

# Proposal/Contract Internal Routing Approval Form

Proposal Number **22056**

Building Better Jobs in Texas: Transforming A Regional Workforce Training System  
**PROPOSAL TITLE:** Through Professional Learning and Development

PROPOSAL STATUS	ACTIVITY TYPE (CHECK ONE ONLY)	
New	Basic Research (20)	Student Services (50)
Revised	Instruction (10)	Developmental Research (20)
Continuation/Renewal	Applied Research (20)	Academic Support (40)
Subcontract w/other entity	Public Service (30)	Institutional Support (60)

**Does this project include clinical trials?** Yes No

**Community Engaged Project** Yes No Unsure

Community engaged research is any type of project that involves working with or for community partners (ie. government agencies, businesses, non-profits, advocacy groups).

**DIRECT SPONSOR/AGENCY NAME:** Economic Development Administration (Department of Commerce)  
(the entity that will receive this proposal)

SPONSOR/AGENCY TYPE	PROPOSAL TYPE
Federal	Grant
City/Local	Pre-Proposal
Private/Foundation/Non-Profit	Contract
State	Fellowship
Industry	
Other: .	

FEDERAL FUNDS	PI Background (questions refer to experience as a PI)	
Are there federal flow through funds? <span style="margin-left: 50px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">No</span>	Is this your 1st SHSU proposal?	<span style="margin-left: 50px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">No</span>
If YES, prime agency's name: .	Have you received ORSP (internal) Funds?	<span style="margin-left: 50px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">No</span>
Agency/Program's CFDA # (federal only, ###.### format) 11.307	Have you received external funds at SHSU?	<span style="margin-left: 50px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">No</span>
	Have you previously rec'd a federal grant?	<span style="margin-left: 50px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 50px;">No</span>

SUBCONTRACTS	INDIRECT/FACILITIES & ADMIN. COST
Will SHSU subcontract out any portion of work on this project? <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Yes</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">No</span>	What Indirect/Facilities & Admin. cost rate is used? <span style="float: right; font-size: 1.2em;"><b>37% MTDC</b></span>
If YES, entity name(s): <b>TDCJ, The Moss Group</b>	<i>Note: If different from SHSU's approved 37.0% MTDC, a Request for Waiver form must be submitted.</i>

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE Summary	PROJECT TIMELINE
<i>Additional detail is required on page 5; it is advised that those questions be answered prior to checking off any boxes below.</i>	Start:08/01/2022 <span style="margin-left: 100px;">End 07/31/2025</span>
<b>Otherwise, please check all that apply:</b>	<b>Proposal Due Date &amp; Time</b> 02/10/2022
Human Subjects	Electronic Submission <span style="margin-left: 100px;">Paper Submission</span>
Radio Active Materials	<b>PROPOSED BUDGET AMT \$ 10,611,648</b>
Animal Subjects	(exclude matching funds, if applicable)
None	
Export Controls	
Drones	

ROLE	NAME	EMPLOYEE ID#	DEPARTMENT	COLLEGE	EMAIL
PI/PD:	Bill Angrove		SHSU On-Line	Academic Affairs	wla002
CoPI 1:	Ruth Chisum		SHSU On-Line	Academic Affairs	ruthcubas
CoPI 2:	Charles Henson		SHSU On-Line	Academic Affairs	cmh025
CoPI 3:	Jonathan Kinsey		SHSU On-Line	Academic Affairs	jkinsey
CoPI 4:	Brian Miller		SHSU On-Line	Academic Affairs	brianmiller

## 1. Project Description and Overview

***Ia. Executive Summary*** – Sam Houston State University (SHSU) requests funds through the EDA Good Jobs Challenge to put into place a permanent program that will develop, design, and implement a Texas regional program titled ***Building Better Jobs in Texas: Transforming A Regional Workforce Training System Through Professional Learning and Development***. This program will bring together state, public, and private sectors across several Texas regions to create a workforce pipeline that will strengthen the region’s economy. As a significant educational institution in the region, SHSU, the System Lead Entity and Backbone Organization, is well positioned to leverage its existing programs, resources, and relationships with a key sectoral partner, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), one of Texas’ largest employers, to create a workforce training pipeline designed to decrease unemployment while increasing employment retention rates across several Texas regions. Funding from the American Rescue Plan Good Jobs Challenge program will play a vital role in developing a regional workforce training system through (1) Supporting the increased economic resiliency of our region and (2) Supporting workforce development that aligns with high growth areas.

***Ib. Sam Houston State University - System Lead Entity and Backbone Organization*** – The SHSU vision is “Best at educating the next generation of professionals.” The strategic plan of our proposed challenge aligns well with the overall mission of our university. Sam Houston State University will serve as the System Lead Entity and Backbone Organization, and partner with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Texas Workforce Solutions, the Moss Group (a Washington, D. C. occupational assessment firm), and various regional private entities. This combination of expertise will provide a workforce training system focused on skill gaps across several industries and occupations. The program will service several geographic regions and one main industry, the TDCJ. This program has the potential to be far reaching because the TDCJ spans the entire state of Texas, and this pipeline program will span the infrastructure of the industry. We will leverage our existing training resources and link them with the skill needs of our Sector Partner (TDCJ) to develop a work-and-learn program that will enable us to gather specific workforce and training needs across the industry. In addition, we will develop and implement training programs for industry gaps that will allow workers to achieve good paying jobs, while increasing promotion and retention to those already working.

***Goals*** – The overarching goals of this challenge are to leverage the unique position of Sam Houston State University (SHSU), establish a sectoral partnership with the TDCJ and local and regional employers to build bridges between potential workers and long term, good jobs to achieve employee retention, new employee recruitment, and upskilling and reskilling existing workers to create pathways for promotion.

### ***Objectives:***

1. Continue to strengthen a long-term relationship and commitment with the TDCJ to a) evaluate their employment needs; b) secure a sustainable commitment to offer work and learn programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and/or conditional hiring events upon participant completion.
2. Partner with TDCJ and local and regional employers to create a pipeline of employable and diverse pool of talent through the development and use of various technology platforms, online

training sessions, internships, certificates and certification programs, workshops, and conferences.

3. Leverage local and regional employers that also have workforce challenges to provide wraparound services to program participants which are designed to remove barriers and support trainees in completing workforce training activities (i.e., transportation, language barrier support services, financial coaching services, childcare services, career navigation and coaching services, accesses to high quality technology, and flexible training options). These employers include the public work force system, local and state boards, public-school systems, and Texas Workforce Solutions.

## **2. Employer Leadership and Commitments**

***2a. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Employer commitment*** – The primary mission of the TDCJ–Training and Leader Development Division (TDCJ–TLDD) is to recruit and retain highly qualified applicants and then train them to have access to full-time high-quality jobs and attain retention throughout the agency. As the TDCJ faces an annualized turnover rate of 26.7% from all divisions, it is vital for TLDD to explore and exhaust all possible avenues to successfully fulfill this mission. The TDCJ has a long history of working in close conjunction with SHSU. As part of this project, TDCJ–TLDD will dedicate members of its executive team, Recruiting and Retention Section, and Distance Education Section to work in tandem with SHSU to fully support this initiative.

***Creating the Training Programs*** – Sam Houston State University will work directly with employers, training participants, employees, and relative state and government agencies to build a functioning and reliable pipeline of high-quality jobs that will benefit multiple Texas regions. Our training model represents online skills training, apprenticeship opportunities, conditional hiring events, and online certification/credentialing programs that will cater to individuals who are unemployed (or underemployed) and/or interested in upskilling.

***Recruitment and Outreach Strategy*** – We will approach program recruitment through:

1. Regional advertisement events – through local media outlets, word of mouth, fliers, newspaper advertisements, and social media.
2. Sam Houston State University direct recruitment events – We will recruit undergraduate and graduate students for the program from within SHSU during the System Development *and* the Program Design phase of this program. Students will attend additional certification related classes on campus that are directly related to their career trajectory, then have the opportunity to participate in hands-on summer experiential learning internships.
3. Texas Department of Criminal Justice Recruiting Efforts – The TDCJ will recruit participants directly on their official website (<https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/>), local and regional advertisement campaigns, and directly through agency departments.
4. Texas Workforce Solutions - <https://www.huntsvilletx.gov/958/Workforce> - We will work with the regional Workforce Solutions Agencies in recruitment efforts. This will allow for region wide efforts to capture a diversity of underrepresented individuals into the program.

These avenues will allow us to maximize the number of individuals participating in the program and will at the same time allow us to recruit the maximum number of underrepresented students.

***Community Agency Involvement*** – We will contact and work closely with regional Texas Workforce Agencies across the region to identify competitive service providers to provide wraparound services. Wraparound services will be an essential component to this project and will aid in thinning barriers to quality training and successful job placement.

Examples of wraparound services that will aid in participant program completion and placement include access to state-of-the-art technology; language support services for participants with language barriers; and flexible online training times for single-parent or needy households; career navigation and coaching services to aid participants in best employment options; financial coaching for households with low monthly incomes; transportation services to training events; and supplemental such as work related health and safety supplies.

### ***2b. Other Stakeholders and Partnerships***

Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) has over three decades of administering an extensive continuing education program, enabling practitioners to stay abreast of current issues and trends in the field of corrections. In addition to developing and delivering its own programs, the CMIT serves as the host site for conferences, training initiatives, and meetings of the National Institute of Corrections, Texas Center for the Judiciary, Texas Association for Court Administration, Texas District and County Attorneys Association, Texas Probation Association, Texas Criminal Defense Attorneys Association, area probation departments, and various divisions of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The Institute for Homeland Security (IHS) is focused on enhancing the security and resilience of the transportation, energy, chemical, and healthcare critical infrastructure sectors, and contributing to the security and resilience of Texans and the Texas economy. The IHS is a center for strategic thought with the goal of contributing to the development of homeland security and emergency management strategies for these sectors. This is accomplished by offering education programs and conducting research to enhance the skills of practitioners specific to natural and human-caused events adversely impacting homeland security.

As a SHSU partner in the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Good Jobs Challenge, the Institute is positioned to build on existing partnerships with government and private industry to create internship and employment opportunities. Beginning in Fall 2022, SHSU will offer three undergraduate certificate programs in Security and Resilience focused on the transportation, energy/chemical, and healthcare sectors. We will also host continuing education programs to develop skill sets and capabilities for competency in critical infrastructure protection. Program participants through the Good Jobs Challenge will be able to participate in work-and-learn models to gain a competitive advantage when seeking employment in the health and medical, advanced manufacturing and energy professions.

The Moss Group is a Washington D.C.-based certified, woman-owned business and criminal justice and public safety consulting firm dedicated to helping state, local, federal, and private organizations achieve excellence. The firm specializes in developing strategic solutions to issues facing correctional administrators, executives, and leaders as well as addressing complex and emerging issues through training and technical assistances in all 50 states within the U.S.

The 4th Purpose Foundation will provide program evaluation, consultation services, and program development expertise for SHSU's Building Better Jobs in Texas: Transforming A Regional Workforce Training System Through Professional Learning and Development program. Further, 4th Purpose staff will deliver workshops and/or present at various conferences, training initiatives, and meetings as needed to promote values-based wellness initiatives designed to speak holistically into the employee and create a better workplace culture and public perception of corrections. Best practices from 4th Purpose's experience in developing, marketing, and presenting a new type of employee and leadership training will be shared, as well as expertise on scalability of programming and training.

### **3. Regional Description**

#### ***Project Location***

This project will be headquartered in Huntsville, Texas and will serve the Texas Gulf Coast Economic Development District within the southeast region of Texas.

#### ***The Texas Gulf Coast Region***

The coronavirus pandemic has had severe negative impacts across communities within the U.S, and nationwide we are still seeing a current unemployment rate remaining well above pre-pandemic levels. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2021), although key hardship indicators show some economic improvement since 2020, the unemployment rate remains staggering, and most job losses are concentrated in low-paying industries, rural areas, and underrepresented communities. Rural communities experience difficulties associated with unemployment differently than those in urban areas (Dobis et al., 2021).

Texas is no exception to this trend. The state represents the largest rural population in the country, and the employment rate is currently reported at a loss of 1.4 million jobs statewide (12.9% peak as of April 2020; Texas Workforce Commission, 2021). Indicators of labor-market conditions, including unemployment rates, employment growth and retention, and earning levels have a substantial impact on both individual and community well-being (Farrigan, 2021); and educational attainment is closely tied to this topic. While Texas is one of the most diverse states in the country, its population lacks necessary workforce qualifications to meet the demands of local area employers.

The Texas Gulf Coast region is rapidly growing and adapting as its population and economic activity have both become increasingly diverse over the past two decades. The region's economy composes 26.6% of Texas' real gross domestic product, and 2.5% of the United States' real gross domestic product (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2022). The 2020 population within the region is 7.2 million. Currently, 37.3% of this population is Hispanic/Latino, 34.1% is white, 17% is Black/African American, 8.1% is Asian, and 3.5% is classified as other (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). According to the Gulf Coast Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDDS), a widening gap between the needs of employers and qualifications in the Texas workforce has been an issue of concern for both businesses and the workforce, as natural growth and migration has increased over recent years.

One area of special interest is historically underserved Hispanic/Latino and other underserved populations. Graduation rates among these students differ significantly in comparison to other student groups. This educational disadvantage reifies inequalities in social

mobility, hindering the largest-growing segment of the region's population from attaining marketable skills necessary to meet the needs of employers, and thus securing better jobs for a higher quality of life. Even though explosive growth in the Texas Gulf Coast region is projected to increase the population by 3.7 million people and create 700,000 new jobs, job readiness in the underserved communities continues to suffer. If this projected growth outpaces the efforts of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its partners, the region's businesses will have difficulty finding qualified employees.

***Identifying in-demand skills for prospective employers*** – Sam Houston State University Online (SHSU Online) and the SHSU Correctional Management Institute of Texas have developed a solid sectoral partnership with the TDCJ leadership (TDCJ Training Division; the TDCJ Reentry and Integration Division; and the Windham School District) to identify role-specific skills needs in positions of high turnover/high demand for the criminal justice system. These demands include a suite of positions and occupations ranging from professional executives to skilled laborers.

In addition, the SHSU Online Department will broaden the lens of skills needs identification by surveying employers in the Texas Gulf Coast Economic Development District from the top three workforce sectors according to the region's CEDS: (1) professional and business services; (2) trade, transportation, and utilities; and (3) education and health services. Survey results will be coded and classified to identify the skills needs most widely indicated as important. In addition, skill level requirements will be collected throughout the survey process to identify richer context for the development of adequate skills needs training. The SHSU Online program enables citizens in Texas and beyond to further their education, find meaningful employment, earn higher wages, and improve their quality of life. As part of its mission, SHSU Online develops online professional learning pathways that meet labor market needs for in-demand skills and support the development of corporate partners. SHSU Online will collaborate with project partners to conduct research and analysis of skill gaps to identify and develop learning microcredentials, certificates, and certifications that will promote employment and career advancement and foster sector partnerships.

## **4. Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System**

### ***4a. Project Proposal Components***

**System Development** – The TDCJ comprises robust divisions representing a suite of industrial needs. The TDCJ represents the second largest prison system in the U.S., is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, and holds one of the largest job markets in the state of Texas. Currently, there are 99 active prisons across the state of Texas housing over 145,000 inmates, and TDCJ employs around 36,000 individuals. In comparison, Walmart, AT&T, and H-E-B employ between 25,000 and 40,000 Texas employees each. The TDCJ has an employment turnover rate exceeding 26% annually and is currently experiencing an employee shortage crisis. Limitations in state funding, instructors, technology, space, and time restraints restrict the number of potential employees that the TDCJ can train during one period of time. In addition, morale and retention are low, causing massive turnover employee rates, and cause even more constraints on timely training and hiring events with the agency.

During the system development phase of the program, SHSU Online will keep an open dialog with the TDCJ, other related agency employers, and regional Texas Workforce Agencies to communicate about the skills needs necessary to fill vacant positions across the region and state. SHSU Online will work in tandem with employers to develop job descriptions that focus on competencies, then match and apply these positions with program participants.

**Program Design** – Once a set of skills needs and proficiency levels has been identified for high turnover/high demand positions within TDCJ, then SHSU Online and TDCJ leadership will continue to work on designing skill-specific training programs, representing the Program Design phase of the project. In the TDCJ's 2021-2025 agency strategic plan, the agency identified 276 job classifications that were narrowed into 21 major job categories. Skills and qualifications that the agency viewed as critical for many jobs include analytical decision-making, effective communication of ideas and instructions, leadership and team building, problem-solving techniques, program management, leading and developing employees, and marketing skills.

The proposal envisions providing relevant skills needs training to include three possible forms of dissemination: (1) Upskilling existing TDCJ employees, (2) adding skills needs training to the current onboarding process for new TDCJ employees, and (3) making such skills needs training more widely available to the broader communities in the Texas Gulf Coast Region, which historically represent the largest candidate pool for the Region's correctional facilities and TDCJ. The program will leverage and develop online learning that is designed to train cohorts of participants. Skills-based assessments will aid us in determining individual skill sets. Existing TDCJ employees will receive soft skills training through a suite of leadership and skills-based training courses developed as part of the proposed training model.

This program is designed to take a proactive skills-based approach to connect participants and employers and provide quality targeted training to get the public in high quality jobs. A skill-based approach will aid in the removal of barriers for participants who might not otherwise have an opportunity to gain real time job training. We will work closely with the TDCJ during all three phases of this program to ensure transparent and continuous training and employment model are achieved, creating a reliable pipeline of high-quality jobs that will benefit multiple regions across Texas. The training and hiring models that will be employed are as follows:

1. Skills Training Programs are an essential component for employment and retention with the TDCJ. The skills training model provided by this proposed program will leverage a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online instruction through scenario and competency-based training over a six-week period, closing skills gaps specific to each employee's area of expertise. This training model will upgrade existing training techniques, improving the recruitment of new employees as well as the retention of existing employees.

2. Work-and-learn (Registered Apprenticeships) is a program that will prove valuable in addressing the current employment challenge, because in addition to increasing real time employment opportunities for participants, it provides more potential employers with a large pool of trained talent. This model will encompass a combination of SHSU and TDCJ online learning, direct on-the-job training, mentorship opportunities, and a paid apprenticeship that will allow for high-quality work and continued learned skills while earning income.

3. Certification/Credentialing Programs will be offered through SHSU and will serve as providers of industry-recognized knowledge. The credential program will serve as proof of a participant's qualifications and/or competency in an industry related field. This program will

allow program participants a direct hire into the TDCJ. The certification program will recognize and validate a participant's specialized education, knowledge, and experience in a specified area of employment.

4. Direct Employer Commitment events will occur after a group or cohort of trainees complete one of the training programs developed through this regional training partnership.

As an example of the training opportunities and strengths between SHSU and TDCJ, SHSU graduate and undergraduate students pursuing degrees within the College of Criminal Justice will have the opportunity to take additional leadership courses through SHSU Online to strengthen their portfolio and to achieve higher ranking employment within the TDCJ system. Developing supplemental skills-based training for recruited individuals that builds upon academic programs will prepare individuals for advancement in career paths within the TDCJ or top industries within the Gulf Coast region.

**Program Implementation** – We will furnish learning technology, a computer lab, and provide wraparound services for program participants. The TDCJ will provide skill demands and course material required to fill the gaps within the agency. Sam Houston State University will work with the TDCJ and hire course development staff, qualified subject matter experts, and instructors to design, develop, and deliver online skills-based training, as well as program participant success managers for ensuring the success and placement of program participants. The TDCJ (Training and Leader Development Division) will develop all training material necessary for dissemination, and SHSU will provide a pipeline for rapid, quality delivery.

The TDCJ identified functions critical to achieving its mission within its 2021-2025 strategic plan. They were the management of offenders, efficient operations of facilities, and effective supervision of employees. To align with their agency's strategic plan, training will be divided into two broad categories:

1. Leadership and Management Training – The TDCJ is committed to the delivery of quality training focused on performance and centered on employee learning and development. The TDCJ will develop training for entry level leaders and upskilling training for existing leaders.
2. Specialized Skills Training – This training ranges from soft skills previously identified as critical for supervisory and management roles, to hard skills that apply to information system, administrative, and business roles.

Program Participant Success Managers – Each program participant will have a training and employment plan. During this phase of the program, managers will pair participants with prospective employers to discuss which hiring commitment models fits best and make an initial program assessment based on participants educational level, wraparound service needs, participants proficiencies, current skills base, and prior work experience. Program participant success managers will shepherd program participants through four phases:

1. Assessment. We will assign a program participant success manager to each participant in need of support and wraparound services. The manager will be responsible for working directly with participants in assessing specific needs.

2. Engagement. This phase involves a tight partnership with regional workforce agencies that will be instrumental in pairing wraparound services with program needs. We will engage competitive local and regional businesses to provide specific wraparound services.
3. Connection. This phase brings together participants, wraparound service providers, and the System Lead to elucidate and coordinate implantation of services.
4. Implementation. Wraparound service provider implements services and participant begins training program.

#### ***4b. Project Alignment with EDA's Recovery and Resilience Investment Priority***

The Economic Development Administration Good Jobs Challenge aims to get Americans back to work by building and strengthening systems and partnerships that bring together employers who have hiring needs with other key entities to train workers with in-demand skills that lead to good-paying jobs. We have identified and incorporated the following two EDA Recover and Resilience investment priorities:

**Equity** – In keeping with the spirit and purpose of equal employment opportunity, TDCJ reaffirms its commitment to the following equal employment opportunity policy: No applicant or employee of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex (gender), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. The TDCJ, therefore, promotes equal employment opportunity through programs and policies designed to achieve employment, promotions, and growth without regard to an applicant's or employee's protected class. TDCJ equal employment opportunity policy consists of the following objectives: (1) Provide equal employment and promotional opportunities to all qualified persons, regardless of protected class. (2) Provide civil rights information to employees regarding personnel policies, complaint procedures, and other conditions of employment affecting employees. (3) Provide an internal complaint procedure for the processing of employment discrimination complaints. (4) Prohibit policies, practices, or procedures that adversely impact a particular individual or group of people due to protected class status; and (5) Provide training to employees, supervisors, and other individuals on civil rights and equal employment legislation, policies, and procedures.

TDCJ's Workforce Profile Agency has conducted a statistical analysis of its workforce. The following are the categories identified as being underutilized; therefore, these are the categories upon which this proposal will focus: African Americans Skilled Craft, Hispanic Americans State Agency Administration, Hispanic Americans Technical, Hispanic Americans Protective Services, Hispanic Americans Administrative Support, Hispanic Americans Skilled Craft, Hispanic Americans Service and Maintenance, Female Technical, Female Skilled Craft.

Participant retention and recruitment will be included within the categories identified above. In so doing, TDCJ will introduce new or modify existing recruiting initiatives, as well as develop outreach strategies to target a diverse workforce, collaborate with local groups and organizations in the Texas Gulf Coast geographical area where the majority of TDCJ service & maintenance, skilled craft, and technical positions are located, and request that such groups and organizations distribute recruitment materials and promote the employment opportunities existing within TDCJ. Such groups and organizations include the following: (1) the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and other technical institutions; (2) the Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) District Offices; (3) Historically Black Colleges

and Universities and other technical institutions; (4) the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branches; (5) the National Association of Asian American Professionals; and (6) Workforce Development Board Coordinators. TDCJ will ensure that no artificial barriers denying applicants or employees equal employment opportunities exist within the TDCJ's selection process. TDCJ will maintain applicant-flow records to document the percent of applicants by race, sex (gender), and age applying for vacant positions, and maintain records of all selection results for each job classification number by race, sex (gender) and age in accordance with the TDCJ's current Records Retention Schedule. The information contained in these records shall be used to determine the presence of artificial barriers to equal employment opportunity. TDCJ will also collect recruitment data on job applicants to determine if the diversity of the applicant pool has been enhanced by recruitment and training efforts focused on each underutilized groups listed above and will monitor the overall effective implementation of such proposed strategies through a monthly analysis of the TDCJ's workforce that determines the percentage of underutilization by each job category. Finally, TDCJ is expected to develop and implement Human Resources policies, procedures and practices that reflect full adherence to equal employment opportunity.

Sam Houston State University is committed to promoting a campus culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, creating an equitable and inclusive environment of collaboration and mutual respect. Expanding on that commitment, the university is recognized as a Black Serving Institution, and a Hispanic Serving Institution. Sam Houston State University is therefore well positioned to provide learning services to historically underrepresented persons. As mentioned previously, the following categories identified as historically underutilized and underrepresented at TDCJ will be the primary focus of the proposed training program.

**Workforce Development** – Successful initiation of this challenge will directly impact the Poverty Rate and Economic Distress Criteria, as outlined in the 2020-2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. In addition, this partnership will create and implement industry-led training programs, designed to provide skills for and connect unemployed or underemployed workers to existing and emerging job opportunities.

Most TDCJ administrative support positions earn about the same or less than the national poverty limit. Minorities and women who work at TDCJ also show a higher likelihood of benefiting from government programs due to the salary range within listed positions. Therefore, TDCJ employees have a higher probability of being recipients of government assistance programs, including SNAP, WIC, and TANF. We will aid government program beneficiaries (i.e., SNAP, WIC, etc.) through equipment provision, software, and technology support services. Participants of the proposed training program will receive a tablet and peripherals in order to access training materials from the convenience of their homes. Courses and training modules will be made available around the clock, providing wider flexibility for completion during lunch breaks, evenings, and weekends. When necessary, physical computer labs will be made available for training purposes. All software access and licenses as necessary for training will also be provided at no cost to the participants. Technology support will also be rendered, including 24/7 access to online learning and 24/7 access to technical support.

#### ***4c. Key Outcomes and Jobs Available***

**Key outcomes and metrics (evaluated semi-annually)** – Project key outcomes will be evaluated quarterly. We will track the project success by the number of program participants

who are initiated into the program, those who complete training, the number of trained participants who obtain employment, and employment retention rates.

TDCJ currently employs around 1,500 non-security employees within the Texas Gulf Coast region. The proposed program will support training for roughly half of the region’s existing non-security employees, 750 individuals, or 12.5% of TDCJ’s non-security workforce. The National Center for Educational Statistics reports that completion rates for training programs like the one proposed are approximately 65%, and job placement rates are as follows: 86% for 25–34-year-olds with a bachelor’s degree or higher, 78% for 25–34-year-olds with some college, and 69% for 25–34-year-olds with a high school diploma or GED. Educational attainment for target employees ranges between high school diploma and GED to some college education. With this in mind, our job placement rate goal for program completers is 75% (NCES).

The project will be represented by a program evaluator who will be responsible for tracking individuals and ensuring a diversity of program participants as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Project evaluation metrics and estimates.

<b>Evaluation questions</b>	<b>Measured metrics</b>	<b>Anticipated numbers</b>
How has the project impacted program participants?	# Participants in the program	750
Does the project impact a diversity of participants?	Measure of participant demographics	See Table 3.
How successful is the program?	# Participants completing the program	~488
Was the project successful across a suite of diverse participants?	Measure of diversification	Aligns with projected figures in Table 3.
Workforce placement success	# Employed participants	~366
Was workforce placement equitable?	Measure of working demographic participants	Demographically equal
What are the relative wages of working participants resulting from this program?	Measure of mean salary of working participants	Market wages
What is the average wage growth of participants in the workforce?	Measure of average wage growth of workforce participants	Gradual increase
What is the program’s workforce retention rate?	# Program participants remaining in workforce.	Steady employment rates
Average dollar amount spent on participants	Measure amount spent per participant	\$ 60.00/day (est.)
What was the average dollar amount spent on wraparound services	Average amount of funds per participant	\$ 50.00/day (est.)

Table 2. Current Employment Needs for TDCJ.

<b>Positions</b>	<b>2022 Vacancies</b>
Administrative Review and Risk Management officers	320
Business and Finance employees	110
CJAD	19

Correctional Officers	8,900
Executive Leadership Staff	15
Facilities Employees	258
Health Service Employees	21
Human Resource Employees	58
Information Technology Employees	72
Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Logistics Employees	177
Office of the General Counsel Staff	5
Parole Officers	446
Private Facility Staff	17
Reentry and Integration Staff	47
Rehabilitation Program Staff	162
Training and Leadership Development Staff	45
Victims Services Staff	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,679</b>

#### ***4d. Program and Partnership Feasibility***

Sam Houston State University and the TDCJ have a longstanding history and partnership. SHSU has one of the best Criminal Justice colleges in the nation, and many of our graduates enter local law enforcement or directly into a TDCJ job directly after graduation. This program will allow undergraduate and graduate students from SHSU to take an extra certification or credentialing course and enter the TDCJ at a higher rank.

In addition, the TDCJ headquarters and SHSU are near each other, and this proximity will allow for rapid communication and delivery of training material and on-the-job training to potential employees. The TDCJ also has regional offices across the state of Texas which will allow for the rapid dissemination of learning material across the state, widening the breadth of training and hiring events. SHSU Online is seasoned in project management, implementation, professional development, online programming, and training. As one of the largest online education offices in the country, SHSU Online is well equipped to deliver a training program in partnership with TDCJ.

#### ***4e. Program Target Demographics***

The average age of employees in the TDCJ is 42 years old, staying employed for a tenure of 9 years. Currently, 53% of TDCJ employees are male, 47% are female, 41% are White, 36% are Black, 21% are Hispanic, and 2% are Other.

The following table projects a demographic breakdown of program participants, program completers, and number of job placements following program completion, based on current TDCJ workforce EEO target utilization demographics.

Table 3. Projected Program participant demographics.

Prospective Employee	Hispanic/	Black (21%)	White (55%)	Asian (1%)	Other (2%)	Female (94%)	Male (6%)	Total
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	Latino (21%)							
# Individuals entering program	157	157	413	8	15	705	45	750
# Individuals completing program	102	102	269	5	10	458	30	488
# Individuals achieving employment	77	77	202	3	7	343	23	366

## 5. Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

### 5a. Estimated Funding Request for Proposed Project

Below is the proposal's estimated funding request for the development, design, and implementation of a regional workforce system in the Texas Gulf Coast Development District between SHSU, TDCJ, and other Gulf Coast Region partners. The request for approximately \$9 million in estimated funding is divided into phases by year and project. Details about project activities are provided in section 5b.

<u>Year 1 – Alignment and Design</u>	Approximately \$1 million may be required for System Development to research and establish a regional workforce training system between SHSU, TDCJ, and other regional partners.
<u>Year 2 – Course Development</u>	Approximately \$2.6 million may be required to employ staff that will design and create courses for a skills training program and to make the capacity building investments necessary to enable its implementation.
<u>Year 3 – Course Development, cont. and Program Implementation</u>	Between \$5 million and \$7 million may be required for program implementation to continue course development, hire instructional and support staff, advertise the program, track participation, and provide wraparound services.

### 5b. Anticipated System Development, Program Design and Program Implementation Projects

<b><i>Year 1 – Alignment and Design</i></b>
Conduct local consensus discussions
Program Mission, Goals, and KPIs

Examine Targets, Measures, Considerations, and Barriers
Establish Evidence-Based Practices for Program Design
Define Staffing Roles of Participating Institutions and Orgs
Hire Staff to support project

<b><i>Year 2 – Course Development</i></b>
Establish timeline for course production schedule
Establish timeline for video production schedule
Employ Research Assistants and Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs) to develop course content
Employ Instructional Designers and Course Builders to build online training modules
Establish scaffolding and pathing of courses within the training program
Publish digital content to the Learning Management System

<b><i>Year 3 – Course Development, cont. and Program Implementation</i></b>
Continue development of digital course content
Market program
Open program for enrollment
Begin tracking enrollment and participation

***5c. Anticipated Barriers to Worker Participation and Mitigation Plans***

Common barriers to worker participation in workforce training programs exist. The following table outlines anticipated barriers to participation in the proposed program. In addition, mitigation plans are delineated:

<b>Lack of transportation</b>	Worker participation in workforce training programs is often stunted by lack of transportation.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b>	
To remove barriers regarding access to transportation, the proposed program will deliver all training courses and programs online.	

<b>Lack of resources and equipment</b>	A common barrier to work or participation in training programs is a lack of adequate equipment or learning materials.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b>	
To remove barriers regarding access to resources and equipment, the proposed program will offer eligible participants the necessary materials needed to complete the training successfully. Such materials include tablets/laptops and webcams.	

<b>Lack of access to internet</b>	The Texas Gulf Coast Region is vast, and many areas remain rural. Internet service in rural areas remains unreliable.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b> To remove barriers regarding internet access, the proposed program will offer eligible participants internet hotspots, making digital and online learning content available even in remote settings.	
<b>Lack of accessible content</b>	Workers with disabilities face extra barriers to participation in workforce training programs due to a lack of access to accessible content.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b> To remove barriers regarding accessibility, the proposed program will deliver all training materials in ADA-compliant form, including such accommodations as captions and transcriptions for video and media content, access to documents in electronic braille, semantic HTML, and audio, as well as access to software that is compatible with screen-readers and assistive technologies.	
<b>Difficulty learning</b>	Worker participation in workforce training programs is often hindered by the lack of cognitive support for learning.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b> To remove barriers regarding learning difficulties, the proposed program will offer all participants access to one-on-one tutoring services. Such services can be accessed online, 24/7.	
<b>Balancing work/life/learning</b>	Family obligations, rigid work schedules, and other such constraints often result in reduced worker participation and persistence in workforce training programs.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b> To remove barriers regarding time and balancing constraints, the proposed program will deliver fully online training courses, self-paced learning options, and asynchronous training modules that will be accessible to participants around the clock.	
<b>Emotional support</b>	Worker participation in workforce training programs is often impeded by a lack of emotional support.
<b>Mitigation Plan:</b>	

To remove barriers regarding access emotional support, the proposed program will offer all participants access to one-on-one counseling services. Such services can be accessed online, 24/7.

**Lack of job search skills**

Successful participation in workforce training programs is often curtailed by lack of job search skills.

**Mitigation Plan:**

To remove barriers regarding lack of job search skills, the proposed program will offer all participants access to career counseling services. Such services can be accessed online, 24/7. Self-service modules on resume writing, interviewing skills, dressing for success, making a good first impression, and other such topics will be made available to all participants via online.

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