

# AN ANALYSIS OF WORKFORCE WEBSITES AND THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER VALUE TO WORKERS

REPORT SUPPORTED BY TEXAS 2036



INCLUDES THE NEW "WORKFORCE WEBSITE EVALUATION RUBRIC"

**WHEREWEGO**



## AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE RESEARCHERS

Whether fair or not, people often judge the real-world quality of an organization based on the quality of its website. Broken links, confusing page layouts, and outdated design send messages to visitors that the organization may not intend to send.

Websites and internet access have transformed access to resources, at their best acting as a welcome mat to an operationally effective and stress-relieving suite of services. At its worst, a website may repel those who need assistance most from the very places that provide services the best.

Nearly 1 in 2 residents of Texas is a "digital native," someone who has spent their lives immersed in digital experiences, many of which cater expertly to their complex needs.

Though Generations Z and Alpha, to which 35 percent of Texans belong, will be most sharply concerned with website quality, this should not imply that this is a problem worth solving only for the young. Workers of all ages want simple, actionable information on their own time.

Without an in-house user experience and design team, deciding how to improve a workforce website is complex and risky. This report suggests a roadmap for Texas workforce agencies with recommendations for digital improvements to prioritize. We hope that Texans will increasingly find what they need on these online sites with good, accurate, and accessible links to the quality services available throughout the state.

**LEAH LYKINS & BEN IFSHIN**

Co-Founders of WhereWeGo

Learn more at [WhereWeGo.org](https://www.wherewego.org) or view our training navigator at [Explore.WhereWeGo.org](https://www.explore.wherewego.org).



# OVERVIEW

Through interviews, focus group design sessions, the evaluation of 45 websites, and a survey of 270 career seekers throughout Texas, we find some significant gaps and many opportunities to improve the numerous publicly-supported workforce information websites. From this research, we created the "[Workforce Website Evaluation Rubric](#)," so that organizations may have a tool for self-evaluating the effectiveness of their sites and strategizing their improvements in a user-centered way.

The first gap is a lack of consistent, modern user experience, likely due to the unique and complex requirements and use cases that workforce websites must satisfy. The second gap is the inability to take the actions most desired by career seekers.

With such a welter of different sites in use across the state, we encourage state and nationwide workforce organizations to consider providing a more effective and dynamic template as a model for agencies, institutions, and workforce regions. A model template is an opportunity to lower site development and maintenance costs, increase the quality of customer service and user empathy, and improve access to existing workforce data and resources. This report does not include an evaluation of the effectiveness of Texas regions to deliver quality in-person services.



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# OBJECTIVE

**Organizations that make workforce websites will be able to use the Workforce Website Rubric and recommendations of this report to deliver greater value to their constituents.**



Q: Why conduct this research now?

A: This report was supported by Texas 2036, a nonprofit organization building long-term, data-driven strategies to secure Texas' continued prosperity for years to come. The state is an example of the rapidly changing characteristics of the U.S. workforce. Texas' population will grow by 10 million in less than 20 years. 8 million new jobs will be required to keep up with that growth. About half of Texas households do not earn a living wage. 71% of jobs will require some college, yet only 28% of Texan 8th graders will likely complete a postsecondary degree or certificate within 6 years of high school graduation. Websites are a tool for accessing the services related to these needs and changes.

Q: How does this report connect to funding opportunities?

A: Intermediary career counseling services, like workforce websites, are fundable from sources like WIOA (the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) and the recent CAREERS Grant. This rubric may inform applications and the procurement processes for such grants and future opportunities, leading to increased funding for high-quality web development.

Q: Why WhereWeGo?

A: WhereWeGo is an EdTech and design thinking firm based in New Orleans that conducts worker-centered research about accessibility to postsecondary education. Its team uses human-centered design thinking to develop workforce resource websites. Its highly regarded flagship platform, the Training Navigator for New Orleans, has been a model since it launched in 2018.

# METHODS

*How did the researchers gather data and stakeholder input?*

WhereWeGo embraced human-centered design thinking and product design practices through this project.

This report used the following methods:



## **INTERVIEWS WITH 10 STAKEHOLDERS**

WhereWeGo conducted 10 one-on-one interviews with chambers of commerce representatives (Austin & Longview), talent pipeline representatives (Cisco & Dow Chemical), education & counseling providers (Educate Texas, Merit America, KIPP National, and Texas State Technical College), and researchers (Accenture).



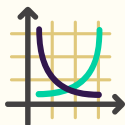
## **DESIGN DAY WITH 10 STAKEHOLDERS**

WhereWeGo facilitated a design-thinking retreat with members from Workforce Solutions, Dallas College, Prosper Waco, Texas State Technical College, T3 Partnership, and Texas 2036 that articulated guidance for what metrics this report could prioritize in its evaluation of workforce websites.



## **SURVEY OF 270 TEXAN CAREER SEEKERS**

Equipped with information from its prior research and Texas stakeholders, WhereWeGo surveyed career seekers to validate assumptions and priorities for this report. WhereWeGo collected data for 270 residents of Texas, 18+, 80% of whom were actively seeking employment.



## **CREATION OF THE WORKFORCE WEBSITE EVALUATION RUBRIC**

Based on these prior activities, WhereWeGo & Texas 2036 collaborated to make a rubric that reflects stakeholders' values.



## **EVALUATION OF 45 WORKFORCE WEBSITES**

After a period of establishing inter-rater reliability, WhereWeGo evaluated 28 Workforce Solutions websites and 17 other workforce-related websites to gather trends and information relevant to this report's aims.

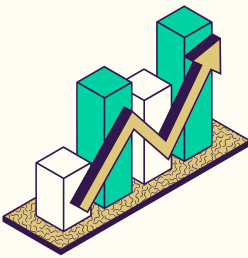
# STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

A collection of the needs, frustrations, and values  
of the stakeholders involved in this research



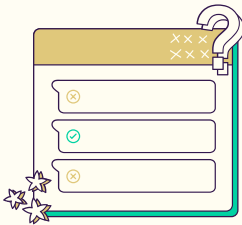
## WHAT KEY NEEDS AND FRUSTRATIONS EMERGED FOR STAKEHOLDERS?

WhereWeGo questioned workforce representatives, educators, researchers, government employees in workforce development, and representatives from chambers of commerce throughout Texas. In these discussions, the researchers sought to uncover problem areas and pain points relevant to information barriers that workers commonly face. The following trends emerged:



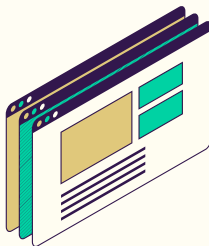
### 1) Workers need more details about their career education opportunities in order to make wise, informed decisions.

Workers want outcomes, family-sustaining wages, better conditions and support services, and a clearer career path. The inability to make sufficiently data-driven decisions about these factors drives down confidence and participation in career education opportunities.



### 2) Workers need better online tools to access the many available resources.

Modern offerings like eligibility quizzes, live chat functions, and other digital services could expand the reach of WIOA grant funding for dislocated workers, opportunity youth, and other career seekers across the state.



### 3) Workforce sites have very complicated UI/UX requirements.

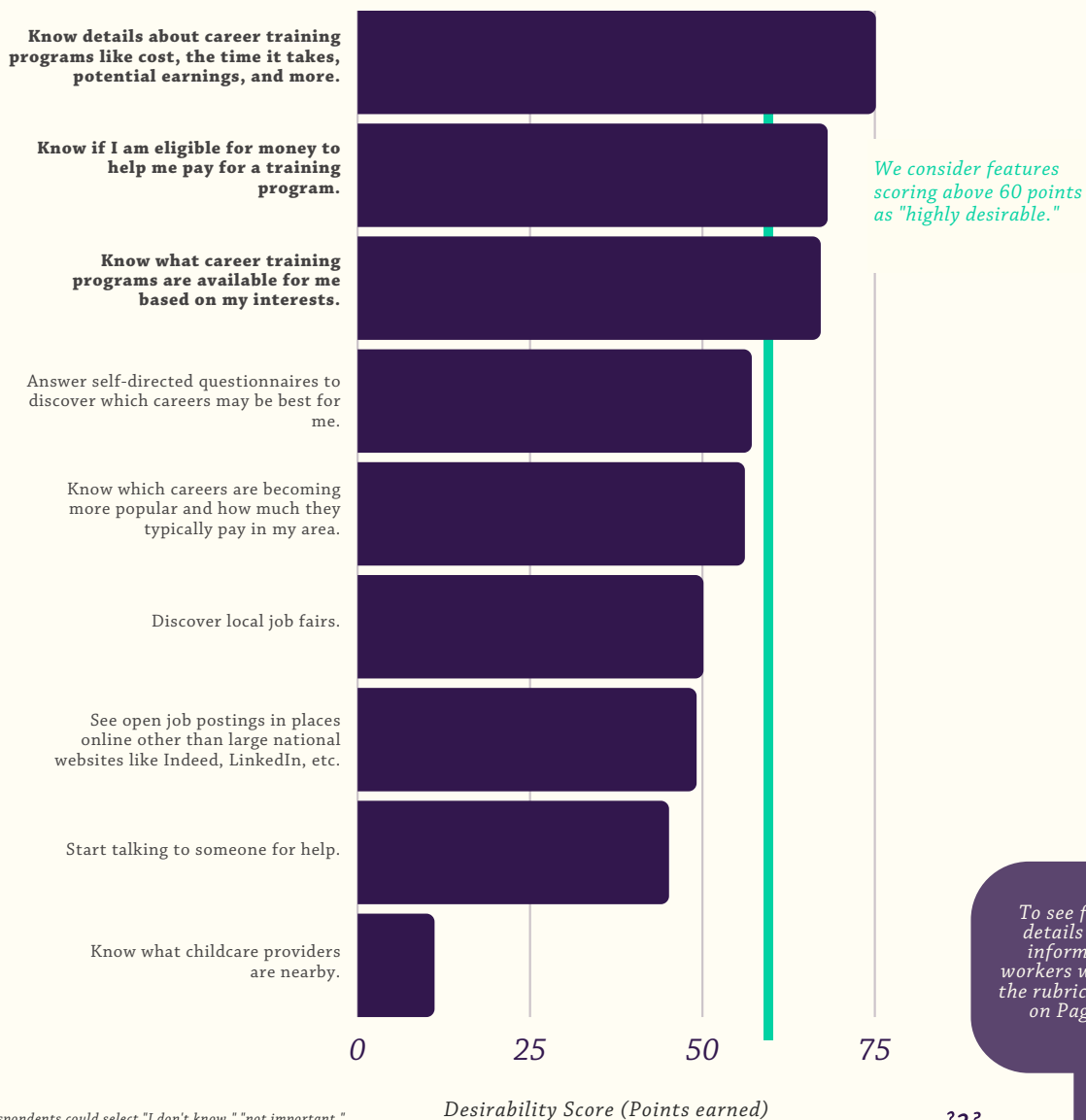
As long as workforce websites juggle compliance, reporting, lead generation, and information delivery, best-in-class user interface and user experience methods will be crucial. Compliance-required disclosures must be easy to find and user-friendly or not in any way impeding the discovery of other valuable information.



# WHAT FEATURES DO TEXANS VALUE MOST FROM WORKFORCE SITES?

Given a variety of different types of useful information, respondents found information relevant to career training programs most valuable. The question posed was: "If we were building a website to help job seekers, how important are the following functions to you or a job seeker you know?"

## Workforce website functions by desirability



Respondents could select "I don't know," "not important," "somewhat important," or "very important."

I Don't Know = 0 points per percent  
 Not Important = -1 point per percent  
 Somewhat Important = +1/2 point per percent  
 Very Important = +1 point per percent

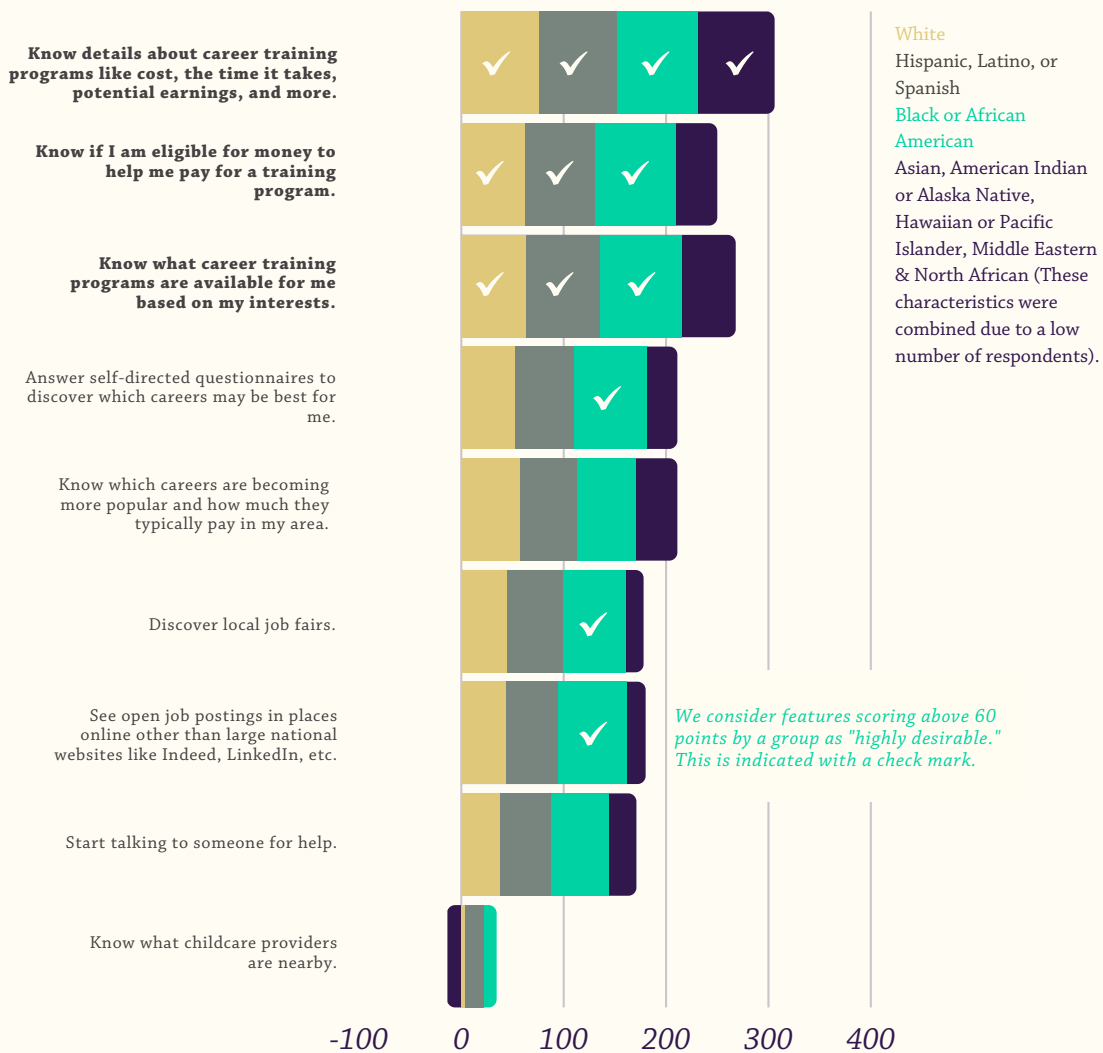
To see further details about information workers want, see the rubric starting on Page 13!



# HOW DO RACE & ETHNICITY IMPACT THOSE RESULTS?

Information relevant to career training programs remained most valuable, after breaking data down by subgroup. African American respondents found other career planning tools nearly as valuable as well. Further investigation into these tools may be valuable to this vital constituency.

## Workforce website functions by desirability and race or ethnicity



Respondents could select "I don't know," "not important," "somewhat important," or "very important."

I Don't Know = 0 points per percent  
 Not Important = -1 point per percent  
 Somewhat Important = +1/2 point per percent  
 Very Important = +1 point per percent

Desirability Score (Points earned)

# THE RUBRIC

A Workforce Website Evaluation Rubric designed from the input of hundreds of career seekers and stakeholders



# THE WORKFORCE WEBSITE EVALUATION RUBRIC

This model rubric is built on 3 performance categories, with a scale of 4 performance bands from Unsatisfactory to Exemplary, which is used to score the accomplishment of 12 service goals.

## CATEGORIES



### I. QUALITY OF INFORMATION

**Can workers discover the information they've indicated as most valuable?**

For example, details about specific training programs were favored above job postings data. The information selected for this category reflects what stakeholders found most desirable. Thus, the rubric values great detail about career training programs and more general details about other career services, like job postings, WIOA, and childcare.



### II. USER EXPERIENCE

**Are user-centered design choices increasing the likelihood of worker engagement and ease of use?**

For example, smartphone dependency is an increasing phenomenon. Therefore, this rubric prioritized mobile responsiveness. Very often, great information is hidden behind a design barrier. It is recommended to prioritize this category of characteristics when deciding how to make improvements.



### III. GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

**Are workers driven towards action?**

How does information cater beyond discovery and general knowledge and towards action and the ability to begin a new opportunity? The "last mile problem," or the lack of information that drives data-driven decision making and action, is a common pain point across stakeholders. This rubric seeks to address that.

## PERFORMANCE BANDS

### 1 - Unsatisfactory

Improvement in this area will have a considerable effect on workers' ability to gain value from this digital tool.

### 2- Developing

The digital tool has already made some progress in this area, impacting workers' ability to gain value.

### 3 - Satisfactory

The digital tool has made significant progress in this area and is providing considerable value to workers.

### 4 - Exemplary

Other digital tools could look to this resource as a model of performance within this category.



**QUALITY OF INFORMATION**

**1 - UNSATISFACTORY**

**2 - DEVELOPING**

**3 - SATISFACTORY**

**4 - EXEMPLARY**

**(1) COMMON CAREER  
SEEKER SERVICES**

*Can users learn specific and actionable details about common services in their region?*

Criteria of a 2 not yet met.

The website provides some, although incomplete or inaccurate, information about common job posting and support services resources, such as:

- WIOA eligibility
- Recent job postings
- Resume & pre-hire services
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Career fairs

The website provides current, comprehensive, and accurate information about common job posting and support services resources, such as:

- WIOA eligibility
- Recent job postings
- Resume & pre-hire services
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Career fairs

The website provides plentiful, current, comprehensive, and interactive information about common job posting and support services resources, such as:

- WIOA eligibility
- Recent job postings
- Resume & pre-hire services
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Career fairs

**(2) COMPARING IN-  
DEMAND CAREER  
PATHWAYS**

*Are users able to discover in-demand and growing career pathways information based on regional trends?*

Criteria of a 2 not yet met.

The website provides information on 1 to 9 growing careers in the region, including 2 or more of the following:

- Career description
- Career outlook
- Who the career may be best suited for
- Regional wages data
- Regional wages data in the context of cost of living data

OR

This information is discoverable via a link to a third party website such as O\*Net or CareerOneStop, where the user must set their own search parameters to discover the above details.

The website provides information on 10+ growing careers in the region, including 3 or more of the following:

- Compelling visuals like photography, graphics, or other design elements
- Career description
- Career outlook
- Who the career may be best suited for
- Regional wages data
- Regional wages data in the context of cost of living data

Within 3 clicks, users can learn about 15+ growing careers in their region, including each of the following components for each career:

- Compelling visuals like photography, graphics, or other design elements
- Career description
- Career outlook
- Who the career may be best suited for
- Regional wages data in the context of cost of living data





QUALITY OF INFORMATION (CONTINUED)	1 - UNSATISFACTORY	2 - DEVELOPING	3 - SATISFACTORY	4 - EXEMPLARY
<p><b>(3) FINDING THE BEST CAREER PATHS AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS</b></p> <p><i>Can career seekers discover the most commonly requested information about vocational and skills training providers?</i></p>	<p>Criteria of a 2 not yet met.</p>	<p>The website provides <u>some, although incomplete or inaccurate</u>, information about vocational and skills training providers, including at least 1 of the following details for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of program</li> <li>• Earning potential</li> <li>• Wraparound services</li> <li>• Useful dates</li> <li>• Contact <u>and</u> location information</li> <li>• Compelling photography</li> <li>• Compelling writing</li> </ul>	<p>The website provides <u>current, comprehensive, and accurate</u> information about vocational and skills training providers, including at least 3 of the following details for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of program</li> <li>• Earning potential</li> <li>• Wraparound services</li> <li>• Useful dates</li> <li>• Contact and location information</li> <li>• Compelling photography</li> <li>• Compelling writing</li> </ul>	<p>The website provides <u>plentiful, current, comprehensive, accurate, and interactive</u> information about vocational and skills training providers, including at least 5 of the following details for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of program</li> <li>• Earning potential</li> <li>• Wraparound services</li> <li>• Useful dates</li> <li>• Contact and location information</li> <li>• Compelling photography</li> <li>• Compelling writing</li> </ul>

USER EXPERIENCE	1 - UNSATISFACTORY	2 - DEVELOPING	3 - SATISFACTORY	4 - EXEMPLARY
<p><b>(4) MOBILE NAVIGATION</b></p> <p><i>Does the website's navigation and structure empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources when the user is on a mobile device?</i></p>	<p>Navigation is very unclear, resulting in confusion and hard to find information for career or training seekers.</p>	<p>Some navigation is unclear, or not mobile responsive, not functioning, or has very slow load times, resulting in a few places where a career seeker is likely to become lost or unengaged.</p>	<p>The site is well-organized and easy to navigate.</p> <p>Career seekers can clearly understand the site's resources and where to go next for a wide range of needs.</p>	<p>The site employs navigation techniques commonly expected of sites built within the last 5 years.</p> <p>The site is well-organized and easy to navigate.</p> <p>Career seekers can clearly understand the site's resources and where to go next for a wide range of needs.</p>



**USER EXPERIENCE**  
(CONTINUED)

**1 - UNSATISFACTORY**

**2 - DEVELOPING**

**3 - SATISFACTORY**

**4 - EXEMPLARY**

**(5) MOBILE LAYOUT**

*Does the website's graphic and web design empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources when the user is on a mobile device?*

There are few or no attractive graphic elements to notify a career seeker of resources, opportunities, jobs, or training, little or no variation in layout, and/or the colors and text interfere with the site's usability.

The site's layout needs significant adjustments to increase usability. Many pages may be incomplete, not working as intended, or overly reliant on text.

Some graphic elements notify a career seeker of resources, opportunities, jobs or training, and there is a limited variation in layout.

Design elements sometimes empower career seekers' to easily understand concepts and ideas about their search.

The site's layout needs minor adjustments to increase usability. Occasionally, pages may be incomplete, not working as intended, or overly reliant on text.

There are multiple graphic elements and variations in layout that assist a career seeker to accomplish their goals and it is generally attractive and approachable.

Design elements often assist seekers in understanding concepts and ideas.

There are multiple graphic elements and variations in layout that assist career seekers to accomplish their goals efficiently. No pages appear incomplete, malfunctioning, or overly reliant on text.

Design elements assist seekers in understanding concepts and ideas.

The site gives an impression of high-quality services by employing commonly expected design features of sites built within the last 5 years.

**(6) DESKTOP NAVIGATION**

*Does the website's navigation and structure empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources when the user is on a computer?*

Same requirements as mobile navigation, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile navigation, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile navigation, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile navigation, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

**(7) DESKTOP LAYOUT**

*Does the website's graphic and web design empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources when the user is on a computer?*

Same requirements as mobile layout, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile layout, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile layout, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop

Same requirements as mobile layout, but for users on a desktop computer or laptop



USER EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)	1 - UNSATISFACTORY	2 - DEVELOPING	3 - SATISFACTORY	4 - EXEMPLARY
<p><b>(8) CAREER SEEKER PAGE</b></p> <p><i>Do the website navigation and layout empower career seekers to locate a page specific to them?</i></p>	<p>It takes multiple clicks to find a career seeker page, it does not exist, or it is not malfunctioning.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>A career seeker page is one click away and easy to find.</p>

GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT	1 - UNSATISFACTORY	2 - DEVELOPING	3 - SATISFACTORY	4 - EXEMPLARY
<p><b>(9) ACCESS TO SERVICES</b></p> <p><i>Can a job seeker use the website to begin access to services for career seekers at any time of day?</i></p>	<p>Criteria of a 2 not yet met or features did not behave as intended.</p>	<p>The website contains 1 or more functioning features from this list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A form to submit a question.</li> <li>• A live chat function.</li> <li>• An intake application designed to be taken at home.</li> <li>• Enrollment steps or sign ups for events, wraparound services, or programming.</li> </ul>	<p>The website contains 2 or more functioning features from this list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A form to submit a question that receives a response within 3 business days.</li> <li>• A live chat function.</li> <li>• An intake application designed to be taken at home.</li> <li>• Enrollment steps or sign ups for events, wraparound services, or programming.</li> </ul>	<p>The website contains 3 or more functioning features from this list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A form to submit a question that receives a response within 3 business days.</li> <li>• A live chat function.</li> <li>• An intake application designed to be taken at home.</li> <li>• Enrollment steps or sign ups for events, wraparound services, or programming.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(10) STARTING JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p><i>Can a user go from discovering the site to taking enrollment steps in job training?</i></p>	<p>Criteria of a 2 not yet met or features did not behave as intended.</p>	<p>There is no way for a user to take actionable steps on this website to start a job training opportunity, but there are links to other websites with some context and instructions for how to use them. Mostly the links are either hidden behind multiple clicks or have little to no context of how a career seeker can use them to their benefit.</p>	<p>There are <u>some ways for a user to take actionable steps</u> on this website, and/or there are links to sites with actionable steps that include instructions for applying or enrolling in programs in a user-friendly way for a significant number of job training opportunities.</p>	<p>The website contains <u>current information on actionable next steps</u> for many job training programs and opportunities, such as application dates, enrollment requirements, application forms, and contact forms by program.</p>



**GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT**  
(CONTINUED)

**1 - UNSATISFACTORY**

**2 - DEVELOPING**

**3 - SATISFACTORY**

**4 - EXEMPLARY**

**(11) PERFORMANCE  
OUTCOMES**

*Can a user be empowered to make informed decisions based on the past performance of certain workforce and training solutions?*

Criteria are not yet met.

Performance outcomes may be present but do not equip users to make decisions informed by data.

At least one type of performance outcomes data about workforce programs is available, such as:

- Number of jobs filled by provider
- Average earnings of jobs filled by provider
- Graduation or completion rates by program provider
- Job placement rates by program provider
- Reviews or testimonials from past participants

Two or more types of performance outcomes data about workforce programs are available, such as:

- Number of jobs filled by provider
- Average earnings of jobs filled by provider
- Graduation or completion rates by program provider
- Job placement rates by program provider
- Reviews or testimonials from past participants

Three or more types of performance outcomes data about workforce programs are available, such as:

- Number of jobs filled by provider
- Average earnings of jobs filled by provider
- Graduation or completion rates by program provider
- Job placement rates by program provider
- Reviews or testimonials from past participants

**(12) INNOVATION & BEST PRACTICES**

*Does this website have exemplary components that other websites should take note of?*

The website does not have any examples of superlative features.

Yes, in 1-2 areas or more, which will be identified in the results. Examples include:

- Effective use of CTAs (calls to action) to drive users towards goals.
- Limiting text on the page.
- Using interactive elements like drop downs.
- Automating eligibility questionnaires.
- New, useful approaches to site mapping.
- Chatbots and other methods of connecting with users right away.

Yes, in 3-4 areas or more, which will be identified in the results. Examples include:

- Effective use of CTAs (calls to action) to drive users towards goals.
- Limiting text on the page.
- Using interactive elements like drop downs.
- Automating eligibility questionnaires.
- New, useful approaches to site mapping.
- Chatbots and other methods of connecting with users right away.

Yes, in 5 areas or more, which will be identified in the results. Examples include:

- Effective use of CTAs (calls to action) to drive users towards goals.
- Limiting text on the page.
- Using interactive elements like drop downs.
- Automating eligibility questionnaires.
- New, useful approaches to site mapping.
- Chatbots and other methods of connecting with users right away.

**END OF RUBRIC**

WhereWeGo & Texas 2036 would like to thank the 250+ Texan career seekers, workforce professionals, and educators whose contributions informed this rubric.

# FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the findings from using the rubric to  
evaluate 45 workforce websites in and outside of  
Texas

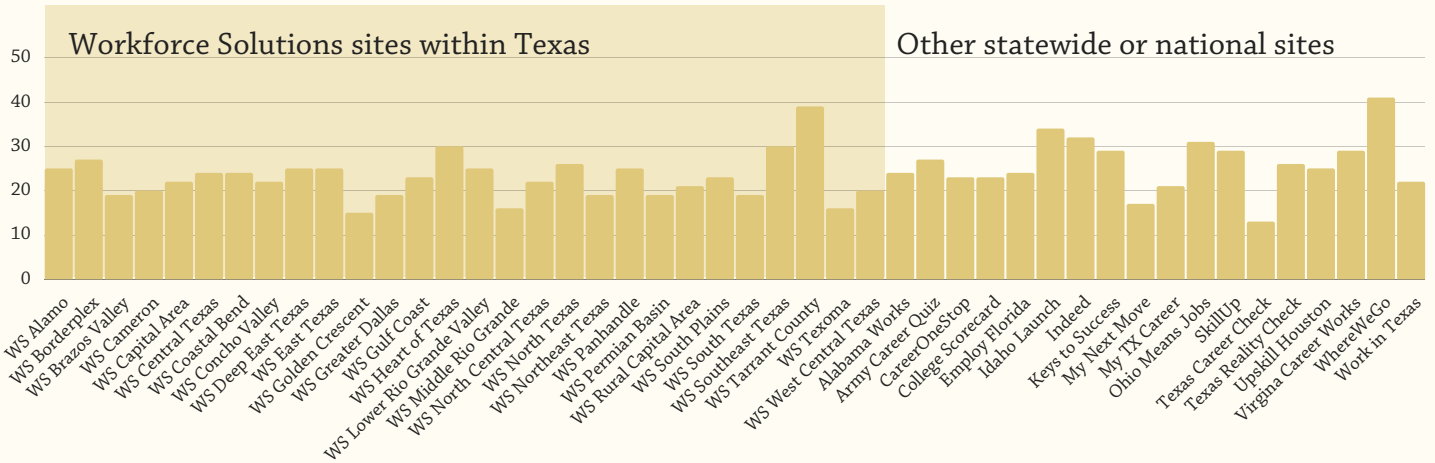




## I. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Conclusions:

- There is considerable variance in the quality of workforce websites within a state.
- There are as many sites whose overall performance may repel workers from resources as sites that may attract workers to resources.

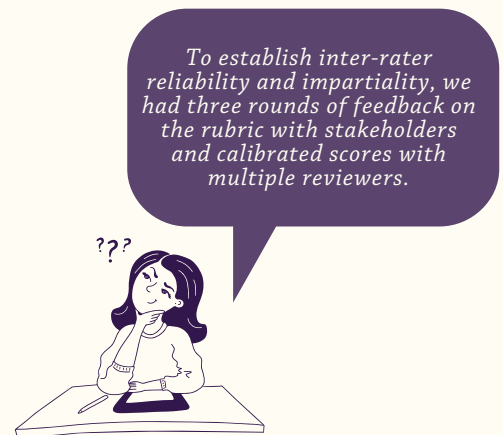


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## II. PERFORMANCE BY ALL RUBRIC ROWS & CATEGORIES





Legend

1. Career Seeker Services
2. Comparing In-Demand Career Pathways
3. Finding the Best Career Paths and Job Training Programs
4. Mobile Navigation
5. Mobile Layout
6. Desktop Navigation
7. Desktop Layout
8. Career Seeker Page
9. Access to Services
10. Starting Job Training Opportunities
11. Performance Outcomes
12. Innovation & Best Practices



## II. PERFORMANCE BY ALL RUBRIC ROWS & CATEGORIES

Conclusions:

- 26% of sites earned a passing score\* for the workers' most desired feature:  Finding the Best Career Paths and Job Training Programs.
- 30% and 28% of sites earned a passing score for  mobile navigation and  mobile layout respectively, which are common barriers to workforce website adoption.
-  Performance Outcomes is the area with the fewest exemplars: CollegeScorecard, WhereWeGo, Idaho Launch, and CareerOneStop.

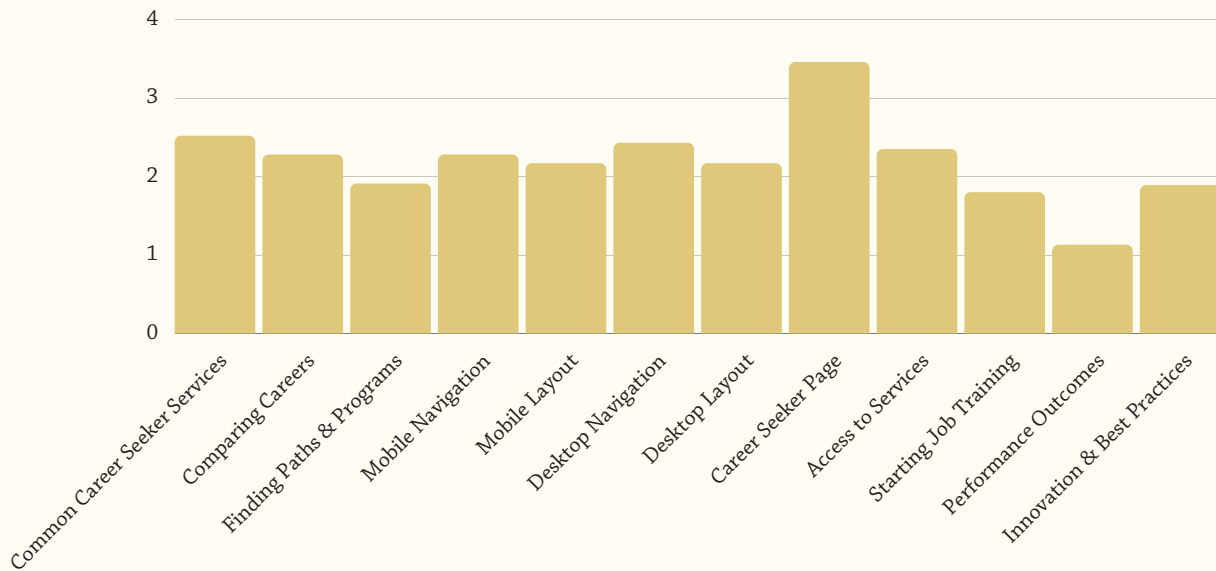
\*Above 50% of points earned.

Workforce Website Name	Score	Quality of Information				User Experience					Goal Accomplishment				Workforce Website URL		
																	
WhereWeGo	41	9	3	2	4	18	4	4	4	4	2	14	3	4	4	3	explore.wherewego.org
WS Tarrant County	39	11	4	4	3	20	4	4	4	4	4	8	4	3	1	4	workforcesolutions.net
Idaho Launch	34	12	4	4	4	16	4	4	4	2	2	6	3	2	2	2	idaholaunch.com
Indeed	32	6	3	2	1	20	4	4	4	4	4	6	2	1	1	4	indeed.com jobs
Ohio Means Jobs	31	8	4	2	2	17	3	3	3	4	4	6	4	2	1	3	ohiomeansjobs.ohio.gov
WS Southeast Texas	30	9	4	3	2	14	3	2	3	2	4	7	4	2	1	4	setworks.org
WS Heart of Texas	30	9	4	4	1	13	2	2	3	2	4	8	2	3	1	4	hotworkforce.com
Keys to Success	29	12	4	4	4	14	4	2	3	3	2	3	4	1	1	1	ktsutah.org
Virginia Career Works	29	7	3	2	2	16	3	3	3	3	4	6	3	2	1	3	virginiacareerworks.com
SkillUp	29	7	1	4	2	16	3	3	3	3	4	6	3	2	1	3	skillup.org
WS Borderplex	27	8	4	2	2	12	2	2	2	2	4	7	4	3	1	3	borderplexjobs.com
Army Career Quiz	27	6	2	2	2	17	4	4	4	4	1	4	2	2	1	1	goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs
WS North Texas	26	8	3	2	3	12	2	2	2	2	4	6	3	3	1	2	ntworkforce.com
Texas Reality Check	26	6	1	3	2	14	3	2	4	4	1	6	1	2	1	3	texasrealitycheck.com
WS Panhandle	25	8	4	2	2	13	2	2	3	2	4	4	2	1	1	2	wspanhandle.com
WS Lower Rio Grande Valley	25	7	2	3	2	13	2	2	3	2	4	5	2	2	1	2	wfsolutions.org
WS Alamo	25	7	2	3	2	13	2	2	3	2	4	5	3	2	1	2	workforcesolutionsalamo.org
WS East Texas	25	7	3	2	2	14	2	3	3	2	4	4	3	1	1	2	easttexasworkforce.org
WS Deep East Texas	25	8	3	4	1	12	2	2	2	2	4	5	3	2	1	2	detwork.org
Upskill Houston	25	6	1	4	1	14	3	2	3	2	4	5	1	1	1	3	upskillhouston.org
WS Coastal Bend	24	8	3	2	3	10	1	1	2	2	4	6	2	3	1	2	workforcesolutionscb.org
WS Central Texas	24	5	3	1	1	14	2	3	2	3	4	5	3	2	1	2	workforcesolutionsctx.com
Alabama Works	24	7	2	2	3	13	3	4	2	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	alabamaworks.alabama.gov
Employ Florida	24	7	2	2	3	13	3	4	2	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	employflorida.com
WS South Plains	23	7	3	2	2	12	2	2	2	2	4	4	3	2	1	1	workforcesouthplains.org
WS Gulf Coast	23	8	3	3	2	10	2	1	2	1	4	5	3	2	1	2	wrksolutions.com
College Scorecard	23	7	1	3	3	9	2	2	2	2	1	7	1	1	4	2	collegescorecard.ed.gov
CareerOneStop	23	5	1	1	3	12	2	2	2	2	4	6	2	3	2	1	careeronestop.org
WS Concho Valley	22	6	3	2	1	12	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	1	1	2	cvworkforce.org
WS Capital Area	22	6	3	1	2	12	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	1	1	2	wfscapitalarea.com
WS North Central Texas	22	8	3	3	2	10	1	1	2	2	4	4	2	2	1	1	dfwjobs.com
Work in Texas	22	7	2	2	3	12	2	4	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	workintexas.com
WS Rural Capital Area	21	5	2	2	1	11	1	2	2	2	4	5	1	2	1	2	workforcesolutionsrca.com
My TX Career	21	6	2	2	2	10	1	1	2	2	4	5	2	3	1	1	mytxcareer.com
WS Cameron	20	5	3	1	1	12	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	wfscameron.org
WS West Central Texas	20	4	2	1	1	12	2	1	3	2	4	4	3	2	1	1	wfswct.org
WS Northeast Texas	19	5	2	2	1	11	2	1	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	networkworkforce.org
WS Brazos Valley	19	6	2	3	1	10	2	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	1	1	bvjobs.org
WS South Texas	19	4	2	1	1	12	2	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	southtexasworkforce.org
WS Permian Basin	19	5	3	1	1	10	2	1	2	1	4	4	2	2	1	1	workforcepb.org
WS Greater Dallas	19	4	2	1	1	12	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	1	1	1	wfsdallas.com
My Next Move	17	6	2	2	2	6	2	1	1	1	1	5	3	2	1	2	mynextmove.org
WS Texoma	16	5	2	2	1	8	1	1	1	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	workforcesolutionstexoma.com
WS Middle Rio Grande	16	4	2	1	1	9	2	1	1	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	wfsmrg.org
WS Golden Crescent	15	3	1	1	1	9	1	1	2	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	gcworkforce.org
Texas Career Check	13	5	1	3	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	texascareercheck.com
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>23.76</b>	<b>6.67</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>12.36</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>1.87</b>	

### III. POSITIVE TRENDS, AVERAGE BY RUBRIC ROW

Positive Trends:

- Every site has a section specifically for career seekers.
- It is very common for a worker to discover a list of available services within 1 or 2 clicks.
- It is common for workers to learn of partnerships within the region or other organizations or websites to explore.



### IV. GENERAL STRENGTHS OF REGIONAL WORKFORCE SITES



**(1) Nearly every regional workforce website has an existing structure for adding new information to their platform.**

For example, there was plentiful information about upcoming events across a workforce region. Suppose a website has an existing structure for who maintains informational updates, who maintains design, and who maintains incoming data from the website. In that case, this is an excellent starting point for further web development.



**(2) Websites are making a concerted effort to link to partnerships and other resources within the community.**

Though stakeholders often feel that there are too many things to keep track of, such as various websites from partners or another resource announced by the state, most websites demonstrated an ability to recognize and celebrate other organizations in their region.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



## 1) **Select UI/UX experts to build opt-in, standardized templates to lower costs, quicken development, and drive outcomes.**

There are many commonalities across workforce website requirements, yet a significant variance in quality. A standard, opt-in template provided to regional workforce websites would lower overall web design costs, leverage the many features worth spotlighting throughout the state, and increase speed. A template may include:

- Suggested URLs, site map, & information architecture.
- User story mapping for each type of user (employer, worker, partner, staff)
- A high-fidelity layout for every kind of webpage on the site.
- A kit of assets for icons, fonts, and illustrations.



## 2) **Fix the "User Experience" rubric rows first. Second, improve the "Quality of Information" rubric rows. Then, improve the "Goal Accomplishment" rubric rows.**

We found that poor navigation and layout hindered many sites' performance, primarily due to a lack of mobile responsiveness or mobile-friendly design choices. Therefore, we recommend that workforce websites build in phases of development, where those phases align with the three categories of the rubric to prevent great information from being hidden behind poor design.



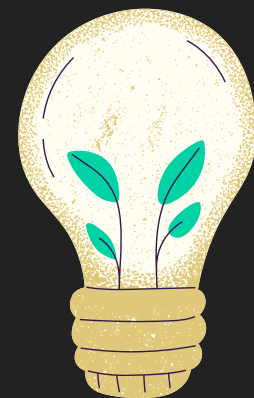
## 3) **Use this report to discover and compare exemplars for the "Quality of Information" rubric rows in particular.**

The feature most desired by workers - Finding the Best Career Paths and Job Training Programs - is the feature least provided by websites. In the last 3-5 years, solutions to this problem have risen in the ecosystem. Review sites that are performing at a 3 or above for Rubric Row 3 to discover potential solutions.

## OTHER OBSERVATIONS

WHAT OTHER TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT EMERGED WHILE EVALUATING REGIONAL, STATEWIDE, AND NATIONAL WORKFORCE WEBSITES?

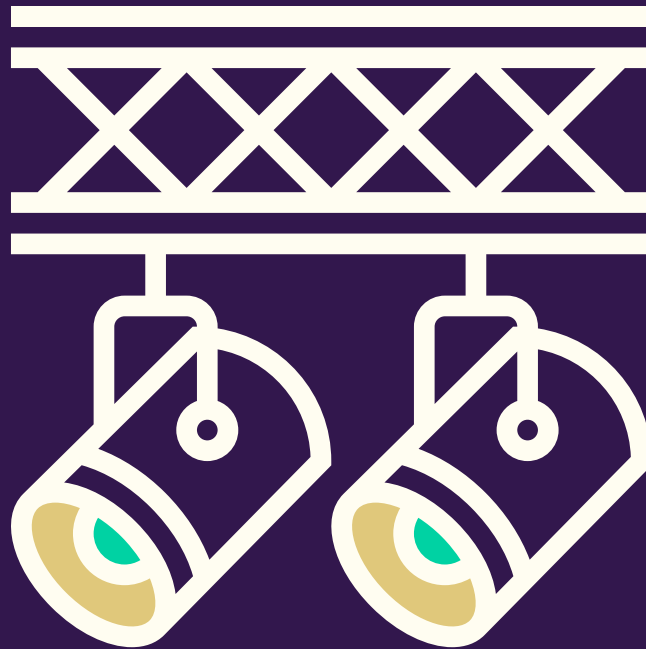
- *Most valuable actions are often reserved for in-person services.*
  - For example, it is rare for a worker to be able to determine their WIOA eligibility, and WIOA information was often made confusing by hiding crucial information behind too many clicks or walls of text.
  - It is rare for a worker to be able to take enrollment steps in career education directly from a workforce website. This is due to a lack of information about training providers and the performance outcomes of those opportunities.
- *Labor-specific information is often written in language that is too technical, or employer-centered.*
  - Many collections of labor market information or "hot jobs" are too dry or technical to strongly motivate the worker towards action. Workers indicate an interest in learning about what career trends are out there, such as what types of jobs are arriving (and more importantly, why and what they are like).
- *Many sites appear to be built compliance-first, rather than user-first.*
  - Compliance-required disclosures appear to be treated as the primary design constraint rather than usability. Though certainly a requirement, compliance disclosures need not drive user experience. In other words, satisfying
- *Many sites are losing user friendliness over time.*
  - The major barriers to scoring higher on mobile navigation and layout appear due to a common circumstance in website development: Upon launch, a website is clean, informative, and cohesive. However, as the website is used and updated over time, the organization and quantity of information create a confusing digital environment.





# USE CASES

In each of the 12 major service goals for a high performing website, we spotlight several Texan and National exemplars.



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### QUALITY OF INFORMATION

#### (1) COMMON CAREER SEEKER SERVICES

*Can users learn specific and actionable details about common services in their region?*

### 4- EXEMPLAR

The website provides plentiful, current, comprehensive, and interactive information about common job posting and support services resources, such as:

- WIOA eligibility
- Recent job postings
- Resume & pre-hire services
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Career fairs

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The designers of many websites treat career seeker services as items to be mentioned but not services to provide or be engaged with online. There is an overreliance on providing one-sized fits-all information without actions. The best sites provided customized information, offered actionable steps like online applications or forms, and avoided burying important information behind several clicks.

### TEXAS SPOTLIGHT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTHEAST TEXAS



<https://setworks.org>

- Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas' WIOA Eligibility Application is an exemplary resource that we highly recommend. A career seeker can easily access key information about WIOA eligibility and apply directly online.
- They also include clear links for assistance—bulleted information vs. blocks of text, hyperlinks, and meaningful action on screen.

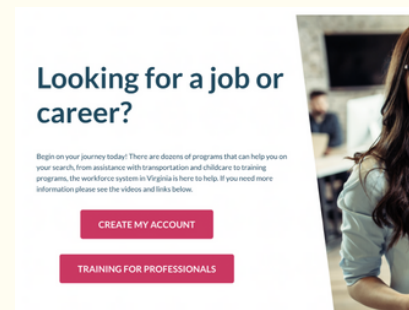


### OTHER SPOTLIGHT VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS



<https://virginiacareerworks.com>

- Virginia Career Works mixes modern and usable design with customizable and user-specific information. Actionable items were highlighted, and the site makes services likely to be engaged with quickly.



*Click the hand to visit website*

## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### QUALITY OF INFORMATION

### 4- EXEMPLAR

#### (2) COMPARING IN-DEMAND CAREER PATHWAYS

*Are users able to discover in-demand and growing career pathways information based on regional trends?*

Within 3 clicks, users can learn about 15+ growing careers in their region, including each of the following components for each career:

- Compelling visuals like photography, graphics, or other design elements
- Career description
- Career outlook
- Who the career may be best suited for
- Regional wages data in the context of cost of living data

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Labor market information can help career seekers target a pathway that will set them up for a lifetime of high-paying jobs. We found that most labor market information is not formatted in a user-friendly way, so it is usually unlikely that a career seeker will find and make an informed decision based on that information.

### TEXAS SPOTLIGHT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS TARRANT COUNTY



<https://workforcesolutions.net>

### OTHER SPOTLIGHT SKILLUP



<https://www.skillup.org>

- By combining high-quality visuals, short, clear descriptions, salary information, and an expandable card of critical information, a career seeker in Tarrant county can take actions informed by some labor market information.

- SkillUp uses a short quiz to get their users started with a list of recommended careers and then provides regionally specific salary information, who a career is for, the number of jobs available in an area, and even information about training programs.

**Environmental Engineers**

Research, design, plan, or perform engineering duties in the prevention, control, and remediation of environmental hazards using various engineering disciplines. Work may include waste treatment, site remediation, or... [Show More](#)

183 Median Salary \$113,373

Top Entry-level Education

- A Bachelor's Degree 73%
- A Master's or Professional Degree 27%

[Save](#)

**Overview** [Bookmark](#)

**Description**

A sales manager supports a company by leading their team of sales representatives. They supervise each member of the team and ensure their success. Sales managers also work with potential customers, dealers, and distributors to sell the company's product or service.

53% Salary range in your area

1196 Number of jobs in your area

992 [Get to SkillUp](#)

# 3 QUALITY OF INFORMATION FINDING THE BEST CAREER PATHS & JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### QUALITY OF INFORMATION

### 4- EXEMPLAR

#### (3) FINDING THE BEST CAREER PATHS & JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

*Can career seekers discover the most commonly requested information about vocational and skills training providers?*

The website provides plentiful, current, comprehensive, accurate, and interactive information about vocational and skills training providers, including at least 5 of the following details for each:

- Cost of program
- Earning potential
- Wraparound services
- Useful dates
- Contact and location information
- Compelling photography
- Compelling writing

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Nearly every site has a dropdown or call to action about job training. However, very few provide the information in the rubric row above, which, according to our surveys and research, is the most valued by career seekers. It is often hard to know, as a user, what to do after clicking job training.

## TEXAS SPOTLIGHT METRIX



<https://tx.metrixlearning.com>

- The partnership with Metrix allows Texans to get meaningful training online. However, there were many points of friction between Workforce Solutions websites and on the Metrix user interface that are likely to prevent a user from enrolling or completing training. Once enrolled, the quality of the courses on Metrix is, at times, very good.

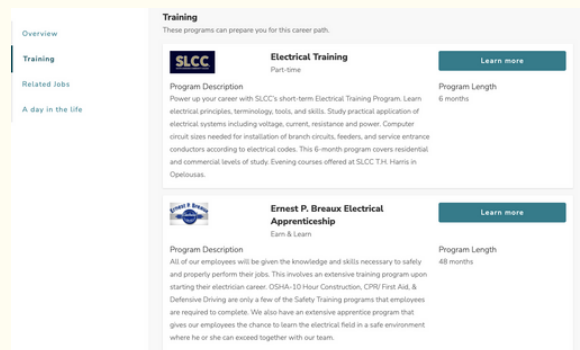


## OTHER SPOTLIGHT SKILLUP



<https://www.skillup.org>

- SkillUp provides friendly, introductory information about training programs and organizes those programs by career. WhereWeGo hopes to see the variety of programs and details about programs develop further as this new coalition grows.



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

USER EXPERIENCE	4- EXEMPLAR
<p><b>(4) MOBILE &amp; (6) DESKTOP NAVIGATION</b></p> <p><i>Does the website's navigation and structure empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources?</i></p>	<p>The site employs navigation techniques commonly expected of sites built within the last 5 years.</p> <p>The site is well-organized and easy to navigate.</p> <p>Career seekers can clearly understand the site's resources and where to go next for a wide range of needs.</p>
<p><b>(5) MOBILE &amp; (7) DESKTOP LAYOUT</b></p> <p><i>Does the website's graphic and web design empower the user to quickly and easily gain access to crucial resources?</i></p>	<p>There are multiple graphic elements and variations in layout that assist career seekers to accomplish their goals efficiently. No pages appear incomplete, malfunctioning, or overly reliant on text.</p> <p>Design elements assist seekers in understanding concepts and ideas.</p> <p>The site gives an impression of high-quality services by employing commonly expected design features of sites built within the last 5 years.</p>

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- In the first quarter of 2021, mobile devices (excluding tablets) generated 54.8 percent of global website traffic. Many websites in the workforce space are designed primarily for desktop users. This design choice leads to high “bounce rates,” or people who leave without action. Many websites built earlier in the 2010s were not built to optimize the mobile experience or rely on outdated designs.
- In addition, an overreliance on blocks of text makes the experience for users on many workforce websites quite tricky. It is common for good services to be buried in paragraphs or behind multiple clicks. Users, especially on mobile, are accustomed to scanning, not reading. While that behavior may make creating a website frustrating, it is critical to meet users where they are and select website providers and designers that can satisfy how most people browse and learn online.



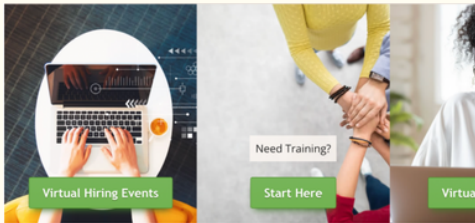
# 4-7 USER EXPERIENCE MOBILE & DESKTOP LAYOUT AND NAVIGATION

## TEXAS SPOTLIGHT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTHEAST TEXAS



<https://setworks.org>

- The homepage of Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas includes clear calls to action on the front page with high-quality images, making sure a user who arrives knows precisely where to go.

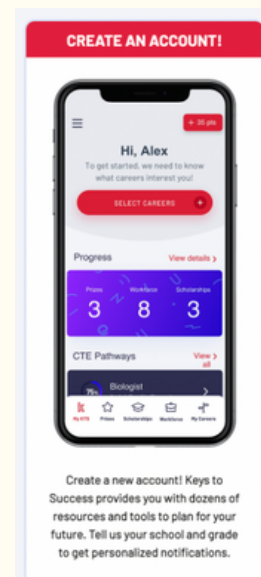


## OTHER SPOTLIGHT KEYS TO SUCCESS UTAH



<https://www.ktsutah.org>

- Keys to Success Utah shows screenshots and has clear step-by-step instructions, so a user knows what's coming and how to get there.

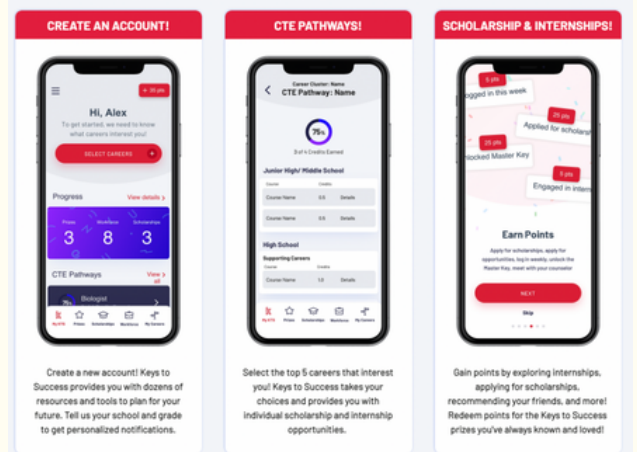


## TEXAS SPOTLIGHT CITY OF AMARILLO



<https://www.amarillo.gov/>

- The City of Amarillo put a drop-down on the most requested services on their homepage. While this seems like a minor feature, it helps avoid users' confusion about which departments to look for. Flexible drop-downs are an example of using site analytics to improve user experience.



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

### 4- EXEMPLAR

#### (9) ACCESS TO SERVICES

The website contains 3 or more functioning features from this list:

*Can a job seeker use the website to begin access to services for career seekers at any time of day?*

- A form to submit a question that receives a response within 3 business days.
- A live chat function.
- An intake application designed to be taken at home.
- Enrollment steps or sign ups for events, wraparound services, or programming.

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The best sites evaluated use chatbots or real humans to help users find what they were looking for. While the best-case scenario is that a user can navigate through a site without assistance, given some of the services and information complexity, it makes sense that some users may need help. If a career seeker keeps difficult hours and cannot make it into a job center, the website can be a place where they may access critical information and services.

### TEXAS SPOTLIGHT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS BORDERPLEX



<https://www.borderplexjobs.com>

- Workforce Solutions Borderplex has a modern, easy-to-use chat function that is responsive and has accessible appointment booking services. In addition to a detailed, actionable services database, this website is likely to serve a population with a diverse set of needs.

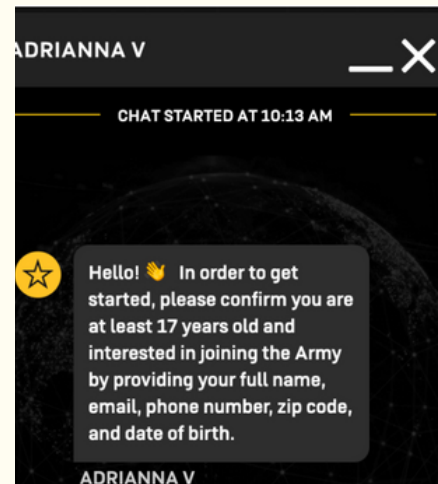


### OTHER SPOTLIGHT GOARMY.COM



<https://www.goarmy.com>

- Many sites use chat functions to support their users. The US Army pairs a career quiz with a high-functioning chat to get users into their funnel. By collecting names and information about users, they can follow up with recruitment information.



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

### 4- EXEMPLAR

(10) STARTING JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The website contains current information on actionable next steps for many job training programs and opportunities, such as application dates, enrollment requirements, application forms, and contact forms by program.

*Can a user go from discovering the site to taking enrollment steps in job training?*

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Most of the links on workforce sites that reference “Job Training” have little information about what they may offer, and very rarely do they have actual content about how to start getting trained or what that means. Sites often present links to online or in-person training without deeper context.

### TEXAS SPOTLIGHT

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS


### TARRANT COUNTY



<https://workforcesolutions.net>

### OTHER SPOTLIGHT

### INDEED

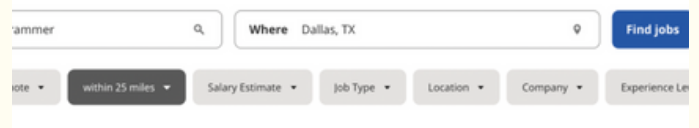


<https://www.indeed.com>

- Similar to the information they provided on the "Comparing In-Demand Career Pathways" rubric row, Tarrant County and their use of the Emsi Career Coach are the closest to an exemplary example of this rubric row of the sites we evaluated.



- Job search websites have set a common standard and expectation for personalizable searching for career opportunities. It is modern and clean, and an interface like this for job training could be a helpful addition to the Texas Workforce online toolbox. For some training examples approaching this kind of user-friendliness, see [Explore.WhereWeGo.org](http://Explore.WhereWeGo.org) and [SkillUp.org](http://SkillUp.org).



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

#### (11) PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

*Can a user be empowered to make informed decisions based on the past performance of certain workforce and training solutions?*

### 4- EXEMPLAR

Three or more types of performance outcomes data about workforce programs are available, such as:

- Number of jobs filled by provider
- Average earnings of jobs filled by provider
- Graduation or completion rates by program provider
- Job placement rates by program provider
- Reviews or testimonials from past participants

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Performance outcomes is an area in need of improvement across the country. Reporting on performance outcomes is often required for access to WIOA funding and other federal financial aid. However, existing reporting mechanisms are rarely user-friendly enough to inform decision-making. Without state and federal mandates to further disseminate performance outcomes, WhereWeGo suggests establishing user-centered, regional Training Navigators where users learn outcomes and critical information, and programs gain increased awareness and enrollment.

### TEXAS SPOTLIGHT TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM



<http://www.txhigheredaccountability.org/>

- The Texas Higher Education Accountability System is an example of concerted efforts to gather completion and job placement data for four-year, technical, and other career institutions. Technology like this is an important starting place on the path towards user-friendly data visualizations for career seekers.

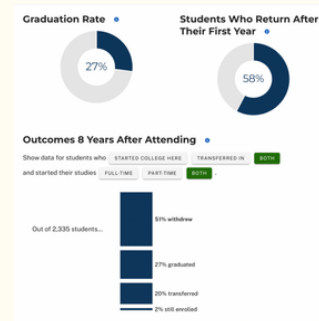


### OTHER SPOTLIGHT COLLEGE SCORECARD



<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>

- College Scorecard is an example of friendly presentations of statistics that enable workers to make data-informed decisions. Many of their graphics and language choices model superb usability.



## RUBRIC ROW DESCRIPTION

### GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

### 4- EXEMPLAR

#### (12) INNOVATION & BEST PRACTICES

*Does this website have exemplary components that other websites should take note of?*

Yes, in 5 areas or more, which will be identified in the results. Examples include:

- Effective use of CTAs (calls to action) to drive users towards goals.
- Limiting text on the page.
- Using interactive elements like drop downs.
- Automating eligibility questionnaires.
- New, useful approaches to site mapping.
- Chatbots and other methods of connecting with users right away.

## TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Three Workforce Solutions sites earned a 4.0 for innovation, and the researchers encourage readers to visit them. Each of them is highlighted at previous points in this report as well.

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS HEART OF TEXAS

<https://www.hotworkforce.com/>

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS TARRANT COUNTY

<https://workforcesolutions.net/>

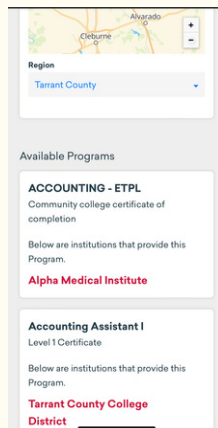
### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTHEAST TEXAS

<https://setworks.org/>

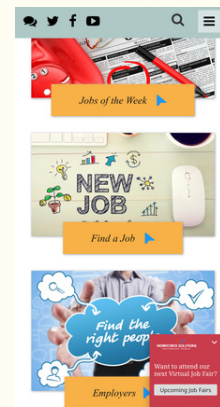
Intuitive, mobile-friendly drop downs keep a user from having to scroll through lots of text to find what they need.



Easy to filter training programs to find career training in the user's area make this experience exemplary.



Clear CTAs, friendly design, mobile responsiveness, and key information pinned to the side.



# THANK YOU!

**For support on your next  
endeavor to create value for  
workers in your region,  
please do not hesitate to  
contact us.**

[info@wherewego.org](mailto:info@wherewego.org)  
Leah Lykins & Ben Ifshin  
Co-Founders of WhereWeGo





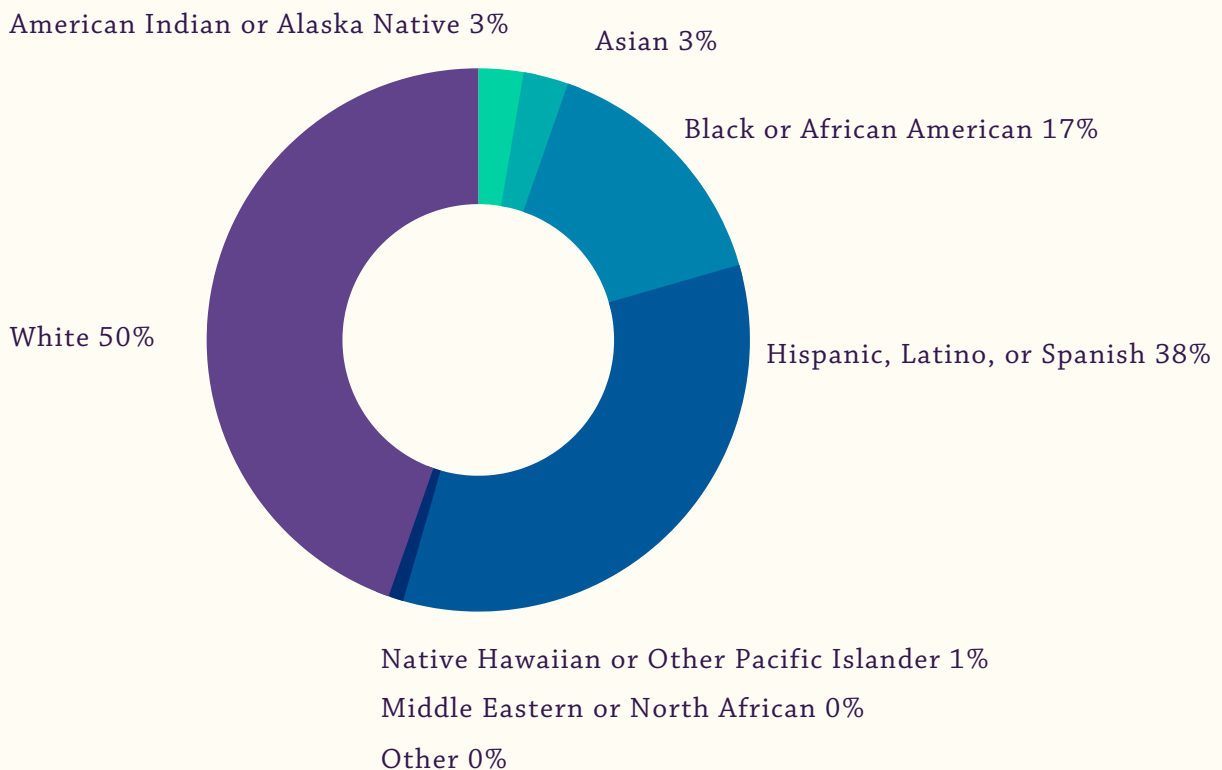


# WORKER SURVEY RESPONDENTS & RESPONSES

WhereWeGo also surveyed 270 Texans about what they value from workforce websites and their mindsets about their current career path. The respondents met the following requirements: (1) All respondents were between 18 and 54 years old. (2) Respondents were sourced from urban, suburban, and rural regions throughout Texas. (3) All respondents were currently or had been unemployed within the past year. (4) Respondents represented varying degrees of education, household income, and racial and ethnic background. (5) At least 80 percent of respondents actively sought new employment.

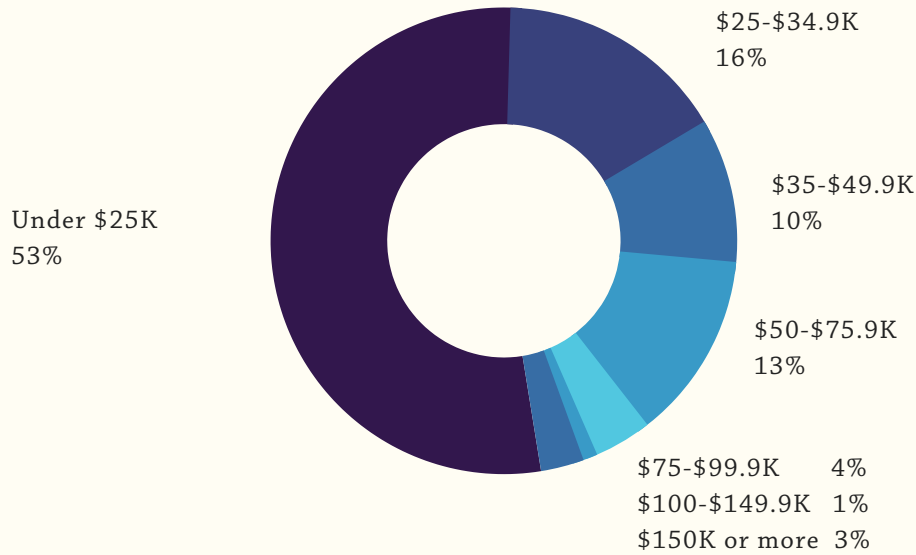
## The survey respondents represented varying races and ethnicities, but some groups were underrepresented.

### Distribution by race & ethnicity



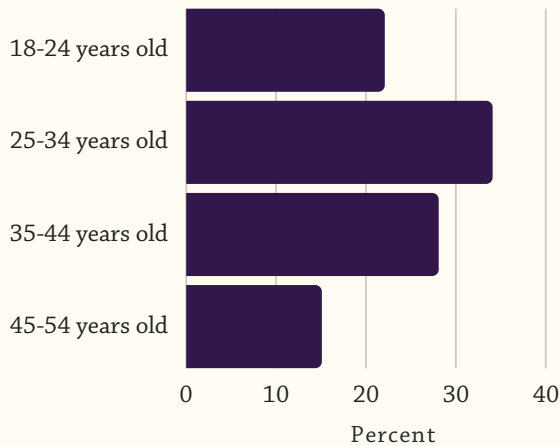
## The survey respondents represented a variety of financial backgrounds.

### Distribution by income

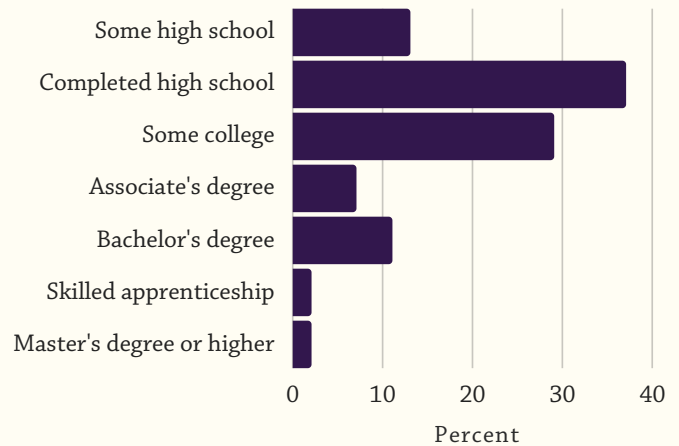


## The survey respondents represented a diverse set of age and education characteristics.

### Distribution by age



### Distribution by education



## Respondents found information about specific opportunities more useful than general tools.

49%

Wish they had a clearer career path ahead.

*These responses only include respondents with a household income below \$75K.*

9%

Found career quizzes and assessments useful.

Responses from the survey indicated that workers are more eager to gain specific information about real opportunities than general information about services.

Although few career seekers desired more job postings on a government workforce website, most found information about education and costs for education highly desirable.

Similarly, workers generally did not find career matching quizzes as applicable as precise details about what training programs were available.

## Most respondents did not use a local or regional workforce-related website in the past year.

"Which of the following websites, if any, have you used within the PAST YEAR?" by household income

