands-on practice on real-world projects that prepare students for the work environment. Vocational training tracks include: Construction; Media Corps: Computer Refurbishing, Media, & Design; Texas Conservation Corps: Natural Resource Management; and Medical Careers.

In addition, HHS invests in the Travis County Metro Parks Program, which trains and engages young people to complete park infrastructure and conservation projects on Travis County parkland through the Texas Conservation Corps program. These projects are hands-on service learning laboratories for participants in the YouthBuild Workforce Development program described above. Metro Parks Program performance is included as part of the YouthBuild Workforce Development summary on the following page.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the YouthBuild Workforce Development program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $145,000. This investment comprised 6.0% of their total program budget. The additional HHS investment towards the Travis County Metro Parks Program was $100,000.

Eligibility Criteria

The target population for this program is young people ages 16-28 who are disconnected from education and employment; most have family incomes at or below 80% of Median Family Income (MFI) or 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG) and face a variety of barriers to reconnecting, including homelessness, pregnant or parenting, LGBT youth, involvement in the criminal justice or foster care systems, mental health issues, and persons with disabilities. Forty percent have not completed high school; no more than 10% fall outside the target population for age or income.

American YouthWorks: YouthBuild Workforce Development

The YouthBuild Workforce Development program met or exceeded the targeted range of performance for all but one measure. Six month placement retention was lower than projected (see the fourth outcome). Staff explained that many people were laid off or not working at all due to COVID–19. It was also more challenging to keep up with alumni. Staff noted that many alumni were less responsive or did not have the technical capability to send proof of placement.

The number of participants obtaining employment and other continuing education/training was slightly higher than expected due to a large number of participants exiting in the fourth quarter and finding employment (see the second outcome). Staff reported that one strategy that has proven successful is using the Equifax-Work Number. This service provides the program with employment wage data that staff have been unable to collect from non-responding alumni.

Finally, more participants than expected were able to obtain employment at $10.00/hour or more (see the third outcome). Staff explained that the program is actively working on connecting participants to higher wage and training related placements. In addition, many employers, even in traditionally low wage positions, are raising their minimum wage to $10.00/hour and above.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	219	225	97%
Number of participants enrolled in vocational training	219	225	97%
Number of participants enrolled in academic classes	103	95	108%
Outcomes			
Percentage of successfully exiting participants	83% (101/122)	80% (100/125)	103%
Percentage of successfully exiting participants receiving job placement services who obtained employment, post secondary education, apprenticeship training, the military, or other national service	83% (84/101)	75% (75/100)	111%
Percentage of successfully exiting participants who obtained employment at $10.00/hr. or more	64% (45/70)	53% (28/53)	122%
Percentage of successfully exiting participants who obtained employment, post secondary education, apprenticeship training, the military, or other national service and retained placement for 6 months or longer	60% (49/82)	75% (56/75)	80%

Capital IDEA

Long-Term Training

Program Description

Capital IDEA's goal is to lift low-income adults out of poverty by providing financial and wrap-around support through multiple-year, certificate and degree-level education for in-demand, living wage occupations identified by area employers in need of highly skilled workers. Program components include developmental education, job training, and career placement services. In addition to paying for tuition, fees, and books, participants receive individualized case management and wrap-around support services. Capital IDEA also fully funds other items necessary to job training, such as vaccinations, uniforms, and equipment.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Long-Term Training program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $760,800. This investment comprised 13.8% of their total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

Capital IDEA's target population is low-income adults in Austin and Travis County who are unemployed, underemployed, or hard to employ and who are willing to commit to long-term training but face multiple barriers, such as an inability to pay for childcare, lack of funds for tuition, books, and fees, and poor academic preparation. To be eligible for services, a client must have an income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG), be a resident of Central Texas (10–County region), be at least 18 years or older and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, and have a high school diploma or GED but have not already completed a college degree.

Capital IDEA: Long-Term Training

The Long-Term Training program exceeded both output goals and exceeded all but one outcome goal. Staff explained that they were able to surpass the goal for total number of participants served primarily due to a strong start in October (see the first output). The number of new students accepted began to decline in April due to the pandemic. Staff noted that they have revised goals for the College Prep Academy, as they continue to see strong enrollment in the program (see the second output).

Staff reported that job placement has been significantly affected due to the pandemic (see the first outcome). The program's primary employer partners are St. David's and Ascension and both had to adjust their hiring schedules due to COVID–19. Staff noted that they are starting to see hiring pick up again, which is an encouraging sign.

Finally, average starting salary continues to increase (current average of $23/hour) so the program has seen very few graduates earning less than $12/hour at placement (see the second and third outcomes).

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	1,288	1,000	129%
Number of students entering College Prep Academy	85	50	170%
Outcomes			
Percentage of students seeking employment who obtained employment	78% (95/122)	90% (73/81)	86%
Percentage of students obtaining employment at a wage of $12/hr or higher	100% (95/95)	90% (66/73)	111%
Percentage of students obtaining employment at a wage of $20/hr or higher	76% (72/95)	55% (40/73)	138%
Percentage of students who complete the College Prep Academy	92% (65/71)	90% (45/50)	102%
Percentage of students who obtained employment two quarters prior and retained employment for six months	96% (108/112)	90% (72/80)	107%

LifeWorks

Workforce Development

Program Description

LifeWorks provides underserved youth and young adults with the opportunity to enhance their skills and education to become work-ready. Educational services aim to increase the number of clients progressing to a higher academic level and completing their High School Equivalency Certification. Job placement and occupational support work to increase the number of clients entering and then retaining employment.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Workforce Development program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $241,196. This investment comprised 27.7% of their total program budget. HHS also funds the LifeWorks Youth and Adult Counseling and Community-Based Peer Support and Counseling program, which is described in the Behavioral Health report.

Eligibility Criteria

Services are designed to meet the unique skill set and needs of youth and young adults (ages 16 to 26) who have had high barriers to educational success and workforce experience. To be eligible for services, clients who are 18 years old or older must show proof of income. Most families have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG), but the program does not exclude someone from participating based on income. Clients must be residents of Travis, Williamson, Hays, or Bastrop counties and be able to show proof of identity and eligibility for employment. For the Education services component of the program, clients must provide evidence of an ability to read at a level sufficient to effectively engage in services, must not be currently enrolled in an education program, and must not have received a high school credential.

LifeWorks: Workforce Development

The Workforce Development program met or exceeded all but two performance targets. Both the total number of clients served as well as the number of clients served in Workforce services were higher than expected (see the first and third outputs). Staff explained that they expanded their Workforce program during the year, adding five new Employment Specialists to the team. This increased their capacity to serve more clients.

Beginning March 2020, educational services shifted to a 100% remote platform. Progress TABE tests could only be offered onsite utilizing a platform that is not accessible on public computers. Staff scheduled clients to come to the site in order to take a progress TABE. However, due to the pandemic, many students were unable to leave home due to a lack of childcare as well as the need to care for younger siblings or other family members. These challenges led to a smaller number of students taking a test as well as a lower percentage of students progressing to the next academic level (see the first outcome).

The percentage of clients who obtained employment was also lower than expected due to the impact of the pandemic on many sectors of employment (see the third outcome). Many businesses were forced to furlough, downsize, or went on a hiring freeze. The sectors of employment that were impacted most by the pandemic are the ones where many of the program's clients obtain employment – food service, retail, and customer service.

Of the clients who obtained employment, the average starting hourly wage was higher than projected due to the program's continued work to expand opportunities that pay competitively (see the fourth outcome). Employment Specialists continually strive to build partnerships with employers and apprenticeship programs that pay competitively so that clients have opportunities to make a living wage, support their families, and find themselves out of poverty.

Finally, the percentage of clients who obtained a job for at least 6 months was higher than expected because of the individualized follow along supports that clients receive as part of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment (see the fifth outcome). These include, but are not limited to, coaching conversations, wake up calls, support with work-related tools/equipment, and on the job support. Clients receive personalized support from their Employment Specialist who works with them on all aspects of employment – from preparation all the way through to post-placement support.

LifeWorks: Workforce Development

Performance Goals and Results

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served in Workforce and Education services	327	210	156%
Number of client served in Education services	117	125	94%
Number of clients served in Workforce services	229	100	229%
Outcomes			
Percentage of clients who progress to the next academic level	47% (18/38)	72% (54/75)	66%
Percentage of clients who pass at least one GED Ready or HiSET Official Practice subject-specific exam	80% (24/30)	76% (38/50)	105%
Percentage of clients who obtained employment	43% (63/148)	66% (33/50)	64%
Average starting hourly wage	$12.21/hr.	$12/hr.	102%
Percentage of clients who obtained a job for at least 6 months	53% (35/66)	39% (13/33)	135%

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas

Career Development

Program Description

The Career Development initiative aims to provide work readiness services through an innovative model that builds upon Travis County's existing network of community-based adult education providers. This program strives to increase employment, career advancement and job retention rates by overlaying workforce development programming on the existing adult literacy programs and vocational training providers. Specialized workforce curriculum builds career awareness, increases employability skills, and empowers clients to make more informed decisions about future education and training needs, while simultaneously improving language comprehension.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Career Development program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $241,196. This investment comprised 27.4% of their total program budget. HHS also funds the Literacy Illuminates program, which is described later in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

This program serves low-skilled, working age adults who are currently enrolled in adult literacy programming, including Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency, and English as a Second Language, at a community-based organization in Travis County and have goals to improve their job status and/or career trajectory, as well as adults enrolled in vocational training designed to bring low-income earners to middle skill employment. Clients must have gross family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG), be at least 18 years of age, and be a current resident of Travis County in order to be eligible for services.

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: Career Development

The Career Development program met or exceeded performance goals for all but three measures. Staff reported that they are serving more clients in need of work-readiness skill building services than expected (see the third output). Austin Free Net, Casa Marianella, Avance, and Austin Career Institute continued to see clients on a one-on-one basis throughout the pandemic. However, Job Coaches only met with individual clients for an abbreviated time, which made reaching the required 35 hours of class time exceedingly difficult. Further, the need to care for themselves and their families during the pandemic also contributed to fewer clients completing a work-readiness credential (see the second outcome).

The pandemic, and its resulting unemployment rate, led to fewer clients with an improved employment status (see the fourth outcome). Staff explained that jobs were hard to come by, especially in a client's desired field. Employment retention was also impacted (see the fifth outcome). Staff noted that when employers were called to check on a client's employment status, many of them reported being closed or having to furlough or let go of their employees due to the pandemic. Clients have reported moving away from Austin to more affordable areas. Further, clients have communicated that they secured temporary employment in a position that does not extend to six months.

Finally, most of the clients that reported job retention were enrolled in a vocational training program. Since they are certificate holders, the positions they secure offer a higher wage (see the sixth outcome).

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	1,202	1,100	109%
Number of unduplicated clients receiving all literacy instruction (ESL, ABE, HSE, and Digital Literacy)	947	925	102%
Number of unduplicated clients receiving work readiness skill-building services	389	250	156%
Number of unduplicated clients enrolled in vocational training in order to earn an industry-recognized certificate	120	130	92%
Outcomes			
Percentage of clients showing a learning gain on a standardized test	69% (321/462)	75% (413/550)	93%
Percentage of clients successfully completing a work-readiness credential	56% (217/389)	75% (168/225)	75%

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: Career Development

Performance Goals and Results

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Percentage of clients successfully completing vocational training and earning an industry-recognized certificate	90% (108/120)	90% (104/115)	100%
Percentage of clients with an improved employment status	15% (78/509)	65% (162/250)	24%
Percentage of clients reporting improved employment status who maintained their improved employment status at 6 months	34% (22/64)	50% (50/100)	69%
Average wage at initial report of employment status	$14/hr.	$12/hr.	114%

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas

Literacy Illuminates

Program Description

The Literacy Illuminates program aims to improve outreach to adults in need of literacy programs, such as basic reading, writing, English as Second Language (ESL), workplace skills and more; raise awareness of literacy programs and literacy services; and increase the number of individuals reached through outreach efforts for accessing literacy-related services across Travis County. The outreach campaign includes distribution of printed and digital content. Printed materials include organization-wide bilingual pamphlets, program pamphlets, family literacy brochures, and other outreach, educational, and promotional materials. These materials contain vital, easy-to-read information and resources for vulnerable families, and direct clients to Literacy Coalition programs and partners. Digital content includes photos, videos, newsletters, e-mail campaigns, and website content to promote local literacy programming and increase traffic towards its updated website.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Literacy Illuminates program from December 9, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $30,000. This investment comprised 75.0% of their total program budget. HHS also funds the Career Development program, which is described earlier in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

The program serves adults and families in Travis County who experience low literacy. Adult literacy learners are generally newly immigrated adults from various countries of origin and/or citizens who dropped out of high school and now seek to improve their education and job skills. Most adult literacy students are working-age, low-income adults with young children. There are no eligibility requirements for this program.

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: Literacy Illuminates

The Literacy Illuminates program had mixed performance results this year. Due to the COVID–19 pandemic and public safety concerns, the number of in-person community outreach events that the Literacy Coalition attended and hosted was greatly reduced (see the first output). Staff noted that they focused on other outreach methods, including: 1) increasing connections with other service providers to increase referral traffic, 2) using advertising through radio, Google, and Facebook, 3) direct outreach to potential students and organization partners, and 4) increased promotion of all literacy programs (their own and their coalition partner network's) on social media.

In response to COVID–19 conditions and adopting new outreach practices, staff increased the number of radio spots in order to promote their Fall Parents and Little Scholars classes and Integrated Education and Training classes on the Spanish language radio station 102.7 (see the second output). These 30–second ads were played during prime times to their target audience.

Staff chose to direct more resources to online and on-air outreach rather than printed materials in order to reach more of the community, as in-person material handout opportunities were diminished (see the third output). Staff did produce materials that directed community members to their website in the form of giveaway items like notebooks, pens, bags, and shirts. They also purchased signage to direct students to their location as well as a camera to create more compelling informational resources.

Staff noted that they significantly increased content on Facebook beginning in the second quarter of the year, sharing resources and updates with followers in response to critical needs seen in the COVID–19 crisis (see the first outcome). The program outperformed goals both for Facebook reach and engagement by dedicating additional resources and focus to social media outreach. However, the ratio of engagement to reach did not meet projected goals. Upon further research of industry standards, they found their goal to be out of alignment with even an ambitious growth pattern.

Finally, staff reported that they have developed a more consistent and responsive communications plan for their Instagram platform and have seen substantial gains in both followers and engagement (see the second outcome). Using social media platforms and other methods of outreach, staff have been able to promote a wide variety of resources for those impacted by COVID–19, from health care to rent and food relief to workforce programs and other literacy and education avenues.

Literacy Coalition of Central Texas: Literacy Illuminates

Performance Goals and Results

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of community outreach events and efforts LCCT participates in	48	65	74%
Number of radio ad spots	30	10	300%
Number of printed informational pamphlets/ materials	1,150	1,500	77%
Outcomes			
Percentage of people who were reached on Facebook and who subsequently became engaged	6% (5,287/85,604)	29% (3,432/12,000)	22%
Percentage change in Instagram engagement from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020	595% increase	50% increase	1194%

Skillpoint Alliance

Gateway

Program Description

The Gateway program strives to improve the work-preparedness and employment status of residents with economic and social barriers. This is achieved through industry-recognized, entry-level rapid employment training, preparation for relevant certifications and/or licensure exams, and close employer partnerships so that program staff can support participants in obtaining employment. All services are provided at zero cost to participants.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Gateway program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $270,800. This investment comprised 31.7% of their total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

The program targets individuals who are former offenders, veterans, homeless, currently incarcerated youth, and opportunity youth. To be eligible for services, clients must reside in the Central Texas 35 corridor counties: Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop, Guadalupe, Comal, Bell, Coryell, McClennan, and Falls Counties; have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG), except in extenuating circumstances; be eligible to work in the United States; be able to read in the language of instruction at a 9th grade reading level; demonstrate mathematical skills at a 9th grade level based on United States standards; and provide Skillpoint Alliance with permission to request criminal background histories.

Skillpoint Alliance: Gateway

The Gateway program exceeded all outcome goals but fell short of their target on the output measure. Staff explained that the overall number of clients served was below expectations because program operations were severely disrupted due to the COVID–19 pandemic. While Skillpoint Alliance was able to successfully transition its courses to all or mostly virtual in order to provide services while protecting the safety of students and staff, the program had to significantly change many parts of their courses and processes over the course of this year. The first shelter-in-residence orders came into effect in what was scheduled to be the heart of their academic year, and capacity was reduced as staff were forced to push back or cancel courses. Rescheduled courses were also longer than originally planned, in order to make up for the difficulties of online teaching, further limiting capacity. Other classes had to be completely suspended due to pandemic-related challenges.

In spite of the pandemic, the program was able to graduate 95% of its students while embracing new recruiting and service delivery techniques (see the first outcome). Staff also reported that they have had success in placing individuals in employment and on a pathway to upskilling towards a middle-skill job, leading to a higher than projected percentage of graduates with starting wages of at least $12 per hour (see the fourth outcome).

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	135	200	68%
Outcomes			
Percentage of participants who graduate job training	95% (122/129)	85% (170/200)	111%
Percentage of unduplicated clients who report working or continuing their education at the 90 day employment review	79% (108/137)	75% (128/170)	105%
Percentage of employed graduates who are employed continuously or enrolled in continuing education for 180 days	62% (83/133)	60% (77/128)	104%
Percentage of employed graduates with a starting wage of at least $12/hr.	73% (79/108)	60% (72/120)	122%

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board

Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum–Travis County

Program Description

The Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum–Travis County (WERC TC) is a component of the larger WERC program, which is a collaboration of eight community partners who provide assessment, targeted education services, occupational training, GED training, work readiness education, and support services to help clients obtain employment and transition out of poverty. Four WERC partners make up WERC TC: Goodwill, Austin Area Urban League, American YouthWorks, and Workforce Solutions Career Centers. These partners coordinate to ensure clients receive the specific services they need including development of an Individual Employment Plan with clients and, depending on the need, providing training preparation for High School Diploma or GED; Work Readiness Instruction; Vocational Certification Programs; Training-related Paid Work Experiences/Internships; Resume, Interviewing, and Job Search Workshops; and Customized Job Search and Placement Assistance. Partners also assist clients in transitioning into the next appropriate job readiness phase.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum–Travis County (WERC TC) program from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 was $630,315. This investment comprised 18.8% of their total program budget. HHS also funds the Continuity of Child Care System Services and the Quality Child Care Collaborative programs, which are described in the Child and Youth Development issue area report.

Eligibility Criteria

Clients must have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG); be residents of Travis County; be at least 16 years old; and either be United States citizens, have "Right-to-Work" status, or be in the process of gaining this status. Clients have barriers to enrollment, such as: school dropout; limited English proficiency low-income; young women; teen parents; incarcerated/re-entry; homeless; and those with drug/alcohol issues. In particular, staff target formerly incarcerated persons, recipients of other public assistance, Opportunity Youth, and clients living in rural areas.

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board: WERC TC

The WERC program met a majority of performance targets. Staff explained that the total number of clients served and the number of clients enrolled in an occupational training program were both slightly short of goals due to the impacts of COVID–19 (see the first and third outputs). Contributing factors included: quarantine/stay at home orders from government and public health agencies, fear of contagion, loss of employment and employment opportunities (e.g. furloughs and layoffs), challenges with client access to basic needs such as housing and healthcare, training providers suspending/postponing in-person courses, and digital literacy skills and technology gaps.

Staff reported that the percentage of clients obtaining a GED/High School diploma, as well as the number exiting the diploma program, were both lower than projected due to clients not yet ready to take all GED component exams, given the challenges in accessing instruction brought on by COVID–19 (see the first outcome). Partner staff continued working to make GED instruction and testing available on a limited basis, due to the ongoing health and safety concerns, but an online learning modality is not always a best fit for all participants.

Although completion rates for Occupational Training and Internships exceeded goals, staff noted that the number of clients exiting from these programs was lower than expected (see the second and third outcomes). Both programs were impacted by the pandemic, leading to training postponements, paused/terminated assignments, and other disruptions in planned programming.

The number of job placements significantly slowed down due to COVID–19 and clients are continuing to receive Job Readiness services (see the fourth outcome). Partners have continued working with clients and employers to ensure continued access to employment and post-secondary education options, even if these are more limited due to COVID–19.

Staff reported that the job retention rate was higher than projected because wraparound supports and services were available to clients who already had an initial connection to employment/post-secondary education, and thus they were able to maintain that connection at the 6–month mark (see the fifth outcome).

Finally, staff noted that the average wage exceeded goals because of the success at which clients who attend/complete an occupational skills training program are able to secure, in many cases, training-related employment that pays closer to a household-sustaining wage (see the sixth outcome).

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board: WERC TC

Performance Goals and Results

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	760	900	84%
Number of unduplicated clients enrolled in a High School or GED program	34	35	97%
Number of unduplicated clients enrolled in an occupational training program	214	245	87%
Number of unduplicated clients enrolled in an Internship	60	50	120%
Outcomes			
Percentage of clients who obtained a GED or High School diploma	70% (14/20)	80% (28/35)	88%
Percentage of clients who successfully complete an Occupational Training program	86% (158/183)	85% (209/245)	101%
Percentage of clients who successfully complete an Internship program	98% (39/40)	80% (40/50)	122%
Percentage of clients who obtain or improve employment or enter post-secondary education/ training/national service	63% (291/464)	70% (431/616)	90%
Percentage of clients who obtain or improve employment or enter post-secondary education/ training/national service and retain employment or continue post-exit pathway after 6 months	67% (266/396)	50% (216/431)	134%
Average wage at entry for clients who obtain or improve employment	$16/hr.	$12/hr.	131%

Appendix

2020 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines

Most HHS contracts require programs to serve participants with household incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline (FPIG) level. Some programs have chosen to follow a more stringent threshold. The following table presents the federal poverty thresholds by household size and income.

Household Size	Income Limits by Household Size				
	50%	100%	125%	150%	200%
1 person	$6,380	$12,760	$15,950	$19,140	$25,520
2 persons	$8,620	$17,240	$21,550	$25,860	$34,480
3 persons	$10,860	$21,720	$27,150	$32,580	$43,440
4 persons	$13,100	$26,200	$32,750	$39,300	$52,400
5 persons	$15,340	$30,680	$38,350	$46,020	$61,360
6 persons	$17,580	$35,160	$43,950	$52,740	$70,320
7 persons	$19,820	$39,640	$49,550	$59,460	$79,280
8 persons	$22,060	$44,120	$55,150	$66,180	$88,240
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,480 for each additional person.					

Data source: "2020 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia," Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, January 17, 2020, https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines.

2020 Austin Median Family Income Guidelines

Some programs may also use Austin MFI guidelines when measuring client incomes. The following table presents the median family income limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Austin-Round Rock, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Household Size	Income Limits by Household Size		
	Extremely Low*	Very Low (50%)	Low (80%)
1 person	$20,550	$34,200	$54,700
2 persons	$23,450	$39,050	$62,500
3 persons	$26,400	$43,950	$70,300
4 persons	$29,300	$48,800	$78,100
5 persons	$31,650	$52,750	$84,350
6 persons	$35,160	$56,650	$90,600
7 persons	$39,640	$60,550	$96,850
8 persons	$44,120	$64,450	$103,100

*The FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act changed the definition of extremely low-income to be the greater of 30/50^{ths} (60%) of the Section 8 very low-income limit or the poverty guideline as established by the Department of Health and Human Services, provided that this amount is not greater than the Section 8 50% very low-income limit.

Data source: "Austin-Round Rock, TX MSA FY 2020 Income Limits Summary," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/2020summary.odn.