



2024 WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

NOMINATION FORM

APPLICANT:

Name of Community or Workforce Board

Contact Name and Title

Email Address

Telephone Number

Community Population (as of the most recent census or as officially marketed)

TEDC Member Name (must be individual TEDC member, not organization)

SUMMARY and INSTRUCTIONS:

Please attach a brief description of the workforce development initiative. Within this description, address the award criteria of Innovativeness, Transferability, Community Commitment and Leverage, Measured Objectives and Secondary Benefits. Please provide the start date of the project and completion date, if applicable.

The program or initiative is to be for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2023. Please provide measurable results for that 12-month period. The workforce development initiative can be a long-term project, however, it must show measurable results within the award year. **The submittal must be the application page and four conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages. Therefore, no more than five (5) pages in total for the award submission. Any award submission that exceeds the five-page limit will be disqualified.**

Please submit this completed nomination form and your project summary via email to Amy Swank at amy@texasedc.org on or before 5:00 PM, Friday, April 26, 2024. You may also submit up to five (5) photographs of your workforce project as separate jpeg or png files.

Questions regarding the Workforce Excellence Award program or procedures should be directed to Amy Swank, Chief Operating Officer, Texas Economic Development Council, amy@texasedc.org, 512-480-8432.

Applications are to be submitted via email to Amy Swank amy@texasedc.org.



Texas Economic Development Council 2024 Workforce Excellence Award Application



Jet Engine Mechanics Program

Kingsville, Texas

Population 24,317

Background:

The City of Kingsville, the Kingsville Chamber of Commerce and Naval Air Station Kingsville have been inextricably linked since the base's inception on July 4, 1942.

Over the years, the Chamber of Commerce has worked with our base on challenges such as spousal employment programs, housing within the community, preventing wind farm encroachment, securing funding from the state and federal governments and now the commissioning of the USS Kingsville.

“The US Navy is incredibly grateful to the Kingsville Chamber of Commerce for their role in strongly supporting our mission training the world's premier jet Naval Aviators. The Navy's heart-blood is our people and their families, and the Kingsville Chamber is focused on building a thriving community for both of them,” said Rear Admiral Rich Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training. “In 2023, the Chamber of Commerce provided funding for aviation support programs onboard NAS Kingsville to the benefit of our aviators. In parallel, the chamber supported numerous off-base opportunities for service members and their families increasing the quality of life for all. The Chamber's partnership with the Navy stretches over 80 years and we are eagerly looking forward to the next 80 years.”

NAS Kingsville is one of two bases in the country whose sole mission is to train carrier-based, strike-fighter pilots. The success of this mission is heavily reliant on the training jet used by the student aviators.

One of the most recent challenges is the availability of the T-45, which is the Navy's only advanced training jet. The lack of available jets requires cancellation of training flights, or sorties. The cancelled flights lead to extended time to complete the curriculum which leads to fewer pilots available for the fleet.

The jet's original manufacturers, McDonnell Douglas and British Aerospace, won the bid for the advanced trainer in 1978. The T-45's first flight was in April of 1988 and was introduced to the fleet in 1991. Boeing took over the production of the jet following its merger with McDonnell Douglas in 1997.

Though production of the T-45 ceased in 2009, fewer than 200 jets are expected to remain in service until at least 2035. The nearly 50-year service life will make it one of the longest service jets in history.

The jet is currently undergoing a service life extension program (SLEP). This program is designed to extend the service life of the jet until a replacement is operational. This complex and comprehensive program requires a full disassembling of the jet's powerplant for assessment, replacement of parts and reconstruction.

The SLEP requires additional staff to complete the highly specialized process. To fill those openings, contractors were required to recruit from other vendors. This has created a transient workforce that lacks the stability needed for the program.

The Chamber of Commerce engaged with Navy partners at the Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) to develop a plan to create a pipeline of local workers. CNATRA is over all naval aviation training, including the Blue Angels.

In 2022 the Chamber of Commerce along with Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend, Kingsville Independent School District and Coastal Bend College applied for the Texas Industry Partnership Grant (TIP).

The grant was awarded to the Chamber-led partnership in 2023. The Kingsville Chamber of Commerce was the first Chamber of Commerce in the State of Texas to win the TIP Grant.

Innovativeness:

Creating innovative funding methods for the \$150,000 grant match was a critical component of the Chamber's application. The Kingsville Chamber of Commerce merged with the Greater Kingsville EDC in early 2020 as a cost saving measure for both entities. As the only economic development organization in Kleberg County, the Chamber serves a dual purpose for our residents. Despite the community's commitment to economic development, the Kingsville Chamber/EDC does not receive any dedicated funding from the City of Kingsville.

The lack of traditional economic development funding requires the Kingsville Chamber to find innovative ways to fund projects. The Chamber Board, recognizing the importance of the program, committed the full grant match of \$150,000. This appropriation depleted the organization's funds.

The Chamber then worked with the City of Kingsville to reimburse the organization so that operations were not impacted.

The Chamber also had to solve where to house the program. Rather than funding a new space, the Chamber reached out to the Kingsville Independent School District to explore the possibility of utilizing space on their high school campus.

The school district not only agreed to that, but contributed \$60,000 towards the renovation of the space.

Ultimately, that partnership allowed more funds to flow to the program and neither the purchase of a building nor the renovation costs that would be needed.

Transferability:

The jet engine training program creates highly transferable skills that can be utilized at NAS Kingsville, NAS Corpus Christi, NAS Meridian or any other facility that requires Airframe and Powerplant certified workforce.

The need for jet engine mechanics in the Coastal Bend is higher than the national average with 930 employees in the area compared to a national average of 324. The wages for these positions

also exceed national averages at \$70,328. The average wages far exceed the average income for a resident of Kingsville which currently sits at \$25,322.

Overall, demand for aircraft mechanics is also on the rise with 209 employees nearing retirement age. Over the last 12 months, the Coastal Bend has seen 150 unique job postings from 25 different employers.

Additionally, the entities at the Port of Corpus Christi or the recently announced Direct Air Capture Project, located entirely within Kleberg County, will utilize workforce that has the adaptability to learn new skill sets.

Community Commitment and Leverage:

Kingsville's commitment to supporting NAS Kingsville is one of our core community pillars. The Navy is ingrained in to the fabric of our community. For decades, Navy veterans have made Kingsville their retirement home and those on active duty have found countless spouses while stationed here.

Kingsville has fought to support and secure our base through multiple rounds of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). We have submitted Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant applications nearly every cycle.

The jet engine training program is an extension of that commitment and our willingness to find innovative ways to protect the mission and jobs at NAS Kingsville.

"Kingsville has a long history of partnering with our Navy friends," said Kingsville Mayor Sam Fugate. "We have MOUs in place for police, fire, water, waste water and trash. They are an important part of our community and we will do whatever we can to make sure that those jobs stay in Kingsville. The City appreciates the Chamber taking the lead on this initiative and we were more than happy to support their efforts."

Measured Objectives:

Kingsville's jet engine mechanics program will train at least 5 students per cohort. These students will receive an A.A.S Airframe and Powerplant with FAA Certifications in Airframe and Powerplant.

This degree and credential will make graduates of the program highly desirable candidates for jobs in Kingsville and the Coastal Bend.

The Kingsville Chamber of Commerce will work with partners to track student job placement and wages.

Secondary Benefits:

The jet engine mechanics program, while an important standalone project, is so much more than just a workforce initiative. It represents our dedication to protecting one of the most critical economic assets that we have.

Department of Defense officials have told us that a BRAC round is inevitable. This program shows that the Kingsville community not only communicates with our local Navy leadership, but that we are responsive to their workforce needs.

Once the DoD does move forward with a BRAC round, this program will be one of the pillars that we stand on when we advocate to protect and expand our Navy base.

“Naval Air Station Kingsville has been recommended for expansion all four (4) BRAC rounds because of unencumbered air space, concrete, flying weather and lack of encroachment. The major concern with retention and expansion of the base is a reliable source of a skilled workforce,” said Rear Admiral Rich Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training. “The Kingsville Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission and City of Kingsville, is working tirelessly to resolve that delta in skilled workers. Their work has become critical to the base and the community,”

Most importantly, Kingsville has a poverty rate that is nearly twice the state average. This program will create opportunities for residents to seek employment that pays family supporting wages. The best way to lift a family out of poverty, especially generational poverty, is with a job. This program will do just that for Kingsville.

Conclusion:

The Texas Industry Partnership Grant represents a commitment to supporting one of the most important economic drivers of the Kingsville community. It shows how in tune with a major employer is, responsiveness to challenges faced by that employer and an innovative approach to helping address that issue.

The program will provide a steady pipeline of workers and provide jobs to family's who need it. This program will create new opportunities for residents who may not have many other options to support their family.