



# PATHS for Texas: Descriptive Statistics, Outcomes, Impacts, Return on Investment, Survey Results, and Qualitative Summary

**2025 Final Report**

Thomas Boswell  
Patty Rodriguez  
Heath Prince

June 2025



---

2300 Red River St., Stop E2700

Sid Richardson Hall, Unit 3

Austin, TX 78712-1536

[www.raymarshallcenter.org](http://www.raymarshallcenter.org)

Disclaimer:

The research included in this report was made possible through funding by the Walmart. The findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are those of Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Walmart.

This report was prepared with funds provided from Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas to the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin. These data were derived by the Ray Marshall Center from a record set supplied by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and individual level data provided by the participating Texas Workforce Boards. TWC specifically disclaims responsibility for any analysis, interpretations, or conclusions. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent the positions of the funding agencies or The University.

# Table of Contents

- List of Tables ..... 3
- List of Figures ..... 4
- Executive Summary ..... 5
- Data Sources ..... 6
- PATHS for Texas Demographics and Other Descriptive Statistics ..... 6
- PATHS for Texas Outcomes..... 12
- PATHS for Texas Impacts..... 25
  - Methodology:..... 25
  - Rural Capital Area: ..... 28
  - Gulf Coast:..... 31
  - Coastal Bend: ..... 34
  - North Texas:..... 37
  - Overall:..... 40
  - Discussion: ..... 43
- Return on Investment (ROI)..... 44
  - Overview ..... 44
  - Results..... 46
- PATHS for Texas Survey Responses ..... 47
- PATHS For Texas Qualitative Assessment ..... 55
  - Overview: ..... 55
  - Program Planning:..... 56
  - Stakeholder Involvement:..... 57
  - Covid-19 Adaptations:..... 57
  - Recruitment: ..... 58
  - Lessons Learned:..... 58
  - Flexibility: ..... 59

Collaboration:.....	59
Leadership:.....	59
References: .....	61

## List of Tables

Table 1: PATHS Demographics Through June 2025 .....	8
Table 2: PATHS Other Characteristics Through June 2025 .....	9
Table 3: PATHS Demographics for Certificate Earners Through June 2025 .....	10
Table 4: PATHS Other Characteristics for Certificate Earners Through June 2025 .....	11
Table 5: PATHS for Texas Participant Counts.....	12
Table 6: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Year Certificate Was Earned .....	13
Table 7: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Board .....	19
Table 8: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024 ....	21
Table 9: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024 ....	22
Table 10: UI Claims Filed and UI Benefits Received for PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024 .....	24
Table 11: Covariates Used in the Mahalanobis Matching By Board .....	26
Table 12: Sample Size for Treatment and Comparison Groups By Board .....	27
Table 13: Impact Measures by Board and Overall 2020-2024.....	28
Table 14: Rural Capital Area Impact Analysis 2020-2024 .....	31
Table 15: Gulf Coast Impact Analysis 2020-2024.....	34
Table 16: Coastal Bend Impact Analysis 2020-2024 .....	37
Table 17: North Texas Impact Analysis 2020-2024.....	40
Table 18: Impact Analysis for All Boards Combined 2020-2024 .....	43
Table 19: Earnings Impacts analysis for Year 1 of post-treatment and Year 2 of post-treatment .....	43
Table 20: 5-Year ROI for PATHS for Texas 2020-2024 Enrollees: Taxpayer and Societal Perspective.....	47
Table 21: PATHS Active Participants Survey Responses .....	49
Table 22: PATHS Inactive Participants Survey Responses.....	52
Table 23: PATHS Employer Survey Responses .....	54

## List of Figures

Figure 1: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate – Employment and Earnings Outcomes 2020 – 2024 (N = 1,985).....	15
Figure 2: Earnings and Employment Outcomes for Certificate Earners by Cohort Year .....	16
Figure 3: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate Earnings Outcomes by Board 2020-2024 .....	20
Figure 4: Employment Rates Over Time Rural Capital Area Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	29
Figure 5: Unconditional Earnings Over Time Rural Capital Area Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	30
Figure 6: Employment Rates Over Time Gulf Coast Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	32
Figure 7: Unconditional Earnings Over Time Gulf Coast Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	33
Figure 8: Employment Rates Over Time Coastal Bend Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	35
Figure 9: Unconditional Earnings Over Time Coastal Bend Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	36
Figure 10: Employment Rates Over Time North Texas Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	38
Figure 11: Unconditional Earnings Over Time North Texas Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	39
Figure 12: Employment Rates Over Time for All Boards Combined Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	41
Figure 13: Unconditional Earnings Over Time for All Boards Combined Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group 2020-2024 .....	42

## Executive Summary

The data presented in this report represent individuals who participated in PATHS for Texas from its start date in 2020 through June of 2025. As of June 2025, 2,519 individuals registered to participate in the PATHS for Texas program from four Texas Workforce Development Boards (WDB) across the state (Coastal Bend, Gulf Coast, Rural Capital Area, and North Texas). Of the 2,519 individuals who enrolled in PATHS, 2,151 (85%) individuals completed training and earned one or more certificates. When compared to the reference quarter (four quarters prior to earning a certificate through PATHS), on average, PATHS participants increased employment by 4 percentage points (from 73.3% to 77.3%), as well as increased their quarterly earnings by \$1,776 (from \$8,501 to \$10,277) four quarters after earning their certificate. Those who earned certificates in the Business, Hospitality, Information Technology, Medical, Retail, and Transportation and Logistics industries saw increases in employment and earnings compared to the reference period, while those earning certificates in Entrepreneurship, and in the Skilled Trades saw flat or slight decreases in employment, and Insurance, which saw a decline in earnings.

When matched with a comparison group of demographically similar individuals with similar employment histories to determine the impact of program participation, and while there is some variation across the Boards and by outcome measure, it is generally the case that participation in PATHS is associated with a positive, and statistically significant, increase in both unconditional quarterly earnings (\$850) and quarterly employment (9.3% percentage points) over the comparison group.

We present findings from a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis, conducted to assess the economic returns to taxpayers and society resulting from investment in PATHS training. We find that, on average, for each dollar invested in PATHS, taxpayers (exclusive of PATHS participants) received a return of approximately \$2.50 over the 5-year project. Society (a summation of benefits to participants and taxpayers) received \$3.36 for each dollar invested in PATHS. These returns underscore the value to economic growth and prosperity stemming from investments in human capital.

We also report on the outcomes of three surveys completed in the past three years: one survey of active PATHS participants, one of inactive participants, and one of PATHS participant employers. Responses indicate that additional hands-on, interactive training may represent a growth area for training providers, but were otherwise highly positive.

Finally, we report preliminary findings from an implementation evaluation of PATHS. Input provided by key stakeholders yielded several lessons learned, including those related to flexibility, collaboration, and leadership. In terms of flexibility, respondents highlighted the value in PATHS ability to pivot its industry

focus in response to COVID-19. Regarding collaboration, respondents frequently cited their collaboration between one another throughout the PATHS funding period as a unique experience in the state's Workforce Solutions space. And, regarding leadership, respondents underscored the importance of an effective and confident managerial presence to the successful implementation of the PATHS for Texas program.

## Data Sources

The evaluation of PATHS for Texas draws from multiple data sources, including participant records maintained by each Texas Workforce Development Board (Board), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) unemployment insurance (UI) earnings and benefits claim files, The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) and WorkInTexas (WIT) records. The outcomes and impacts data include data only for those participants for whom social security numbers were available, earned a certificate, and whose income data, therefore, could be found in the UI wage data.

Two caveats should be noted about UI earnings data used for this evaluation. First, UI earnings records have known coverage gaps. Workers in industries with high levels of self-employment or independent contracting, and others employed in the gig economy, are less likely to be in a UI-covered position. Researchers therefore acknowledge that the outcomes reported here for individuals who are self-employed or working in the gig economy are likely undercounted in actual labor market outcomes. Further, workers who obtain employment outside of the state of Texas will not be found in the Texas UI earnings data. Second, UI earnings records are subject to review and correction by workers and employers as part of the claim's determination process for UI benefits. Therefore, numbers reported here are based on the most recently available records.<sup>1</sup>

An additional limitation of the UI wage data is a significant (4.5 month) lag between employment and the time that the University of Texas at Austin's Ray Marshall Center (RMC) receives data from the TWC. UI wage data used in this report was received by the RMC in May 2025 for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024. UI wage data for 2016 through 2024 was used to produce outcomes and impacts for this report.

## PATHS for Texas Demographics and Other Descriptive Statistics

The data presented in Tables 1-4 below present basic demographics with some disaggregation by Board, industry of training, and other categories. In terms of demographics for all participants, almost two-thirds (61%) of PATHS participants through June of 2025 were female, and were nearly evenly divided by race, with 30% White, 26% Black, 30% Hispanic. Slightly less than half (47%) of participants fell between

---

<sup>1</sup> Any discrepancies are expected to be quite small.

the ages of 20 and 39 years old. Interestingly, 41% of participants reported having completed high school or earned a GED, having attended some college (29%), or having earned a college degree (17%). Although national averages for associate and bachelor's degree holders is just over 30%, this skew in our sample towards relatively high educational attainment for high school and some college (compared to national averages of 26% and 19% respectively) may be indicative of PATHS' outreach and recruitment strategies, of the effects of the COVID pandemic on the labor market, or some combination of these and other factors.<sup>2</sup>

When only those who earned certificates (92% of total participants) are considered, most of these patterns persist. It is notable that 87% of certificate earners were participants in programs operated by two of the four participating Boards: Rural Capital Area (44%) and Gulf Coast (43%).

Of the various training categories, Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, and Customer Service had the largest number of certificate earners at 33% (771 certificate earners), followed by Skilled Trades at 15% (350 certificate earners).

---

<sup>2</sup> Data Source: 2022 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1: PATHS Demographics Through June 2025

	Counts	Percentages
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>2,519</b>	<b>100%</b>
Number of Participants with SSNs	2,151	85%
Number of Participants without SSNs	368	15%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Female	1,544	61%
Male	965	38%
Missing/Unknown	10	0%
<b>Race</b>		
White	766	30%
Black	644	26%
Hispanic	753	30%
Asian	105	4%
Two Or More Races	41	2%
Other	85	3%
Missing/Unknown	125	5%
<b>Age</b>		
14 - 19 years	267	11%
20 - 29 years	659	26%
30 - 39 years	520	21%
40 - 49 years	407	16%
50 - 59 years	314	12%
60 years and older	157	6%
Missing/Unknown	195	8%
<b>Education Level</b>		
Less than 12th grade	227	9%
12th grade or GED	1,040	41%
Attended College	726	29%
College Degree	432	17%
Missing/Unknown	94	4%
<b>Veteran</b>		
Yes	55	2%
No	2,342	93%
Missing/Unknown	122	5%

Table 2: PATHS Other Characteristics Through June 2025

<b>Board</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Rural Capital Area	1,114	44%
Gulf Coast	1,082	43%
North Texas	177	7%
Coastal Bend	146	6%
<b>Status</b>		
Active	0	0%
Inactive	197	8%
Completed	2,322	92%
<b>Cancelled/Inactive Reason</b>		
Cancelled/refunded with vendor	139	71%
Dropped Out after 30 days	52	26%
Has not participated in 14+ days	6	3%
<b>Earned a Certificate</b>		
Yes	2,329	92%
Missing/Unknown	190	8%
<b>Training Category of Certificates Earned</b>		
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	771	31%
Skilled Trades	260	10%
Medical	253	10%
Retail	216	9%
Entrepreneurship	200	8%
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	183	7%
Skills Development	171	7%
Information Technology	91	4%
Business Office Administration	80	3%
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	27	1%
Real Estate	18	1%
Transportation/Logistics	15	1%
Insurance	10	0%
Other	33	1%
Missing/Unknown	191	8%
<b>Employment Status at Enrollment</b>		
Employed	1,723	68%
Unemployed	796	32%
<b>Retail or Customer Service Experience at Entry</b>		
0-1 Year	434	17%
1-2 Years	24	1%
3-5 Years	373	15%
5-10 Years	277	11%
10+ Years	415	16%
Missing/Unknown	996	40%

Table 3: PATHS Demographics for Certificate Earners Through June 2025

	Counts	Percentages
<b>Total Number of Participants</b>	<b>2,329</b>	<b>100%</b>
Number of Participants with SSNs	1,987	85%
Number of Participants without SSNs	342	15%

Gender	Counts	Percentages
Female	1,410	61%
Male	909	39%
Missing/Unknown	10	0%
<b>Race</b>		
White	717	31%
Black	569	24%
Hispanic	712	31%
Asian	99	4%
Two Or More Races	41	2%
Other	80	3%
Missing/Unknown	111	5%
<b>Age</b>		
14 - 19 years	256	11%
20 - 29 years	603	26%
30 - 39 years	469	20%
40 - 49 years	376	16%
50 - 59 years	298	13%
60 years and older	146	6%
Missing/Unknown	181	8%
<b>Education Level</b>		
Less than 12th grade	217	9%
12th grade or GED	950	41%
Attended College	684	29%
College Degree	398	17%
Missing/Unknown	80	3%
<b>Veteran</b>		
Yes	54	2%
No	2,168	93%
Missing/Unknown	107	5%

**Table 4: PATHS Other Characteristics for Certificate Earners Through June 2025**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Rural Capital Area	1,114	48%
Gulf Coast	955	41%
Coastal Bend	135	6%
North Texas	125	5%
<b>Status</b>		
Active	0	0%
Inactive	10	0%
Completed	2,319	100%
<b>Cancelled/Inactive Reason</b>		
Cancelled/refunded with vendor	10	100%
Dropped Out after 30 days	0	0%
Has not participated in 14+ days	0	0%
<b>Earned a Certificate</b>		
Yes	2,329	100%
Missing/Unknown	0	0%
<b>Training Category of Certificates Earned</b>		
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	771	33%
Skilled Trades	260	11%
Medical	253	11%
Retail	216	9%
Entrepreneurship	200	9%
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	183	8%
Skills Development	171	7%
Information Technology	91	4%
Business Office Administration	80	3%
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	27	1%
Real Estate	18	1%
Transportation/Logistics	15	1%
Insurance	10	0%
Other	33	1%
Missing/Unknown	1	0%
<b>Employment Status at Enrollment</b>		
Employed	1,633	70%
Unemployed	696	30%
<b>Retail or Customer Service Experience</b>		
0-1 Year	419	18%
1-2 Years	16	1%
2-5 Years	358	15%
5-10 Years	258	11%
10+ Years	406	17%
Missing/Unknown	872	37%

## PATHS for Texas Outcomes

In terms of outcomes, it is important to reiterate that results represent employment and earnings reported to the TWC UI wage system through the fourth quarter of 2024.

Table 5 below shows the total counts of PATHS participants through December 2024, participants with SSNs through December 2024, participants with SSNs who earned at least one certificate through December 2024, and participants with SSNs who earned at least one certificate through December 2024 (4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024) who were found in the UI wage data.

**Table 5: PATHS for Texas Participant Counts**

Description	Counts
Total Number of PATHS Participants through June 2025	2,519
Number of PATHS Participants with SSNs through June 2025	2,151
Number of PATHS Participants with SSNs and at least one certificate through June 2025	1,987
Number of PATHS Participants with SSNs and One Certificate through 4th quarter 2024 (found in the UI wage data)	1,985

The following outcomes tables display outcomes for the following categories:

- **Quarterly Employment** – percentage of individuals found in the UI wage data with earnings above zero.
- **Quarterly Average Earnings** – average quarterly earnings for all individuals found in the UI wage data with earnings greater than zero.
- **Filed UI Claim** – percentage of individuals that filed for unemployment insurance benefits.
- **Received UI Benefits** – percentage of individuals that received unemployment insurance payments.

Outcomes for PATHS participants are processed by linking individual participants' social security numbers (SSNs) to the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) unemployment insurance (UI) wage data. Participants who did not provide SSNs are excluded from the outcomes processing.

**Table 6: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Year Certificate Was Earned  
Employment and Earnings Outcomes**

Outcome Measure	Four Qtrs Before Earning a Certificate	Qtr Certificate Earned	2nd Qtr After Receiving Certificate	1 Year After Receiving Certificate	2 Years After Receiving Certificate	3 Years After Receiving Certificate
<b>Number of Participants That Earned a Certificate:</b>						
2020	14	14	14	14	14	14
2021	322	322	322	322	322	322
2022	602	602	602	602	602	.
2023	537	537	537	537	.	.
2024	510	510	478	.	.	.
<b>Overall Counts</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>1,953</b>	<b>1,475</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Certificate Earners: Quarterly Employment</b>						
2020	57.1%	64.3%	42.9%	50.0%	50.0%	57.1%
2021	72.5%	75.8%	82.3%	80.8%	79.2%	77.3%
2022	75.7%	83.6%	83.6%	81.7%	77.1%	.
2023	70.6%	72.8%	75.2%	71.0%	.	.
2024	74.4%	86.3%	83.3%	.	.	.
<b>Overall Average Quarterly Employment</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
<b>Certificate Earners: Average Qrtly Earnings</b>						
2020	\$7,087	\$8,067	\$8,948	\$8,560	\$9,711	\$8,930
2021	\$8,119	\$8,591	\$9,552	\$10,375	\$11,086	\$11,823
2022	\$7,518	\$7,440	\$9,335	\$8,816	\$9,594	.
2023	\$10,191	\$10,336	\$11,009	\$12,130	.	.
2024	\$8,257	\$9,258	\$10,297	.	.	.
<b>Overall Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	<b>\$8,501</b>	<b>\$8,838</b>	<b>\$10,042</b>	<b>\$10,277</b>	<b>\$10,119</b>	<b>\$11,733</b>
<b>Certificate Earners: Filed UI Claim</b>						
2020	10.7%	14.3%	.	.	.	.
2021	9.2%	4.4%	1.6%	1.9%	1.6%	0.6%
2022	3.5%	0.8%	2.2%	0.7%	1.0%	.
2023	5.7%	3.0%	3.7%	2.8%	.	.
2024	0.9%	0.8%	1.1%	.	.	.
<b>Overall Filed UI Claim</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Certificate Earners: Received UI Benefits</b>						
2020	12.5%	.	.	.	.	.
2021	11.7%	4.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.2%	0.6%
2022	3.4%	0.7%	2.0%	0.5%	0.8%	.
2023	5.7%	2.6%	3.4%	2.4%	.	.
2024	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	.	.	.
<b>Overall Received UI Benefits</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

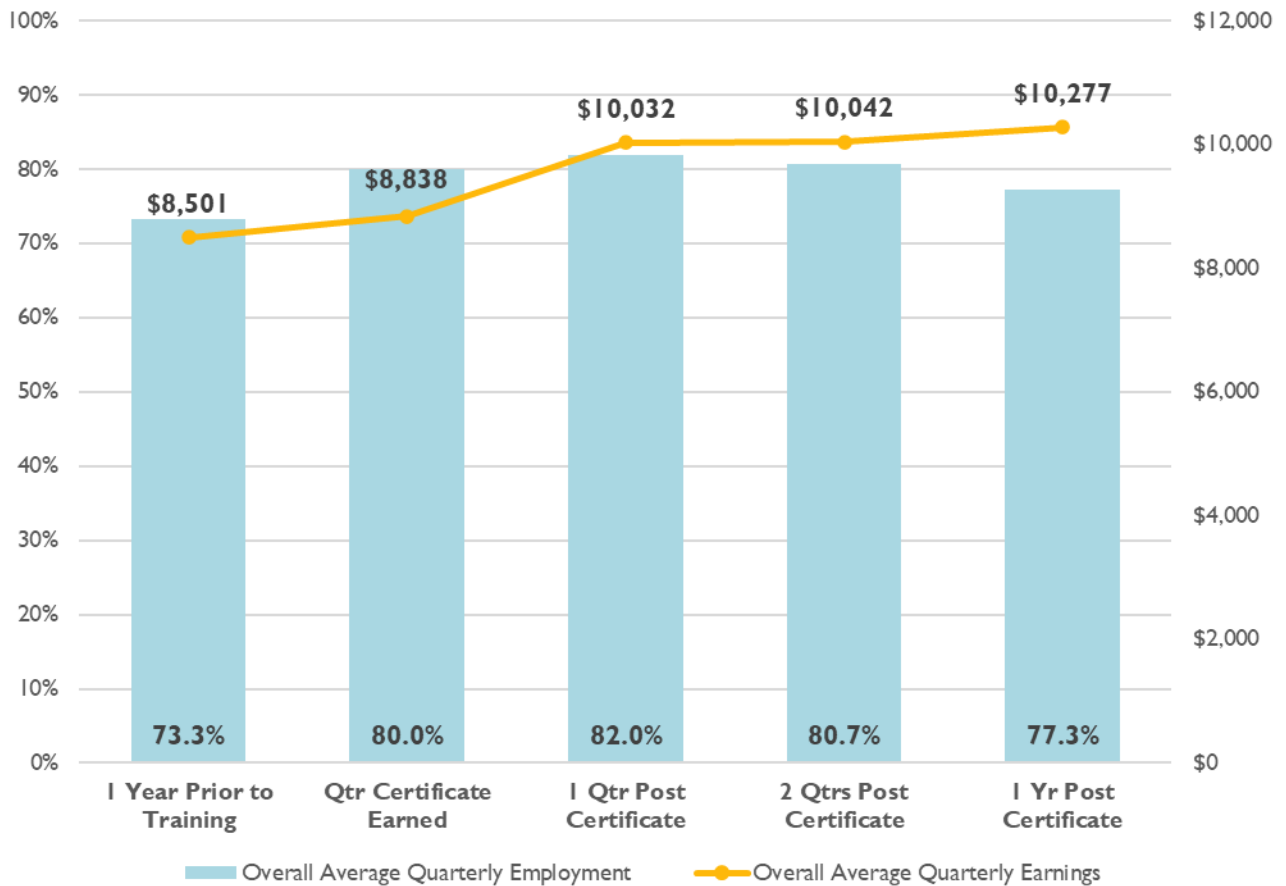
Table 6 shows counts of PATHS participants who earned a certificate in the years 2020 through 2024. The table further shows quarterly outcomes four quarters prior to earning a certificate, the quarter the certificate was earned, two quarters, one year, two years, and three years after the certificate was

earned. Since TWC UI wage data was only available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024, only immediate short-term outcomes are available for most participants that earned their certificate in 2024.

In addition to employment and average earnings outcomes, outcomes for PATH participants who filed for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and participants who received UI benefits are listed in the table. Please note that the group of individuals that filed a UI claim are not necessarily the same group of individuals that received UI benefits. The outcomes reflect the percentage of individuals that filed UI claims during the specified quarters/years and the percentage of individuals that received UI benefits during the specified quarters/years.

Figure 1 below shows quarterly outcomes one year prior to earning a certificate, the quarter the certificate was earned, up to one year after a certificate was earned for the 2020 through 2024 cohorts combined. Due to the lag in the TWC UI wage data, four quarter outcomes will not be available for the 2024 cohort until May 2026. Therefore, their outcomes are underrepresented in the outcomes below.

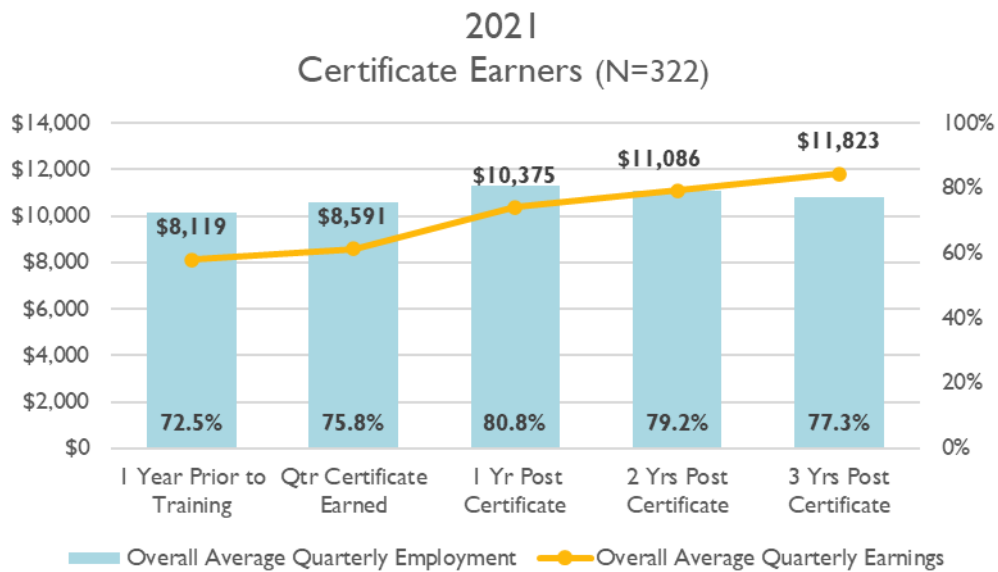
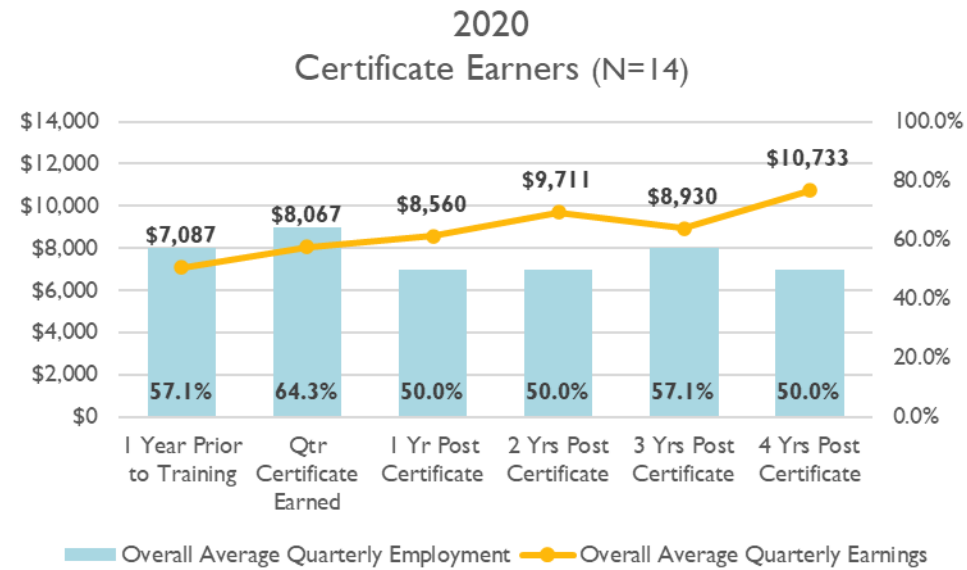
**Figure 1: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate – Employment and Earnings Outcomes 2020 – 2024 (N = 1,985)**



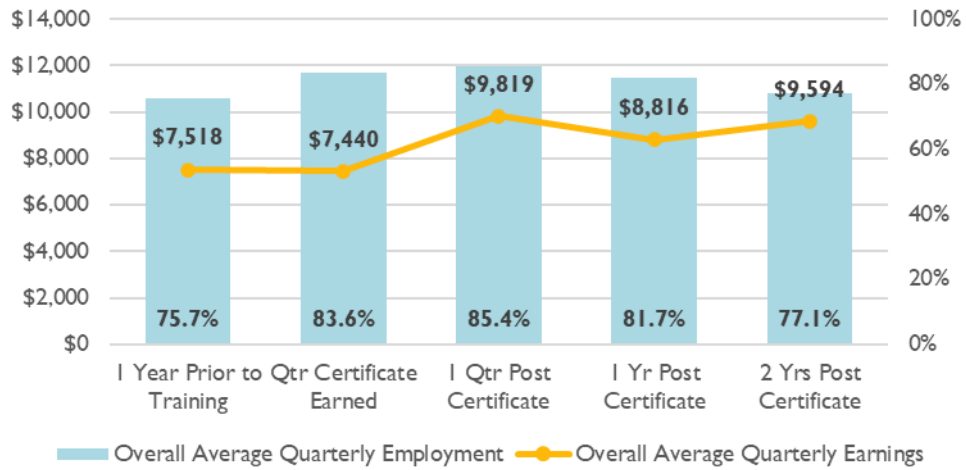
Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

When compared to the reference quarter (one year prior to earning a certificate through PATHS), on average, PATHS 2020 through 2024 participants increased employment by 4 percentage points (from 73% to 77%), and quarterly earnings increased by \$1,776 (from \$8,501 to \$10,277) one year post certificate. Figure 2 looks at the earnings and employment outcomes more closely by separating out the cohort years to provide more detail and remove influence that inflation and employment trends might have depending on the year an individual entered the program.

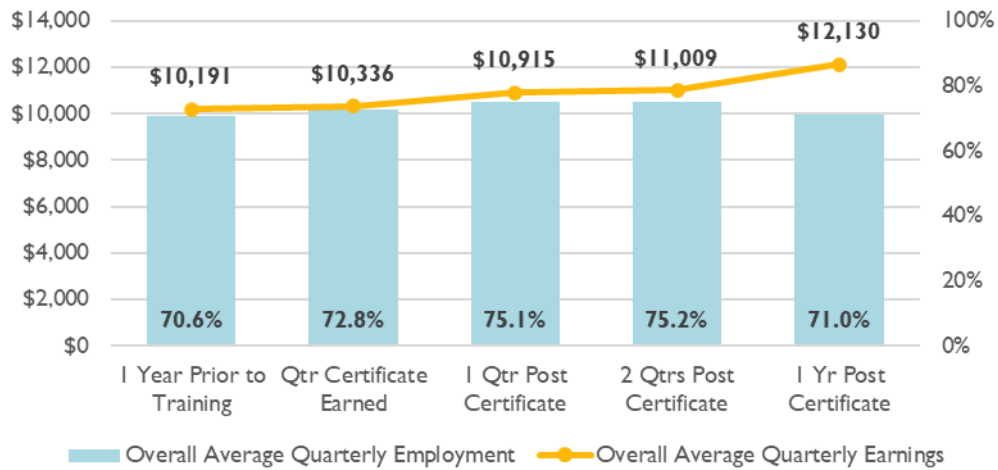
Figure 2: Earnings and Employment Outcomes for Certificate Earners by Cohort Year



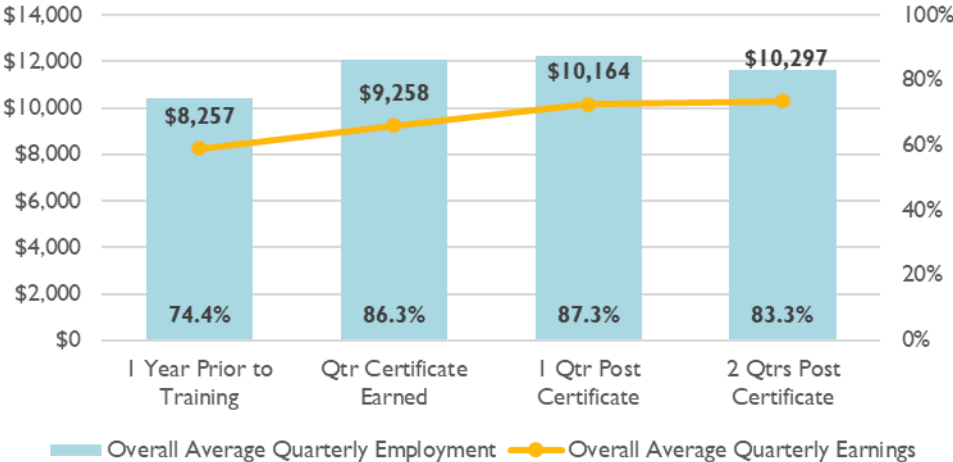
### 2022 Certificate Earners (N=602)



### 2023 Certificate Earners (N=537)



# 2024 Certificate Earners (N=510)



**Table 7: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Board  
Employment and Earnings Outcomes  
Through December 2024 (Outcomes for low counts have been removed)**

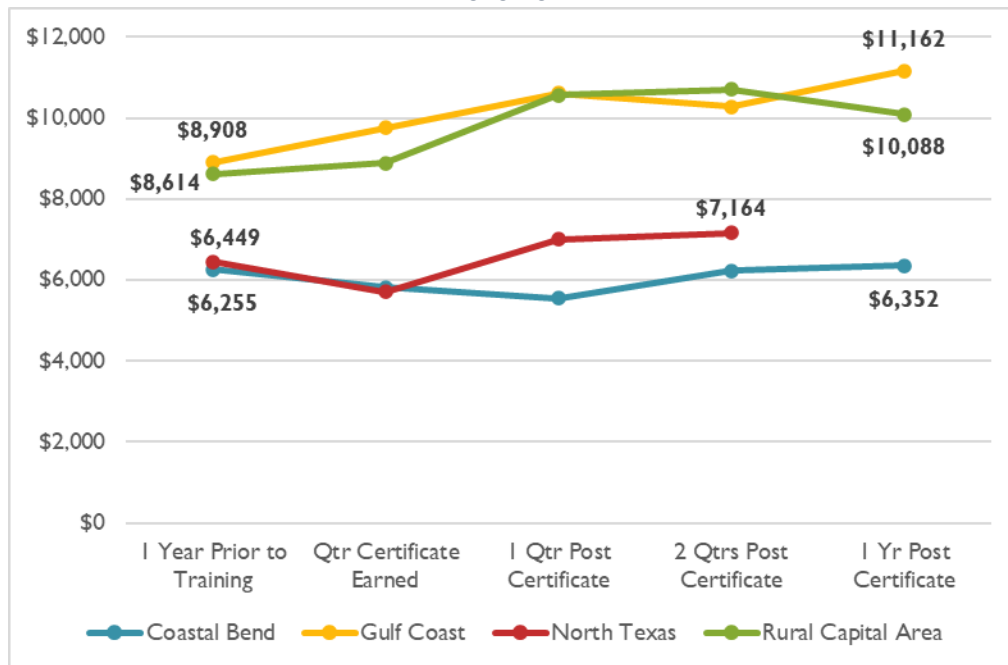
Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Earning a Certificate	Qtr Certificate Earned	1st Qtr After Receiving Certificate	1 Year After Receiving Certificate	2 Years After Receiving Certificate	3 Years After Receiving Certificate
<b>Count of Certificate Earners w/ Available Outcomes by Timepoint</b>						
Coastal Bend	135	135	135	115	54	21
Gulf Coast	770	770	749	684	281	178
North Texas	97	97	97	21	14	4
Rural Capital Area	983	983	982	655	589	133
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>1,963</b>	<b>1,475</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Certificate Earners: Quarterly Employment</b>						
Coastal Bend	59.4%	71.1%	85.9%	74.8%		
Gulf Coast	72.4%	70.3%	72.9%	72.8%		
North Texas	66.2%	84.5%	85.6%			
Rural Capital Area	76.7%	88.3%	88.0%	82.6%		
<b>Overall Average Quarterly Employment</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>82.0%</b>			
<b>Certificate Earners: Average Qrtly Earnings</b>						
Coastal Bend	\$6,255	\$5,813	\$5,554	\$6,352		
Gulf Coast	\$8,908	\$9,760	\$10,608	\$11,162		
North Texas	\$6,449	\$5,702	\$7,007			
Rural Capital Area	\$8,614	\$8,894	\$10,560	\$10,088		
<b>Overall Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	<b>\$8,501</b>	<b>\$8,838</b>	<b>\$10,032</b>			
<b>Certificate Earners: Filed UI Claim</b>						
Coastal Bend	0.7%	2.2%	0.7%	0.9%		
Gulf Coast	8.7%	4.0%	2.4%	2.8%		
North Texas	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%			
Rural Capital Area	1.9%	0.6%	1.1%			
<b>Overall Filed UI Claim</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>			
<b>Certificate Earners: Received UI Benefits</b>						
Coastal Bend	0.6%	2.2%	0.7%	0.9%		
Gulf Coast	9.6%	3.5%	2.0%	2.5%		
North Texas	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%			
Rural Capital Area	1.9%	0.6%	0.9%			
<b>Overall Received UI Benefits</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>			

Note: TWC UI wage data was available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 7 above shows outcomes for PATHS participants who earned a certificate by each of the Texas Workforce Boards that were participating in the PATHS for Texas program. As stated for Table 6, outcomes have been blanked out for low cohort counts since they do not accurately reflect the outcomes for the whole cohort.

The Rural Capital Area participants had an average employment increase by about 5.9 percentage points one year after earning a certificate (from 76.7% to 82.6%), Coastal Bend participants had employment increase by nearly 15.4 percentage points one year after earning a certificate (from 59.4% to 74.8%), and Gulf Coast participants' employment remained relatively flat with an increase of .4 percentage points one year after earning a certificate (from 72.4 to 72.8). North Texas enrolled the majority of their certificate earners in 2024. Due to the lag in the UI wage data, outcomes for one year after earning a certificate are not available at the time of this report for North Texas.

**Figure 3: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate  
Earnings Outcomes by Board  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Figure 3 above shows the average conditional<sup>3</sup> quarterly earnings by Board for the 2020 through 2024 cohorts<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Conditional earnings only include individuals with earnings greater than zero. Individuals with zero earnings are not included in the average.

<sup>4</sup> Differences in average regional wages may account for differences in reported earnings outcomes depicted here.

**Table 8: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024**  
 (Note: The individuals in the training categories listed below did not necessarily work in those industries. They received certificates in the training categories.)

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Earning a Certificate	Qtr Certificate Earned	1st Qtr After Receiving Certificate	1 Year After Receiving Certificate	2 Years After Receiving Certificate
<b>Count of Certificate Earners w/ Available Outcomes by Timepoint</b>					
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	689	689	689	675	601
Medical	253	253	232	155	120
Retail	215	215	215	195	131
Skilled Trades	198	198	198	50	.
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	174	174	174	1	.
Entrepreneurship	136	136	136	136	.
Skills Development	84	84	84	47	8
Business Office Administration	79	79	79	79	19
Information Technology	71	71	71	71	45
Other	31	31	30	23	.
Real Estate	17	17	17	17	.
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	14	14	14	8	.
Transportation/Logistics	13	13	13	7	5
Insurance	10	10	10	10	8
Missing/Unknown	1	1	1	1	.
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>1475</b>	<b>938</b>

Table 9 below shows earnings and employment outcomes by training category. Note that the individuals in the training categories listed did not necessarily work in those industries; they received certificates in those industries. As with the other outcomes tables, outcomes with low cohort counts were removed since they do not accurately represent the whole cohort.

**Table 9: PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024**  
 (Note: The individuals in the training categories listed below did not necessarily work in those industries. They received certificates in the training categories.)

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Earning a Certificate	Qtr Certificate Earned	1st Qtr After Receiving Certificate	1 Year After Receiving Certificate	2 Years After Receiving Certificate
<b>Certificate Earners: Quarterly Employment</b>					
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	78.9%	89.6%	89.1%	83.0%	79.7%
Medical	68.2%	66.0%	69.8%	67.7%	
Retail	67.4%	77.2%	85.6%	79.0%	
Skilled Trades	73.4%	85.9%	85.9%		
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	66.2%	81.6%	78.7%		
Entrepreneurship	76.1%	66.2%	70.6%	67.7%	
Skills Development	88.1%	97.6%	98.8%		
Business Office Administration	68.7%	74.7%	73.4%	74.7%	73.7%
Information Technology	67.6%	59.2%	71.8%	73.2%	71.1%
Other	42.7%	38.7%	40.0%	30.4%	
Real Estate	69.1%	58.8%	64.7%	64.7%	
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%		
Transportation/Logistics	84.6%	76.9%	84.6%		
Insurance	50.0%	60.0%	60.0%	50.0%	50.0%
<b>Certificate Earners: Average Qrtly Earnings</b>					
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	\$7,684	\$7,505	\$9,553	\$9,180	\$9,584
Medical	\$5,895	\$6,788	\$7,767	\$8,284	
Retail	\$8,255	\$8,763	\$8,092	\$9,563	\$11,517
Skilled Trades	\$9,660	\$12,375	\$13,039		
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	\$6,176	\$5,551	\$6,460		
Entrepreneurship	\$9,963	\$9,211	\$10,299	\$11,255	
Skills Development	\$18,704	\$18,855	\$19,825		
Business Office Administration	\$11,178	\$12,126	\$14,314	\$13,857	\$12,393
Information Technology	\$7,396	\$8,541	\$8,968	\$9,193	\$11,939
Other	\$4,409	\$5,424	\$4,720	\$5,579	
Real Estate	\$7,566	\$6,211	\$7,703	\$9,834	
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	\$16,197	\$16,857	\$18,550		
Transportation/Logistics	\$8,577	\$8,007	\$6,238		
Insurance	\$6,844	\$5,464	\$6,669	\$7,064	\$7,637

Note: TWC UI wage data was available through the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

The outcomes in Table 10 below show that individuals with the highest relative percentage of filings for UI claims and the highest relative percentage of receiving UI benefits received certificates in the Information Technology, Medical, and Real Estate training categories.

**Table 10: UI Claims Filed and UI Benefits Received for PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate by Training Category Through 2024**

(Note: The individuals in the training categories listed below did not necessarily work in those industries. They received certificates in the training categories.)

Outcome measure	Four Qtrs Before Earning a Certificate	Qtr Certificate Earned	2nd Qtr After Receiving Certificate	1 Year After Receiving Certificate	2 Years After Receiving Certificate
<b>Certificate Earners: Filed UI Claim</b>					
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	2.7%	1.2%	1.9%	1.5%	0.5%
Medical	11.0%	4.4%	1.8%	1.9%	
Retail	2.3%	1.9%	1.4%	1.5%	2.3%
Skilled Trades	2.9%	2.0%	1.0%		
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	0.7%	.	.		
Entrepreneurship	9.0%	3.7%	9.6%	4.4%	.
Skills Development	0.3%	3.6%	1.2%		
Business Office Administration	4.8%	.	1.3%	.	.
Information Technology	14.8%	7.0%	8.5%	1.4%	2.2%
Other	0.8%	.	.	.	.
Real Estate	10.3%	5.9%	.	5.9%	.
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	.	.	.	.	.
Transportation/Logistics	3.9%	.	.	.	.
Insurance	.	.	.	.	.
<b>Certificate Earners: Received UI Benefits</b>					
Hospitality, Kitchen Safety, Customer Svc	2.8%	1.0%	1.7%	1.0%	0.2%
Medical	12.7%	4.4%	1.3%	1.3%	
Retail	2.8%	1.9%	0.9%	1.5%	2.3%
Skilled Trades	2.5%	1.5%	1.0%		
Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Child Instruction	0.6%	.	.	.	.
Entrepreneurship	8.6%	2.9%	8.8%	4.4%	.
Skills Development	0.3%	3.6%	1.2%		
Business Office Administration	6.0%	.	1.3%		
Information Technology	16.6%	5.6%	8.5%	1.4%	2.2%
Other	0.8%	.	.	.	.
Real Estate	10.3%	5.9%	.	5.9%	.
Management/Supervisory/Leadership	.	.	.	.	.
Transportation/Logistics	1.9%	.	.	.	.
Insurance	.	.	.	.	.

## PATHS for Texas Impacts

A quasi-experimental research design was employed to conduct an impact analysis for PATHS for Texas certificate earners who earned a certificate between 2020 and quarter two of 2024. We employed a statistical matching method<sup>5</sup> which allowed us to identify suitable comparison individuals who possess similar pre-treatment demographic and economic characteristics to those participating in PATHS for Texas programming. The pool of comparison individuals was drawn from the TWC TWIST, WIT, UI wage and claims datasets. Due to the lag in the TWC UI wage data, PATHS participants who earned a certificate after the second quarter of 2024 were not included in this impact analysis. In prior iterations of this analysis, only participants with at least four quarters of post-treatment data were considered. We adjusted this threshold given the high rates of uptake in two of the four Boards in 2024. To accommodate and include these later certificate earners, we allowed for the inclusion of any certificate earner with at least two quarters of post-treatment employment and wage data. This round of the report also includes impact results for Workforce Solutions North Texas given the expansion of eligible PATHS certificate earners in this region from 9 to 92.

### Methodology:

Data on treatment (PATHS for Texas certificate holders) was first analyzed to determine the average number of quarters a participating individual remained in treatment. Most certificate earners entered and exited the program within a single quarter or exited the program in the following quarter with a few exceptions for participants who spent slightly longer time periods earning their certificate(s). In a small number of cases, the treatment period lasted almost one year (extended engagement). Researchers accounted for the potential bias these treatment individuals could exert on the impact analysis by including controls for treatment time in the impact models, but this accounted for less than 2% of the total treatment cases.

We employed a matching process to identify individuals from the pool of potential comparison observations who possessed similar demographic and pre-treatment economic characteristics to their matched treatment observation. Treatment cases were first matched to comparison individuals by geographic location (Board area), the start year and quarter of treatment (or start year and quarter of TWIST/WIT registration for the potential comparison pool), and whether the individual had an earnings dip of 20% or more in the four quarters prior to start. Once the data was subset to only match on these

---

<sup>5</sup> We employed a Mahalanobis matching process which is a measure of distance between observations based on standard-deviations of multiple variables. The process allows treatment individuals to be paired with a comparison observation based on their similarities in the dataset.

essential criteria, treatment individuals were matched on a core set of pre-treatment economic characteristics, demographics, and Board-specific matching variables. A balance test was conducted by Board to determine whether the matching process was successful in building a comparison group that was similar to the treatment group on economic variables. An expanded balance test was conducted to determine demographic differences across treatment and comparison groups by Board. Demographic variables were added in the matching process on a Board-specific basis when differences in aspects of race, gender, and education level could potentially bias the impact results. Table 11 below displays which variables were ultimately able to be used after making these Board-specific balancing adjustments.

**Table 11: Covariates Used in the Mahalanobis Matching By Board**

	Coastal Bend	Gulf Coast	North Texas	Rural Capital Area
<b>Economic Attributes</b>				
Average Earnings 4 Years Prior	√	√	√	
Had earnings dip of 20% or more	√	√	√	√
Maximum earnings dip in prior 2 years, percent	√	√	√	√
Employed at Entry Period	√	√	√	√
Eligible for UI based on work history	√	√	√	√
Percent of time employed; 4 years prior	√	√	√	√
Time since 1st observed earnings, quarters	√	√	√	
Any UI benefits in prior year	√	√	√	√
Any UI claims in prior year	√	√	√	√
<b>Demographics</b>				
Age	√	√	√	√
White	√	√	√	√
Black	√	√	√	√
Hispanic	√	√	√	√
Race Unknown	√	√	√	√
Gender	√	√	√	
Education Level				

Note: √ = Differences between the treatment and control group for identified variables are not statistically significant at  $p < .01$ .

It is important to note that in the previous cycle of analysis, comparison individuals were able to be matched for Rural Capital Area on all but one of the economic attributes. This is generally the threshold for acceptability that the Ray Marshall Center accepts. However, in this year’s report, comparison individuals were unbalanced on two economic variables for Rural Capital Area: average earnings 4 years

prior and time since 1<sup>st</sup> observed earnings. In the case of average earnings four years prior, treatment individuals averaged lower earnings four years prior against the matched comparison group and a shorter pre-treatment earnings history. These differences were statistically significant. We deemed the remaining bias on these variables after matching to be acceptable because it would likely underestimate the treatment effect on earnings and employment, allowing impacts to be, at worst, conservative estimates for PATHS certificate earners. Additionally, all matching variables are included as controls in the analysis to ensure appropriate comparisons are being made between subgroups.

The impacts figures display the average quarterly employment and unconditional<sup>6</sup> earnings of the matched treatment and comparison members. Impact figures illustrate the unadjusted net difference in average earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings) and average employment rates from prior to training, at the final quarter of training (quarter certificate was earned), and four quarters of the post-treatment period. The unadjusted net effects in the impact tables are the difference between mean outcomes for the matched treatment and comparison groups. The “Impact Measure” in the tables are generated in regression models that control for remaining differences in pre-treatment demographic and economic characteristics between the two groups. Impact tables include data from all available post-treatment quarters.

Researchers removed 34 individuals from the treatment sample who earned a certificate after the second quarter of 2024 given the limited post-treatment outcomes data that could be used to analyze impacts. This number represents less than 2% of PATHS certificate earners.

The final sample size for the impact analysis is presented in Table 12. Across all Boards, there are less comparison individuals than treatment after matching, which is a common feature of Mahalanobis matching. Comparison individuals are assigned weights to balance the sample distribution between treatment and controls (i.e., a comparison individual may be matched to multiple treatment individuals due to strong similarities to various treatment cases).

**Table 12: Sample Size for Treatment and Comparison Groups By Board**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Comparison (n)</b>	<b>Treatment (n)</b>
Coastal Bend	83	132
Gulf Coast	598	664
North Texas	75	92
Rural Capital	614	970

---

<sup>6</sup> Unconditional earnings include individuals with zero earnings when calculating averages.

Table 13 below provides a snapshot of the impact analysis by Board and an overall impact measure for the two outcomes of interest: quarterly employment and average quarterly earnings. The yellow highlighted figures indicate whether an impact measure was statistically significant. The following sections provide a closer look at the outcomes from each Board.

**Table 13: Impact Measures by Board and Overall 2020-2024**

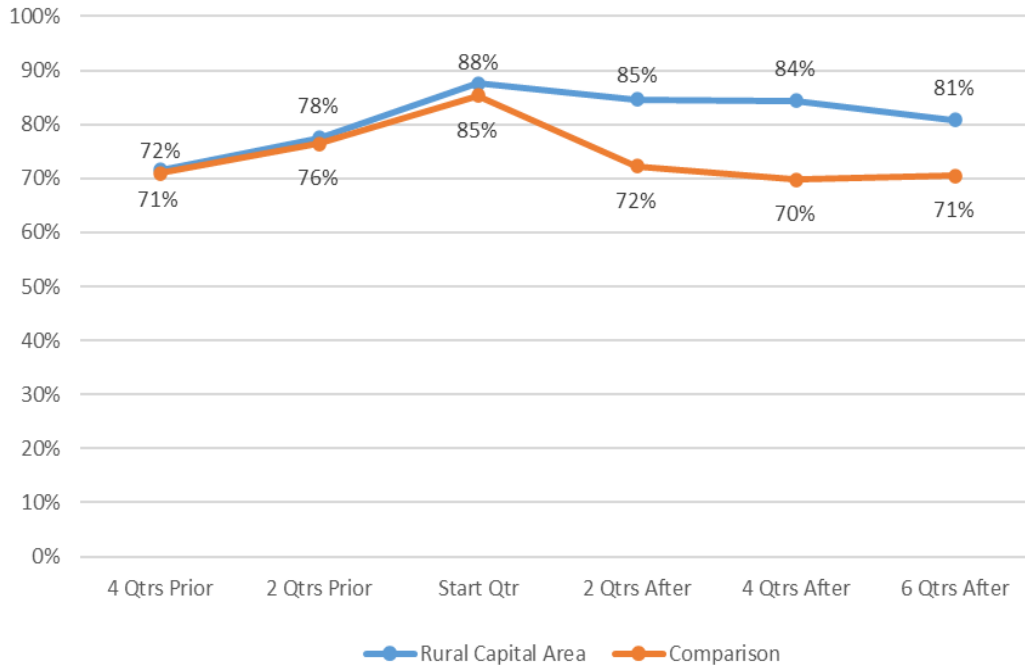
Impact measure	All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group	Comparison Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure	
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>					
Coastal Bend	79.0%	66.2%	12.8%	13.1%	**
Gulf Coast	72.5%	66.0%	6.5%	7.3%	**
North Texas	83.9%	73.5%	10.4%	4.5%	
Rural Capital Area	82.3%	71.2%	11.1%	10.8%	**
<b>Overall</b>	78.5%	69.1%	9.4%	9.3%	**
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>					
Coastal Bend	\$5,205	\$5,574	-\$369	\$357	
Gulf Coast	\$8,260	\$7,730	\$530	\$412	
North Texas	\$6,187	\$5,314	\$873	\$900	
Rural Capital Area	\$9,112	\$8,263	\$849	\$1,428	**
<b>Overall</b>	\$8,372	\$7,735	\$637	\$850	**

Note: \*\*=significant at p<.01; \*=significant at p<.05

### Rural Capital Area:

In Figure 4 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in the Rural Capital Area is examined by looking at participant employment over time in relation to comparison group employment. The analysis includes all PATHS certificate earners who completed the program between 2020 and 2024q2. The figure demonstrates that the average rate of employment for both groups showed a slight decline from the quarter certificates were earned through four quarters after employment, but the negative trend was less pronounced for PATHS participants relative to the comparison group's decline.

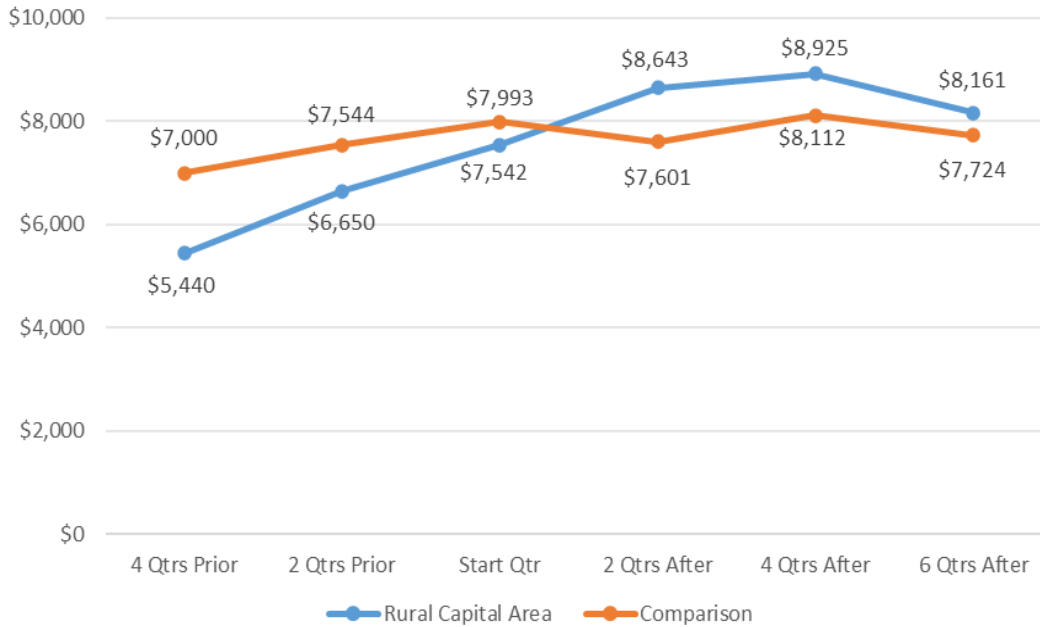
**Figure 4: Employment Rates Over Time  
Rural Capital Area Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4th quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

In Figure 5 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in the Rural Capital Area is examined by looking at participant earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group’s unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that Rural Capital Area had lower average earnings prior to PATHS entry compared to the same period for the comparison group. However, starting after program completion, PATHS certificate earners outpaced their matched comparison group between quarters one and five of the post treatment period. By quarters six and onward, average earnings differences between PATHS certificate earners and the comparison group were much less pronounced.

**Figure 5: Unconditional Earnings Over Time  
Rural Capital Area Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 14 below presents findings from the impacts analysis model comparing outcomes of 970 Rural Capital Area PATHS certificate earners to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. The table presents impacts only for certificate earners for whom adequate matching could be performed. Participation in the Rural Capital Area was positively associated with the two outcome measures of interest. The data identified a positive and statistically significant outcome for the PATHS certificate earners of \$1,428 in quarterly earnings and 10.8% in employment.

**Table 14: Rural Capital Area Impact Analysis  
2020-2024**

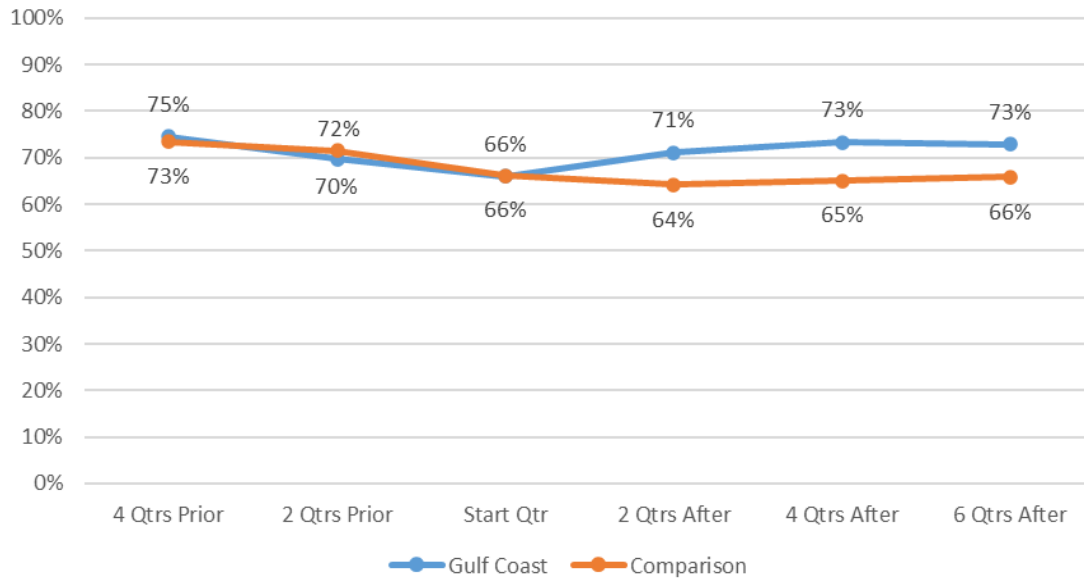
Impact measure	All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group	Comparison Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure	Significance Level
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	82.3%	71.2%	11.1%	10.8%	**
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$9,112	\$8,263	\$849	\$1,428	**

Note: \*\*\*=significant at p<.01; \*\*= significant at p<.05

**Gulf Coast:**

In Figure 6 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in the Gulf Coast Board area is examined by looking at participant employment over time in relation to comparison group employment. The analysis includes all PATHS certificate earners who completed the program between 2020 and 2024. The figure demonstrates that the average rate of employment for certificate earners began to outpace the comparison group by the start of the post-treatment period and continued to outpace the employment rate of the comparison group throughout the analysis period.

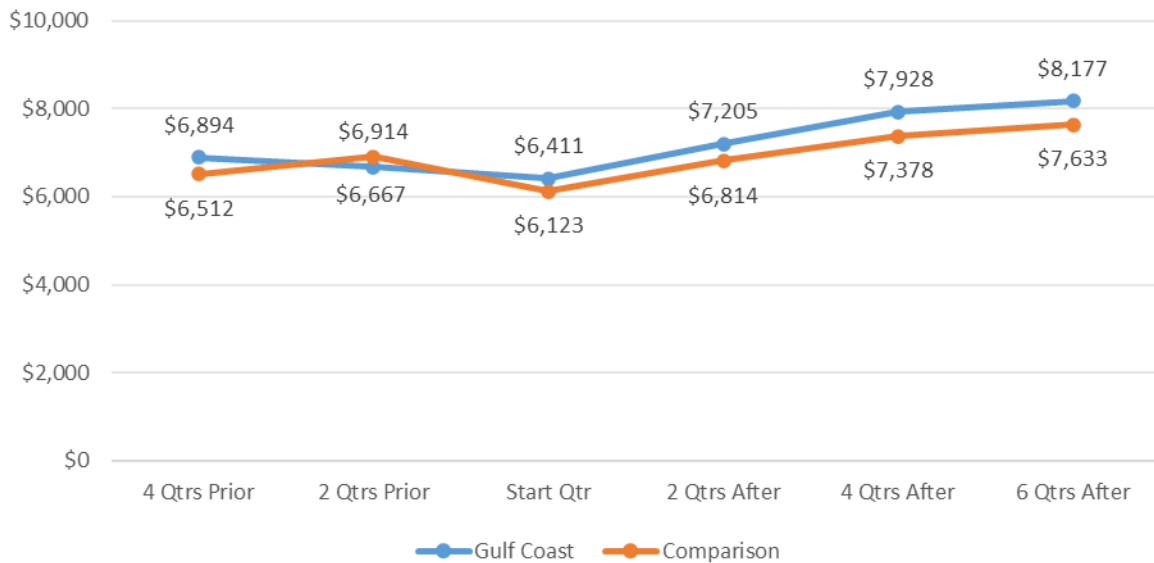
**Figure 6: Employment Rates Over Time  
Gulf Coast Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

In Figure 7 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in the Gulf Coast is examined by reviewing participant earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group’s unconditional earnings. The analysis shows that Gulf Coast certificate earners began to outpace average quarterly earnings at the start of the post-treatment period and outpaced earnings through the 6<sup>th</sup> quarter of the post-treatment period.

**Figure 7: Unconditional Earnings Over Time  
Gulf Coast Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this reporting. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 15 below presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing outcomes of 694 Gulf Coast PATHS certificate earners to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. The table presents impacts only for certificate earners for whom adequate matching could be performed. Participation in PATHS for Texas in the Gulf Coast service area was positively associated and statistically significant for employment, but not for earnings. RMC identified a positive and statistically significant impact measure of 7.8% in average quarterly employment. While in previous cycles of this analysis, a statistically significant and positive impact measure for quarterly earnings was identified, a combination of larger sample size and longer post-treatment time horizon may mean that comparison group earnings are catching up to certificate earners, but Gulf Coast PATHS certificate earners have a higher quarterly employment rate.

**Table 15: Gulf Coast Impact Analysis  
2020-2024**

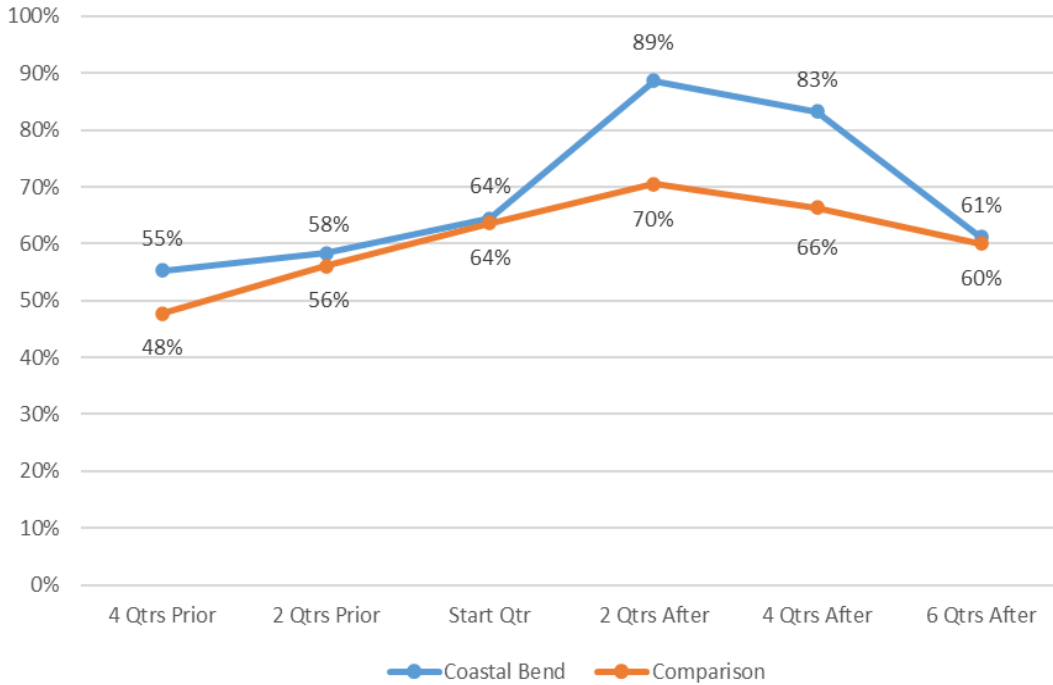
<b>Impact measure</b>	<b>All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>	<b>Unadjusted Net Effect</b>	<b>Impact Measure</b>	<b>Significance Level</b>
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	72.5%	66.0%	6.5%	7.3%	**
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$8,260	\$7,730	\$530	\$412	

Note: \*\*\*=significant at  $p < .01$ ; \*\*= significant at  $p < .05$

**Coastal Bend:**

In Figure 8 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in Coastal Bend is examined by looking at participant employment over time in relation to comparison group employment. The analysis includes all PATHS certificate earners who completed the program between 2020 and 2024. The figures demonstrate that the PATHS certificate earners saw a large jump in employment within two quarters after the treatment period, with the comparison group members catching up by the 4<sup>th</sup> post-treatment quarters. The certificate earning group saw a decline in its employment rate between quarter four and quarter six post-treatment before rising again. The large variation between employment rates may be explained by regional trends that are controlled for in the impact analysis. PATHS certificate earners may be more resistant to regional economic performance declines that affect employment than their comparison group counterparts, and they may recover more quickly.

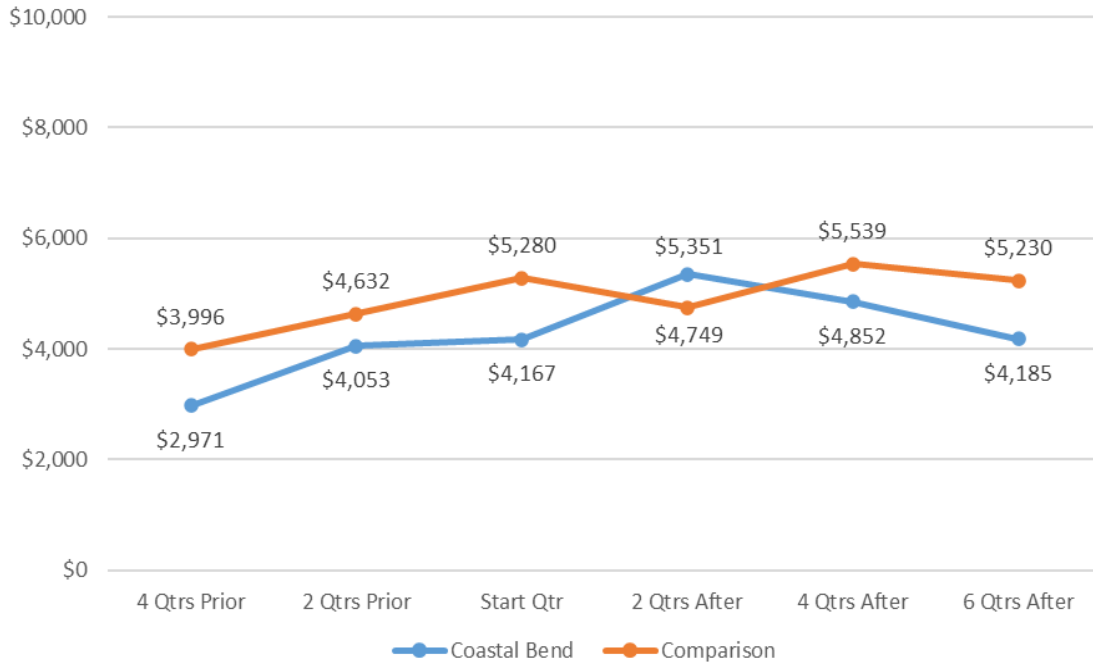
**Figure 8: Employment Rates Over Time  
Coastal Bend Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

In Figure 9 below, the impact of participation in PATHS for Texas in the Coastal Bend is examined by looking at participant earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group’s unconditional earnings. PATHS Certificate earners from the Coastal Bend area had lower average quarterly earnings than their matched counterpart throughout the pre-treatment period. However, both groups display similar upward trends up until the beginning of the post-treatment period. In the post-treatment period, we see PATHS participant earnings briefly outpace earnings of their matched comparison group before falling below the comparison group by quarter 4 of the post-treatment period and resuming this trend. It is possible that Coastal Bend’s recruitment strategies targeting younger participants in high school may explain the drop in post-treatment earnings as this age group may be more likely to pursue higher education opportunities than their matched comparison group.

**Figure 9: Unconditional Earnings Over Time  
Coastal Bend Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 16 below presents findings from the impacts analysis comparing outcomes of 132 Coastal Bend PATHS certificate earners to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. The table presents impacts only for certificate earners for whom adequate matching could be performed. We identified a positive and significant impact for PATHS certification of 13% in quarterly employment rates. While regression models identified an impact measure of \$357 additional quarterly earnings for PATHS certificate earners, this result was not statistically significant and may not necessarily be attributable to the program.

**Table 16: Coastal Bend Impact Analysis  
2020-2024**

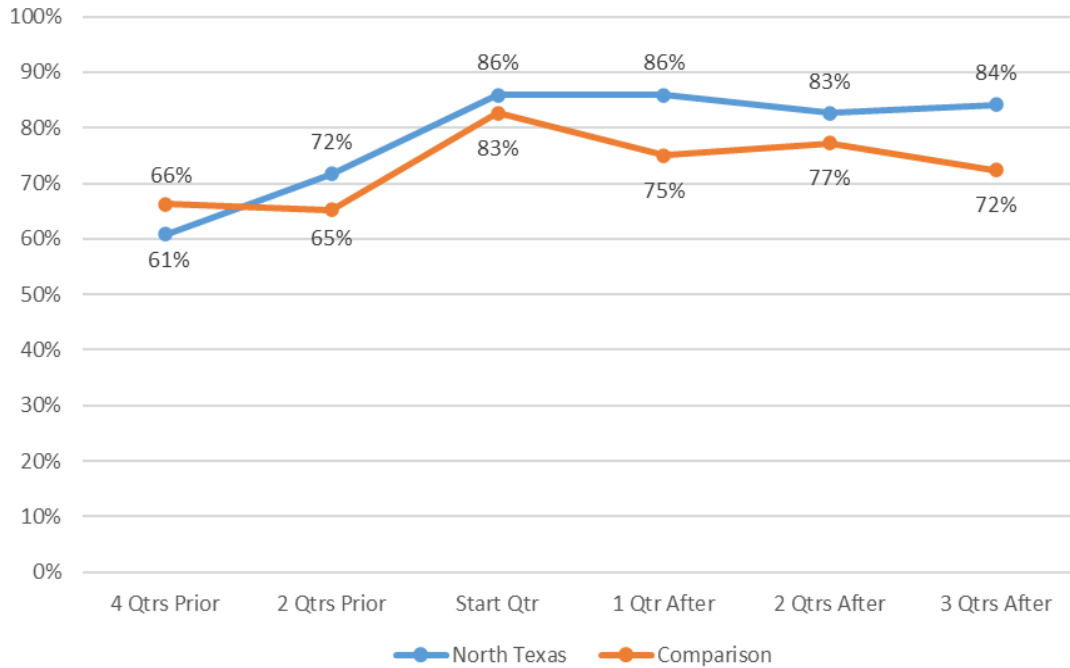
<b>Impact measure</b>	<b>All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>	<b>Unadjusted Net Effect</b>	<b>Impact Measure</b>	<b>Significance Level</b>
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	79.0%	66.2%	12.8%	13%	**
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$5,205	\$5,574	-\$369	\$357	

Note: \*\*\*=significant at p<.01; \*\*= significant at p<.05

**North Texas:**

We included PATHS certificate earners from the North Texas Board in this final version of the impact report. However, an impact analysis for them was omitted in previous reports due to low sample size. This is the first reporting on impacts for North Texas individually. Figure 10 below displays the average quarterly employment rates for PATHS certificate earners and their matched comparison group in North Texas. Only three post-treatment quarters were included in the graphs because most certificate earners in this period were recruited at the start of 2024. Both groups followed similar pre-treatment employment trends and converged at the time of entering treatment. In the post-treatment period, quarterly employment rates for certificate earners remained steady for three quarters while comparison group employment rates dipped slightly.

**Figure 10: Employment Rates Over Time  
North Texas Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Figure 11 below displays average quarterly earnings for PATHS certificate earners in North Texas and their matched comparison group during the pre-treatment period and 3 quarters into the post-treatment period. Both groups followed a similar pre-treatment trend, but certificate earners appear to earn over \$1,000 more per quarter on average than their matched comparison group in the post-treatment period.

**Figure 11: Unconditional Earnings Over Time  
North Texas Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 17 below displays the results of the impact analysis for North Texas, comparing outcomes of 92 PATHS certificate earners and their matched counterpart. Researchers identified a positive impact measure for both quarterly employment and quarterly earnings for North Texas PATHS certificate earners of 4.5% and \$900 respectfully. However, the impact measures were not statistically significant, meaning researchers cannot definitely attribute the positive performance of certificate earners to the PATHS program.

**Table 17: North Texas Impact Analysis  
2020-2024**

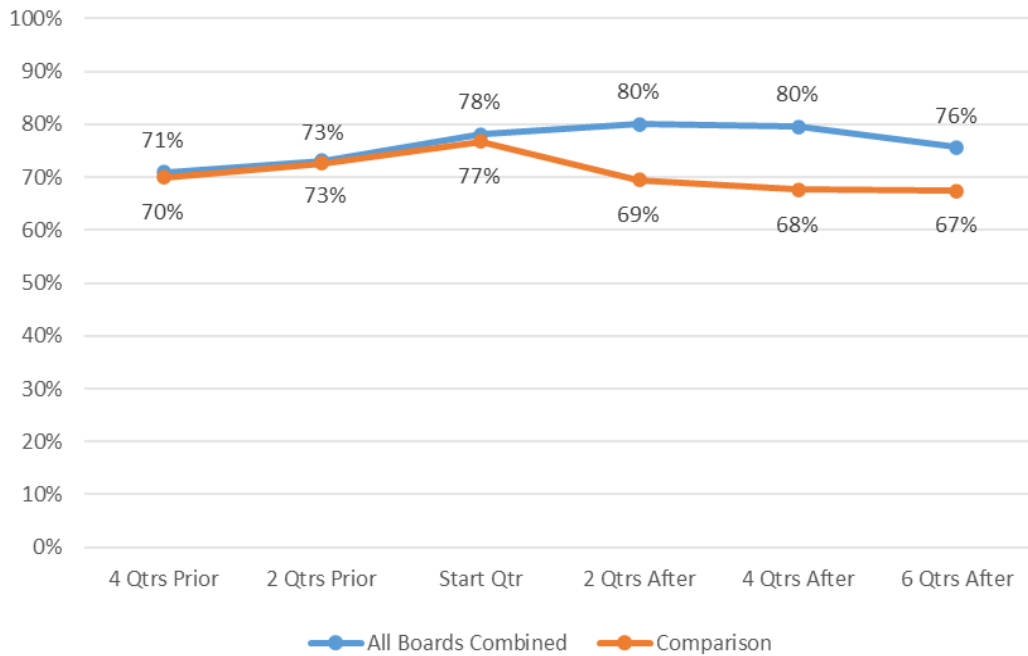
<b>Impact measure</b>	<b>All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>	<b>Unadjusted Net Effect</b>	<b>Impact Measure</b>	<b>Significance Level</b>
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	83.9%	73.5%	10.4%	4.5%	
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$6,187	\$5,314	\$873	\$900	

Note: \*\*\*=significant at p<.01; \*\*= significant at p<.05

**Overall:**

In Figure 12 below, the combined impact of participation in PATHS for Texas overall is examined by looking at participant employment over time in relation to comparison group employment. The analysis includes all PATHS certificate earners who completed the program between 2020 and 2024. The figure demonstrates that the average rate of employment for certificate earners began to outpace the comparison group by the start of the post-treatment period and continued to do so throughout the post-treatment period of analysis.

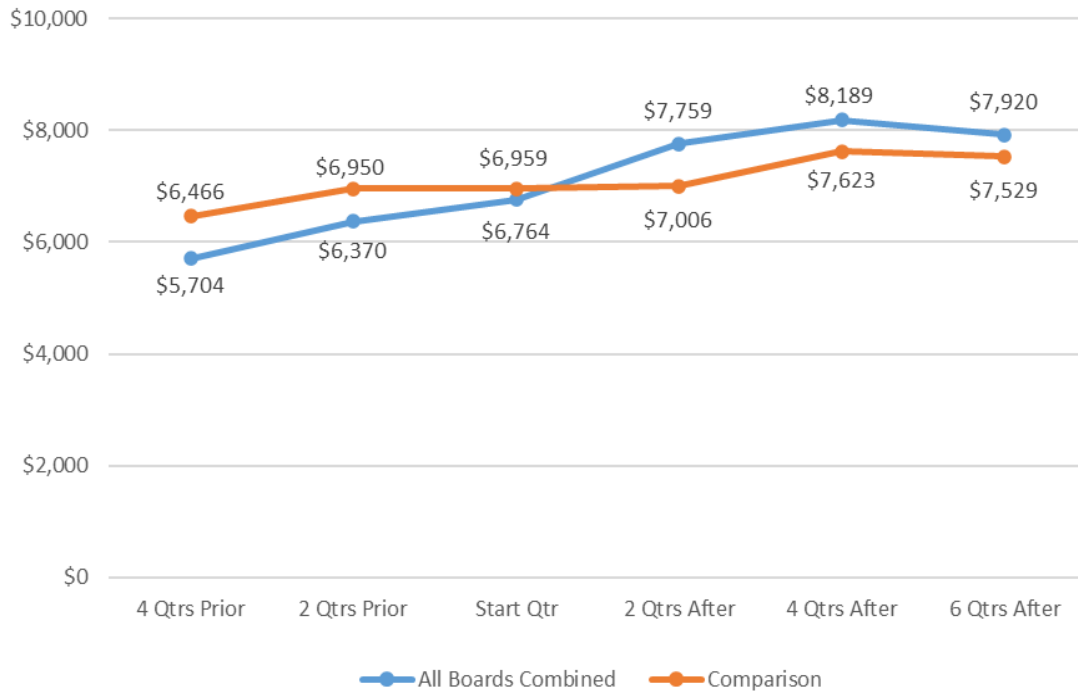
**Figure 12: Employment Rates Over Time for All Boards Combined  
Certificate Earners vs Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

In Figure 13 below, the combined earnings impact of participation in PATHS for Texas across all Boards is examined by looking at participant earnings over time, regardless of employment status (i.e., unconditional earnings), in relation to the comparison group’s unconditional earnings. The treatment and comparison group averages appear to follow a similar trajectory although PATHS certificate earners have slightly lower average earnings in the four quarters of the pre-treatment period. At the quarter of program start, both group’s earnings averages converge. In the post-treatment period, certificate earners earn more on average in each quarter than their matched comparison group through quarter six.

**Figure 13: Unconditional Earnings Over Time for All Boards Combined  
Certificate Earners vs. Comparison Group  
2020-2024**



Note: TWC UI wage data available through 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2024 as of this report. UI wage data only reflects earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

Table 18 below presents findings from the impact analysis comparing outcomes of 1,858 PATHS certificate earners to the outcomes of a matched comparison group. The table presents impacts only for certificate earners for whom adequate matching could be performed. Participation in PATHS for Texas across the four Boards was positively associated with the two outcome measures of interest. This positive association with the treatment was also statistically significant for both earnings and employment. The data identified a positive and statistically significant impact measure for PATHS certification of \$850 in additional quarterly earnings and an employment rate 9.5% higher for the certificate earning group than their matched comparison group.

**Table 18: Impact Analysis for All Boards Combined  
2020-2024**

Impact measure	All Qtrs After Receiving a Certificate: Treatment Group	Comparison Group	Unadjusted Net Effect	Impact Measure	Significance Level
<b>Quarterly Employment</b>	78.5%	69.1%	9.4%	9.3%	**
<b>Average Quarterly Earnings</b>	\$8,372	\$7,735	\$637	\$850	**

Note: \*\*\*=significant at p<.01; \*\*= significant at p<.05

**Discussion:**

In general, the impact analysis of the PATHS for Texas program shows that participation in the program had a positive impact on earnings and employment. This is consistent with findings from the previous interim impact analyses conducted in June 2023 and 2024. However, in previous reports, PATHS certification impact on earnings was positive and statistically significant for three of the four boards. In this report, the impact measures are positive, but no longer significant for Gulf Coast and Coastal Bend. This is likely due to additional post-treatment data made available for the earliest certificate earners. Program impacts may be more apparent in the short and medium-term before comparison individuals catch up after finding alternative pathways to better employment, education, and earnings opportunities. To test this hypothesis, researchers conducted impact analyses on short-term, and medium-term earnings outcomes. These outcomes were defined as average quarterly earnings in the first post-treatment year, and average quarterly earnings in the second-post treatment year. We see that impacts were positive and significant for Gulf Coast and Rural Capital Area, and positive for Gulf Coast in both years, but only significant for year 2. Impacts for North Texas were positive but remained statistically insignificant. Table 19 below presents the results.

**Table 19: Earnings Impacts analysis for Year 1 of post-treatment and Year 2 of post-treatment**

	Quarterly Earnings- Year1	Quarterly Earnings- Year2
Coastal Bend	\$692	\$932
Gulf Coast	\$835	\$1,559
North Texas	\$1,090	\$1,221
Rural Capital Area	\$1,770	\$1,807
<b>Overall</b>	\$1,173	\$1,142

The highlighted cells indicate statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The values in the cells represent the difference in average quarterly earnings in the first post-treatment year (quarters one through four) and the second post-treatment year (quarters five – eight) between PATHS certificate recipients and their comparison group. It appears that PATHS certificate earners are, at the least, provided a medium-term boost before the impacts on earnings become less apparent. Their certification/training also likely insulates them from layoffs and allows for more employment stability than their comparison group, resulting in higher quarterly earnings in both periods.

After year three and into year four of post-treatment, comparison group members catch up. The comparison group is created by matching PATHS certificate earners with other residents in their Board areas that are also seeking some job-search assistance. It is likely that many of these comparison individuals go on to enroll in other career-building programs or go to college. This likelihood could explain why PATHS had positive and statistically significant impact on quarterly earnings in the first and second post-treatment year for some boards but no statistically significant impact on average quarterly earnings across all quarters available. While beyond the scope of our work, there are likely some additional economic impact associated short-term and mid-term impacts even if, over-time, earnings impacts become less pronounced. PATHS certificate earners seems to get a head start in their job-seeking journey. Having an additional two-years of income at a level that one might have eventually achieved later means there are greater opportunities for saving, investing in other personal or household necessities, and career advancement.

## Return on Investment (ROI)

### Overview

For the final report, RMC calculated an overall Return on Investment (ROI) for the PATHS for Texas program based on the updated results from the impact analysis. The return on investment analysis incorporates the framework developed for the Texas Association of Workforce Boards.<sup>7</sup> Using this framework, RMC researchers considered costs per participant and estimated contributions to fringe benefits, productivity, reduced vacancy days, taxes, welfare, and food stamps. ROI estimates are presented from both the taxpayer and societal perspectives.

In the impact results presented in the previous section, the overall quarterly impact on earnings for PATHS certificate earners was \$850. Over the 18 quarters considered in the analysis, certificate earners made \$850 more on average per quarter (equivalent to \$3,400 additional earnings per year) than their

---

<sup>7</sup> See King et al, 2008 for more information on this analysis

comparison group. Additional analysis in the previous section suggests that earnings impacts were higher when looking at quarterly earnings in the first, second, and third post-treatment year. Therefore, when calculating the ROI, values used for Years one, two and three were \$4,692, \$5,768, and \$7,292 respectively. We then used the \$3,400 impact measure to estimate returns in the final two-years of the five-year return period.

Program costs were collected from PATHS Boards. Over the course of the project, Boards invested, collectively \$4,283,810 to train 2,519 individuals, of which 1,986 received a certification. This results in an overall cost per enrollee of \$1,701.

The estimation approach and key assumptions guiding the ROI analysis are as follows:

- *Opportunity cost.* The value of forgone earnings lost due to election to participate in a program define the opportunity costs. To estimate the opportunity costs, researchers consider the average length of time a participant spends in training and looks at the comparison group's average earnings during that time. PATHS certificate earners typically spent less than a quarter (three months) in training. The average earnings for the comparison group during that in-treatment period was \$6,959. This value is used in the ROI calculation as the primary "investment" the participant is making in seeking training through PATHS. It is worth noting that this opportunity cost value is likely the upper bound and will result in a conservative estimate of ROI. In many cases, PATHS certificate earners worked full-time or part-time during their training and would therefore have a lower opportunity cost.
- *Fringe Benefits.* RMC imputed an additional 10% of earnings impacts to capture the value of associated employee fringe benefits following research estimating the value of employee benefits at 20% based on Bureau of Labor Statistics and US Chamber of Commerce survey data.<sup>8</sup> We adjust the value downward by half to reflect the fact that many workers no longer have access to full employer-provided fringe benefits.
- *Employer Productivity and Reduced Vacancy Days.* We estimate employer impacts for increased productivity and the value of reduced vacancy-days at 10% of the value of participant earnings impact based on findings from prior research on this topic.<sup>9</sup>
- *Taxes.* We conservatively estimate taxes in the first post-treatment year at 18% of the earnings impact and all other years to be 13% of earnings impact.

---

<sup>8</sup> See Hollenback and Huang (2006) for more information

<sup>9</sup> See Barron et al. (1997) and Bishop (1991) for more information.

- *Welfare and Food Stamps.* Finally, we estimated the value of reduced welfare and food stamp payments based on earnings impacts. Due to welfare reforms in the mid-to-late 1990s, TANF and food stamp benefits represent only a very small component of cost savings from participation in workforce services. In year one, we estimate the reduction at 5% of the earnings impact. In all other years, it is estimated at 3% of earnings impact.
- *Discount Rate.* Given fluctuations in inflation since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have updated earnings values in a given year to reflect the 2025 value after adjusting for inflation. With this in mind, we incorporate a (real) discount rate of 3.4% for the last two years of the five-year ROI estimation.

## Results

The net returns from the Walmart Foundation’s investment in the PATHS program are presented from the taxpayer and societal perspectives. Taxpayers in benefit/cost analysis are those not directly benefiting from workforce services; they are essentially the ones paying for the workforce services through taxes. While the PATHS program was supported through private funds, RMC considers how this investment would benefit the taxpayer should the program be adopted widely via public funding. The societal perspective is the sum of participants and taxpayers. Shifting to the societal perspective results in a number of key benefits being “netted out,” in that they are transfers between participants and taxpayers. For example, welfare benefits and tax payments are transfers between these two groups and are not reflected in the computations of net returns to society as a whole. The table below summarized the returns of investments in PATHS for Texas:

**Table 20: 5-Year ROI for PATHS for Texas 2020-2024 Enrollees: Taxpayer and Societal Perspective**

	<b>Taxpayer</b>	<b>Society</b>
<b>Expenditures/Participant</b>		
Administration & Program Services	\$1,701	\$1,701
Foregone Participant Earnings		\$6,959
Total Expenditures	\$1,701	\$8,660
<b>Present Value of Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,701</b>	<b>\$8,660</b>
<b>Returns/Participant</b>		
Earnings		\$24,552
Fringe Benefits		\$2,455
Employer Output/Vacancy-days		\$2,455
Welfare and Food Stamps	\$830	
Taxes	\$3,426	
Total Returns	\$4,257	\$29,462
<b>Present Value of Total Returns</b>	<b>\$2,503</b>	<b>\$29,064</b>
<b>Returns on Investment</b>		
Net Present Value of Returns	\$2,503	\$20,404
% Returns Over Time Period	247%	336%
<b>ROI (IRR) Over Time Period</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>66%</b>

*Taxpayer Returns:* The stream of taxpayer returns from their hypothetical investment in PATHS for Texas programs over a five-year period, expressed in present value terms, is \$2,503. This is largely due to the fact that returns are limited to reductions in welfare and food stamp payments and increased tax receipts. The total returns are estimated at 247%, with an annualized ROI of 48% for taxpayers. Therefore, each dollar invested in PATHS is associated with potential returns to taxpayers of \$2.47 over the 5-year period.

*Societal Returns:* The present value of all costs associated with PATHS for Texas is \$8,667. Over the five-year period, total returns to society rise to a present value of \$29,064 or an estimated 336%. The annualized ROI for society over the 10-year period is 66%. Thus, for every dollar invested in PATHS for Texas, returns \$3.36 over the five-year period.

### **PATHS for Texas Survey Responses**

Three surveys were made available to each Board to gather responses from PATHS for Texas participants, as well as employers. One survey was for active PATHS participants who completed

training, the second survey was for inactive PATHS participants, and the third was for employers of PATHS participants. There were 645 individuals who completed the active PATHS survey, 25 individuals who responded to the inactive PATHS survey, and 13 employer responses. Table 18 below shows the responses for the active PATHS participants.

**Table 21: PATHS Active Participants Survey Responses**

<b>What county do you live in? (Summarized by Board)</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
RURAL CAPITAL	507	79%
COASTAL BEND	94	15%
NORTH TEXAS	35	5%
GULF COAST	9	1%
<i>Total Responses</i>	645	100%
<b>Name of training(s)/course(s) taken. (select all that apply)</b>		
Hospitality-Customer Service Training	202	27%
National Retail Federation Retail Bundle	65	9%
Customer Service & Sales	44	6%
Business of Retail: Operations & Profit	29	4%
Restaurant Service Training	29	4%
Retail Industry Fundamentals	24	3%
Business Office Administration	8	1%
Covid 19 Retail Operations	8	1%
COVID 19 Customer Conflict Prevention	7	1%
IT Support Specialist	4	1%
Medical Assistant	4	1%
Medical Office Administration	3	0%
Security IT	3	0%
Medical Billing and Coding	2	0%
Principals of Retailing	2	0%
Pharmacy Technician	1	0%
Other	302	41%
<i>Total Responses</i>	737	100%
<b>Name of training(s)/course(s) taken. OPEN TEXT</b>		
Health and Safety	74	30%
Electric Training/Apprenticeship	65	26%
Safety Training	24	10%
Child Care/Early Education	20	8%
Kitchen Skills	20	8%
Supervisor/Leadership	11	4%
8D Training	8	3%
Other	8	3%
Restaurant Safety and Service Training	5	2%
Manufacturing	4	2%
Robotics	3	1%
Information Technology	2	1%
Skilled Trades/Apprenticeship	2	1%
Grant Paperwork	1	0%
Problem Solving	1	0%
<i>Total Responses</i>	248	100%
<b>How have you benefited from the training provided by PATHS? (select all that apply)</b>		
Received a certificate	396	29%
Better at my job	333	24%
Improved self-confidence	294	22%
Pay increase	92	7%
Gained employment in a similar occupation/industry	72	5%
Promotion/Advancement with your current employer	43	3%
Not benefited	43	3%
Gained employment in a new occupation/industry	38	3%
Promotion/Advancement in a similar occupation/industry	14	1%
Other	39	3%
<i>Total Responses</i>	1,364	100%

<b>How have you benefited from the training provided by PATHS? OPEN TEXT</b>		
Health and Safety	5	25%
Self growth in the industry	3	15%
No response received back from inquiries	2	10%
Acknowledgement of improvements needed	1	5%
Did not benefit	1	5%
Educational	1	5%
Eligible for a raise with progress	1	5%
Entrepreneurial Education	1	5%
Grant	1	5%
Knowledge	1	5%
Obtained License	1	5%
Other	2	10%
<i>Total Responses</i>	20	100%
<b>How to you rate your skill level based on the training you received?</b>		
High	386	64%
Medium	199	33%
Low	15	3%
<i>Total Responses</i>	600	100%
<b>Looking ahead, do you think this training will (select all that apply):</b>		
Improve your job performance	462	47%
Advance your career	276	28%
Help you get a job	119	12%
Help you change careers	69	7%
None of the above	32	3%
Help you get a better job	0	0%
Other	23	2%
<i>Total Responses</i>	981	100%
<b>Looking ahead, do you think this training will - OPEN TEXT</b>		
Be better safety aware	4	50%
All of the above	1	13%
Be a better trainer	1	13%
Help communicate how to improve our area in hopes of justifying pay increases	1	13%
You can take your credits from JATC to college afterward and continue your education for other field	1	13%
<i>Total Responses</i>	8	100%
<b>What would make PATHS for Texas better? What else could we offer? Thoughts/feedback:</b>		
It was great/informational	36	31%
More hands on/interactive/role playing	13	11%
Nothing	10	9%
Different time options	6	5%
Instructor/Chef was great	6	5%
Better communications/clear instructions	4	3%
Shorter	4	3%
It was great/offer more classes	3	3%
More information/labs/visibility	3	3%
No PATHS training offered, just information.	3	3%
Streamline check-in process	3	3%
Waiting for a call back/response	3	3%
Better Instructors	2	2%
Breakfast/snacks	2	2%
Examples on what you can do when a customer is upset.	2	2%
More indepth/concise	2	2%
No PATHS training, just information on a grant opportunity.	2	2%
Provide copies of training material	2	2%
Always can be better. Support the environment for our kids.	1	1%
How to calibrate thermometers	1	1%
In depth behavior strategies.	1	1%
JATC apprenticeship does an awesome job at helping the future union electricians.	1	1%
Make it easier.	1	1%
Provide online training instead.	1	1%
Repetitious information	1	1%
Safety and knowledge	1	1%
Too cold	1	1%
<i>Total Responses</i>	115	100%

The majority of responses (79%) came from the Rural Capital Area, followed by the Coastal Bend (15%). Individuals enrolled in the 'Other' training provided the majority of responses (41%), followed by the 'Hospitality-Customer Service' training category (27%). Based on open text responses, the 'Other' training category was mostly health and safety (30%), Electric Training/Apprenticeship (26%) and Safety Training (10%). When the respondents were asked how they benefitted from the training, the largest numbers of respondents selected 'Received a Certificate' (29%), 'Better at my job' (24%), and 'Improved self-confidence' (22%).

The respondents were asked to rate their skill level after receiving their training; of those who responded, 64% rated their skill as "High", 33% as "Medium", and only 3% of the respondents indicating "Low". Finally, when asked to look ahead, the respondents replied that the training they received will 'Improve their job performance' (47%) and 'Advance their career' (28%).

The results of the active participant survey appear to be generally positive as far as assessment of the program and its impact on participants' success. Rural Capital Area, Coastal Bend, and North Texas provided adequate representation in their responses proportional to the number of participants who entered PATHS-funded programs. Gulf Coast had a very limited number of responses (9) compared to their overall participation levels (1,082 as of June 2025).

In general, the positive impressions of the program indicated by the questions on benefits and skill-level assessment supplement the findings from the impact analysis.

**Table 22: PATHS Inactive Participants Survey Responses**

<b>What county do you live in? (Summarized by Board)</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
COASTAL BEND	23	92%
NORTH TEXAS	2	8%
GULF COAST	0	0%
RURAL CAPITAL	0	0%
<i>Total Responses</i>	25	100%
<b>Name of training(s)/course(s) taken. (select all that apply)</b>		
National Retail Federation Retail Bundle	18	69%
Customer Service & Sales	3	12%
COVID 19 Customer Conflict Prevention	2	8%
Covid 19 Retail Operations	2	8%
Business of Retail: Operations & Profit	1	4%
Business Office Administration	0	0%
Hospitality-Customer Service Training	0	0%
IT Support Specialist	0	0%
Medical Assistant	0	0%
Medical Billing and Coding	0	0%
Medical Office Administration	0	0%
Pharmacy Technician	0	0%
Principals of Retailing	0	0%
Restaurant Service Training	0	0%
Retail Industry Fundamentals	0	0%
Security IT	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<i>Total Responses</i>	26	100%
<b>Name of training(s)/course(s) taken. OPEN TEXT</b>		
Udemy	1	100%
<b>Why were you unable to complete the PATHS training? (Select all that apply)</b>		
Lack of time	15	42%
Family problems	6	17%
Schedule conflicts	5	14%
Too difficult to work full-time and take an online course	5	14%
Health Issues	2	6%
Limited access to a computer	1	3%
Technology problems with the online training course	1	3%
My employer does not support or value this training	0	0%
Training was too difficult	0	0%
Prefer in person class/training	0	0%
Lack of interest in the material	0	0%
Poor or no WiFi	0	0%
Training took too much time	0	0%
Other	1	3%
<i>Total Responses</i>	36	100%
<b>Why were you unable to complete the PATHS training? OPEN TEXT</b>		
	0	0%
<b>What would make PATHS for Texas training better? What else could we offer? Thoughts/feedback:</b>		
Computer availability at my worksite.	1	100%

Table 22 shows the survey responses from individuals who enrolled in training and, for various reasons, could not complete the training. Most responses (92%) came from the Coastal Bend area. Most of the

respondents (69%) enrolled in the 'National Retail Federation Retail Bundle' training program. The top reasons for not completing training include 'Lack of Time' (42%), 'Family problems' (17%), 'Schedule conflicts' (14%), and 'Too difficult to work full-time and take an online course' (14%). While these responses are not necessarily representative of the full scope and geographic range of PATHS-funded programming, they still present some insight into the types of supports that program providers can consider offering to participants moving forward. Things like flexible training arrangements, follow-up, and information provision for family counseling services are all growth opportunities for service providers.

Table 23: PATHS Employer Survey Responses

What county do you live in? (Summarized by Board)	Counts	Percentages
RURAL CAPITAL	9	69%
COASTAL BEND	4	31%
GULF COAST	0	0%
NORTH TEXAS	0	0%
<b>Please select an industry category that applies to your company.</b>		
Educational Services	7	54%
Other Services	3	23%
Finance and Insurance	1	8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	8%
Retail Trade	1	8%
<b>How likely would you be to hire another employee trained by PATHS for Texas provided by Workforce Solutions?</b>		
Extremely likely	5	56%
Extremely unlikely	3	33%
Not applicable	1	11%
Somewhat unlikely	0	0%
Neither likely nor unlikely	0	0%
Somewhat likely	0	0%
<b>For your currently employed staff who received training from PATHS, in what areas have you seen improvement? (select all that apply)</b>		
Job knowledge	4	29%
Quality of work	2	14%
Effectiveness	2	14%
Relevant skills	2	14%
Not applicable	2	14%
Increased efficiency	1	7%
Customer service	1	7%
Leadership	0	0%
Did not see improvement	0	0%
None	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>What areas have you seen improvement?. OPEN TEXT</b>		
	0	0%

<b>For newly hired staff who were trained by PATHS, in what areas are these employees better prepared for their position than other newly hired staff? (select all that apply)</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Effectiveness	4	27%
Quality of work	3	20%
Job knowledge	2	13%
Customer service	2	13%
Not applicable	2	13%
Increased efficiency	1	7%
Relevant skills	1	7%
Leadership	0	0%
Did not see improvement	0	0%
None	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>For newly hired staff who were trained by PATHS, in what areas are these employees better prepared for their position than other newly hired staff? OPEN TEXT</b>		
	0	0%
<b>If you are able to offer an opportunity for a promotion or a wage increase, would the skills that your employee acquired through PATHS training make them eligible?</b>		
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%
Not applicable	0	0%
Other	0	0%
<b>If you are able to offer an opportunity for a promotion or a wage increase, would the skills that your employee acquired through PATHS training make them eligible? OPEN TEXT</b>		
	0	0%
<b>What changes, if any, would you recommend to the PATHS for Texas program to improve its effectiveness for your workers or business as a whole? OPEN TEXT</b>		
N/a	1	50%
Nothing	1	50%

Table 23 above shows the responses from 13 employers with employees that participated in the PATHS for Texas program. Fifty-six percent responded that they would likely hire another individual trained by PATHS for Texas. Job knowledge was cited as the highest area of improvement at 29%. For newly hired staff that received PATHS training, the employers cited job effectiveness as the highest result of training at 27%.

**PATHS For Texas Qualitative Assessment**

**Overview:**

As part of the impact assessment conducted by the RMC, an implementation evaluation was conducted Summer 2024. The purpose of the implementation evaluation was to identify best practices and lessons that can be applied to similar workforce development initiatives. The RMC research team has been a constant presence during the planning, implementation, and monitoring phase of the PATHS for Texas

program since its inception in 2020. Through the course of the evaluation, researchers have attended monthly partner meetings, attended annual in-person gatherings, and conducted informal and semi-structured interviews with partnering Boards. Current findings allude to several factors that have allowed PATHS for Texas to successfully implement upskilling and job-training assistance that have reached over 2,500 individuals across the state. While PATHS for Texas participating boards are united under an overarching mission to provide job skill training certification, each Board provides a unique perspective to the successes and challenges related to program implementation. The qualitative assessment is organized into five sections. The first four sections represent perspectives from the four Boards and covers the following topics: program planning, stakeholder involvement, adaptations to Covid-19, and recruitment. The final section covers common themes related to lessons learned over the course of PATHS for Texas implementation and best practices identified by researchers and stakeholders.

### **Program Planning:**

PATHS for Texas was initially conceived as a career pathways program for workers in the retail and services industry that represented a significant, but underserved, area for career development given the limited opportunities for worker growth and upward mobility within the industry. The Wal-Mart Foundation had awarded a multi-year, multi-million dollar grant to the Boards, and respondents noted that this privately sourced funding stream was atypical, particularly regarding its flexibility, to the standard federal funding that Boards in Texas typically receive through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

While the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) had initially set out to organize the program and distribute the funds to participating Boards, they were unable to act as a fiscal agent for the program. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas took over as the fiscal agent and invited Boards across Texas to submit proposals for how to utilize the private-funding opportunity and target the retail space that the Wal-Mart Foundation was interested in supporting. The collaborating Boards of Coastal Bend, Gulf Coast, Rural Capital Area, and North Texas developed a proposal that focused on upskilling in the retail-services space, drawing on past experiences in the Greater Dallas Area with the Retail Pays Grant. The initial goal for the PATHS for Texas program was to assist employers in investing in the development of hard- and soft-skills that increased productivity and long-term career potential for retail and service industry workers.

Program planning was conducted through a series of meetings between the implementing partner and participating Boards. Initially, the program focused on typical retail employers like department and

grocery stores, but quickly expanded to other industries that had employers interested in developing service-oriented skills in their workers.

### Stakeholder Involvement:

Each Board engaged key stakeholders to inform them of no-cost training opportunities. Stakeholders included members of the Workforce Solutions ecosystem and major employers that had long-standing relationships with each regional Board. In Coastal Bend, Board team members sought engagement with Goodwill Industries, Omni Hotels, and the Education Service Center. In Gulf Coast, primary stakeholders included community-based organizations, Chambers of Commerce, community colleges, and economic development corporations. The North Texas Board engaged its workforce development ecosystem and a community college to build an upskilling curriculum for retail employees interested in moving into management. Rural Capital Area similarly sought engagement from major hotel and restaurant industry leaders and later in the manufacturing industry to assess needs for workers in customer-facing positions.

Overall, stakeholder involvement had a primary impact in the planning and sustainability of the program in each of the four Boards. Stakeholders provided critical information on worker and employer needs and facilitated appropriate tailoring of services in the four regions without undermining the overall mission of the program to provide job-skill certification that could upskill workers into mid-level and financially lucrative careers.

### Covid-19 Adaptations:

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted each Board's initial project scope and ability to connect to both employers and workers. The initial planning phase for PATHS programming prioritized upskilling employed workers. The pandemic shifted employer needs as they had less time they could allocate to worker training. Additionally, unemployment grew drastically in each region, which meant potential PATHS participants in the retail space no longer qualified based on their employment status. The program broadly adapted to Covid-19 by allowing flexibility on employment status for potential participants, which allowed boards to provide training certification to unemployed workers until working conditions stabilized across the state. The participating Boards also adapted by identifying which trainings would be appropriate for retail workers moving into other industries. This allowed Boards to consider upskilling workers that were formerly employed in the retail space so that they would have marketable skills in other industries such as IT, Healthcare, and Real Estate – industries that still had worker demand during the pandemic. The Boards also adapted by employing new technologies to train workers and jobseekers remotely, though each Board has different impressions on the return on

investment in these remote training options. Covid-19 also made new employer and stakeholder engagement difficult, which prompted Boards to nurture the existing relationships they had developed prior to the pandemic.

Overall, Covid-19 presented significant challenges that each Board needed to address. The introduction of monthly partner video-calls likely mitigated the negative impact of the pandemic by allowing partners to brainstorm alternative avenues for successful program implementation while still maintaining its vision.

### **Recruitment:**

All participating Boards engaged in some level of mass participant recruitment, either through email blasts to employers, or passing out fliers at local retail hubs. These strategies generally had limited impact and Covid-19 further hindered the opportunity to raise awareness of PATHS programming in a meaningful way. Boards found greater success when focusing on pre-existing employer relationships to recruit new participants, using PATHS programming as a potential solution to employer/specific problems, and focusing resources on identifying new industries for disconnected retail workers to employ customer-service related skills.

Coastal Bend particularly had success focusing their energy on pre-existing employers to recruit participants. Their partners at Goodwill Industries of South Texas agreed to set up a wage-increase model for employees that received PATHS certifications. This led to higher retention rates, career advancement into managerial positions, and worker uptake as awareness of potential benefits of PATHS participation grew. Similarly, North Texas was able to recruit new participants by offering PATHS programming as a solution to employer specific problems. Notable cases include bundling onboarding costs (such as background checks and fingerprinting for workers interacting with youth) with on-the-job training and offering PATHS training to help local businesses compete against operations that had a statewide or national presence.

A limitation noted in the qualitative research was the lack of proper pre-screening mechanisms to ensure participants who entered the program were willing to complete the program successfully. There were cases in which participants enrolled in PATHS training either online or in-person but left the program due to personal issues or after finding another job. Boards addressed this issue by generating materials to orient participants to PATHS and help set and manage expectations for potential enrollees.

### **Lessons Learned:**

In the final stages of the PATHS for Texas funding lifecycle, several discussions have been had related to the initiative's legacy and how programming has impacted the operational practices of the participating

Boards. The collaborating boards have all expressed positive sentiments on their experience implementing PATHS for Texas. When prompted to provide written answers related to best practices and lessons learned, Boards frequently cited flexibility, collaboration, and leadership as components that were unique to this grant and that should be modeled in future workforce development initiatives across the state.

### Flexibility:

PATHS for Texas deviated from traditional workforce solutions programs funded by federal dollars due to its ability to engage with clients that would not normally qualify for no-cost assistance due to income, employment status, and industry preference. Being a privately funded initiative, PATHS was able to capture a previously untapped market of workers seeking career advancement that could set them on a new employment and earnings trajectory. The Wal-Mart Foundation, as a funder, also allowed for some flexibility in their own requirements by helping Boards think creatively about which industries and job-types qualified as “retail.” Over the course of the program, the Boards were able to consider industries that were emerging during and after the Covid-19 pandemic that had a customer-facing component, at the same time that the retail industry was moving towards online/automated platforms.

This aspect of the PATHS for Texas program has inspired the participating Boards to seek other privately funded opportunities and advocate directly (or via the Wal-Mart Foundation) for policymakers to set aside funds for future projects that maintain this flexibility as a core element of their funding structure.

### Collaboration:

The Boards frequently cited their collaboration between one another throughout the PATHS funding period as a unique experience in the state’s Workforce Solutions space. Prior to PATHS, the participating Boards operated without frequent engagement with other Boards across the state. This operational isolation meant that there were limited opportunities to learn best practices and adopt those practices in their own settings. Monthly partner calls, annual in-person meetings, and collective production of impact reports to the funder allowed the Boards to adopt successful practices and workshop solutions to problems that one or more of them were experiencing.

Participating Boards have expressed an interest in sharing these experiences with all 26 Boards across Texas and the Texas Workforce Commission to encourage this collaboration to continue and be extended across initiatives.

### Leadership:

Respondents indicated the importance of an effective and confident managerial presence to the successful implementation of the PATHS for Texas program. Each Board indicated that Workforce

Solutions Greater Dallas was critical to fostering a positive environment for the PATHS program to move forward and evolve with changing circumstances. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas stepped into this role after TWIC could not administer the awarded funds and actively recruited Boards to take advantage of the private-funding opportunity. Their experience in a previous privately funded initiative meant they were poised to facilitate the planning and implementation process effectively, promote data collection practices, and ensure monitoring and course-correction mechanisms were in place.

## References:

Barron, John M., Mark C. Berger, and Dan A. Black. (1997). *On-the-Job Training*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Bishop, John. (1991). "On-the-Job Training of New Hires," In D. Stern and J. Ritzel, editors, *Market Failure in Training*. New York: Springer Verlag.

King, Christopher, Ying Tang, Tara Smith, and Daniel Schroeder. (2008). *Returns from Investments in Workforce Services: Texas Statewide Estimates for Participants, Taxpayers, and Society*. Austin, TX: Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas. August.