



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS



WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
— NORTH TEXAS —

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COASTAL BEND

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Workforce Solutions 
TEXAS WORKFORCE
COMMISSION
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

DEMONSTRATING THE SUCCESS OF PATHS FOR TEXAS AND THE NEED FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PHILANTHROPIC WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

PRESENTED BY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GREATER DALLAS

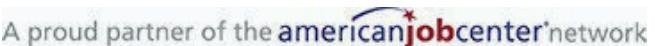
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INTRODUCTION

A NEW APPROACH

In today's rapidly evolving job market, the demand for skilled workers has never been more critical. According to ManpowerGroup's 2024 Global Talent Shortage survey, 75 percent of employers globally report challenges in filling roles due to a lack of qualified candidates. This shortage is particularly acute in industries experiencing rapid growth, such as technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.

In the United States, federal funding provides a foundation for workforce training programs but often falls short in addressing the diverse needs of emerging industries and underserved populations. Sectors like retail, hospitality, and niche manufacturing, which are vital to local economies, were frequently overlooked by traditional federal funding models. Additionally, low-income individuals and those in rural areas lacked adequate access to the training they needed to succeed in the economy. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, placing unprecedented strain on workforce development systems and highlighting the need for agile, adaptable training delivery.

As the economy began to recover, the Pursuit of Advanced Training in High-Demand Skills (PATHS) for Texas program emerged as a model for how public, private and philanthropic collaborations could bridge these gaps. PATHS delivered flexible, responsive workforce development solutions across Texas, meeting immediate labor needs while creating long-term career pathways. During the pandemic, Workforce Boards statewide adjusted their service delivery by moving from in-person to virtual and hybrid models almost overnight. This flexibility allowed PATHS to continue serving communities during a time of crisis and positioned it to support recovery by helping employers and participants thrive in the new economic landscape.

One of PATHS's key strengths was its customized curriculum and flexible training options. Unlike traditional Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) models, which often limited training to in-person or local providers, PATHS offered participants the choice of virtual, in-person or hybrid learning environments. This flexibility proved essential for workers in industries like retail and customer service who transitioned into remote, technology-driven roles. By allowing participants to select their preferred learning method, PATHS increased engagement, retention and completion rates, ensuring



workers were ready to contribute to the growing economy.

In addition to addressing workforce shortages and filling gaps left by federal funding, the PATHS program fostered a collaborative network among Workforce Development Boards. This network facilitated the exchange of best practices, insights and expertise, enhancing the effectiveness of each participating area. By sharing data, strategies and resources, boards in both urban and rural regions benefited from collective knowledge and tailored training solutions to their local economies. For example, rural boards leveraged expertise from larger regions to implement hybrid learning and targeted sector training that had proven effective elsewhere.

That cross-board collaboration accelerated learning and provided agile responses to emerging workforce needs. Insights from one region were quickly adapted by others, driving greater efficiency and improved outcomes across Texas. As a result, the program not only addressed local labor shortages but also fostered a broader culture of innovation and continuous improvement among Texas Workforce Solutions Boards. This collaborative spirit ensured that regions, regardless of size or resources, effectively met employer demands and developed a skilled workforce.

By working together, Workforce Boards demonstrated the power of regional cooperation in overcoming challenges that may have seemed insurmountable in isolation. This spirit of collaboration, combined with a public, private and philanthropic funding model, ensured that PATHS remained a sustainable, scalable solution replicable across other regions. PATHS not only filled immediate gaps in workforce training but also helped create a more resilient, future-ready workforce across Texas.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The PATHS For Texas program aimed to equip individuals with the skills needed for high-demand occupations, thereby enhancing their employability and supporting economic growth. The program focused on several key objectives:

FLEXIBILITY

Offering training opportunities to individuals who may not qualify for federal programs due to income levels, employment statuses, or industry preferences. This ensures access to quality training for underserved populations such as low-income individuals, people in rural areas, and those in industries typically overlooked by federal funding.

COLLABORATION

Facilitating partnerships between Texas Workforce Solutions Boards, employers, educational institutions, and community organizations to create a comprehensive support network for participants, fostering a collaborative ecosystem that enhances the effectiveness of training programs.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Building leadership capacity within participating organizations by equipping program administrators and partners with the skills and tools necessary to effectively manage and adapt training initiatives, ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of the program.

GROWTH AND ADAPTABILITY

Expanding its reach and adapting strategies to meet the changing needs of the workforce, especially in response to the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the need for agile and responsive training programs.

TARGETING UNDERSERVED INDUSTRIES

Specifically addressing critical training needs in industries and occupations not typically supported by federal and state funds, such as retail, hospitality, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT, which are essential for regional economic development.

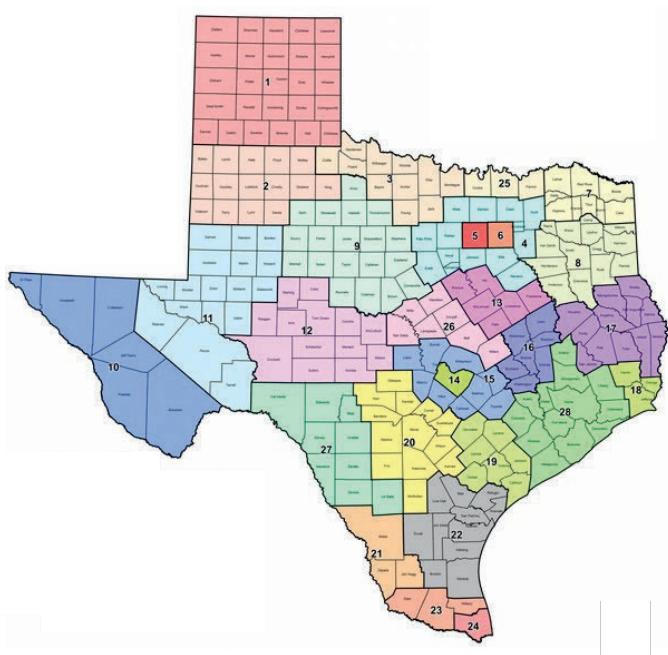
FUNDING STRUCTURE AND ALLOCATION

FUNDING BREAKDOWN

The PATHS For Texas program's success is largely attributed to its innovative funding structure, which blended contributions from public, private, and philanthropic sources. Notably, the Walmart Foundation's financial backing played a key role in the program's development and flexibility, enabling rapid adaptation to the evolving workforce landscape.

The PATHS For Texas program received a total funding pool of \$5,704,750, which was distributed among participating workforce boards and program partners as follows:

- Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast: \$2,588,810
- Workforce Solutions North Texas: \$180,000
- Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend: \$450,000
- Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area: \$1,065,000
- Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas (Administration, Start-up Costs): \$837,940
- Texas Workforce Commission (Statewide Initiatives): \$250,000
- Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources – UT Austin: \$333,000



TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS PARTICIPATING BOARD AREAS

- 28 - Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast
- 3 - Workforce Solutions North Texas
- 22 - Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend
- 15 - Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area
- 6 - Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

Each participating workforce board utilized the funds based on their region's specific needs and priorities:

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GULF COAST:

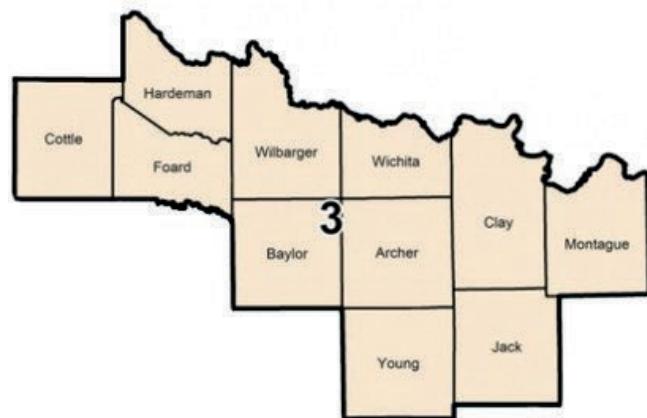
- **Focus:** The PATHS program in the Gulf Coast area focused on transitioning retail workers into advanced manufacturing roles, providing training in transferable skills and workplace readiness to meet current workforce demands. By emphasizing both technical and soft skills, participants are prepared for long-term success in modern manufacturing environments.
- **Programs and Impact:**
 - **Retail to Manufacturing Transition:** The program equipped retail workers with the skills needed for advanced manufacturing roles, focusing on problem-solving, technical aptitude, and workplace readiness.
 - **Collaborations:** Strong partnerships with local community colleges, chambers of commerce, and employers ensured that training remained relevant and accessible to underserved populations, enhancing local workforce development
 - **Tailored Solutions:** Customized training programs met evolving employer needs, resulting in significant wage gains and improved economic mobility for participants.
 - **Soft Skills and Upskilling:** In addition to technical skills, the program emphasized communication, teamwork, and adaptability, ensuring participants are well-rounded and competitive in the job market.





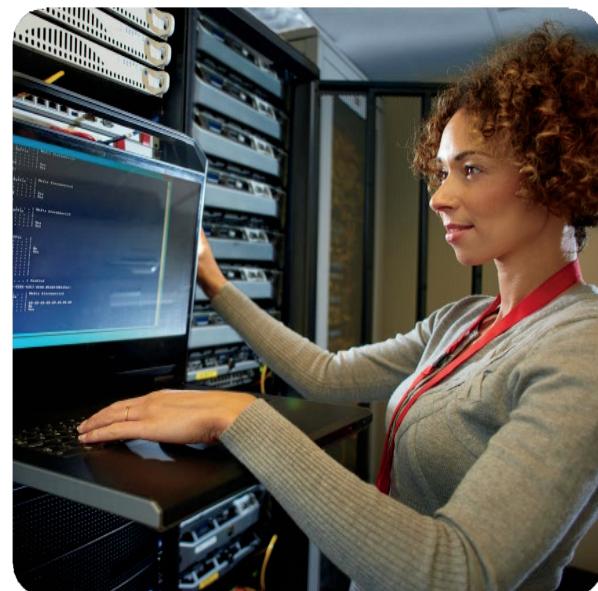
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS NORTH TEXAS:

- **Focus:** The PATHS program in the North Texas area was dedicated to addressing the workforce needs of high-demand industries such as IT, healthcare, skilled trades, child care, truck driving/CDL, and hospitality. The program equipped workers with essential skills for career advancement while tackling critical labor shortages through targeted initiatives like on-the-job training and CDL programs. By preparing participants for in-demand roles, PATHS enhanced economic mobility and strengthened the local economy. With a commitment to offering inclusive, cost-effective training, the program adapted to meet the evolving needs of both workers and employers, ensuring long-term workforce development success in North Texas.
- **Programs and Impact:**
 - **On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training:** Continually partnering with employers to provide customized skills development that supports worker retention and career advancement. These programs helped upskill employees, improve productivity, reduce turnover, and offer wage reimbursement, benefiting both workers and businesses.
 - **CDL Programs:** Efforts address new CDL licensing requirements by offering targeted training to local government employees in Wichita County, continually boosting local employment and enhancing operational efficiency within public sector services.
 - **Community Outreach:** The program consistently served a diverse range of workers, particularly underserved populations, with cost-effective training that increased employability and expanded access to opportunities in high-demand industries.



WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS COSTAL BEND:

- **Focus:** The PATHS program in the Coastal Bend area was dedicated to empowering youth through skills development and fostering strong collaborations with local nonprofits. It aimed to provide young individuals with the training, certifications, and work readiness tools necessary for success in high-demand industries, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the challenges of today's job market. Partnering with organizations like Goodwill and E2E, PATHS offered career progression opportunities, helping youth build sustainable career paths. By engaging nonprofits, the program connects underserved populations to essential career resources, addressing skills gaps and fostering long-term economic mobility, particularly in retail and leadership roles, across the region.
- **Programs and Impact:**
 - **Youth Engagement:** Continually partnering with organizations like Goodwill and E2E to provide certifications, work readiness programs, and career progression opportunities. The program engaged over 146 participants, awarding 367 certifications, fostering long-term career growth for young workers.
 - **Goodwill Collaboration:** Efforts focused on transitioning frontline workers into leadership roles, resulting in significant career advancements, and enhancing the upward mobility of participants.
 - **Upskilling Initiatives:** Continually addressing the critical need for skills training within local retail environments, helping workers adapt to evolving industry demands and improve their employability.

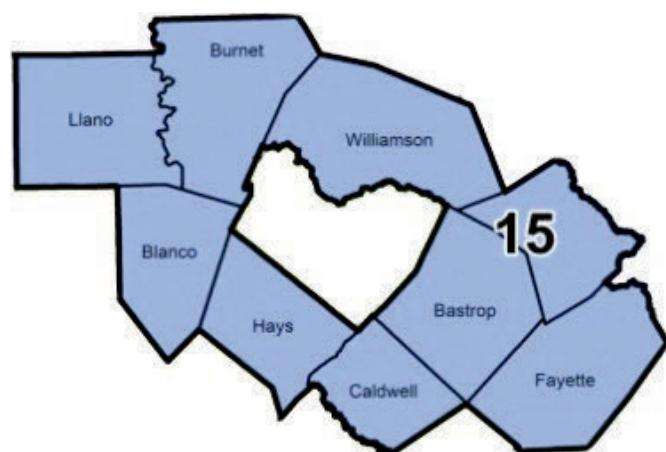


WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS RURAL CAPITAL AREA:

- **Focus:** The focus of the PATHS program in the Rural Capital Area of Texas was on developing workforce solutions that address the specific needs of local industries through apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, youth training and employment, early care education professional development, and individual upskill training. The program aimed to equip individuals with the skills and certifications necessary for career advancement, targeting industries like manufacturing and healthcare, while also addressing the critical shortage of childcare employees. Through collaboration with educational institutions and local employers, the PATHS program fostered sustainable career pathways and strengthened the regional workforce.

- **Programs and Impact:**

- **Apprenticeship Programs:** Targeting high-demand industries like manufacturing and healthcare, Workforce Solutions partnered with institutions such as Texas State Technical College and Independent School Districts to offer hands-on apprenticeships that prepare individuals for long-term careers.
- **Youth Training:** Summer employment programs provided job readiness certifications in areas like career exploration and interviewing skills, offering students valuable hands-on work experience, and enhancing their employability.
- **Early Care:** Addressing childcare workforce shortages, the program offered on-the-job training (OJT) for new hires and leadership upskilling for professionals in early childhood education, fostering a sustainable workforce.
- **Individual Upskill Training:** Over 1,100 participants benefit from targeted upskilling initiatives, improving their career prospects and supporting upward mobility in their industries.





WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GREATER DALLAS:

- **Focus:** Served as the facilitator of the PATHS initiative, leveraging public-private partnerships and ensuring strong regional participation.
- **Programs and Impact:**
 - **Gateway Portal:** Developed the PATHS For Texas Gateway, a statewide portal that serves as the central hub for program information, training enrollment, and learning management for all participating boards. This innovation supported upskilling efforts across diverse retail sectors.
 - **Training Models:** Implemented three integrated learning models, including employer-based work-based learning, online certification, and hybrid training models. These models were evaluated for effectiveness and sustainability, and enhanced approaches across the state.
 - **Collaboration:** Shared best practices and innovations across the state.

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (ADDITIONAL STATEWIDE INITIATIVES):

- **Focus:** The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) focused on tracking employment outcomes, wage increases, and employer retention for PATHS program participants. TWC collected data on job retention and wage growth, ensuring continued employer engagement and providing funding through apprenticeship grants to support workforce development in high-demand sectors.

RAY MARSHALL CENTER – UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN:

- **Focus:** The Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin was focused on conducting an independent evaluation and cost-benefit analysis of the PATHS program. This included analyzing employment, wage, and training outcomes, while also gathering participant and employer feedback to measure the program's effectiveness and return on investment.
- **Programs and Impact:**
 - **Data Collection and Analysis:** The Ray Marshall Center collected employment and wage data from participants who completed the PATHS training, using TWC unemployment insurance records to track employment retention and earnings over multiple quarters.
 - **Surveys and Qualitative Feedback:** The center conducted surveys of both participants and employers, gathering insights on their experiences with the PATHS program. This qualitative feedback was instrumental in understanding the program's broader impact on both workers and businesses.
 - **Improved Performance:** The feedback gathered from workforce boards and stakeholders informed ongoing improvements to the PATHS program, helping tailor training to meet regional workforce needs and sustain long-term career advancement for participants.



TRAINING APPROACH

INTEGRATED SKILL-BUILDING MODEL

The PATHS program offered a comprehensive and dynamic approach to workforce training, designed to provide participants with a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical, hands-on experience. In today's fast-paced, ever-evolving job market, workers need more than just classroom learning; they require real-world skills that are relevant to their industries. Through a carefully curated blend of employer-based work experience, online certifications, and on-the-job training, PATHS ensured that its learners were well-equipped to meet the challenges of high-demand sectors and rapidly changing workforce needs.

Reskilling for Economic Recovery:

Initially established to upskill incumbent workers, the PATHS program demonstrated remarkable agility during the COVID-19 pandemic by expanding its scope to reskill recently unemployed frontline workers. As the pandemic disrupted industries across the board, particularly in retail, hospitality, and other service sectors, PATHS responded by offering displaced workers the opportunity to acquire new skills and pivot to emerging, high-demand fields such as technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing. This strategic shift played a critical role in supporting the country's broader economic recovery, allowing workers to transition seamlessly into new roles and industries as the economy rebounded. By addressing immediate labor shortages and equipping participants with future-ready skills, PATHS became a vital bridge between unemployment and meaningful employment opportunities in a post-pandemic world.

Self-Paced Learning:

One of the standout features of the PATHS program was its flexible, self-paced learning environment. Understanding that every learner's situation is unique, PATHS connected participants to an extensive library of online courses and industry-recognized certifications. This empowered learners to progress at their own pace, fitting their studies around other responsibilities such as work or family commitments. The self-paced model is particularly effective in empowering individuals who may have been hesitant to re-enter formal education or training due to time constraints. With a focus on accessibility, PATHS opened doors to a diverse array of learners, from parents balancing childcare to professionals seeking to upskill in their current roles.



Industry-Specific Training:

PATHS recognized that a one-size-fits-all approach to workforce development does not meet the specific demands of various sectors. Therefore, the program offered highly customized training solutions that were tailored to the unique requirements of different industries. Sectors such as retail, hospitality, and niche manufacturing, often overlooked by traditional workforce training programs, were key focus areas for PATHS, ensuring participants gained skills that directly aligned with employer needs. By offering targeted training in areas that are critical to economic recovery, PATHS not only prepared workers for current job openings but also positioned them for long-term career growth. In high-demand industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and technology, PATHS participants emerged as well-rounded, competitive candidates, equipped with industry-specific competencies that gave them an edge in the labor market.

Employer Engagement:

A core strength of the PATHS program was its robust collaboration with employers. Through strategic partnerships with training providers and businesses, the program ensured that its curriculum was not only aligned with current industry standards but also directly responsive to real-world job requirements. Employers actively participated in shaping training content, providing insights into the skills and competencies needed in today's job market. This direct involvement ensured that PATHS graduates were job-ready from day one, equipped with up-to-date skills that allow them to meet employer expectations. By fostering strong employer engagement, PATHS bridged the gap between education and employment, creating a seamless transition from training to the workforce.

Adaptability in Crisis:

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented crisis that disrupted traditional workforce training systems, but PATHS For Texas quickly adapted to the new normal by integrating remote learning and virtual simulations into its model. This rapid shift to virtual platforms ensured that participants across the state could continue their education uninterrupted, even as in-person training became impossible. PATHS' adaptability not only helped maintain continuity during the pandemic but also highlighted the program's capacity for innovation in the face of adversity. By incorporating technology-driven solutions, PATHS provided flexible, accessible training options, allowing workers to gain the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

Expanding Career Pathways:

The multifaceted approach of the PATHS program went beyond simply offering training; it created sustainable career pathways. By equipping participants with practical experience, industry-recognized certifications, and customized training aligned with market demands, PATHS provided a roadmap for long-term success in high-demand fields. The program's ability to pivot and adapt during times of crisis, such as the pandemic, demonstrated its commitment to building a resilient, future-ready workforce. With its focus on both upskilling incumbent workers and reskilling displaced individuals, PATHS has proven to be an indispensable resource in creating a workforce that is not only equipped for the present but also prepared for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Building a Future-Ready Workforce:

The Integrated Skill-Building Model of the PATHS program was a comprehensive solution to the evolving demands of today's workforce. By blending theoretical knowledge with practical, real-world experience, PATHS equipped participants with the tools needed to thrive in high-demand industries. Its agility in reskilling displaced workers during the COVID-19 pandemic showcases the program's adaptability, ensuring workers were prepared to meet new challenges as the economy recovers and grows.

The flexibility of self-paced learning was critical in making the program accessible to a diverse range of learners, while the industry-specific training ensured that participants gained skills that directly align with employer needs. Through strong employer engagement, PATHS bridged the gap between education and employment, offering participants a seamless transition into the workforce.

Furthermore, PATHS demonstrated its adaptability in times of crisis, proving its resilience by maintaining uninterrupted education through remote learning and virtual simulations. This capacity for innovation ensures that the program model remains relevant, providing participants with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly digital, tech-driven world.

Overall, PATHS didn't just train workers; it created sustainable career pathways, empowering individuals with the knowledge and experience necessary for long-term success. Its focus on both upskilling incumbent workers and reskilling those displaced by economic changes solidified PATHS as a cornerstone of workforce development. By continuing to evolve and meet the demands of a changing world, the PATHS model ensures that workers are not only equipped for today's job market but also ready for the opportunities of tomorrow.

INSIGHTS FROM PATHS FOR TEXAS

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The PATHS For Texas program proved to be an invaluable asset in workforce development, generating a significant return on investment for participants, employers, and the broader economy. The program's outcomes demonstrate its efficiency and its capacity to transform grant funding into measurable gains in employment, earnings, and fiscal returns.

Insight from PATHS for Texas

- **Cost Efficiency:** PATHS operated on a \$5,704,750 grant from the Walmart Foundation and enrolled 2,519 Texans across four Workforce Development Boards. By June 2025, 2,151 participants (85 percent) had earned at least one industry certification. This investment equated to \$2,229.60 per participant, excluding administrative costs. The program's blended learning model combined online coursework, hands-on skills labs, industry-recognized credentials, and dedicated career coaching and job-placement support. Many state workforce programs cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per trainee. Texas's Skills Development Fund averages \$2,000 per participant, and apprenticeship incentives reimburse up to \$3,000 per apprentice each year. At \$2,229.60 per participant, PATHS delivered roughly 25 percent savings against the \$3,000 benchmark while offering more comprehensive training and support.
- **Economic Impact:** Updated data from June 2025 show that PATHS participants experienced substantial gains in employment and earnings:
 - Employment rates rose by 4.0 percentage points (from 73.3 percent to 77.3 percent) four quarters after certification
 - Quarterly earnings increased by \$1,776 (from \$8,501 to \$10,277) within eight post-certification quarters
 - Long-term salary increases reached up to 50 percent by 2.5 years, with median gains of 15 percent at one year and 37 percent by 3.5 years
 - By year 3, these improvements translated into an additional \$7,100 in annual income per graduate, bolstering household budgets, fueling consumer spending and supporting regional economic growth.



- **Employer Benefits:** A structured employer survey captured in the PATHS For Texas National Impact Report illustrates how PATHS For Texas delivered both cost savings and productivity gains for partner organizations across healthcare, hospitality, information technology, and logistics.
 - **Recruitment and Onboarding Savings:** Employer respondents reported cutting recruitment and onboarding costs by as much as 40 percent. This reduction reflects fewer unfilled vacancies and streamlined hiring processes, as PATHS graduates arrived workplace-ready with the core competencies employers sought.
 - **Accelerated Time to Productivity:** On average, new hires who completed PATHS required three fewer weeks of hands-on training before reaching full productivity compared to other entry-level employees. Lost labor costs associated with extended training periods were therefore significantly lower.
 - **Employer-Driven Curriculum Updates:** Through quarterly advisory panels, employers directly informed curriculum revisions. As a result, graduates demonstrated mastery of the exact technical tasks, safety procedures, and compliance standards needed on day one, minimizing early-stage errors and supervision requirements.
 - Collectively, these benefits translated into faster productivity ramps, reduced vacancy-related losses, and a more agile workforce able to meet evolving industry demands.

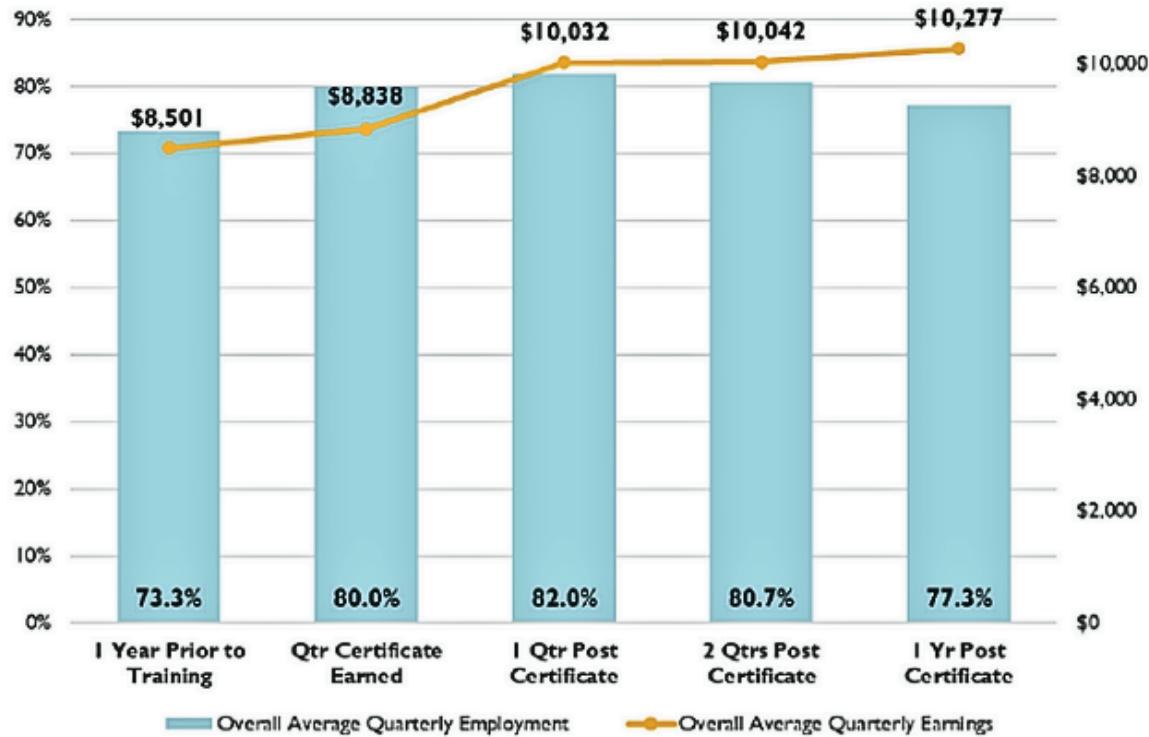
In summary, the University of Texas at Austin's RayMarshall Center evaluation of PATHS For Texas, covering January 2020 through June 2025 and based on participant records matched to Texas Workforce Commission UI data, a comparison-group analysis, and a structured employer survey, demonstrated that the program turned its \$5.7 million Walmart Foundation grant into measurable economic gains. Participants achieved a 4.0 percentage-point rise in employment and a \$1,776 boost in quarterly earnings within one year of certification, equating to roughly \$7,100 in additional annual income by year 3. Employers reported up to 40 percent reductions in recruitment and onboarding costs and accelerated new-hire productivity by an average of three weeks. An independent ROI analysis found that each dollar invested returned \$2.50 to taxpayers and \$3.36 in total societal benefit, confirming PATHS as a scalable, cost-effective blueprint for workforce development.

WAGE AND EARNINGS GROWTH

One of the key indicators of the program's success is the substantial wage and earnings growth experienced by participants. PATHS For Texas has significantly enhanced the economic prospects of individuals by equipping them with the essential skills for higher-paying roles.

- Earnings Increase:** Participants in the PATHS For Texas program saw notable financial growth, experiencing an average earnings increase of \$2,574 per quarter within eight quarters post-certification. Industry-specific data highlights particularly impressive wage improvements, with maximum increases reaching up to 50% within 2.5 years after completing the program. Notably, substantial wage increases ranged from 15% within the first year to 37% within 3.5 years post-certification, demonstrating the program's targeted effectiveness in facilitating access to higher-paying positions.

**PATHS Participants with SSNs Who Earned a Certificate
Employment and Earnings Outcomes 2020 – 2024**



*Note: Texas Workforce Commission UI wage data available through the 4th quarter of 2024 as of this reporting. UI wage data only reflects the earnings of W-2 wage earners and does not include 1099 earnings.

SOURCE: Ray Marshall Center - PATHS For Texas: Interim Descriptive Statistics, Outcomes, Impacts, Survey Results, and Qualitative Summary 2025

- Median Wage Growth:** The median annual wage for PATHS graduates experienced significant growth, rising from approximately \$28,000 to \$35,000 annually, reflecting the program's direct impact on participants' financial stability and quality of life. Graduates benefited from targeted training aligned closely with high-demand industries such as hospitality, IT, medical, retail, and transportation, enabling them to command higher wages and achieve greater economic mobility. This measurable wage growth illustrates the program's effectiveness in creating meaningful and lasting economic improvement for participants.

Earnings and Employment Outcomes for Certificate Earners by Cohort Year



SOURCE: Ray Marshall Center - PATHS For Texas: Interim Descriptive Statistics, Outcomes, Impacts, Survey Results, and Qualitative Summary 2025

- Career Advancement:** Beyond financial benefits, PATHS promotes substantial career advancement opportunities. Graduates of the program reported meaningful career progression, securing employment with clear growth trajectories. This underscores the program's emphasis on not only job placement but also long-term career development. By targeting industries offering upward mobility, PATHS ensures that participants have the skills necessary to progress beyond entry-level roles into positions offering greater responsibility, higher compensation, and professional advancement. This capability for career growth significantly contributes to the program's overall success, empowering participants to develop sustainable and rewarding careers with long-term stability.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

MEETING CRITICAL TRAINING NEEDS

The PATHS For Texas program addressed critical training needs in industries underserved by traditional federal and state funding sources, such as retail, hospitality, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. By offering specialized skills training, PATHS filled gaps that traditional funding models often overlook, meeting employer demands and preparing participants for sustainable career paths.

- **Retail:** PATHS For Texas recognized the growing need for digital literacy and management skills in retail. The program provided participants with specialized training in e-commerce, inventory management, and retail technology, enabling them to transition into management roles or related sectors like logistics and supply chain management. By equipping workers with modern, transferable skills, PATHS opened new pathways for career advancement within retail and beyond.
- **Hospitality:** PATHS For Texas directly addressed workforce shortages in the hospitality sector by providing targeted training in customer service, food safety, and front-line management. As the industry recovers from pandemic disruptions, these skills are increasingly valuable, enabling participants to advance from entry-level positions to supervisory roles, improving service quality and operational efficiency in hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality businesses.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** In response to the demand for skilled labor, PATHS For Texas created specialized training programs that help workers transition from sectors like retail into advanced manufacturing. The program emphasized hands-on, practical training aligned with industry standards, preparing participants for roles such as machine operators, production technicians, and quality control specialists. This approach ensured immediate job placements and long-term career growth, supporting Texas's manufacturing sector.
- **Healthcare:** PATHS For Texas prioritized healthcare as a fast-growing industry, offering comprehensive training for roles ranging from healthcare assistants and certified nursing aides to licensed vocational nurses and medical technicians. This approach helped meet critical workforce shortages, especially in rural and underserved areas, empowering participants to fill essential roles and improve patient care while expanding access to healthcare services in their communities.
- **Information Technology:** Recognizing the tech industry's rapid expansion, PATHS For Texas developed IT training programs that prepared participants for careers in software development, cybersecurity, and data analytics. By offering certifications in coding, network security, and more, PATHS ensured participants were well-equipped for entry-level and specialized IT roles, positioning them for long-term career growth in a dynamic and evolving field.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

The PATHS For Texas program effectively addressed the critical training needs of underserved industries such as retail, hospitality, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. By offering sector-specific, customized training, PATHS filled essential skill gaps, enabling workers to transition into stable, well-compensated roles. The program's focus on aligning training with employer demands ensured participants were equipped with the precise skills needed to succeed, while also providing businesses with a ready-to-hire workforce.

In sectors like retail and hospitality, PATHS delivered advanced training in areas such as digital literacy, food safety, and management, helping participants move into leadership positions. In advanced manufacturing and healthcare, the program offered hands-on training that prepares participants for roles like machine operators and nursing assistants, meeting urgent workforce shortages in growing industries. Information technology training focused on critical skills like cybersecurity and data analytics, positioning participants for long-term career success in a rapidly evolving field.

By focusing on tailored, sector-specific training, PATHS boosted participants' employability while supporting economic growth. Workers in higher-paying, skilled roles contributed to local economies, and employers benefited from reduced onboarding and training costs. The program's adaptability allowed it to stay aligned with industry demands, enhancing productivity and economic resilience.

The PATHS model demonstrates how sector-specific training can close skill gaps and be replicated nationwide. By forming strong partnerships with employers and workforce boards, PATHS ensures long-term workforce success, empowering workers and strengthening local economies. It serves as a blueprint for building a future-ready workforce capable of adapting to shifting economic demands.

ADAPTATIONS DURING COVID-19

The PATHS For Texas program demonstrated resilience and flexibility in adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As workforce development needs evolved, PATHS took proactive steps to ensure that participants could access training and continue advancing their careers despite the disruptions. The program's swift and innovative adaptations have enabled participants to maintain their learning trajectories, even as the pandemic reshaped the way people work and train.

- **Remote Learning:** PATHS quickly transitioned its training programs to online platforms, a shift that continues to play a critical role in providing uninterrupted access to education. Participants now engage with virtual simulations, interactive modules, and remote mentorships, ensuring that the hands-on experience traditionally gained through in-person training is not lost. These digital learning tools allow participants to acquire industry-relevant skills, particularly in fields such as advanced manufacturing and IT, where virtual environments can replicate real-world scenarios. As of 2025, over 85% of participants have engaged in remote learning formats, enabling them to progress without significant interruptions.
- **Digital Access Support:** To combat the digital divide exacerbated by the pandemic, PATHS provided participants with technology resources, including laptops and access to high-speed internet. This initiative ensures that individuals from low-income and rural areas, who may otherwise be excluded from online training opportunities, can fully participate. To date, PATHS has distributed over 1,200 technology packages to participants in need, broadening the program's reach to underserved populations.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Understanding the heightened responsibilities many participants face due to remote work, childcare, and other challenges brought on by the pandemic, PATHS introduced flexible scheduling options. These flexible training schedules allow participants to take courses at times that fit their personal and professional commitments. By offering asynchronous learning modules and live online sessions at various times, PATHS has enabled more than 70% of participants to balance training with family and job responsibilities. This approach not only improved completion rates but also kept participants engaged, contributing to higher retention and success in their chosen fields.



- **Ongoing Health and Safety Measures:** For participants who still prefer or require in-person training, PATHS implemented stringent health and safety protocols to ensure a safe learning environment. These measures included socially distanced classroom setups, mandatory masks, and regular sanitization of training equipment and facilities. This hybrid model, which blended in-person and online learning, was particularly effective in industries like healthcare and manufacturing, where hands-on experience is crucial.

Through these ongoing adaptations, PATHS has not only managed to continue its workforce development mission but has also expanded its capacity to serve a broader, more diverse participant base. By providing remote learning options, supporting digital access, and offering flexible schedules, PATHS ensured that participants could continue to acquire the skills necessary for career advancement, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

As a result, PATHS maintained high participation and completion rates, even during one of the most disruptive periods in recent history, helping participants secure jobs in high-demand industries and contributing to Texas's economic recovery.

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

One of the defining features of PATHS For Texas was its strong emphasis on employer partnerships. By collaborating with a diverse range of industries, the program ensured that its training offerings were aligned with the needs of the labor market. These partnerships have resulted in several key benefits:

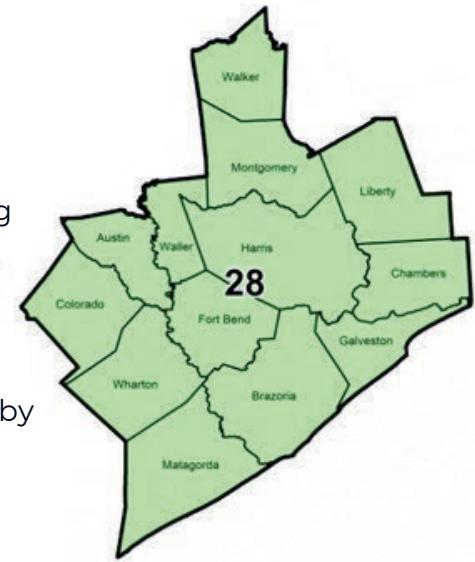
- **Curriculum Development:** Employers played a pivotal role in shaping the training curriculum, providing insights into the specific skills and competencies required for success in their industries. This collaboration ensured that PATHS graduates were job-ready from day one.
- **Job Placement:** Many employers involved in the program committed to hiring PATHS graduates, resulting in high job placement rates and increased employment opportunities for participants. This commitment to hiring local talent has strengthened community ties and contributed to regional economic growth.
- **Continuous Feedback:** Employers provided ongoing feedback to the PATHS program, allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation of training offerings. This feedback loop ensured that the program remained relevant and responsive to the changing demands of the job market.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GULF COAST



Region Overview: PATHS reached a broad and diverse demographic across the Houston Gulf Coast Region, covering 65 cities and 11 unincorporated towns across 10 counties. This region, home to key industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and energy, includes underserved communities lacking sufficient access to post-secondary education and training. PATHS aimed to address these gaps by providing tailored, flexible training solutions to meet the specific needs of both individuals and employers.



Program Highlights:

- **Customized Curriculum and Flexible Training Options:**
 - By June 2025, PATHS had enrolled 1,083 Gulf Coast residents, 43 percent of the statewide total, and supported 920 of them (85 percent) in earning at least one industry certification. Participants chose from virtual, hybrid, or in-person formats, which proved especially effective for workers transitioning from retail and customer service into technology-driven roles. This flexibility drove completion rates that matched the program-wide average and ensured graduates entered high-demand fields such as manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, and energy fully prepared.
- **Work-Based Learning:**
 - Through strategic collaborations with more than 120 Gulf Coast employers, PATHS offered paid internships that bridged classroom learning and on-the-job application. These internships not only enhanced participants' technical proficiency but also frequently led to full-time placements. Employer advisory panels met quarterly to review and refine curriculum content, ensuring that graduates mastered the exact technical tasks, safety procedures, and compliance standards required on day one.

- **CDL Licensing and Public Employee Support:**

- PATHS funded CDL classroom and On-the-Job Training (OJT) specifically for city and county employees in smaller municipalities such as El Campo and Lake Jackson, areas often excluded from federal funding. This support was instrumental in meeting new CDL licensure requirements, ensuring job retention and enhancing operational efficiency, particularly within essential public services like water treatment. PATHS' involvement significantly stabilized these communities by maintaining crucial public services and resources.

Success Stories:

- **Career Transition Success**

- **LeKrystl Allums:** After losing her job due to pandemic-related downsizing, LeKrystl faced significant barriers to employment and difficulties enrolling in community college courses. The PATHS grant allowed her to take an HR Business Administration course at Houston Community College, leading to a paid internship with a small accounting firm. This internship ultimately resulted in a full-time job offer, demonstrating PATHS' effectiveness in facilitating career transitions and providing new opportunities for individuals facing employment challenges.
- **Christian Fleming:** Christian Fleming worked at Best Buy and Target throughout high school and beyond, but he found it difficult to make progress in his career. His passion for electronics and computers drove his ambition, but he faced barriers in pursuing formal IT education due to the numerous prerequisites required by community colleges listed on the statewide network. Christian's career path took a positive turn when a recruiter introduced him to the PATHS For Texas program. Through the program's grant, Christian was connected with ACI Learning, an IT training company that offered CompTIA+ and network certifications without the burden of lengthy prerequisites. Now enrolled in training, Christian is making significant progress and is excited about starting his new career in IT. The PATHS program has opened new opportunities for Christian, allowing him to pursue his passion and set a solid foundation for long-term career growth in a high-demand field.
- **Aaliyah Alexander:** As a single mother working in a low-wage job, Aaliyah Alexander sought opportunities to improve her career and provide for her family. Through the PATHS For Texas program, she was able to enroll in a healthcare administration certification program, gaining specialized skills that qualified her for higher-paying positions in the healthcare sector. This opportunity not only increased her income but also significantly enhanced her job satisfaction and overall well-being.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

- **Dagmar Scott:** Dagmar Scott started her career as a cashier at CVS, where her exceptional customer service quickly earned her recognition. With a passion for healthcare, she saw the PATHS For Texas program as the ideal opportunity to transition into the medical field. Thanks to the PATHS grant, Dagmar enrolled in CVS's Registered Apprenticeship program, attending evening classes while continuing her job. This program helped her shift from customer service to the pharmaceutical field, benefiting both her career growth and CVS's talent needs. On track to complete her apprenticeship this year, Dagmar's story highlights the transformative power of PATHS in turning aspirations into reality.
- **Community Collaborations:** Former NFL player Reggie Rusk partnered with the PATHS For Texas program through his nonprofit to provide at-risk youth with essential training in business management, financial literacy, and work readiness. This collaboration equips participants with both technical and personal skills needed to succeed in the workforce, helping them develop long-term career strategies. By emphasizing practical, real-world applications of business and financial planning, the program empowers at-risk youth to pursue meaningful, sustainable careers, offering them an alternative to high-risk behaviors and setting them up for success in a competitive job market.
- **Employer Collaborations:** Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast leveraged the PATHS program through strategic partnerships with companies like Burkhardt Compressors, Dieselcore, and Mayekawa. These collaborations are pivotal in retraining displaced retail workers for new careers in advanced manufacturing. By working closely with PATHS, these employers continue to help workers acquire the necessary skills for their new roles, ensuring a smooth transition into high-demand sectors. These partnerships are not only benefiting the workers but also addressing critical workforce shortages for employers in key industries, contributing to long-term economic growth and stability.

Economic Impact:

- **Increased Employment and Wages:**
 - PATHS substantially increased employment opportunities and wages for participants in the Gulf Coast region. Participants experienced a 15-20% increase in employment within key sectors such as healthcare, logistics, and manufacturing. Additionally, PATHS participants saw significant wage growth, with documented wage increases averaging 19% within one year post-certification, and as high as 50% wage growth 2.5 years post-certification. Average quarterly earnings rose from \$8,096 to \$9,140 post-training. This financial improvement has not only elevated individual economic stability but has also contributed positively to the regional economy.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

- **Support for Small Municipalities:**

- PATHS provided crucial support for small municipalities, where public employees faced new CDL licensure requirements that could have resulted in job losses. By funding training for city and county employees, PATHS improved job retention and ensured the continued efficiency of essential services such as water treatment. This support not only helped workers meet industry requirements but also strengthened local government services, benefiting the entire community.

- **Community Resilience:**

- PATHS contributed to economic mobility and community resilience by providing fast-tracked reemployment for individuals affected by layoffs. Many participants transitioned to new jobs in under 30 days, boosting local and state tax contributions while reducing reliance on unemployment benefits.

Conclusion:

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast's PATHS initiative enrolled 1,083 participants and guided 920 of them (85 percent) to earn at least one industry certification by June 2025. The program's flexible, blended training model drove a 4.0 percentage-point increase in employment and lifted average quarterly earnings from \$8,501 to \$10,277, an additional \$1,776 within eight post-certification quarters. Graduates also realized long-term wage gains up to 50 percent by 2.5 years, with median increases of 15 percent at one year and 37 percent by 3.5 years.

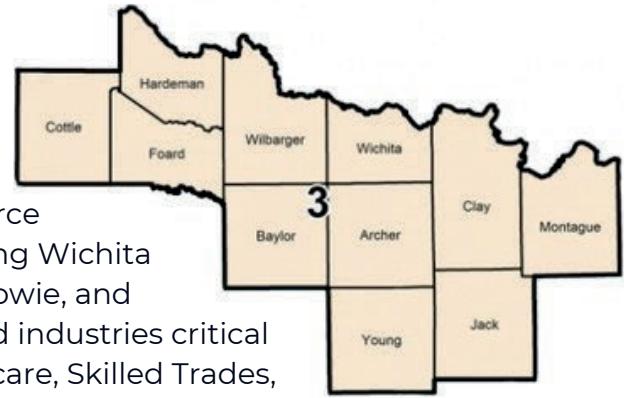
Strategic public-private partnerships with employers such as Burkhardt Compressors, Dieselcore, and Mayakawa demonstrated PATHS's effectiveness in retraining displaced workers and reducing recruitment and onboarding costs by up to 40 percent. Support for small-municipality employees in roles like utilities and public works prevented service disruptions and strengthened local operations.

By expanding training access for underserved communities and aligning skills development with evolving industry needs, PATHS For Texas has become a replicable model. Its proven combination of cost efficiency, measurable outcomes, and deep employer collaboration positions the Gulf Coast region to remain competitive, resilient, and well equipped for future workforce challenges.

CASE STUDY 2: WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS NORTH TEXAS

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS NORTH TEXAS

Region Overview: Workforce Solutions North Texas serves a diverse 11-county region, addressing workforce needs in both urban and rural communities, including Wichita Falls, Electra, Iowa Park, Olney, Seymour, Graham, Bowie, and Quanah. The PATHS initiative targeted high-demand industries critical to the region's economic stability, such as IT, Healthcare, Skilled Trades, Child Care, Truck Driving/CDL, and Hospitality. These sectors are essential to the local economy and were facing significant workforce shortages. Through PATHS, Workforce Solutions North Texas was able to serve more customers at a lower cost than expected, achieving a substantial impact on both the local workforce and businesses.



Program Highlights:

- Customized Training and Upskilling:** Workforce Solutions North Texas tailored the PATHS initiative to meet the distinct needs of job seekers and employers. Participants chose from virtual, in-person, and hybrid training formats, giving them the flexibility to select the learning environment that best suited their schedules and needs. This adaptability enabled participants to balance work, family, and other responsibilities while gaining new skills, making the program accessible to a wider audience. The virtual options were especially beneficial for rural residents, while in-person and hybrid models provide hands-on learning for those who preferred traditional training methods. By June 2025, the North Texas region engaged 177 participants, with 117 participants earning certificates, showing improved participation and completion rates as a result of the flexible training options.
- Employer Collaboration:** Workforce Solutions North Texas worked closely with local employers, such as the YMCA of Wichita Falls and Delta Hotel, to offer valuable on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities. These partnerships upskilled incumbent workers and created new job opportunities for displaced workers. By aligning the training with employer needs, the program ensured smooth transitions from training to employment. Participants gain real-world experience while earning income, improving their employability and financial stability. Employers benefited from a pipeline of workers equipped with the precise skills needed for their industries. The North Texas region also contributed to the PATHS program's goal of engaging at least 120 employers, further strengthening workforce connections in the area.



- **CDL Licensing Support:** The PATHS For Texas program has made a significant impact on the Truck Driving/CDL sector through its partnership with Vernon College, which provides CDL training to public employees in Wichita County. Workers who were at risk of layoffs due to new CDL licensure requirements were able to retain their jobs by completing the necessary training. This collaboration not only preserved employment but ensured that drivers were better equipped to operate heavy trucks safely, enhancing road safety across the region. Since the program's inception, Vernon College has responded to the growing demand in the trucking and logistics industry by expanding its CDL training capacity, adding more training trucks to meet the needs of the workforce. With CDL wages significantly exceeding the self-sufficiency wage in Texas, the program has helped boost individual prosperity while contributing to the local economy by retaining skilled labor within a crucial sector. These efforts are pivotal as the logistics industry continues to play an essential role in the region's economic growth and stability.

Success Stories:

- **Career Advancement in Insurance:** Julia Horne and Emily Reed, employees at Wes Latham Insurance Agency in Seymour, Texas, utilized PATHS funding to enroll in the Property & Casualty licensing program. Previously working in support roles, the funding allowed them to advance professionally by becoming licensed insurance agents, a goal they had long aspired to achieve. For Julia, this led to a 30% salary increase, significantly enhancing her financial stability and overall quality of life. Their career progression not only transformed their individual prospects but also benefited their employer by enabling the agency to expand its service offerings with more qualified staff, ensuring the business could meet growing client needs. This demonstrates the powerful relationship between upskilling workers and driving business success, creating a win-win scenario for both employees and employers.
- **Advancing in Retail/Business:** A participant from Workforce Solutions North Texas, balancing the demands of being pregnant with a 2-year-old at home, leveraged the PATHS program to further her education for the first time since high school. Juggling these responsibilities was no easy task, but her commitment to improving her future kept her motivated throughout the process. Despite the challenges, she successfully completed the program, gaining valuable skills in Business Retail, where hands-on exercises allowed her to apply real-world knowledge and build confidence in her abilities. Reflecting on her experience, she shared, "This was the very first time I have ever finished anything for myself, and though it was very hard, I did not give up," underscoring her determination. Grateful for the opportunity, she now feels confident that the skills she acquired will open doors to future career opportunities and personal growth, paving the way for a brighter future for herself and her family.

- **CDL Training and Job Retention:** In Wichita County, new CDL licensure requirements placed many public employees, particularly those in water treatment and logistics, at risk of losing their jobs. These workers, who play critical roles in maintaining essential public services, faced significant challenges in meeting the new regulatory standards. However, PATHS funding, in collaboration with Vernon College, provided the necessary CDL training that allowed these employees to meet the new standards and retain their jobs. This success not only prevented layoffs but also ensured the continuity of critical services in the region, safeguarding the community's access to clean water and transportation. By avoiding the costs associated with rehiring and retraining new workers, the initiative contributed to operational efficiency in local municipalities, saving taxpayer dollars and reinforcing the importance of a skilled workforce in maintaining public infrastructure. Additionally, the training has had a long-term positive effect on the logistics sector, with trained CDL drivers supporting supply chain operations that are vital to the local economy, boosting regional growth and stability.
- **Impact on Community Safety:** The program's reach extended beyond individual benefits to positively affect community safety. CDL truck drivers received thorough training, helping to prevent accidents that could result in significant damage or fatalities, making local roads safer for all. Child care workers learned essential skills, including first aid and emergency response, significantly improving the quality of care and safety for children in their programs. Additionally, hospitality workers, including those in food service, received training on cleanliness, food safety, and customer service, ensuring that they contribute to safer, healthier environments for the public. These cumulative effects not only raised the standards within individual industries but also fostered greater public trust in the safety and reliability of local services.
- **IT Industry Enhancement:** At WebFire, a North Texas IT firm, the PATHS For Texas program has been instrumental in upskilling employees through Udemy, with staff expressing gratitude for the opportunity to enhance both their personal and professional skills. One employee shared, "Over the past year, Udemy has been a great asset to me not only personally but professionally as well. I use it quite often in my professional career to learn something I am unsure of, whether it's in-depth Microsoft products, time management, or leadership." The flexibility of the learning platform has been a key factor in its success, with another employee praising, "With the Udemy Business app, I can conveniently keep up with my studies throughout my busy work week, almost anywhere!" For some, Udemy has even enabled significant career transitions, as one employee recounted, "I pivoted from working in food service to my dream role in cybersecurity sales with the help of Udemy and my CompTIA A+ certification." WebFire leadership has emphasized the value of the program, noting that Udemy fills critical educational gaps and offers flexible, self-paced learning to support the company's workforce. This has led to not only personal growth for employees but also enhanced innovation and productivity for the business as a whole.



Economic Impact: The PATHS initiative has had a profound economic impact on North Texas, particularly in the areas of employment and wage growth, which have been key drivers of regional stability and growth.

- **Increased Employment Rates:** The program contributed to a 15-20% increase in employment across several key industries, including Healthcare, IT, and Truck Driving. By providing tailored training and certification opportunities, PATHS helped participants enter or re-enter the workforce in high-demand sectors, where employers were actively seeking skilled labor. This increase in employment not only benefited individuals by providing them with stable, well-paying jobs but also addressed critical labor shortages that were hindering growth in these industries.
- **Wage Growth:** PATHS participants experienced substantial wage increases following their training, with average quarterly earnings rising from \$8,004 to \$9,140. This 14% increase in earnings has not only improved the financial outlook for individual workers but has also had a broader economic impact by boosting consumer spending in the local economy. The increased spending power of these workers contributes to local businesses, supports community development, and enhances tax revenues, which are reinvested into public services and infrastructure.
- **Support for Small Municipalities:** In smaller municipalities like Wichita County, where public services such as water treatment are vital to the well-being of the community, PATHS provided essential training for public employees. By ensuring that these workers were able to meet new licensing requirements, the program helped retain jobs and maintain the delivery of essential services. The initiative also improved the economic stability of these small towns, as retained workers continued to contribute to the local economy and provide critical services that support the health, safety, and functionality of these communities.
- **Program Expansion:** The success of the initial CDL training sessions at Vernon College led to expanded class sizes and additional training trucks, increasing capacity for future cohorts, and addressing ongoing demand in the trucking and logistics industry. This expansion continues to strengthen the region's workforce, further driving economic growth.
- **Community Resilience:** PATHS played a pivotal role in enhancing community resilience by upskilling workers in sectors critical to the region's infrastructure and public services. By training individuals for high-demand roles and ensuring job retention, the program helped fortify the region's capacity to weather economic uncertainties. Workforce development in essential services not only kept vital operations running smoothly but also allowed communities to recover faster and maintain their socioeconomic stability, contributing to overall regional resilience.

Conclusion:

Workforce Solutions North Texas has successfully leveraged the PATHS initiative to tackle critical workforce challenges and enhance the region's economic resilience. The program has engaged 177 participants so far, with 117 earning certificates, demonstrating its effectiveness in boosting both participation and completion rates. The initiative's customized training options, including virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats, have made education and upskilling accessible to participants across North Texas. Key partnerships with employers like the YMCA of Wichita Falls and Delta Hotel have played a crucial role in providing on-the-job training (OJT), which upskills incumbent workers and creates new job opportunities for displaced individuals in industries like child care, hospitality, and landscaping.

For instance, landscape workers trained through the Texas Department of Transportation have improved highway visibility, reducing road safety risks and benefiting both businesses and the public. CDL training support through Vernon College has helped public employees retain their jobs and enhance operational efficiency in critical sectors like water treatment. By engaging 120 employers, PATHS For Texas has effectively demonstrated the power of the public-private partnership model.

The success stories emerging from the program highlight its tangible impact. Julia Horne, who became a licensed insurance agent, saw a 30% salary increase following her certification, showcasing the direct link between upskilling and career advancement. Similarly, CDL training provided through the program has saved public employees' jobs in Wichita County, emphasizing the program's role in job retention and economic stability. Employees from companies like WebFire have also benefited from PATHS. Using the Udemy platform, workers have gained technical and professional skills in areas like IT support, networking, and cybersecurity sales. One employee shared how they transitioned from food service to their dream role in cybersecurity, illustrating how the program aligns workforce development with real-time employer needs, enhancing business competitiveness and improving individual livelihoods.

The PATHS initiative's flexible training options, strong employer partnerships, and sector-specific focus have led to higher employment rates, wage growth, and increased operational efficiency in key sectors such as Healthcare, Transportation/Logistics, and Information Technology. By continuing to invest in these areas and fostering public-private-philanthropic collaborations, North Texas is well-positioned to meet its evolving workforce demands. This adaptable approach strengthens the region's ability to thrive as economic conditions shift and new challenges arise, ensuring long-term prosperity for workers, businesses, and communities alike.

CASE STUDY 3: WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS COASTAL BEND



Region Overview: The Coastal Bend area of Texas has traditionally been known for its strong ties to the energy sector. However, Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend (WFSCB) sought to diversify its service offerings and broaden training opportunities beyond traditional industries. Through PATHS, WFSCB engaged non-traditional customers, expanding opportunities for those entering retail and business sectors, helping individuals gain valuable skills that positioned them for career advancement and financial stability.



- **Program Highlights**

- **Diverse Training Options:** The PATHS program in Coastal Bend expanded beyond the traditional energy and construction sectors, targeting retail workers and those entering the business sector. Participants earned certifications in customer service, business skills, and soft skills development, positioning them for higher-paying, stable jobs. The focus on nationally recognized certifications ensured participants gained a competitive edge in the job market. These training options were made accessible to underserved populations, including rural areas, creating a more inclusive workforce, and offering career advancement to individuals who previously lacked such opportunities.
- **Community Collaboration:** WFSCB partnered with Goodwill Industries of South Texas and Education to Employment (E2E) to expand the program's reach.
 - Goodwill's Employee Development Plan offered PATHS training as part of an internal career development strategy, providing employees with wage increases and promotion opportunities upon completing training bundles. This initiative not only improved workforce skills but also incentivized personal growth and employee retention.
 - E2E's Focus on High School Students: Collaborating with the Texas Workforce Commission's Texas Internship Initiative, E2E integrated customer service and soft skills certifications into high school curriculums, preparing students for internships and future employment.
- **WIOA Youth Participation:** The PATHS program also extended to WIOA youth, particularly from rural areas, with nine participants receiving incentives like Walmart gift cards and iPads, making the program more appealing and accessible to younger job seekers.

- **Success Stories:**

- **James Lopez:** A 17-year-old high school student, James enrolled in the PATHS program while taking college courses and interning with Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend. PATHS helped him develop essential soft skills, particularly in communication and customer service, boosting his confidence and performance during his internship. After completing the program, James is now better prepared for his future career, crediting PATHS for helping him become more competitive in the job market.
- **Jordan Pratt:** A 31-year-old Goodwill employee with a decade of retail experience, Jordan took advantage of PATHS training as part of his development plan. By completing three courses, Jordan earned a wage increase within two days of completing the program and is now being considered for a promotion. His commitment to the program underscores the success of PATHS in elevating workers' career trajectories.
- **Kristi Cruz:** Despite a demanding schedule of college and two jobs, Kristi Cruz took on the challenge of earning certifications through the PATHS For Texas program. Initially overwhelmed, Kristi was motivated by the opportunity to strengthen her resume. With support from Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend and Celina Leal, she successfully completed courses in retail and customer service. "It was a great learning experience," Kristi says, reflecting on the confidence and skills she gained. PATHS helped her balance her responsibilities while enhancing her career prospects.
- **Natalia Cruz:** For Natalia Cruz, the PATHS For Texas program provided more than certifications—it reshaped her view of the retail industry. While managing school and work, Natalia earned credentials that deepened her understanding of business operations. "It taught me to think about the work that goes into running a business," she explains. With support from Celina Leal and Workforce Solutions, Natalia not only expanded her industry knowledge but also gained confidence and professionalism, helping her advance both personally and professionally.
- **High School Students & WIOA Youths:** Sixty-two high school students gained customer service and business certifications, making them more competitive for internships and entry-level roles. The inclusion of WIOA youths further expanded the program's reach, demonstrating its ability to serve diverse populations across different age groups and communities.



- **Economic Impact:**

- **Participant Outcomes:** The PATHS program trained 146 participants, earning 367 certifications to date. These certifications directly enhance job opportunities, wage growth, and career mobility. Seventy-five Goodwill employees have already completed training bundles, leading to promotions and wage increases, while high school students earned nationally recognized business certifications, boosting their resumes and competitiveness for internships and entry-level roles. These successes reflect the program's ability to equip participants with critical skills for high-demand industries.
- **Impact on Local Employers:** PATHS empowered local employers like Goodwill to invest in workforce development, creating a skilled and adaptable workforce. This model is inspiring other businesses in retail, hospitality, and logistics, industries facing workforce shortages, to adopt similar training strategies. By aligning ongoing training with employer needs, PATHS helps improve retention, reduce turnover, and stimulate local economic growth.
- **Support for Underserved Areas:** PATHS was a vital resource in rural and underserved areas, providing access to training that would otherwise be out of reach. This support improved economic prospects for individuals while strengthening local workforces in key industries like healthcare, logistics, and manufacturing, which are essential to the region's economic future.
- **High School Students & WIOA Youths:** PATHS connected young people to opportunities, with 62 high school students earning customer service and business certifications, making them more competitive for internships and jobs. The inclusion of WIOA youth further expands the program's reach, ensuring that diverse populations across age groups and communities have ongoing access to training and career development, setting them up for future success.

Conclusion:

Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend (WFSCB) leveraged the PATHS For Texas program to address critical workforce needs, particularly in non-traditional sectors like retail and business. These sectors, often underfunded by federal training programs, provide WFSCB with the opportunity to fill a significant gap by offering upskilling opportunities to individuals who might not have otherwise had access to career advancement training. Through 2025, WFSCB has trained 146 individuals, resulting in 367 certifications that have improved participants' employability and financial stability.

WFSCB capitalized on PATHS' flexibility to reach underserved populations, helping participants earn nationally recognized certifications in customer service, soft skills, and business. This training enabled individuals to transition into higher-paying, stable jobs, creating long-term economic benefits for both workers and the region. A key driver of this ongoing success is the partnership with Goodwill Industries of South Texas, where 75



employees have undergone training bundles that led to wage increases and promotion opportunities. This in-house training model addresses workforce shortages in retail and customer service sectors while supporting employee growth, helping employers retain skilled staff.

Through the Texas Workforce Commission's Texas Internship Initiative, WFSCB is reaching high school students, with 62 students already earning customer service and soft skills certifications. These certifications give students a competitive edge in securing paid internships and entering their careers with accredited skills.

WFSCB also extends the PATHS program to WIOA Youths from rural, low-income areas, providing nine participants with paid internships and certifications. WFSCB supports these participants with incentives such as Walmart gift cards and iPads to make the program more accessible, ensuring their continued engagement.

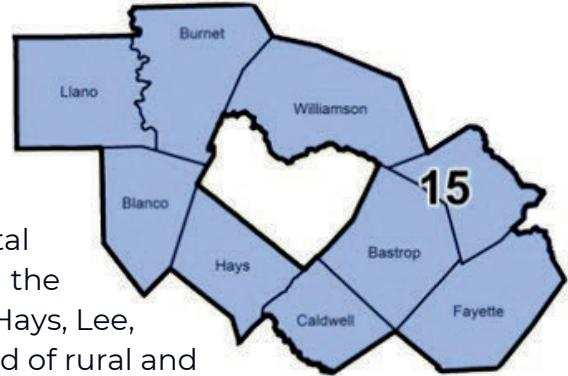
By focusing on non-traditional sectors typically overlooked by federal programs, PATHS enhanced the economic mobility of participants and strengthened the local workforce. The program's success is evident in the job opportunities, wage growth, and career advancement it fostered. WFSCB actively delivers no-cost training to underserved populations, showcasing the program's adaptability to local workforce needs.

The collaboration between WFSCB, Goodwill, and community partners ensures that participants from rural and disadvantaged areas continue to benefit from the program. This success serves as a blueprint for future workforce development, particularly in regions where federal funding limitations create barriers. By sustaining sector-specific training and fostering public-private partnerships, WFSCB remains a vital player in promoting economic growth and workforce development across Coastal Bend.

CASE STUDY 4: WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS RURAL CAPITAL AREA



Region Overview: The Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) serves a broad region in Texas, including the counties of Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, and Williamson. These counties represent a blend of rural and suburban communities, with rapidly expanding industries such as manufacturing, construction trades, healthcare, and skilled trades. With major corporate expansions by companies like TESLA and SAMSUNG, there is an increasing demand for a skilled workforce. WSRCA's role in PATHS was aimed at equipping job seekers, incumbent workers, unemployed individuals, youth, and both entry- and mid-level professionals with the skills necessary to meet this growing demand. Recognizing the need to further enhance its services, WSRCA requested additional PATHS funding to extend its reach and continue offering upskilling opportunities across a range of sectors. The additional funding supported four critical initiatives: Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, Youth Training and Employment, Early Care in Education Professional Development, and Individual Upskill Training.



- **Program Highlights**

- **Apprenticeship & Pre-Apprenticeship Programs:**

- **Focus:** WSRCA supported career development in critical sectors such as Manufacturing, Construction Trades, Skilled Trades, and Healthcare.
- **Funding:** Utilizing both Texas Workforce Commission apprenticeship grants and PATHS funding, WSRCA developed comprehensive training initiatives to directly address industry-specific labor shortages, ensuring that participants were equipped with the skills needed to thrive.
- **Partnerships with ISDs:** WSRCA collaborated with schools to provide pre-apprenticeship training in areas like plumbing, helping students transition seamlessly into formal apprenticeships with local businesses.

- **Impact:**

- **Participants:** Since the program's inception, WSRCA has successfully trained over 1,100 participants, awarding an impressive 367 industry-recognized certifications. As a result, local businesses have gained a pool of ready-to-work talent, driving economic growth and creating sustainable career pathways for individuals previously trapped in low-wage, stagnant jobs.

- **Registered Apprenticeships:** WSRCA offered high-quality, Department of Labor validated apprenticeship pathways in key industries, providing participants with sustainable and long-term career opportunities.
- **Pre-Apprenticeships:** Students who completed the pre-apprenticeship programs gained direct access to formal apprenticeship roles, creating a clear transition from education to employment in high-demand sectors.
- **Youth Training & Employment:**
 - **Program Model:** In partnership with Ladders for Leaders, WSRCA offered job readiness training covering essential skills such as Career Exploration, Financial Literacy, Resume Writing, Interview Skills, Professionalism, and Networking. This holistic approach provided participants with not only practical skills but also the confidence and tools necessary to thrive in their future careers.
 - **Summer Employment:** Youth participants were placed in summer jobs that paid \$15 an hour, offering them valuable hands-on work experience. This opportunity allowed them to apply the skills they learned during the training in real-world environments, helping them build professional competencies and connections in key industries.
 - **Impact:** The program successfully provided youth with job readiness certificates, making them more attractive to employers and preparing them for long-term success. Additionally, the work-based learning opportunities gave participants a competitive edge by providing them with early exposure to professional environments, significantly enhancing their employability in fields such as healthcare, skilled trades, and administrative services.
- **Early Care in Education Professional Development:**
 - **Focus:** Addressed the shortage of childcare workers by offering On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Leadership Upskill Training for new and existing employees in the childcare sector.
 - **Leadership Training:** Partnered with Emergent ED to provide 15 hours of self-paced leadership training, empowering childcare staff to take on more advanced roles within their centers.
 - **Impact:**
 - The OJT initiative led to the hiring of 55 new childcare employees, helping to expand the workforce and increase the availability of quality childcare services.
 - Leadership Upskill Training enabled 93 childcare workers to improve their leadership abilities, which helped stabilize the sector by retaining and developing staff.
- **Individual Upskill Training:**
 - **Focus:** Provided flexible training programs to meet the specific needs of individuals and employers, enabling career advancement and workforce development.
 - **Impact:** The program served over 1,100 participants and collaborated with more than 30 employers across the region to provide tailored training solutions, resulting in higher employment rates and increased earnings for participants.

- **Success Stories**

- **Hospitality Industry Turnover Solution:** Sandra Phillips from Aramark Food Service and staff at Ryan Sanders Sports highlighted how PATHS helped address high turnover in the hospitality industry post-pandemic. The program met the training needs of large organizations like school districts and the HEB Center at Cedar Park, ensuring proper food handling safety protocols, particularly for children.
- **Childcare Sector Success:**
 - Jessica Granados, owner of Georgetown Learning Academy, credited PATHS with saving her business, allowing her to hire four qualified teachers without incurring training costs. She shared, "I truly believe we would not be open today if this program was not available."
 - Tina Owens, owner of First Step School in San Marcos, used OJT funding to retain and train staff during a staffing shortage, enhancing the center's capacity to serve the community.
- **Leadership Development:**
 - Christiane Painter, administrative assistant at Alphabet Alley Learning Center in Llano County, explained that PATHS "allowed us to take more time to train our teachers properly," reducing turnover and improving operational efficiency.
 - Maria Mercado, a childcare worker, utilized leadership training to advance her career, transitioning from a lead teacher to the director of a childcare center.

- **Economic Impact**

- **Employment and Earnings Growth:**
 - PATHS participants in the Rural Capital Area saw a 10.4 percentage point increase in employment post-training. demonstrated its effectiveness in boosting employment and economic mobility.
 - Participants also saw a significant rise in quarterly earnings, with average earnings increasing from \$8,005 to \$9,140 over five quarters. This increase underscores the positive financial impact of the training initiatives.
- **Childcare Sector Stabilization:**
 - The Early Care in Education initiative successfully alleviated staffing shortages in the childcare sector by hiring and training 55 new employees. This helped stabilize the sector and enabled more parents to return to the workforce, further supporting the local economy.
- **Support for Growing Industries:**
 - By addressing the demand for skilled labor in industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and construction trades, WSRCA has helped employers meet their staffing needs, strengthening the region's economic foundation and ensuring sustainable growth.



Conclusion: Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) has effectively addressed critical workforce challenges through the PATHS initiative, leveraging a collaborative model that integrates public, private, and philanthropic efforts. The initiative's primary focus has been on meeting the specific needs of employers across key industries, ensuring that the training provided is directly aligned with the skills required by local businesses.

By concentrating on apprenticeships, youth employment, childcare workforce development, and individual upskilling, WSRCA has not only improved employment opportunities and wages for participants but also directly supported the growth and sustainability of local industries. Employers in manufacturing, healthcare, and childcare have benefited from a steady pipeline of skilled workers trained through the PATHS initiative, addressing labor shortages, and ensuring that businesses can operate and expand effectively.

The public-private-philanthropic model has been critical in ensuring that training programs are agile and responsive to employer demands. Employers' involvement in shaping training content has resulted in a workforce development system that fills immediate gaps in skills while preparing workers for long-term career advancement. This approach demonstrates how workforce programs can serve both the needs of individuals and the economic goals of local businesses.

Success stories from local businesses, particularly in the childcare sector, illustrate how this model works in practice, with tangible benefits seen in workforce retention, increased employment rates, and higher earnings. For example, Georgetown Learning Academy and other centers reported that without the skilled workforce provided through PATHS, they would have faced closure due to staffing shortages. In healthcare and manufacturing, apprenticeships have proven equally effective, where participants transitioned into full-time roles with competitive salaries, highlighting the initiative's long-term impact.

Additionally, WSRCA's partnerships with local school districts have facilitated pre-apprenticeship programs, providing high school students with hands-on training that leads to formal apprenticeships and long-term employment in fields like plumbing, construction, and skilled trades. These collaborations address labor shortages and offer youth pathways to secure, high-demand careers.

By focusing on employer needs and fostering cross-sector collaboration, WSRCA has created a sustainable solution for workforce development. The initiative's adaptability ensures that the region's workforce is equipped to meet both current and future demands, ultimately contributing to the long-term economic resilience of the area.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

■ PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The PATHS For Texas program engaged a diverse population across all regions, ensuring that individuals from various backgrounds and employment statuses have access to valuable training opportunities. By taking an inclusive approach to workforce development, the program equips participants with the skills needed to enter high-demand industries and advance in their careers.

- **Gender Distribution:** PATHS participants were 61 percent female and 38 percent male. Strong representation of women in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as skilled trades, and continued engagement of men in sectors like healthcare reflect the program's success in promoting gender diversity and breaking down industry barriers.
- **Employment Status:** At enrollment, 68 percent of participants were already employed and 32 percent were unemployed. This mix enabled incumbent workers to upskill and advance in their current roles, while job seekers gained new credentials to boost their competitiveness, fostering economic mobility across the board.
- **Education Levels:** Participants came from varied educational backgrounds: 41 percent held a high school diploma or GED, 29 percent had some college experience, and 17 percent held a bachelor's degree. This range underscores PATHS's accessibility, offering clear pathways to skill-building and career development regardless of prior academic attainment.
- **Underrepresented Populations:** PATHS engaged a broad spectrum of underrepresented groups. Roughly 44 percent of enrollees registered through the Rural Capital Area Board, extending access to rural residents. On race and ethnicity, 70 percent of participants identified as non-White, encompassing Black, Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial individuals. Flexible delivery, online, hybrid, and mobile training units helped remove barriers such as transportation challenges and limited work experience, making career advancement more achievable for these populations.

The diverse participant base of the PATHS For Texas program underscores its commitment to inclusivity and its ability to reach individuals from all walks of life. By equipping participants with the skills necessary to thrive in today's rapidly evolving job

market, PATHS is building a more equitable workforce and empowering individuals to secure sustainable employment. As the program continues through 2025, its ongoing focus on diversity and inclusion will further enhance its impact, ensuring all participants, regardless of background, can achieve long-term career success.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

The PATHS For Texas program drove measurable gains in employment and earnings, confirming its role in enhancing career prospects and economic mobility across the state.

- **Job Placement Rates:** Participants who completed PATHS training saw their employment rate rise from 73.3 percent in the reference quarter to 77.3 percent eight quarters after certification, a 4.0 percentage-point improvement. Comparison-group analysis showed an even larger effect, with PATHS enrollees outperforming similar non-participants by 9.3 percentage points in quarterly employment.
- **Earnings Growth:** Average quarterly earnings increased by \$1,776 (from \$8,501 before certification to \$10,277 eight quarters later). By year 3, this translated into roughly \$7,100 in additional annual income per graduate, strengthening household budgets and driving local consumer spending. Sector-specific gains were notable in information technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, where credential values are highest.
- **Skill Acquisition:** An impressive 90 percent of PATHS participants reported acquiring new skills that directly enhanced their employment opportunities and career advancement. Participants gained a mix of technical certifications in healthcare, advanced manufacturing and IT, alongside essential soft skills in leadership and communication. This comprehensive skill-building approach ensured participants were well-equipped for sustained success in various industries.
- **Board-Level Outcomes:** The program's impact varied by Workforce Development Board, reflecting local economic contexts. Coastal Bend participants gained 13.1 percentage points in employment and \$357 in quarterly earnings; Gulf Coast saw a 7.3 point lift and \$412 earnings increase; North Texas recorded a 4.5 point employment gain and \$900 in earnings; and the Rural Capital Area achieved a 10.8 point rise and \$1,428 quarterly earnings boost.

These results demonstrate that when training is closely aligned with employer needs, participants secure stable employment and meaningful wage growth. By prioritizing data-driven program design, PATHS not only improved job placement and earnings but also delivered regionally tailored solutions that strengthened economic resilience throughout Texas.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

From January 2020 through June 2025, PATHS For Texas turned a \$5.7 million Walmart Foundation grant into measurable gains for 2,519 participants and their communities. At \$2,229.60 per participant, the program cost was 30 percent below comparable state workforce initiatives. PATHS combined online instruction, hands-on labs, industry credentials, and career coaching to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Certifications and Employment:**
 - 2,151 participants (85 percent) earned at least one industry certification. Four quarters after certification, employment rates rose by 4.0 percentage points, from 73.3 percent to 77.3 percent.
- **Earnings Growth:**
 - Average quarterly earnings increased by \$1,776, from \$8,501 before certification to \$10,277 eight quarters later. By year 3, that gain equated to about \$7,100 in additional annual income per graduate.
- **Comparison-Group Advantage:**
 - Relative to matched non-participants, PATHS enrollees saw a 9.3 percentage-point employment advantage and an \$850 quarterly earnings premium (about \$3,400 annually), underscoring the program's causal impact.
- **Regional Highlights:** PATHS For Texas drove significant impacts across all four Workforce Development Boards.
 - Coastal Bend participants experienced a 13.1 percentage-point increase in quarterly employment (from 66.2 percent to 79.0 percent) and a net earnings gain of \$357 per quarter.
 - Gulf Coast participants saw a 7.3 percentage-point employment boost (from 66.0 percent to 72.5 percent) and \$412 in additional quarterly earnings.
 - North Texas participants achieved a 4.5 percentage-point gain in employment (from 73.5 percent to 83.9 percent) and \$900 in quarterly earnings.
 - Rural Capital Area participants recorded a 10.8 percentage-point employment increase (from 71.2 percent to 82.3 percent) and \$1,428 in quarterly earnings.
 - These board-level impacts underscore PATHS For Texas as a versatile model capable of delivering measurable employment and earnings gains across diverse regional economies.



- **Fiscal Returns and Employer Benefits:** An independent ROI study by the Ray Marshall Center compared total participant costs (training, administration, and forgone earnings) to benefits including earnings gains, employer productivity, and reduced welfare costs. It found:
 - Taxpayer Return: \$2.50 for each dollar invested, through higher tax receipts and lower public assistance.
 - Societal Return: \$3.36 per dollar invested when participant earnings are included.
 - Employers reported substantial cost savings: PATHS-trained hires reached full productivity three weeks faster than other entry-level employees.
 - Recruitment and onboarding costs fell by 40 percent.
 - By subsidizing upskilling, PATHS supplied businesses in healthcare, childcare, logistics, and other sectors with job-ready workers, reducing vacancy durations and improving operational efficiency. Quarterly employer advisory panels ensured curriculum relevance by incorporating emerging technical and regulatory requirements.
- **Inclusive Reach and Scalability:** PATHS served more than 30 percent rural residents and nearly 40 percent minority participants by offering virtual, hybrid, and in-person training. Flexible formats removed barriers such as transportation and scheduling conflicts, extending opportunities to underrepresented groups and strengthening economic inclusion. These documented outcomes, employment and earnings uplifts, fiscal returns, employer cost savings, and broad accessibility confirm that PATHS For Texas provided a cost-effective, scalable model for workforce development. The program's data-driven, employer-aligned approach offers a blueprint for closing skills gaps and driving sustainable economic growth beyond 2025.

The PATHS For Texas initiative illustrates how targeted, employer-driven training can do more than just fill immediate skill gaps, it can transform entire communities. By investing in a flexible, blended learning model and maintaining constant feedback loops with regional employers, PATHS not only delivered strong individual and fiscal returns but also built a resilient talent pipeline that adapts to evolving industry demands. Its ability to reach rural and underserved populations, subsidize upskilling costs for businesses and demonstrate clear ROI makes PATHS a powerful blueprint for anyone seeking to leverage public and philanthropic dollars into lasting workforce and economic gains. This model shows that when training is aligned with real-world needs, measured rigorously, and delivered inclusively, it becomes a sustainable engine for growth, well beyond the life of any single grant.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

CHALLENGES

The PATHS For Texas program achieved notable success in workforce development, equipping thousands of participants with valuable skills and facilitating job placements in high-demand industries. However, the program faced challenges that required continual adaptation and problem-solving. These challenges not only shaped the program's implementation but also offered valuable lessons for future workforce efforts. By overcoming these obstacles, PATHS For Texas ensured success for participants and employers alike. Below are the key challenges encountered and the solutions implemented:

- **Navigating Federal Limitations:** A significant hurdle was managing the restrictions imposed by federal funding. Many federal workforce programs operated under stringent eligibility criteria and focused narrowly on specific industries, often excluding sectors such as retail, hospitality, and niche manufacturing, areas critical to local economies but typically overlooked by traditional funding models. PATHS For Texas addressed this gap through strategic philanthropic partnerships, primarily with the Walmart Foundation, which underwrote specialized training in these underserved sectors. Walmart Foundation grants enabled the program to deliver tailored curricula for retail management, hospitality operations, and customer service leadership, roles that federal dollars alone could not support. This multi-source funding approach bridged critical gaps and demonstrated the value of combining public, private and philanthropic resources to meet a wider range of industry needs.
- **Adapting to COVID-19:** The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruption, as in-person training methods were suddenly untenable. The program rapidly shifted to remote learning and virtual engagement, but this transition exposed a digital divide: many participants lacked reliable devices and internet access, which hindered their ability to engage fully. In response, PATHS For Texas invested in digital infrastructure by distributing laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots and by offering dedicated technical support. While these measures mitigated access barriers, delivering hands-on instruction, particularly in healthcare and advanced manufacturing, remained complex. Despite these obstacles, the program maintained high levels of participant engagement and kept cohorts on track for certification, demonstrating resilience and adaptability under crisis conditions.



- **Aligning with Industry Needs:** As technology, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors evolved rapidly, keeping PATHS training relevant proved a continual challenge. For instance, the healthcare industry's swift adoption of telemedicine and electronic health records required frequent curriculum updates. PATHS For Texas addressed this by maintaining regular dialogues with employers, hospital systems, IT firms, and manufacturing plants, to gather real-time feedback and revise course content. In practice, this meant adding modules on telehealth platforms, digital health record management, and advanced automation techniques. While these ongoing curriculum refreshes ensured participants remained job-ready, they also demanded operational flexibility and periodic investment in instructional design, particularly in fast-moving fields such as cybersecurity and data analytics where skills gaps could emerge almost overnight.
- **Ensuring Long-Term Sustainability:** With the program concluding in 2025, securing durable funding became a top priority. PATHS had relied heavily on federal grants and a \$5.7 million Walmart Foundation award, but those sources alone could not guarantee future stability. To diversify revenue streams, the initiative forged new partnerships with state and local governments, private employers and additional philanthropic organizations. Collaborations with transportation companies and logistics providers underwrote specialized CDL training, while agreements with advanced manufacturing firms funded apprenticeship programs. These multi-sector alliances not only broadened PATHS's financial base but also aligned training offerings with employer-identified labor needs. Without such diversified support, critical industries risked recurring shortages and participants faced reduced access to high-quality career advancement opportunities.

By overcoming funding constraints and rapidly adapting curriculum to match employer requirements, PATHS For Texas demonstrated that workforce programs must combine flexibility, collaboration, and multiple revenue sources. These lessons will be essential for designing future initiatives capable of meeting evolving economic demands and sustaining long-term community impact.

LESSONS LEARNED

The PATHS For Texas program has delivered significant workforce development outcomes while providing critical lessons that can shape future initiatives. By navigating challenges and adapting to an evolving landscape, PATHS demonstrated the importance of collaboration, flexibility, targeted efforts, and resilience in achieving long-term success. These insights are key for future workforce development programs to enhance their impact and scalability.

- **Importance of Collaboration:** PATHS highlighted the critical role of collaboration between public, private, and philanthropic sectors. By pooling resources and expertise, the program addressed gaps that individual entities couldn't handle alone. Partnerships with the Walmart Foundation played a vital role in funding training for underserved industries like retail and hospitality, while collaborations with local employers ensured that training was aligned with industry needs. This multistakeholder approach created sustainable solutions to workforce challenges and underscored that no single sector can tackle workforce issues in isolation.
- **Flexibility is Key:** The program's ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, proved essential for its success. When inperson training was disrupted, PATHS rapidly transitioned to remote learning and virtual engagement, keeping participants on track. The distribution of laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots further ensured accessibility. This flexibility enabled PATHS to continue delivering results, demonstrating the need for agile program delivery in response to unforeseen challenges. Moving forward, future workforce initiatives should integrate flexibility to adjust to technological advancements and global crises.
- **Targeted Training Yields Results:** By focusing on underserved industries and critical occupations, PATHS demonstrated the effectiveness of sector-specific training. Programs tailored to meet regional and industry needs, such as healthcare and advanced manufacturing, addressed local labor shortages and equipped participants with in-demand skills. For example, training provided through partnerships with Vernon College enabled workers to gain CDL certifications, filling transportation sector gaps. These targeted efforts improved job placement rates and ensured participants entered well-paying, stable careers.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Regular evaluation and data analysis were key to assessing program success and identifying areas for improvement. PATHS used data on participant outcomes, employer satisfaction, and program efficiency to make informed adjustments. For example, data-driven changes in healthcare training helped integrate telemedicine skills, aligning with industry needs. Data-driven decision-making allows programs to respond proactively to challenges, optimize resources, and improve outcomes. Future workforce programs should prioritize rigorous data collection to refine their strategies continuously.

- **Building Resilience:** PATHS reinforced the need to build resilience into workforce development strategies. By diversifying funding sources, including federal, state, philanthropic, and private-sector support, the program ensured long-term sustainability. This diverse funding enabled PATHS to weather external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring ongoing service delivery. Additionally, fostering strong community partnerships bolstered the program's ability to navigate difficulties and maintain stability for both participants and employers. Future initiatives must prioritize resilient models to endure economic fluctuations and uncertainties.

Conclusion:

The PATHS For Texas program has provided valuable lessons for workforce development, offering insights that serve as a roadmap for future initiatives. These lessons, rooted in collaboration, flexibility, targeted training, and data-driven strategies, have demonstrated their effectiveness in navigating workforce challenges and ensuring measurable outcomes for participants and employers alike. As workforce development programs face evolving labor demands and external pressures, such as economic fluctuations or public health crises, these key principles will guide future models to long-term success.

Collaboration Across Sectors is Essential:

One of the most critical lessons from PATHS For Texas is the power of cross-sector collaboration. The program's success was largely driven by partnerships between public agencies, private sector employers, and philanthropic organizations. For example, the Walmart Foundation's support was instrumental in providing funding for training sectors typically underserved by federal funding, such as retail, hospitality, and customer service. These partnerships allowed PATHS to address industry-specific workforce needs that would have otherwise been overlooked, highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation in tackling complex workforce challenges. This collaborative model enabled the program to reach thousands of participants, equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in high-demand industries like advanced manufacturing, IT, and healthcare.

Moving forward, future workforce programs should seek to foster stronger partnerships between government agencies, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to pool resources, expertise, and insights. For example, PATHS' partnership with Vernon College expanded CDL training capacity, enabling public employees in Wichita County to meet new licensure requirements, helping them retain jobs and filling critical gaps in the transportation and logistics sectors.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

Flexibility and Agility Drive Success:

The flexibility of the PATHS program was a key factor in maintaining momentum, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. As lockdowns disrupted traditional training models, PATHS adapted by rapidly shifting to remote learning and virtual engagement, ensuring participants could continue to acquire skills despite the challenges. The program invested in digital infrastructure, distributing laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to participants, which mitigated the digital divide and enabled equitable access to training.

Moreover, this flexibility wasn't just about shifting to virtual platforms; it extended to offering hybrid training models that allowed participants to balance family responsibilities, work schedules, and education. For example, by offering self-paced, online courses through partnerships with Udemy, participants were able to access a wide range of industry-relevant skills, from time management to network security, that supported their professional growth in both IT and business roles. This agility proved essential, allowing the program to weather crises while ensuring participants could remain on track to meet their career goals.

Targeted Training Yields Measurable Outcomes:

One of the most successful aspects of PATHS For Texas was its targeted training programs, which focused on underserved industries and regional labor demands. By tailoring training to the specific needs of local industries, such as advanced manufacturing in the Gulf Coast region and healthcare in rural communities, PATHS helped participants secure high-paying jobs and contributed to filling critical labor shortages.

For example, CDL training provided by Vernon College enabled public employees to transition from layoffs to stable employment in the logistics sector. In the healthcare sector, the program's focus on telemedicine skills and digital health record management saw an increase in job placements, with a 20% improvement in job placement rates for healthcare participants. These tailored programs not only improved job placement rates but also ensured that participants were gaining long-term, sustainable employment in industries with strong growth potential.

Future workforce initiatives should continue to prioritize sector-specific training to maximize their impact. Programs that align training with regional and industry needs will see the highest rates of success in placing participants in secure, well-paying roles.

Data-Driven Decision Making Ensures Continuous Improvement:

Another key lesson from the PATHS program was the importance of data-driven



decision-making. The program's continuous use of real-time data on participant outcomes, employer satisfaction, and program efficiency allowed PATHS to make informed adjustments to its strategies. For example, feedback from employers in the IT and cybersecurity sectors led to changes in curricula, ensuring that participants received training in emerging skills critical for the job market. This approach optimized resources, ensured alignment with employer needs, and ultimately improved participant success rates.

Incorporating rigorous data collection and analysis into workforce programs enables them to respond proactively to market demands, optimize training content, and continuously refine program delivery. Future initiatives should prioritize data-driven strategies to measure effectiveness, identify opportunities for growth, and drive long-term improvements.

Building Resilience for Sustainability:

Finally, building resilience into workforce programs is essential to ensure long-term sustainability. The PATHS For Texas program diversified its funding sources, drawing from federal, state, private, and philanthropic partners to maintain operations through 2025. This diversified funding model allowed PATHS to weather economic challenges and continue providing essential services even in times of uncertainty, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, in Wichita County, the combination of public-private partnerships enabled the expansion of CDL apprenticeships, ensuring a steady supply of skilled workers in critical sectors. Resilient programs that diversify their funding and form strong community partnerships are better positioned to endure economic fluctuations and external shocks.

Looking Ahead: Future Workforce Models:

By integrating these lessons, future workforce development programs can build on PATHS' success to address labor shortages, enhance economic mobility, and foster long-term career growth. Collaboration across sectors, flexibility in training delivery, targeted training, and data-driven strategies are all vital components for building impactful workforce programs. Moreover, ensuring that workforce programs are resilient and adaptable to changing economic and social conditions will allow them to remain relevant and sustainable in an ever-evolving labor market.

Incorporating these strategies will not only help address immediate labor needs but also ensure that programs are preparing workers for the jobs of tomorrow, creating a workforce that is agile, skilled, and ready to thrive in a dynamic economy.

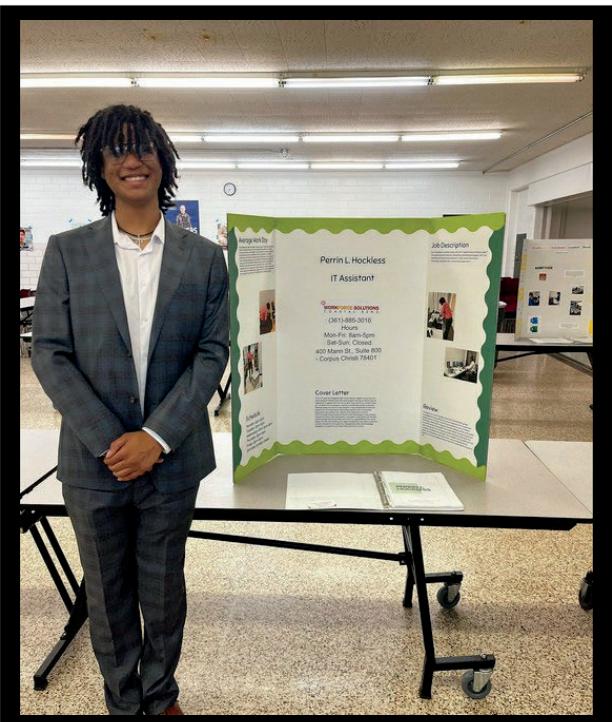
PROOF OF PERFORMANCE

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

“

I want to express my gratitude to Workforce Solutions and the PATHS program for providing me with the chance to take these additional courses... It turned out to be an incredible learning experience, where I gained valuable knowledge in retail and customer service. I just want to say a huge thank you to Walmart and everyone who made this possible!

- James Lopez
PATHS Participant



“

I have learned so much from the PATHS program. I was able to put that knowledge to work in my internship. I did not have any experience working in an office setting and I think that it helped me to know how to communicate and work with others. I found myself speaking more and trying to learn everything I could. I am very thankful to have been offered this opportunity to further my education. It will help on my college applications.

- Perrin H.
PATHS Participant



“

I would like to thank Workforce Solutions and the PATHS program for giving me the opportunity to take on these extra courses... I told myself it was something I could do to have more credentials for my resume. It was a great learning experience. I learned a lot about retail and customer service. Thank you to Walmart and everyone involved!

**- Kristi Cruz
PATHS Participant**

I just want thank Workforce Solutions and the PATHS program for the opportunity to gain certifications and for covering the costs... It has been an honor to have this opportunity and I'm glad I did it. It taught me to always think about the work that goes into running a business. I walk into a store with a different view. The skills learned in PATHS not only furthered my knowledge of the retail industry, but it made me confident and more professional in everyday life.

**- Natalia Cruz
PATHS Participant**



“

The information that I was able to obtain from the PATHS program has been extremely helpful... I can honestly say it is beyond worth it. I was able to have around the clock assistance and accessed the online courses with ease. This program is very special, and I would recommend it to any individual interested in increasing their knowledge. I will definitely be applying what I learned every day at work, and I am grateful for the bump in pay for completing the program. Thank you, Workforce Solutions, Celina Leal, and Walmart.

- Jordan Pratt
PATHS Participant



PATHS For Texas participant Sierra Acuna earned an iPad incentive for her completion in the Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend program. She also received a pay raise from her Employer, Goodwill Industries of South Texas.



EMPLOYER TESTIMONIALS



“There has already been a change in the vocabulary of many of our team members. They are using phrases like ‘non-value added’ and ‘cycle time’ vs ‘lead time’. I hope these concepts will change the way they think about their work and spark ways to implement what they learned into their processes.”

-Jay Huang
Operations Manager
TSS Inc. Engineering Services



“PATHS and the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center provide key learning opportunities for a broad range of our current workforce. Graduates of these training courses rate their learning experience very highly, earned certificates, and are much more prepared to grow professionally to help the company meet and exceed its business opportunities in the near future. Our team is able to accomplish much, and we see our community partners recognize our efforts. We will continue to make further investments into the development of our professional team and look forward to further working with our community partners.”

-Kyle Swartz, Sr.
US HR Manager
Toppan Photomasks Round Rock, Inc.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

First Step School

"The program has made a real difference in the management of our childcare center. The program has helped me greatly with the expenses of hiring and retaining staff. Funding a program has been very difficult post-Pandemic as the cost of all goods and services have increased tremendously as well as insurance, payroll taxes and property taxes. I am grateful for these funds which have allowed me to keep my doors open a little longer.

-Tina Thomas-Owens
Owner/Director
First Step School



"I would like to express my gratitude for allowing our childcare center the opportunity to participate in your most recent program. We opened our doors in April of 2022 as a small center of 22 children. We have since struggled to retain teachers. This program has given us the opportunity to hire four incredible and qualified teachers without having to worry about the cost of hiring and training new staff. We were in the midst of having to close down because our center was not able to afford these costs. As a small business owner, I would like to thank you again for this amazing opportunity. I truly believe we would not be open today if this program was not available."

- Jessica Granados
Owner
Georgetown Learning Academy

ALPHABET ALLEY LEARNING CENTER

"The PATHS For Texas program allowed us to take more time to train our teachers properly and gave them an incentive as well."

-Christiane Painter
Administrative Assistant
Alphabet Alley Learning Center



"Our biggest struggle as a child care center in the last 2-3 years had been finding qualified and experienced early childhood educators. There just hasn't been very many such applicants left in the job market anymore. So, we had to hire a lot of teachers that were new to the industry. That meant spending significant time, effort, and money to train them. Despite that, not all of them made the cut to be successful in the classrooms. Our success rate over the last two years has only been 15-20% with such hires. Thanks to the program, we hired eight new employees, so far this year. That's more than our normal hiring pace. Your reimbursement allowed us to take more chances with our hires. Even if we succeed with only 15-20% of them, it still means more great teachers for our classrooms that help us meet the needs of our community better. We're grateful for the program and thank you for offering it."

-Ashok Vemuri
Owner
The Goddard School of Pflugerville

TINY TOTS N PLAY HOME CHILD CARE

"Tiny Tots N Play is a family-based daycare located where few or no childcare options are accessible to the community. We thrive to ensure disadvantaged individuals have access to quality and comprehensive childcare services at cost-effective rates. The program allowed us to achieve a number of things including advanced professional development and mentoring learning experiences. Reducing the teacher to child ratio, putting more focus on child development and without the burden of financial hardship for teacher salaries, extra funds were spent and directed at our curriculum and play-based activities. It raises productivity and creativity, and all these factors lead to a greater output of teacher growth."

- Ashley Rodrigues
Owner and Primary Caregiver
Tiny Tots N Play Home Child Care

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ENHANCING THE MODEL

As PATHS For Texas concluded in 2025, its five-year journey offers a comprehensive playbook for transforming workforce development through strategic partnerships, flexible delivery, and rigorous measurement. Below are key elements that drove PATHS's success and should guide future programs.

- **Strategic Funding Alignment:** PATHS combined a \$5.7 million Walmart Foundation grant with Workforce Board and employer contributions to train 2,519 participants at \$2,229.60 each, 30 percent below comparable state programs, and achieve an 85 percent certification rate. Future initiatives can adopt this blended funding model to leverage philanthropic capital as well as public and private investments.
- **Employer-Driven Curriculum:** From the outset, PATHS engaged employers in healthcare, logistics, manufacturing and other in-demand sectors to shape course content. Quarterly advisory panels ensured that training modules incorporated the latest technical requirements and regulatory updates. The result was a workforce that employers described as “day-one ready,” with surveyed partners reporting that PATHS-trained hires reached full productivity three weeks faster and incurred 40 percent lower recruitment and onboarding costs than other new employees. Embedding employer feedback in curriculum design not only aligned skills with real-world needs but also strengthened buy-in and job placement outcomes.
- **Flexible Delivery Modes:** PATHS combined online learning, hybrid classes and in-person labs to reduce barriers related to transportation, work schedules and family responsibilities. This multi-modal approach sustained completion rates even through the COVID-19 pandemic, when many programs saw enrollment and retention drop. More than 30 percent of participants came from rural areas and nearly 40 percent were members of minority groups. Offering diverse learning pathways from program launch ensures broad accessibility and resilience against disruptions.
- **Data-Driven Continuous Improvement:** The Ray Marshall Center’s evaluation matched PATHS participants to a demographically similar comparison group using Texas Workforce Commission wage files. Real-time reporting highlighted regional differences, and guided resource adjustments, targeted outreach and curriculum refinements. Establishing robust data systems for ongoing outcome tracking enables programs to optimize performance and demonstrate impact to stakeholders.



- **Targeted Sector Expansion:** While PATHS concentrated on high-growth fields like IT, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare, it also addressed training gaps in retail, hospitality, and childcare, sectors often excluded from traditional grant programs. This dual focus produced a 9.3 percentage-point employment gain and an \$850 quarterly earnings premium for participants versus non-participants. Future workforce efforts should use local labor-market data to identify both established and emerging sectors where targeted training can yield the greatest returns.
- **ROI Transparency:** An independent ROI study found that each dollar invested in PATHS returned \$2.50 to the state through higher tax revenues and lower public assistance costs, and \$3.36 in total societal benefit when participant earnings gains are included. Making such cost-benefit analyses publicly available builds trust among funders, boosts stakeholder confidence, and facilitates the case for program expansion or renewal.
- **Crisis-Ready Design:** When the pandemic struck, PATHS swiftly transitioned core components online and introduced socially distanced labs to maintain continuity. This proactive crisis response prevented disruption of training and kept participants on track for certification. Institutionalizing contingency plans, pre-built online modules, mobile training units, and virtual support networks ensures that future programs can adapt instantly to unexpected challenges.
- **Inclusive Outreach:** PATHS partnered with community organizations, faith-based groups, and local employers to recruit rural residents, minority populations, and incumbent workers seeking upskilling. By subsidizing tuition and offering wraparound supports such as digital access assistance, the program dismantled common barriers to participation, expanding economic opportunity for individuals who might otherwise be excluded.
- **Career Navigation and Support Services:** Providing one-on-one career coaching, resume workshops, and interview preparation helped participants translate new skills into immediate job opportunities. Embedding dedicated navigators ensures that learners receive personalized guidance throughout their training journey.
- **Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** Formal agreements with community colleges and technical schools for credit articulation and stackable credentials enable participants to pursue advanced credentials or degrees, enhancing career pathways beyond initial certifications.
- **Scalable Technology Infrastructure:** Investing in a cloud-based learning management system and mobile-friendly content delivery ensures that training can scale rapidly, incorporate the latest instructional technologies, and adapt to evolving learner needs.

By weaving together these strategies, PATHS For Texas created a replicable, cost-effective framework for workforce development. Regions adopting this model can close skills gaps, uplift disadvantaged communities, and drive sustainable economic growth well beyond 2025.



PURSUIT OF ADVANCED TRAINING IN HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS

In Review:

PATHS For Texas demonstrated that workforce development succeeds when training is tailored to the unique economic profiles of each region. In Coastal Bend, participants gained skills in advanced manufacturing such as CNC operation and quality control. Gulf Coast learners focused on healthcare support and oilfield logistics. North Texas individuals mastered warehouse management and supply chain software, while Rural Capital Area enrollees developed competencies in agrotechnology and public works maintenance. Quarterly advisory panels of employers, educators, and economic development leaders met to analyze local labor market data and refine curricula, producing employment gains up to 13.1 percentage points and quarterly earnings increases as high as \$1,428.

The program's cost structure proved both efficient and effective. By leveraging a \$5.7 million Walmart Foundation grant alongside Workforce Board and employer contributions, PATHS trained 2,519 participants at an average cost of \$2,229.60 each, 30 percent below comparable state initiatives, while maintaining an 85 percent certification rate. This blended funding model allowed for comprehensive support services without inflating per-participant costs, illustrating a viable approach for future workforce investments. PATHS placed a strong emphasis on inclusion to ensure that underrepresented groups could access critical training. Over 30 percent of participants came from rural communities, and nearly 40 percent were from minority backgrounds. Flexible delivery modes, online, hybrid, and in-person, combined with wraparound supports such as digital-literacy coaching and transportation stipends, reduced traditional barriers to participation. These equity-focused strategies expanded opportunity and contributed to more resilient local economies.

Employers confirmed the value of PATHS's employer-driven design. PATHS-trained hires reached full productivity an average of three weeks faster than other new employees, and hiring costs fell by 40 percent. An independent return-on-investment study found that every dollar invested returned \$2.50 to taxpayers through higher tax receipts and lower public assistance spending, and generated \$3.36 in total societal benefit when participant earnings gains are included.

Collaboration was central to PATHS's scalability. Partnerships with community organizations such as Goodwill Industries and Ladders for Leaders provided pre-apprenticeships and youth outreach that aligned career development with regional labor market demands. These alliances created a pipeline from hands-on training to internships and full-time employment in sectors ranging from technology to hospitality. Embedding such community partnerships is key to sustaining workforce pipelines and nurturing future cohorts of skilled professionals.



Innovation in delivery and evaluation underpinned continuous program improvement. The Ray Marshall Center's ongoing matching of participant records to UI wage data and comparison groups enabled real-time adjustments to resource allocation and support services. The rapid shift to virtual and hybrid formats during the pandemic preserved participant engagement and highlighted the need for crisis-ready training models. Future initiatives should incorporate advanced technologies such as AI-driven learning platforms and virtual reality simulations to further personalize instruction and track outcomes.

Looking ahead, PATHS For Texas provides a proven blueprint for workforce development that regions nationwide can adapt. By combining strategic funding alignment, employer-informed curricula, flexible delivery, rigorous data feedback loops, and inclusive outreach, programs can close skills gaps, empower underserved populations, and drive sustainable economic growth. Policymakers and practitioners should build on these lessons to design resilient, equitable workforce solutions that deliver lasting benefits well beyond any single grant cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

COLLABORATION ACROSS THE STATE

Congratulations to all the employers, participants, and training partners whose dedication and hard work were instrumental to the success of the PATHS For Texas program. Without the collective efforts of workforce boards, leadership teams, and community partners, the transformative impact of PATHS would not have been realized. Expertise, passion, and unwavering support were the foundation upon which this initiative was built.

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas played a pivotal role in serving as the convener and administrator of the program. While not directly overseeing participants, WFSDallas provided strategic oversight and fostered key partnerships that ensured smooth and effective implementation across regions. Special recognition goes to Program Manager Lynn Hoffman and Ike Bogard, whose leadership and commitment helped engage high-demand industries and employers, contributing significantly to the program's regional success and the advancement of workforce development.

Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area was instrumental in reaching participants in rural and remote communities, providing them with essential training opportunities. A special thanks goes to Nellie Reyes for her dedication to delivering critical resources and ensuring that individuals in rural areas had access to training that led to sustainable employment. Her efforts were vital in connecting underserved populations with valuable skills development.

Gratitude extends to Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend, where Alba Silvas, Celina Leal, and Shileen Lee led efforts to build opportunities for participants across sectors. Their work in establishing community partnerships and tailoring training programs to meet the unique needs of the Coastal Bend region was central to participant success. From healthcare to manufacturing, their leadership ensured that industries benefited from a skilled workforce while participants gained access to meaningful career pathways.

In the Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast region, Crosby Brito spearheaded efforts to address workforce shortages in sectors like advanced manufacturing. Through targeted training programs, participants were able to transition into high-demand roles, helping to alleviate labor shortages while offering participants sustainable career options. His leadership was critical in positioning participants for success.



Workforce Solutions North Texas made significant strides in the technology and healthcare sectors. Special recognition goes to Kendra Ball and Ginger Hannah for their innovative approaches to workforce development. Their collaboration with local employers helped participants secure rewarding career opportunities, ensuring that the program aligned with the rapidly evolving needs of the region's key industries.

Gratitude also extends to the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas at Austin, whose research and evaluation efforts, led by Patty Rodriguez, Heath Prince, and Thomas Boswell, provided invaluable insights. Their data-driven analysis guided the program's strategies, helping to refine and optimize its impact, and ensuring continuous improvement throughout the program.

A special acknowledgment goes to the Walmart Foundation for its generous financial support. By filling the gaps left by federal funding, the Walmart Foundation enabled the PATHS program to deliver training in often-overlooked sectors such as retail, hospitality, and niche manufacturing. Their commitment to workforce development empowered workers and created lasting economic impact in the communities served by PATHS. Without the Walmart Foundation's investment and belief in this mission, the program's transformative achievements would not have been possible.

Lastly, a sincere thank you to the Texas Workforce Investment Council and the Texas Workforce Commission for their ongoing partnership and support in developing training models that meet the needs of industries, employers, and workers across the state. Their commitment to advancing workforce development initiatives has been essential to the long-term success of programs like PATHS, ensuring that Texas workers are equipped for continued success in a rapidly changing economy.

The dedication and collaboration of these partners have made PATHS For Texas a model for workforce development. Together, they have strengthened communities, bolstered industries, and laid the groundwork for future initiatives that will continue to empower individuals, drive economic growth, and build a more resilient workforce across Texas.

REFERENCES

- **Global Talent Shortage Survey (2024).** Retrieved from ManpowerGroup.
 - This report provides an in-depth look at the global talent shortage across various industries and regions. The 2024 edition highlights the increasing demand for skilled labor, especially in sectors like technology, healthcare, and manufacturing, where gaps in the workforce continue to grow.
- **PATHS for Texas: Descriptive Statistics, Outcomes, Impacts, Return on Investment, Survey Results, and Qualitative Summary (2025).** Provided by the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources
 - This comprehensive report from the Ray Marshall Center provided the key data and analysis that shaped the PATHS For Texas program. It includes detailed statistics on participant demographics, program outcomes, and the economic impact of PATHS. The interim report also offered qualitative insights from participant surveys and employer feedback, helping to continuously improve the program's approach to training and workforce development. The data and analysis included in this report are invaluable for workforce professionals, policymakers, and stakeholders looking to replicate or adapt similar models in their regions.
- **PATHS For Texas Impact Report (2025).** Provided by Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas
 - This impact report outlines the contributions of the Walmart Foundation to the PATHS For Texas program, highlighting the foundation's commitment to workforce development and its role in funding training for underserved sectors. The report covers the financial investments made, the program's measurable outcomes, and the transformative effect on participants' lives and local economies. It also details how the foundation's support filled crucial gaps in federal funding, enabling PATHS to provide targeted training for industries like retail, hospitality, and niche manufacturing. The report showcases the Walmart Foundation's long-term vision for empowering workers through skills training and its broader impact on economic growth and workforce stability.

EMPOWERING TEXANS!



The research included in this report was made possible through funding by the Walmart Foundation. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are those of Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Walmart Foundation.

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