



2025 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 (TEDC membership is held by the individual, not the 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, 2024. 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.

Important Information:

- 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 submissions that exceeds the five-page limit will be disqualified.
- The project or program may not have been submitted previously for a TEDC Workforce Excellence Award.

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, May 9, 2025. You may also submit up to five (5) photographs of your workforce project as separate jpeg or png files.

Application Fee: There is a \$100 fee to apply for the TEDC's Workforce Excellence Award. An invoice will be generated upon receipt of the application.

Workforce Excellence Award

Application Narrative

Project Title: Healthcare Workforce Training Initiative

Organization: Pharr Economic Development Corporation

Start Date: January 1, 2024

End Date: Currently ongoing

Project Summary

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board, in partnership with the Pharr Economic Development Council (EDC) and RGV College, launched a high-impact workforce initiative under the High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Program to address critical shortages in the healthcare sector. This collaborative project leveraged local economic development sales tax funds through the Pharr EDC and matched them with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds from the Texas Workforce Commission to deliver targeted training for high-demand occupations.

The initiative set out to train approximately 50 eligible new or incumbent students in Vocational Nursing, Pharmacy Technician, or Medical Assistant programs. Further, the project has three primary goals:

1. Increase access to high-demand training programs for underserved populations;
2. Support local healthcare employers by growing the regional talent pipeline;
3. Build capacity for long-term training delivery by upgrading instructional infrastructure and instructor readiness.

Pharr, Texas, the focus of this project, has a population of 80,410 (2023 ACS estimates), with approximately 80.3% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Education data highlights key challenges in the region: 78.9% of residents aged 25 and older have a high school diploma or equivalent, but only 9.9% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. These statistics underscore the need for accessible workforce development opportunities to help bridge the educational gap and address workforce shortages in critical sectors like healthcare. By offering targeted training to underserved populations, this initiative will not only increase career opportunities for local residents but also strengthen the regional healthcare talent pool.

Award Criteria

I. Innovativeness

This initiative combined traditional workforce development methods with an innovative financing model. By aligning WIOA funds with local EDC investments, the program created a public-private structure that directly addressed the local healthcare labor shortage while enhancing the capacity of a private training institution. The dual focus on both equipment upgrades and tuition/work-based learning support ensured students received hands-on, high-quality training and immediate job placement opportunities.

II. Transferability

The model used—pairing a Local Workforce Board, a local EDC utilizing 4A/4B sales tax funds, and a postsecondary provider—is readily transferable to other regions in Texas. The structure is simple, replicable, and provides a clear path for local stakeholders to jointly solve workforce gaps in high-demand fields. The project demonstrates how locally-governed funds and federal resources can be braided together for maximum impact.

III. Community Commitment and Leverage

The project is a testament to regional collaboration. The Pharr EDC contributed local funding and strategic alignment with economic development goals. The LRGV Board brought federal WIOA funding, performance tracking, and outreach infrastructure. RGV College contributed in-kind resources such as instructors and classroom space. This leveraged approach enabled the training of a greater number of students than either partner could have achieved independently. Employer partners also committed to hiring successful completers, underscoring strong community buy-in. PEDC has provided substantial support for this project, including:

- Funding tuition for 40 students, including full tuition and preceptorship for 4 students;
- Contributing up to \$33,800 toward individual participant recruitment;
- Funding training and development for 25 educators at RGV College;
- Collaborating on upgrades to six classrooms and a skills lab through investment in new medical equipment.

This program is an excellent example of cross-sector collaboration between local government, higher education, and workforce development institutions to address a critical labor shortage.

IV. Measured Objectives

For the calendar year 2024, the following measurable outcomes were achieved:

- 47 students were awarded tuition support:
 - 41 received \$2,000 each
 - 6 received \$1,000 each

- Students trained across:
 - Medical Assistants: 15 students (12 at \$2,000 level, 3 at \$1,000)
 - Pharmacy Technicians: 5 students (4 at \$2,000, 1 at \$1,000)
 - Vocational Nursing: 27 students (25 at \$2,000, 2 at \$1,000)
- 8 students withdrew, resulting in a retention rate of 83% (39 of 47 students)
- Medical equipment was installed across six classrooms and a skills lab, expanding the college's capacity to serve future cohorts totaling \$137,364.
- 25 instructors at RGV College received updated professional development;
- 6 classrooms and a skills lab were modernized to meet current industry standards;

V. Secondary Benefits

The project produced ancillary economic benefits by:

- Enhancing the local talent pool and reducing reliance on out-of-area recruitment.
- Increasing household income potential for program completers, improving economic mobility in a historically underserved region.
- Expanding RGV College's training capacity, which will allow future cohorts to be trained beyond the life of this grant.
- Strengthening employer confidence in the regional workforce pipeline, which supports long-term economic development strategies.