



As a Texas employer, you are the focus of the Skills Development Fund. As an employer, you provide two things – a desire to collaborate with the other partners involved with the project and the commitment to see the project through to completion.

Together, under the Skills Development Fund program, businesses gain a more highly trained workforce, workers upgrade their skills, and the Texas economy is strengthened.

## Overview and Benefits:

- Funds customized training
- Partners with colleges and workforce boards.
- Business recruitment and retention
- Assists small businesses with workforce training
- Provides industry recognized certifications to persons on public assistance or at risk at becoming dependent
- Assists transitioning veterans to acquire in-demand skills

## Specialized Industry Training:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** Pneumatics and Hydraulics, Machining, Metal Stamping
- **Healthcare:** Healthcare Professionals and Facilities Maintenance
- **Information Technology:** Computer Support Specialists, Computer Hardware and Software Installation
- **Petroleum Refining/Energy:** Heavy Equipment Operators, Welding and Construction Trades

# Rapid Response

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The Rapid Response program is a prelude to the regular Dislocated Worker Program. This program provides transitional services that are designed to assist in the early stages of a layoff. These services are offered in recognition that Dislocated Workers have various levels of need. Some workers only require minimal assistance to successfully return to the workforce, while others may need more.

Activities under Rapid Response acknowledge the importance of early intervention and are designed to address the most commonly recognized needs of Dislocated Workers. The services provided through Rapid Response are designed to help make the period of unemployment as manageable as possible and can be made available on-site.

## **Rapid Response Workshops include:**

- How to Apply for Unemployment Insurance
- Stress Management
- Financial Management
- Job Search
- Interviewing Techniques/Applications
- Resume Writing
- Training Opportunities
- Layoff Aversion/Shared Work Program
- Mass Layoff Claims

To schedule a Rapid Response Workshop or for additional information please contact Josue Vasquez, Coordinator, at (956) 683-3738 or via e-mail at [joshua@wfsolutions.org](mailto:joshua@wfsolutions.org).



The Self-Sufficiency Fund program, administered by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), assists businesses by designing, financing and implementing customized job training programs in partnership with public community and technical colleges, a higher education extension service, community-based organizations for the creation of new jobs and/or the retraining of existing workforce.

The goal of the Self-Sufficiency Fund is to assist recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), or a parent, including a noncustodial parent whose annual wages are at or below \$37,000 to obtain training, get jobs, and become independent of government financial assistance.

Training must be provided in one of the following industry clusters. Training may be for core, ancillary or support occupations that establishes a career path toward higher-level occupations.

### **Target Industry Clusters are:**

- Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Defense
- Biotechnology and Life Sciences
- Construction
- Logistics
- Transportation
- Energy
- Information and Computer Technology
- Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products

Training can be delivered through a variety of methods including classroom, simulations, online instruction, and on-the-job instruction.



Through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Skills for Small Business program, up to \$2 million from the Skills Development Fund is dedicated to the backbone of Texas' business community - our small employers. Small businesses can apply to TWC for training offered by their local community or technical college, or the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). TWC processes the applications and works with the college to fund the specific courses selected by businesses for their employees.

This exceptional opportunity supports businesses with fewer than 100 employees, and emphasizes training for new workers though it also may help upgrade the skills of incumbent workers.

## **Skills for Small Business:**

A small business with fewer than 100 employees applies for the grant which provides:

- Up to \$1,800 for tuition and fees per new hire, per 12-month period
- Up to \$900 for tuition and fees per incumbent employee, per 12-month period
- Training for full-time employees
- Training selected from courses offered by a Texas public community or technical college or the Texas Engineering Extension Service
- Employers must pay prevailing wages in the local labor market for the trainees funded under the grant
- Online application available:  
[www.twc.state.tx.us/businesses/skills-small-business-employers](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/businesses/skills-small-business-employers)

# Training Opportunities

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## **On-the-Job and Customized Training/Work Experience Services**

**On-the-Job Training (OJT)** and **Customized Training** provide unique opportunities for participants who already possess some job-related skills and the knowledge to "learn as they earn." By participating in training as an employee, the participant not only acquires new skills and knowledge, but also receives the same wages and benefits as current employees in same or similar positions. The employer benefits by being reimbursed for part of the participant's wages during the training period, while having the services of a full-time employee.

To learn more about any of these programs and/or other Employer Services, please call your local WFS Business Service Representative today at (956) 687-1121 or send an e-mail to [info@wfsolutions.org](mailto:info@wfsolutions.org).

## **Work Experience**

Work Experience services allow a customer to be placed at a business or agency within the community to learn skills for long-term, competitive, integrated employment. These entities are referred to as "Work Experience sites." Work Experience services are intended to be short term (maximum 1,040 hours) and part-time. Work Experience can take place in a volunteer, internship, or temporary short-term paid-work setting.

# Fidelity Bonding

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The fidelity bonding service helps at-risk job applicants get and keep a job. TWC and the Workforce Development Boards offer free fidelity bonding services to reduce employers' concerns about hiring at-risk job applicants who cannot be bonded through other sources. For this bonding, Union Insurance Group issues an insurance policy that protects the employer against employee acts of dishonesty such as larceny, embezzlement, and theft.

## Program Features:

- Coverage is free for six months. After six months, bonding becomes the employer's responsibility.
- Coverage is usually issued in the amount of \$5,000.
- There is no deductible.
- There are no forms to fill out and no processing.
- Coverage can be activated almost immediately.

## Eligibility:

Applicants eligible for fidelity bonding services include:

- Ex-offenders, including individuals with records of arrest, probation, or any police record
- Applicants with poor credit histories, including bankruptcy
- Veterans dishonorably discharged from the military
- Public assistance recipients
- Applicants with a substance abuse history
- Disadvantaged youth who lack a work history
- Anyone who is declined fidelity bonding through the commercial bonding system.

# Texas Industries Partnership

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The **Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) program** supports collaborations between local workforce development boards and industry partners through the leveraging of matching contributions of cash or qualifying expenditures for occupational job training. Match funds must support certain WIOA activities and focus on six designated industry clusters:

- Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Defense
- Biotechnology and Life Sciences
- Information Technology
- Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products
- Energy

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# Work Opportunity Tax Credit

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The **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** is a federal income tax benefit administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for employers who hire individuals from specified target populations. WOTC reduces a business's federal tax liability, serving as an incentive to select job candidates who may be disadvantaged in their efforts to find employment.

The main objective of this program is to enable individuals to become employed, earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers. WOTC joins other workforce programs that help provide incentives for workplace diversity and improve access to good jobs for American workers.

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