



Public Comment to the Texas Sunset Commission

Review of the Texas Workforce Commission

Prepared by the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies

The 2026 Sunset review of the Texas Workforce Commission provides an important opportunity to strengthen the connection between Texas' workforce system and community-based organizations also using state and federal funding to serve many of the Texans who could benefit most from workforce development services.

We encourage the Sunset Advisory Commission to recommend that TWC strengthen expectations for Local Workforce Development Boards to develop meaningful, ongoing partnerships with Community Action Agencies and other community-based organizations in their service areas.

Community Action Agencies Should Be Core Workforce Partners

Texas' Community Action Agencies are particularly important partners for local workforce boards because they serve many of the same families the workforce system is intended to help. Together, Community Action Agencies and local workforce boards can move more Texans from poverty to prosperity and employment.

Community Action Agencies administer a wide range of state and federally funded services that help families achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency. Depending on the community, these services may include utility assistance, housing assistance, weatherization, transportation, emergency and disaster assistance, case management, financial education, and other supports.

The families receiving these services frequently include adults, veterans, and disabled Texans who are unemployed, underemployed, seeking better-paying work, trying to reenter the workforce, or facing barriers that make employment difficult.

Community Action Agencies are natural partners for Local Workforce Development Boards.

Texans should not have to understand the boundaries between federal programs, state agencies, local workforce boards, and nonprofit organizations to find work. If a family comes to a Community Action Agency for utility assistance or Head Start, that interaction can also provide an opportunity to connect a parent with job training, employment services, or other workforce resources.

Likewise, a Workforce Solutions office serving a job seeker should have strong relationships with the organizations that can help address the transportation, housing, utility, or other challenges that may prevent that individual from successfully entering or remaining in the workforce.

Better Coordination Means Better Use of Taxpayer Dollars

This is not simply a question of providing better customer service. It is also a question of stewardship of state and federal resources. Texas communities receive significant state and federal funding through multiple systems intended to improve family stability and economic opportunity. Those programs often serve overlapping populations but operate through different agencies, funding streams, eligibility requirements, and local organizations.

Without intentional local coordination, Texas risks having publicly funded programs operating alongside one another rather than with one another. Local Workforce Development Boards are uniquely positioned to help solve this problem. They can bring together employers, Community Action Agencies, education providers, local governments, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, child care providers, and other community partners around a common goal: helping Texans obtain and retain employment that allows their families to become economically secure.

Strong coordination can reduce duplication, increase referrals between programs, identify gaps in services, and help communities make better use of existing state and federal resources. It can also allow organizations to combine their respective strengths. A Community Action Agency may already have a trusted relationship with a family and understand the barriers that family faces, while the local workforce board has access to employers, training resources, labor-market information, and workforce programs.

Neither organization needs to duplicate the other's work. They need to work together.

Local Coordination Should Be an Expectation, Not an Accident

The quality of these partnerships currently varies by community. Texas should not rely solely on individual relationships or the initiative of particular local leaders to determine whether families receive coordinated services.

The Sunset Commission should recommend that TWC establish clear expectations for Local Workforce Development Boards to engage Community Action Agencies and other major publicly funded community-based service providers in their workforce areas.

Those expectations should preserve local flexibility while requiring boards to demonstrate meaningful coordination. This could include regular consultation with Community Action Agencies, formal referral relationships, participation in community needs assessments and workforce planning, data-informed identification of shared populations and service gaps, and collaborative strategies for connecting families receiving supportive services with workforce opportunities.

The goal should not be to create another layer of bureaucracy, reporting, or state-level administration. The goal should be to make the programs Texas already funds work better together at the local level.

Proposed Solutions

We respectfully recommend that the Sunset Advisory Commission direct TWC to strengthen its expectations for Local Workforce Development Boards regarding coordination with Community Action Agencies and other community-based organizations receiving state or federal funds to serve low-income families.

Specifically, TWC should require local boards to demonstrate how they:

- Establish and maintain meaningful partnerships with Community Action Agencies serving their workforce areas;
- Create effective referral pathways between workforce services and Community Action programs;
- Include Community Action Agencies in local workforce planning and discussions of barriers to employment;
- Use local community needs assessments and other available data to identify populations that could benefit from workforce services;
- Partner to ensure the successful transition of Community Action clients from poverty and public assistance to work;
- Utilize Community Action Agencies for job placements for participants in WIOA and TANF programs;
- Coordinate services to minimize duplication and make the most efficient use of state and federal funds; and
- Measure whether partnerships are actually resulting in families being connected to employment, training, child care, and supportive services.

Texas does not necessarily need another program or another funding stream to improve outcomes for these families. In many communities, the resources already exist. The opportunity is to connect them.

By making cooperation between Local Workforce Development Boards, Community Action Agencies, and other community partners a more deliberate part of the Texas workforce system, the state can help more Texans move toward employment and economic independence while getting greater value from the state and federal dollars already being invested in their communities.

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