

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Workforce Solutions Awarded \$1.2 Million Grant to Improve Postsecondary Outcomes for Rural Students

Abilene, Texas —Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas will receive approximately \$1.2 million over a three-year period from the U.S. Department of Education to improve postsecondary enrollment and completion among rural students in career pathways that lead to employment in high demand, high wage careers. The Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development (RPED) grant will be implemented in partnership with institutions of higher education including Cisco College, Hardin-Simmons University, and McMurry University, with support from employers in manufacturing, healthcare, and other key industries. Award funds will support career awareness initiatives for middle and high school students, college and career advising for seniors, work-based learning opportunities, career pathway mapping, and additional activities to address postsecondary enrollment and completion.

Grant funds expand Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas programs and services that prepare youth in rural communities with the tools, resources, and experiences to make educated decisions about their future careers. “We are building partnerships and facilitating opportunities that are multi-faceted to meet the varying needs of students, schools, and industry partners,” said Director of Career Education Dr. Amelia Reeves. “All with the end goal of addressing workforce challenges and supporting economic growth across the West Central Texas region.” Through activities like exploring careers at the World of Work (WOW) Youth Expo, job shadowing in a field of interest, or gaining 1-on-1 guidance around college and career training, students are more likely to pursue pathways that lead to high demand careers paying family-sustaining wages.

Career education programs at Workforce Solutions raise awareness of high demand career pathways, cultivate education-employer partnerships, engage students in work-based learning, and ultimately support the pursuit of education and training in pathways that lead to sustainable, good-paying jobs. Additional grant supporters who make this work possible include: Abilene Industrial Foundation, Big

Country Manufacturing Alliance, Hendrick Health, Office of Congressman Jodey Arrington, RAM Inc., and Region XIV Education Service Center.

For further information, please contact Dr. Amelia Reeves, Director of Career Education, at Amelia.Reeves@workforcesystem.org or (325) 795-4364.

The Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board is charged with oversight and policy-making responsibility for local workforce and training programs. We are committed to strengthening the economic vitality of our 19-county region by investing in the success of residents and businesses. Our assistance and expertise are provided to both the job seeker and the employer. Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities. Relay: 1-800-735-2989 (TTY) / 711 (voice). Programs/services are funded in whole or in part with federal funds.

- *The percentage of the total cost of the program which will be financed with Federal money is 53%*
- *The dollar amount of Federal funds for the program is \$620,000*
- *The percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program that will be financed by non-governmental sources is 47% and \$550,000*

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