

STERLING COUNTY

Community Strategic and Service Delivery Plan

*Concho Valley Workforce Development Board
Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley
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Introduction

The community audit and service delivery plan for Sterling County has been developed in coordination with local employers, economic development entities, civic leaders, business owners, churches, social services agencies and private citizens in an effort to better understand Sterling County's workforce. Meetings with community partners and members were conducted to explain the project, the importance for community involvement, and to update the community on the status of the community audit activities. The Concho Valley Workforce Development Board collected and has interpreted the county's labor market information. Concho Valley Workforce Development Board, Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley, and communities in Sterling County have built consensus and partnerships to implement skills enhancement training services that are tailored to the unique needs of the employers in the business sector. Through mapping of assets, existing programs and providers who are presently serving clients were identified, which reduces duplication of services, along with identifying gaps in services.

This document presents both short and long-term goals and objectives, local demographics, the scope of existing training/support programs and linkages with the business community, faith-based organizations, services providers and educational institutions.

The Concho Valley Workforce Development Board utilizes labor market information to plan services for the present and future needs. Employer input allows the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board to effectively plan services, designate funds, and formalize policies and procedures in advance of needs. Employer input allows the Board to effectively maximize the shortage of education and training dollars, develop strategies to implement short-term industry specific training, and provide for current worker training that meets both the needs of the employer and the worker. Along with self-assessment tools, the Board and the business community can rapidly move to identify current skilled workers and potential employees with the aptitude to succeed and tailor training for career advancement.

The Concho Valley Workforce Development Board conducted a local labor market analysis specific to providing skills enhancement and training services in Sterling County from June 2005 to August 2005.

The goals of the local labor market analysis were to:

- Gather primary information on economic and labor market trends;
- Address critical information gaps in the regional economy;
- Develop informed strategies to respond to employer and worker needs; and,

- Establish linkages between employers and educational institutions to ensure responsiveness to labor market needs.

The purpose of conducting the local labor market analysis was to obtain current information that accurately identifies skill shortages, which allows the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board, Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley, and community partners/members to respond to technological change and a tight labor market. The community audit and service delivery plan will assist the community and individuals with up-to-date information on good job and career opportunities, provide employers with assistance in finding employees with the right sets of skills, assist service and training providers with information to design appropriate workforce development interventions, obtain timely information on the supply and demand sides of the labor market, and identify business trends that allow us to respond to employers needs prior to any adverse actions. In a geographically isolated rural area, it is critical for the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board and workforce system partners to include quantitative analysis of both the demand and supply side of the labor market, along with identifying funding sources and providers for labor exchange, training, and support services.

Primary sector/cluster analysis was conducted through surveys and interviews to identify industries and business clusters that are critical to maintain in the local economy. Survey and interview instruments were tailored specifically to employers and workers. The Community Auditor conducted the surveys and interviews and collected data on the number of building permits for new or expanded business facilities, obtained data from Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce on what kinds of businesses are scouting the area for commercial space by industry sector and size. In addition, the Community Auditor collected data and compiled survey, interview, and resource results. Concho Valley Workforce Development Board staff, Workforce Solutions staff, and Child Care Services staff conducted community meetings.

The Concho Valley Workforce Development Board, Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley, and community partners conducted local labor market analysis to provide insight into broad occupational trends that can be related to skill trends by gathering primary information on the demand and supply sides of the labor market and the employment and training resource base. The basic profile of the geographic area was created with quantitative data utilizing the following sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Bureau of Labor Statistics; and Texas Workforce Commission-Labor Market Information. The quantitative data, along with the primary research, will ensure timely responses to the rapidly changing economy and build upon the employment and training resource base.

Geographic Scope

Sterling County is located in the Concho Valley region, and the county seat is Sterling City. The population of Sterling County decreased 3.1% from 1,438 persons in 1990 to 1,393 persons in 2000, according to the U. S. Census Bureau Census 1990 and 2000. The projected 2006 population for Sterling County is noted in the following:

Age Group	# of Persons	% of Projected 2006 Population
Age 0	17	1.17
Age 1-5	72	4.95
Age 6-18	258	17.73
Age 19-64	868	59.66
Age 65+	240	16.49
Total:	1,455	100

(Health and Human Services Commission, Projected 2006 Texas Population by County & Age Groups, November 28, 2005, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.)

This 2006 projection indicates a slight increase in total population (1.04%) compared to the total population of 2000.

Income and Wages

Sterling County's annual per capita income was \$19,506, which is \$9,568 lower than the annual per capita income of \$29,074 for the State of Texas in 2003. The average weekly wage, as reported by the Texas Workforce Commission in the 2nd Quarter of 2005, was \$452, which is \$295 below the state average weekly wage of \$747. (Bureau of Economic Analysis, BearFacts, <http://www.bea.doc.gov/beat/regional/bearfacts/>) (Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information, <http://www.twc.state.tx.us>)

Major Firms

Major industries in the county are listed below with the related number of employees under covered employment:

Industry	2004 3rd Quarter	2004 4th Quarter	2005 1st Quarter	2005 2nd Quarter
Natural Resources and Mining	138	132	109	139
Construction	18	17	14	13
Manufacturing	--	--	--	--
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	98	94	66	63
Information	--	--	--	--
Financial Activities	23	25	--	--
Professional Business Services	5	4	--	--

Education Health Services	--	--	--	--
Leisure Hospitality	74	71	163	184
Other Services	34	29	27	29
Unclassified	13	16	44	37
Federal Government	3	3	3	3
State Government	12	13	14	14
Local Government	138	146	150	164
Total	556	550	590	645

Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information, 2004 & 2005, <<http://www.twc.state.tx.us>>.

*The Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Department clarifies unclassified as a classification when somebody starts filing their tax reports has not been assigned an industry classification. They are new to the system and eventually will be reclassified as more information is obtained about their business for identification in an industry. If an industry in a geographical area has less than three employers or one employer has 80% or more of the employees, the information is considered confidential. This confidential information is then combined and put into the unclassified industry category.

Analysis

The number of employees from the 3rd quarter of 2004 to the 2nd quarter of 2005 has decreased in Construction; Other Services; and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industries. The number of employees increased in Leisure Hospitality, Local Government, and Unclassified industries. Federal Government, Natural Resources and Mining, and State Government have remained fairly steady. The largest decline in employment for Sterling County was in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Industries with a 35.71% decrease. The largest employment base is found in Leisure Hospitality, Local Government, and Natural Resources and Mining.

Labor Force, Employment, Unemployment

The county seat is the community of Sterling City and the largest employers are Grimmitt Brothers Inc., James David Glass, Pioneer Resources USA, Inc., SCDQ Inc., Sterling City Independent School District, Sterling County, The First National Bank, Town & Country Food Stores Inc., Wagner & Brown, and Yale E. Key, Inc.

The civilian labor force has decreased 4.24% from December 2004 to December 2005. The unemployment rate has decreased from 3.3% in December 2004 to 2.6% in December 2005. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information, the civilian labor force decreased from 873 in December 2004 to 836 in December 2005. Sterling County's unemployment rate in June 2004 and 2005 were respectively 4.5%, and 3.8% which were at the highest, compared to the state's average unemployment rate of 5.4% for 2005. The Concho Valley Workforce Development Board did not receive any reported layoffs in 2004 or 2005 from Sterling County employers. (Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information, <http://www.twc.state.tx.us>) (Concho Valley Workforce Development Board, Employer Services, Rapid Response Report)

Building Permits

The Texas Workforce Commission's Labor Market Information did not have any listings for building permits for new or expanded business facilities. (<http://www.twc.state.tx.us>).

Transportation

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, workers commuting to work (age 16 and older) total 618 with a mean travel time to work in minutes as 24.8. There is not a public transportation system in Sterling County. Thunderbird Transit operates from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. transporting individuals to San Angelo every Monday and as needed.

The following table shows a breakdown of transportation related information:

Means of Transportation	Number	Percent
Car, truck, or van:	536	88.74
Drove alone	469	77.65
Carpooled:	67	11.09
2- person carpool	49	73.13
3- person carpool	6	8.96
4- person carpool	6	8.96
5- or 6-person carpool	2	2.99
7- or-,more-person carpool	4	5.97
Public Transportation	0	0.00
Motorcycle	0	0.00
Bicycle	0	0.00
Walked	15	2.48
Worked at home	53	8.77
TOTAL	604	100.00

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 & Table DP-4. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000, Sterling County.

Poverty

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, poverty status in 2000 for families with female householder, with no husband present, was at 55.2% below poverty level. Female householders', with no husband present and with related children under 18 years of age, were 60.9 % below poverty level. *U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Sterling County*

Demand Side of the Labor Market

The Community Auditor conducted employer surveys in Sterling County from May 2005 to July 2005 to gather primary information on the demand side of the labor market. The number of businesses identified to participate was 101. This number was determined by utilizing InfoUSA's database of local businesses, which is based upon taxpayer identification numbers, and the identification of new businesses or businesses not listed in the database. Of those 101 businesses, 65 were unable to participate for the following reasons: out of business/going out of business in this county, bad address/phone number, unable to make contact, business with no employees, business/club no longer in county, duplicate entry of business, federal office, seasonal business, private civic club, business refused to participate, employer is retiring, not a Sterling County business, employer is ill, and employer thought the survey did not pertain to his business.

The following table outlines the results of the recent employer surveys:

2005 Sterling County Survey Results	
Businesses Listed on InfoUSA, Inc. (95)	94.1 %
New Businesses or Unlisted Businesses Identified (6)	5.9 %
Total = 101	100 %
Inability to participate (65)	
Inability to participate (65)	64.4%
Ability to participate (36)	
Ability to participate (36)	35.6%
Total = 101	100 %
Businesses surveyed of businesses with ability to participate (33/36)	
Businesses surveyed of businesses with ability to participate (33/36)	91.7%
Employer surveys not returned of businesses surveyed (2/33)	
Employer surveys not returned of businesses surveyed (2/33)	6.1%
Survey Rate - {Businesses surveyed/ Businesses having ability to participate (33/36)}	
Survey Rate - {Businesses surveyed/ Businesses having ability to participate (33/36)}	91.7%

Based on survey results, the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board tabulated the numbers of current full-time and part-time employees and projected full-time and part-time employees as outlined in the table below:

	Service Sector	Service Sector	Goods Sector	Goods Sector	Goods & Service	Goods & Service
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Current	136	23	17	3	6	0
Projected	14	2	2	1	1	0

Analysis

Employer projected labor needs were based on 10% turnover rates noted on the surveys. Employers indicated that turnover ranged anywhere from “no turnover” to “50% or less,” with the majority noting “no turnover.”

Job positions reported to experience the largest turnover were: Certified Nursing Assistant, Dietary Worker, Driver, Housekeeping/Laundry/Mail, LVN, Office Manager, RN, Secretary, Shop Foreman, and Shop Help/Painter.

Indicators of labor market problems evidenced from the employer surveys are listed below:

Survey	# of Answers	% of Responses
Poor Work History/References	17	21.8
Work Ethic	15	19.2
Lack of Skills	13	16.7
Lack of Experience	9	11.5
Lack of Proper Education/Training	8	10.3
Not Applicable	7	9.0
Lack of Preparation	6	7.7
Other	3	3.8
Total Responses	78	100.00

Analysis

The survey results indicate that labor market problems are “Poor work History/References”, “Work Ethic”, and “Lack of skills” and are the greatest issues related to workers that are not hired, which indicates the need to inform and educate job seekers on: how to complete applications and resumes, how to utilize references, how to utilize labor market information, services available through Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley, and resources available to meet employment and educational needs. “Work ethic” issues may best be addressed through employer job descriptions and written policies and/or through job search training that addresses issues such as: attendance, attitude, integrity, effort, productivity, communication, customer service, team work, problem-solving, and organization and time management skills.

Based on the survey and responses, the table below documents what entities are contacted for workforce training:

Answers Given	# of Responses	% of Responses
On-the-Job Training	19	41.30
Educational/Training Institutions	9	19.57
No One/Not Applicable	6	13.04
Other Professional Organizations	5	10.87

Training on Video	5	10.87
Workforce Solutions	2	4.35
Total Responses	46	100

Skills required by survey respondents in relation to job positions were noted as:

Answers Given	# of Responses	% of Responses
People Skills/PR Customer Relations	45	18.29
Communication Skills	23	9.35
Other	23	9.35
Maintenance/Mechanic Skills	17	6.91
Computer Skills	16	6.50
General Office Skills	15	6.10
Heavy Equipment Operation Skills	15	6.10
Organizational Skills	14	5.69
Accounting/Bookkeeping/Financial	10	4.07
Critical Thinking	10	4.07
Plumbing Skills	9	3.66
Management Skills	8	3.25
Basic Skills	7	2.85
Cooking/Food Prep Skills	6	2.44
Welding/Fitting Skills	6	2.44
Work Ethic	6	2.44
Cash Register Skills	5	2.03
Construction/Carpentry Skills	4	1.63
Electronic/Electrical Skills	4	1.63
Medical Skills	3	1.22
Total Responses	246	100.00

Analysis

The number of responses (246) in relation to employer surveys returned (31) indicates that employers require more “soft” skills than “hard” or tactile skills.

When asked how the Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley can help with workforce needs, survey respondents noted:

Answers Given	# of Responses	% of Responses
Don't Know	12	33.33
Provide Information	8	22.22
Provide Skilled Workers	7	19.44
Can't Help	5	13.89
Provide Training	4	11.11
Total Responses	36	100.00

Analysis

A correlation could be drawn between the labor market problems and the fact that only 4.35% of the business respondents contact Workforce Solutions to help with them with their workforce needs. Respondent, at 13.04%, feel it is not applicable to contact anyone for workforce training. Survey responses indicate the need to promote the Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley and the services available to meet business and employer needs in obtaining and training employees with the required skill sets. Survey responses indicate opportunities to partner and share resources with professional organizations, educational and training institutions, and employers who utilize on-the-job training.

The 3 most important attributes that an employer looks for in employees are:

1. Honesty (25.21%)
2. Ability to get along with others (17.65%)
3. Communication Skills (16.81%)

Analysis

These are qualities or characteristics that are not easily discernible during a job interview and would require in-depth assessment to identify potential employees capable of these attributes. These qualities or characteristics are more discernible with current employees who have been on the job and have exhibited these attributes.

The responses to the average cost to train one employee in his/her position in relation to dollars were ranked as follows:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
Not Applicable	12	38.71
\$1,000 or less	7	22.58
\$500 or less	6	19.35
\$5,000 or less	2	6.45
\$10,000 or less	2	6.45
\$100 or less	1	3.23
\$50,000 or less	1	3.23
Over \$50,000	0	0.00
Total Responses	31	100.00

The average time to train one employee in his/her position is ranked as follows:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
One year or less	11	35.48
One week or less	8	25.81
One month or less	6	19.35

Not Applicable	3	9.68
Over one year	2	6.45
One day or less	1	3.23
Total Responses	31	100.00

Analysis

Due to the high response of “Not Applicable,” it is difficult to project a typical cost. Based on the remaining responses, the majority of responses indicate the cost to train an employee typically falls between \$100 to \$50,000 or less. Based on the majority of responses, the average time it takes to train one employee is indicated from “one week or less” to “one year or less”, or “Not Applicable.”

The following is a listing, ranked in order, of issues related to present or currently employed workers as identified by employer responses:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
None/Not Applicable	12	18.18
Salary	12	18.18
Skills	12	18.18
Work Ethic	10	15.15
Training	8	12.12
Under Staffed	6	9.09
Benefits	4	6.06
Turnover	2	3.03
Total Responses	66	100.00

When asked how more skills training and increased skills affect their business, the responses were:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
Increase employee efficiency	19	24.36
Add value to your product or service	15	19.23
Increase production	13	16.67
Help decrease training time	12	15.38
Not Applicable	9	11.54
Help to retain employees	5	6.41
Make your company more competitive	5	6.41
Total Responses	78	100.00

Pay increases, in relation to skill development, would be supported by 41.94 % of the respondents compared to 19.35% of the remaining businesses responding “no” and 38.71% responding “not applicable”. Noted from those responding “yes,” skill development could make an employee more competitive in a bid for promotion. Most

businesses responded that the typical pay increase that could be expected would range from: 5% or less (56.25%), 10% or less (31.25%), and 25% or less (12.50%). Employee benefits are provided by 48.39% of the 31 respondents in comparison to 51.61 % of respondents that do not provide any employee benefits.

The majority of the firms in Sterling County require some specific credential or level of education, which employers may use as a screening protocol. Survey respondents listed credentials or levels of education that would be required as depicted in the table below:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
High School Diploma	43	40.19
None	20	18.69
Specific License/Certificate	19	17.76
GED	12	11.21
Other	11	10.28
Bachelor's Degree	1	0.93
Associate's Degree	1	0.93
Total Responses	107	100.00

“Other” responses include 1 year experience, 4 years experience, CDL, EMT/Paramedic, Food Service Safety Certificate, Graduate of Theology-Master’s Degree desired not required, and Seminary Degree. The answers given may be duplicated in some categories because the specific requirement was a high school or general equivalency diploma or degree plus a certificate or license. The majority of Associate’s degree, Bachelor’s degree, and certificate or license responses related to job positions of Certified Nursing Assistant, Customer Service Representative, Deputy Sheriff, Dietary Worker, Equipment Operator, Fitness Instructor, Librarian, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Mechanic, Office Manager, Pastor, Public Works Director, Registered Nurse, Roustabout, Sewer Superintendent, Teacher, Truck Driver, and Water Superintendent..

Analysis

A large number of employers (81.3%) require education levels at or above a high school diploma. Almost eight percent (8%) of the employers surveyed require licensing or certification, which indicates some trade and/or technical skills training may benefit the area. A majority of positions require not only a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma but also require a specific license or certification. This indicates that workers not only need a high school education, but some post-secondary education that results in trade and/or technical skills with licensure or certification.

The typical beginning salary paid in Sterling County per survey respondents is listed below:

Answers Given	# of Answers	% of Responses
\$6.76-\$7.75/hour	15	19.23
\$5.76-\$6.75/hour	13	16.67
\$9.76-\$12.75/hour	13	16.67
\$7.76-\$9.75/hour	12	15.38
\$15.01/hour or more	10	12.82
\$5.15/hour	6	7.69
\$12.76-\$15/hour	3	3.85
\$5.16-\$5.75/hour	3	3.85
Varies	3	3.85
Total Responses	78	100.00

Analysis

The correlation of the level of education to the associated wage levels in Sterling County are predominantly in the range of \$5.76 an hour to \$12.75 an hour with basic reading and writing skills, high school or general equivalency diploma, specific license/certificate or associate's degree. The wage levels indicated from \$6.76 an hour to \$12.75 an hour were predominantly noted for those positions requiring basic reading, writing and math skills, high school or general equivalency diploma, specific license/certificate, some college, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, industry specific knowledge or technical training/schooling. Wage levels above \$12.75 an hour typically require a high school education plus a specific license/certificate, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree and/or specific technical training.

Supply Side of the Labor Market

The Community Auditor conducted worker interviews, with the approval of the employer, in Sterling County from June 2005 to August 2005 to gather primary information on the supply side of the labor market.

Based on the 2000 U. S. Census, Sterling County's 1,393 total population break down by age, as it might relate to an available workforce, is depicted below:

Age	Number	Percent
15-19 yrs.	127	9.1
20-24 yrs.	45	3.2
25-34 yrs.	143	10.3
35-44 yrs.	271	19.5
45-54 yrs.	183	3.1

55-59 yrs.	52	3.7
60-64 yrs.	55	3.9
65-74 yrs.	103	7.4
Median Age (years)	37.9	N/A

U.S. Census Bureau, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Persons under the age of 18 in Sterling County comprise 28.7% of the population in 2000. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprised 31.0% of the population in 2000.

Analysis

Sterling County's available workforce is atypical to the nation as a whole. While the median age in years of the nation's population is projected to increase, Sterling County's median age of 37.9 is slightly higher compared to the national average of 35.3. The number of persons under the age of 18 is 3.0% more than the national average of 25.7%. This indicates that Sterling County has a younger population.

According to the U. S. Census 2003 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, the following chart shows the break down in numbers and percentage of population:

Category	Number	Percentage
People of all ages in poverty	154	12.0
Age 0-17 in poverty level	53	16.3
Age 5-17 in families in poverty	39	14.5
Median Household Income	\$37,830	---

Poverty is a condition under which individuals, or entire families, do not have sufficient economic resources, or money income, to pay for their basic needs of food, shelter, utilities, health care, transportation, and clothing.

According to the Health and Human Services Commission, the percent of people below poverty in the State of Texas in 2001 is listed below:

Percentage Below Poverty	Age 0 through 6	Under Age 18	All Ages
Below 100% of Poverty	22.87%	21.10%	14.88%
Below 150% of Poverty	37.75%	34.64%	26.12%
Below 200% of Poverty	50.11%	46.35%	36.36%

Texas Historical Poverty Statistics For Selected Age Group 2001. Texas Health and Human Services Commission., <<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/dssi/PS/TXHISTPOV.html>>.

The 2005 Poverty Guidelines, along with Percent of Poverty, are outlined in the following chart:

Size of Family	Poverty Guideline-100%	150% of Poverty	200% of Poverty
1	9,800	14,700	19,600
2	13,200	19,800	26,400
3	16,600	24,900	33,200
4	20,000	30,000	40,000
5	23,400	35,100	46,800
6	26,800	40,200	53,600
7	30,200	45,300	60,400
8	33,600	50,400	67,200

Poverty guidelines are used by a number of government assistance programs for administrative purposes, such as determining eligibility for Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care, rent and utility assistance, and others. Some programs use the guidelines as only one of several criteria for eligibility.

In November 2005, there were no recipients of food stamps available for work (Concho Valley Workforce Development Board Mandatory Work Registrants Report, November 2005). Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley serves public assistance recipients and as for December 2005, there was one public assistance recipient available for work in Sterling County.

Worker Interviews

Out of the 33 businesses surveyed, 30 businesses participated in worker interviews (63.46 %). The table below depicts the type of the participating workers' job positions:

Position	# of Positions	% of Total Positions
Trade/Technical/Specialized Work	32	26.45
Sales Clerk/Cashier/Desk Clerk/Teller	16	13.22
Tax Preparer/Bookkeeper/Accounting	13	10.74
Clerical	10	8.26
Management	9	7.44
Food Service Work	7	5.79
Building Service/Domestic Work	6	4.96
Drilling/Mining(Oil & Gas)	6	4.96
Inspection Work	6	4.96
Education-Certified	5	4.13
Personnel Services	4	3.31
Education-Non-Certified	4	3.31
Health Occupations	2	1.65

Library	1	0.83
Total Responses	121	100

Worker interviews were conducted on a personal, one-on-one basis. The Community Auditor asked each worker the exact same twelve questions and documented their responses. Worker interviews were approximately 10 minutes in length.

Workers' skills related to their jobs are outlined in the table below:

Skill	# of Responses	% of Responses
People Skills/Public Relations/Customer Relations	45	18.29
Communication Skills	23	9.35
Other	23	9.35
Maintenance/Mechanic Skills	17	6.91
Computer Skills	16	6.50
General Office Skills	15	6.10
Heavy Equipment Operation Skills	15	6.10
Organizational Skills	14	5.69
Accounting/Bookkeeping/Financial	10	4.07
Critical Thinking	10	4.07
Plumbing Skills	9	3.66
Management Skills	8	3.25
Basic Skills	7	2.85
Cooking/Food Prep Skills	6	2.44
Welding/ Fitting Skills	6	2.44
Work Ethic	6	2.44
Cash Register Skills	5	2.03
Construction/Carpentry Skills	4	1.63
Electronic/Electrical Skills	4	1.63
Medical Skills	3	1.22
Total Responses	246	100

The experience that workers brought to their jobs when they were hired are:

Experience	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer Relations-people skills/public relations	23	15.86
Heavy Equipment Operating	12	8.28
Maintenance/Mechanics Operating	12	8.28
Oil/Gas/Ranching	11	7.59
General Office/Sec.-phone/typing/calculating	10	6.90
Construction/Welding/Fabrication	9	6.21

Housekeeping	8	5.52
Accounting/Bookkeeping/Financial	7	4.83
Computer	7	4.83
None	7	4.83
Other	7	4.83
Inventory/Shipping/Receiving	5	3.45
Education	4	2.76
Truck Driving	4	2.76
Work Ethic	4	2.76
Electrical/Plumbing/Engineer/Plant Operations	3	2.07
Food Service	3	2.07
Child/Elder Care	2	1.38
General Labor	2	1.38
Law Enforcement	2	1.38
RN/LVN/CAN/ENT/ Lab	2	1.38
Banking	1	0.69
Total Responses	145	100

During the worker interviews, the Community Auditor did not ask whether the worker received or did not receive any job related benefits. The following are responses to the statement “Tell me, in order of importance, what benefits would be important to you as a valued employee.”

Benefit	# of Responses	% of Responses
Health/Med.Ins.(+ Dental & Vision)	41	27.15
Good pay/Pay Increase	27	17.88
Retirement Plan/Savings Plan	27	17.88
Good Work Environment/Good Working Relationship	17	11.26
Bonus/Promotion/Work Incentives	10	6.62
Flex Time/Flexible Schedule/Comp Time	9	5.96
Job Satisfaction	8	5.30
More hours or full-time work	5	3.31
Sick Leave Benefits	4	2.65
Don't Know	1	0.66
None	1	0.66
Open Door Policy	1	0.66
Total Responses	151	100

Workers positively responded by 96.88% that they felt they were an important part of the company.

Workers noted what steps companies could take to keep a worker as a valued employee:

Steps	# of Responses	% of Responses
Good Pay/ Pay Increase	25	23.15
Keep or Offer Benefits/ Incentives/Promotions	22	20.37
Respect/ Trust/ Fairness/ Honesty/ Support	16	14.81
Good Working Environment/ Relationship	14	12.96
Appreciation/ Recognition/Job Security	9	8.33
Nothing	9	8.33
Full- Time Employment	6	5.56
Job Security	4	3.70
Education/Training Opportunities	1	0.93
Employee Empowerment	1	0.93
Open Communications	1	0.93
Total Responses	108	100

There are a high percentage of companies in Sterling County that provide training (72.73%) as compared to those that do not provide training (27.27%). A large majority (93.62%) of current workers take advantage of this training benefit to advance their skills, whereas 6.38 % of current workers do not avail themselves of this training benefit.

Although training is provided as a benefit and workers take advantage of the training benefit, the following table clearly shows that workers overwhelmingly feel they need additional education, training and computer skills to advance in their careers:

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Nothing	23	30.67
Training	22	29.33
Other	11	14.67
Computer Skills	8	10.67
Advancement Opportunities	4	5.33
Increased/ Improved Technology	2	2.67
Management Skills	2	2.67
Don't Know	1	1.33
Math/Accounting/Bookkeeping Skills	1	1.33
Tuition Assistance	1	1.33
Total Responses	75	100

The following tables are in relation to where workers see themselves, in regard to their careers, in one year and in five years.

One-Year Career Goals

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Same position in same or different company	53	72.60
Don't Know	6	8.22
Enrolled in Education/ Training	4	5.48
Working Full Time	4	5.48
Advanced position in same or different company	3	4.11
Retired or Semi-Retired	2	2.74
More efficient/ confident in position/ job/company	1	1.37
Total Responses	73	100

Five-Year Career Goals

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Same position in same or different company	23	30.67
Don't Know	20	26.67
Advanced position in same or different company	10	13.33
Retired or Semi-Retired	9	12.00
Enrolled in Education/ Training	5	6.67
Working Full- Time	5	6.67
Self- Employed	2	2.67
Job Security/ Long- Term Employment	1	1.33
Total Responses	75	100

Under one-year and five-year career goals, “Enrolled in Education/Training” includes licensed vocational nursing, registered nursing, food service supervisor licensing, accounting, and/or clerical.

Analysis

Responses indicate that workers do not perceive a career ladder or pathway is available for advancement within their company or Sterling County. Responses indicate that most workers are happy in their job or company. It is interesting to note that while workers indicated the need for additional education, training and computer skills, workers do not predominantly address these needs in their one- and five-year goals.

The table below shows the responses to the question “What do you expect from your employer”:

Expectations	# of Responses	% of Responses
Respect/Trust/Fairness/Honesty/Understanding	41	35.34
Good Working Environment/Relationship	23	19.83
Benefits/Incentives/Bonuses/Awards	14	12.07
Good Communication	13	11.21
Appreciation/ Recognition	8	6.90
Job Security	4	3.45
Nothing	3	2.59
Pay Check	3	2.59
Increased Wages	2	1.72
Other	2	1.72
Advancement Opportunities	1	0.86
Job Satisfaction	1	0.86
More Responsibilities/ Duties	1	0.86
Total Responses	116	100

Workers' expectations of their employers are intangible and intrinsic based on Respect/Trust/Fairness/Honesty/Understanding, Good Working Environment/Relationship, Benefits/Incentives/Bonuses/Awards, Good Communication, etc.

Service Delivery Strategies

Initial workforce strategies were determined based on critical skill shortages identified through primary sector/cluster analysis surveys with employers, workers interviews, and community member groups. These strategies focus on:

- Employer-focused training to improve the productivity and employability of the business/industry's workforce;
- "High Road" to ensure limited funds target industries, firms, and occupations that provide the most benefit in increased wages, job opportunity, skill upgrading, and job retention;

Through the employer survey and worker interview instruments, there is an indication of the need for skilled entry-level workers and skill upgrading for current workers. Since Sterling County's business sector is comprised of a few medium-sized businesses and a large number of small businesses, the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board will target limited funds to occupations that provide the most benefit in increased wages, job opportunity, skill upgrading and/or job retention. Skills shortages can be the single greatest barrier to economic growth. The number

one issue from the community audit is that employers need an existing workforce that has both “soft” skills and “hard” skills. Soft skills are the fundamental skills such as, communication, listening, time management, problem solving, etc. Hard skills are the more tactile skills such as, technical skills, computer skills, mechanical skills, medical field skills, etc. Skilled workers who receive training, or are involved in life-long learning, to keep abreast of changes in their field are essential to the survival of a business. High-skilled workers are essential to attract new industries and retain and expand businesses for economic development.

Service Delivery Plans

To respond to employer and worker needs in Sterling County, the Concho Valley Workforce Development Board’s service delivery plan will focus on the following:

Basic Skills

- Partner with the Sterling City Independent School District, Education Service Center Region XV, and Howard College–San Angelo, to promote and provide basic skills improvement, General Equivalency Diploma and English as a Second Language courses to increase current workers’ and job seekers’ skill levels and levels of education.

Computer Technology

- Partner with the Sterling City Independent School Districts, Sterling County Library, Education Service Center Region XV, ASU♦Small Business Development Center, Howard College-San Angelo, and other area agencies such as, Christian Women’s Job Corps and Texas Cooperative Extension, to develop and provide computer courses, such as: computer literacy, operating systems, Internet, web page, and software training utilizing existing computer resources and space to increase the productivity of area employers and the skill levels of area workers and job seekers.

Economic Development

- Assist in attracting new industries and businesses to the area that will increase wages and job opportunities and explore opportunities that exist for business expansion and retention.

Career Opportunities

- Educate and promote the use of Internet technology through Workforce Solutions to increase utilization of programs and resources such as:

Socrates, Work in Texas, Oscar, the Education Training Provider List and other on-line assessment and resource tools to both employers and job seekers.

Job Search

- Partner, in conjunction with Workforce Solutions, Texas Cooperative Extension, and Christian Women's Job Corps to provide and promote job search seminars or clubs to increase job readiness.
- Promote job opportunities in partnership with local employers through job fairs.
- Educate and promote the use of Work in Texas and America's Workforce Network to area employers to increase available pools of applicants.

Training Providers

- Partner with Sterling City Independent School District, Sterling County Library, ASU♦Small Business Development Center, Howard College-San Angelo, and area organizations such as, Christian Women's Job Corps, to increase access to short-term training opportunities.

Transportation

- Partner with the Cities, the County, Thunderbird Rural Transportation, and the Concho Valley Council of Governments to identify transportation options to increase availability to jobs and job opportunities.

Entrepreneurship

- Partner with Texas Cooperative Extension, ASU♦Small Business Development Center, Concho Valley Center for Entrepreneurial Development, and Howard College-San Angelo to offer courses, seminars and workshops to increase opportunities for entrepreneurship in the area.

Youth

- Partner with Texas Cooperative Extension, Sterling City Independent School District, Howard College-San Angelo, and Education Service Center Region XV to identify and increase opportunities for youth.

Services for the Disabled

- Partner with agencies and organizations such as: Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council, West Texas Rehabilitation Center, and MHMR of the Concho Valley to increase services to employers that employ people with disabilities.
- Promote peer-to-peer network and resources for employers accessible through Workforce Solutions of the Concho Valley website under the Employer Services Division.

Employer Links and Services

- Increase communication with area employers, Sterling City Independent School District, and the Sterling County Judge's Office through ongoing contact from Board Staff and Workforce Solutions-Employer Services.
- Increase technical assistance for economic development and business support through quarterly regional economic development and business supported luncheons.

Churches and Faith-Based Organizations

- Identify opportunities for partnership with local churches, and other faith-based organizations to increase services in areas such as: child care, transportation, volunteers, and community programs.

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Sterling County Library
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