

NCTX 2030

Pathways to Success In North Central Texas



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North Central Texas Regional Pathway Network



**North Central Texas Pathways
Strategic Plan 2025-2029**

Table of Contents

Overview of the Texas Regional Pathways Network	6
North Central Texas 2025-2029 Strategic Plan	8
Executive Summary	8
Mission	8
Vision	9
Key Findings- NCTX Asset Map & Gap Analysis	9
Priority Industry Sectors	9
Gap Analysis	9
Asset Mapping	10
Strategic Objectives:	10
Strengthening Industry-Education Partnerships:	10
Alignment with Labor Market Needs:	10
Improving Credentialing and Career Pathways:	10
Expanding Work-Based Learning Opportunities:	10
Effective Advising - Enhancing Counselor and Advising Roles:	10
Advancing Academic and Career Integration:	11
Key Recommendations	11
North Central Texas By the Numbers	14
North Central Texas Counties	16
Priority Industry Sectors	20
2025 NCTX Leading Career Pathways	21
Asset Map & Gap Analysis	21
Strategies for Regional Engagement	24
1. Cross-Sector Partnerships - Strengthening Industry-Education Partnerships	24
2. Alignment with High-Wage, In-Demand Labor Market Information	24
3. Links Between Secondary & Post-Secondary Education	25
4. Credential and Degrees with Value in the Labor Market	25
5. Integration of Rigorous Academics and Career-Focused Learning	25
6. Strong College and Career Advising, and Counselor Supports	25
7. Work-Based Learning	26
NCTX 2030 Strategic Plan	
Support	
Pathways	
Infrastructure	
Communication	
Strategy Supporting Actions	
Cross-Sector Partnerships	
Alignment with High-Wage, In-Demand Labor Market Information	
Links Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education	
Credentials and Degrees with Value in the Labor Market	
Integration of Rigorous Academics and Career-Focused Learning	
Strong College and Career Advising and Counseling Supports	
Continuum of Work-Based Learning Experiences	

Conclusion	45
References	46
Appendix A - Texas Data Collection	49
Appendix B - Texas Data Tools	50



Overview of the Texas Regional Pathways Network

The Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) builds regional career and technical education programs that



TEXAS REGIONAL
PATHWAYS NETWORK

expand the occupational talent pool, spur economic growth across the state, and ensure that all **TEXANS** have the skills and credentials to secure high-wage employment.

Launched in 2019, the TRPN supports Governor Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative,

through which the Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission are working collaboratively to increase economic development in Texas by ensuring a strong link between education and industry.

The Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) builds regional talent pipelines that spur economic growth across the state and ensures that all Texans have the skills and credentials needed for economic advancement. The TRPN brings together state and regional leaders to build strong educational and career pathways that prepare Texans for careers in high-wage, in-demand industries. Leaders engaged in the TRPN represent multiple sectors, including K-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce and economic development, business and industry, government, and nonprofit and community-based organizations.

This alliance is led by an executive leadership team of high-level, strategic state leaders representing business, K-12, postsecondary education, and workforce development. This alliance oversees the progress of regional initiatives that support our state's economic growth.

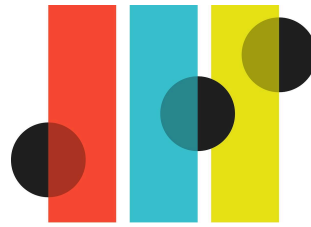
The team is supported by Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the American workforce and education systems to ensure access to economic advancement for all (JFF, 2024). JFF drives change in the American workforce and education systems to promote economic advancement for everyone. Founded with a focus on addressing workforce and educational needs, JFF works at the intersection of policy, practice, and research, designing and scaling innovative workforce development and education initiatives. Their work involves collaborating with educators, employers, and policymakers to build a more

skilled, productive, and equitable workforce.

JFF's approach is characterized by a commitment to creating pathways to economic success for underserved populations and adapting to the rapidly changing demands of the global economy. Together, the plan is to advance the work of the Tri-Agency

Workforce Initiative through the following three high-priority focus areas:

- Efficient and flexible **PATHWAYS** to earning degrees, certificates, and other credentials linked to high-wage, in-demand jobs.
- Ensure students receive the **SUPPORT** necessary to succeed at all stages of their education and in their transitions.
- Create a robust **INFRASTRUCTURE** for interagency collaboration around common goals, data, and processes to ensure improved student outcomes and meet employers' needs.



Jobs for the Future



North Central Texas 2030 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Executive Summary

The North Central Texas (NCTX) Pathways initiative represents a robust, region-wide effort to align education and workforce systems, focusing on high-wage, high-demand career pathways. This plan builds on comprehensive research, stakeholder engagement, and asset mapping conducted across 14 counties to address the region's economic and workforce needs. The strategic focus is on fostering collaboration, expanding opportunities, and overcoming systemic barriers to equip young individuals for meaningful careers that support regional economic growth.

Leaders and members of the North Central Texas Regional Pathways Network are crafting cutting-edge career and technical education programs that will enhance students' academic and technical prowess, and ignite leadership qualities and in-demand skills.

Mission

To equip students with the tools they need to conquer the demands of higher education and thrive in a fiercely competitive global workforce!

Vision

A collaborative system to provide North Central Texas individuals the tools needed to meet the demands of the regional workforce and thrive in a fiercely competitive labor market.

Key Findings:

Priority Industry Sectors:

The 2025 NCTX Leading Career Pathways Landscape Map identifies nine high-wage, high-demand occupations, including education, public safety, skilled trades, and technology. These roles meet or exceed regional wage benchmarks and demonstrate significant growth potential.

Gap Analysis:

Challenges include a lack of data on work-based learning (WBL), misalignment of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with labor market needs, limited employer partnerships, and barriers to implementing high-quality WBL opportunities.

Asset Mapping:

While progress has been made, only 21% of school districts offered aligned CTE practicum courses, highlighting a need for stronger industry-education alignment and incentivized funding for high-demand career pathways.

Strategic Objectives:

Strengthening Industry-Education Partnerships:

- Convene regular stakeholder meetings, including quarterly Council sessions and monthly Leadership Council updates, to ensure alignment with labor market demands.
- Host biannual "Pathways to Partnership" fairs to foster new collaborations between education and industry.

Alignment with Labor Market Needs:

- Annually update NCTX Pathways Landscape Maps and conduct program inventories to ensure alignment with high-wage, high-growth occupations.
- Develop targeted campaigns to increase awareness of career opportunities in priority industries such as education and protective services.

Improving Credentialing and Career Pathways:

- Establish stackable credential systems allowing students to progressively build skills.
- Collaborate with employers to validate credentials and certifications for regional relevance.

Expanding Work-Based Learning Opportunities:

- Develop a structured WBL continuum, from job shadowing to internships, aligned with industry needs.
- Address liability concerns for employers through insurance options and increased stakeholder education on relevant laws like Texas HB 639.

Effective Advising - Enhancing Counselor and Advising Roles:

- Embed WBL opportunities into individualized advising, highlighting career exploration and skill development.
- Advocate for dedicated college and career advisor roles to reduce the administrative burden on counselors.

Advancing Academic and Career Integration:

- Support the integration of rigorous academics and soft skills into career-focused learning pathways.
- Align curricula with industry needs to ensure graduates are both college and career-ready.

Key Recommendations:

- Address the stigma surrounding career pathways by educating stakeholders on their value.
- Funding incentives for CTE programs aligned with high-need regional careers through funding models.
- Improve data collection and reporting for WBL programs to measure impact and guide decision-making.
- Promote dual credit opportunities and articulation agreements to enhance secondary-to-postsecondary transitions.

***Strategy execution is the drive
and ability to convert plans
into results.***

**North Central Texas Pathways
Strategic Plan 2025-2029**



North Central Texas Council for High Quality Pathways

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2029

Name	Organization	Representing
NCTX 2030 Executive Leadership Council		
Aleshia Rivera	FACT Education Inc	NCTX Pathways
Andrea Ellis	Commerce/NETCAT	K-12
Carla Ruge-Fritz	Denton ISD	K-12
Danielle Davis	Workforce Solutions North Central Texas	WDA 4
Daphne Rickert	InterLink North Texas	Labor Market
David Lanman	Wylie ISD	K-12
Dr. Ryan Thornton	TSTC	IHE
Dr. Sharonda Pruitt	East Texas A&M University	IHE
Dr. Tara Peters	Navarro College	IHE
Eric Batten	Texas Instruments	Industry
Haley Crawford	Princeton ISD	K-12
Gerald Nichols	Amber Electric	Industry
John Dickson	City of Greenville	Economic Development
Kenda Willingham	Community ISD	K-12
Kerri Bowles	Region 8 ESC	ESC
Kym Hill	Stellar Virtual	Virtual Education
Lorrie. Simon	The Burmax Company	Industry
Marcus Balch	TSTC	IHE
Micah Tannery	Denton ISD	K-12
Nick James	WhitegloveAI	Industry
Raul Martinez	Collin College	IHE
Renae Tribble	Navarro College	IHE
Rene Ralston	TSTC	IHE
Rob Stanley	Paris Junior College	IHE
Shelby Honeycutt	Community ISD	K-12
Stephanie Roberts	Workforce Solutions North Central Texas	WDA 4
Ted Mackey	Anna ISD	K-12
Terry Arndt	Region 12 ESC	ESC
Todd Gibson	Granbury ISD	K-12

NCTX 2030 Focus Groups

Protective Service

Blake Miller	Wylie PD Drones
David Lanman	Wylie ISD
Jeff Patterson	Dallas Firefighters Association
Joe Wetzill	Fire Chief
Lt. Brandon Terry	Dallas Black Firefighters Association
Michael Glynn	Fort Worth Firefighters Association
Serveo Perez	Education Consultant - Law Enforcement

Architecture/Construction

Alicia Baron	Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors Association of North Texas
Brad Bodine	Saber Power Services
Denise Campos	Shermco Industries
Eric Beckman	National Field Services
Jane Hannah	Construction Education Foundation
Jerold Nichols	Amber Electric/Independent Electrical Contractors
Price Warwick, III	IBEW Local Union 20
Ron Windup	Shermco Industries
Wesley Osborne - new	Saber Power Services

IT/Electronics

Eric Batten	Texas instruments
Nick James	WhitegloveAI
Vince O'Connell	Education Technology Group

Education & Training

Dr. Sharonda Pruitt	East Texas A&M University
Kenda Willingham	Community ISD
Mr. Carl R Garner	Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

North Central Texas Pathways Regional Overview

View NCTX Data Dashboard – Demographics & Statistics at <https://facted.org/demographics-statistics>

North Central Texas By the Numbers



The North Central Texas (NCTX) Region, Texas Workforce Development Area 4 (WDA4), includes a diverse population of over 3 million individuals (about the population of Arkansas in 2023!) who live and work in 14 counties. Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Johnson, Kaufman, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, and Wise Counties create a circle surrounding Tarrant and Dallas Counties. The circle around two large suburban areas provokes some to describe WDA4 as the donut region. North Central Texas Counties along with Dallas and Tarrant County form the Dallas Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). According to the United States Office on Management and Budgets, the general concept of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a core area with a significant population nucleus is joined together with outlying counties having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core (U.S. OMB, 2020). Individuals residing within a MSA frequently commute between counties to live, work, and play. The bureau explains that MSA's should not be used to classify a county or school district, such as rural or suburban, but for statistical purposes only. Collectively, this MSA is the fourth largest metro area in the U.S. Understanding the relationships, overlapping geographical areas, along with the opportunities and challenges existing due to immutable data sources defined by locale, are vital to this project. Frequently, geographical, and statistical overlaps between the North Central, Tarrant, and Greater Dallas Workforce Regions occur requiring filtering or further defining. In simple terms, North Texans live, work, and play throughout all three regions.

As displayed in table 1, the 2023 population of North Central Texas Region (NCTX), Workforce Development Area 4 (WDA4), is 3, 384, 437 (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2022).

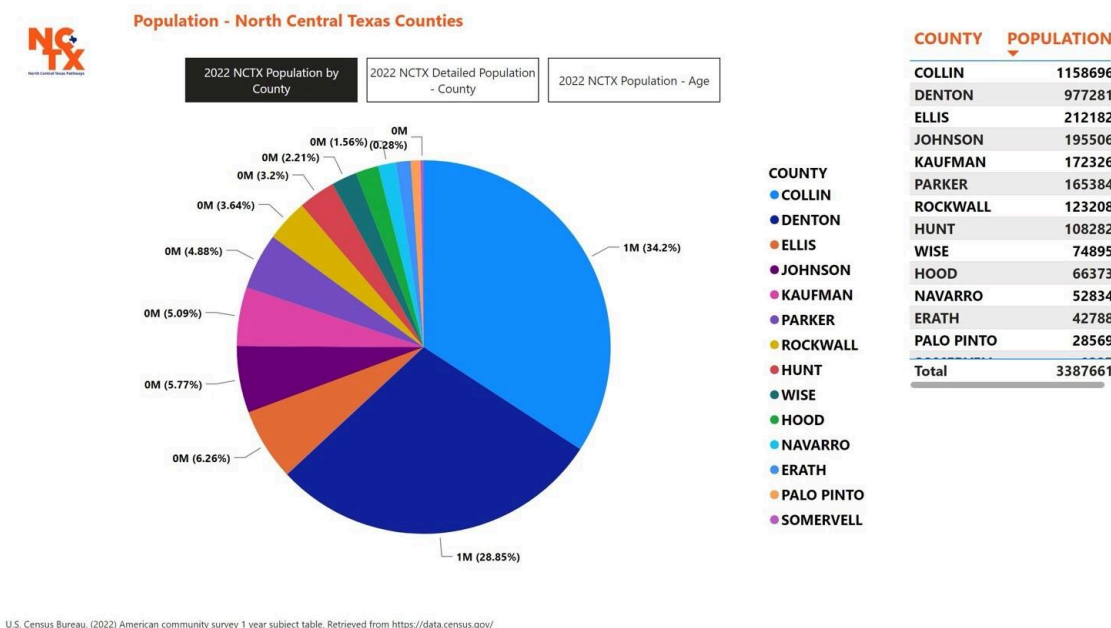
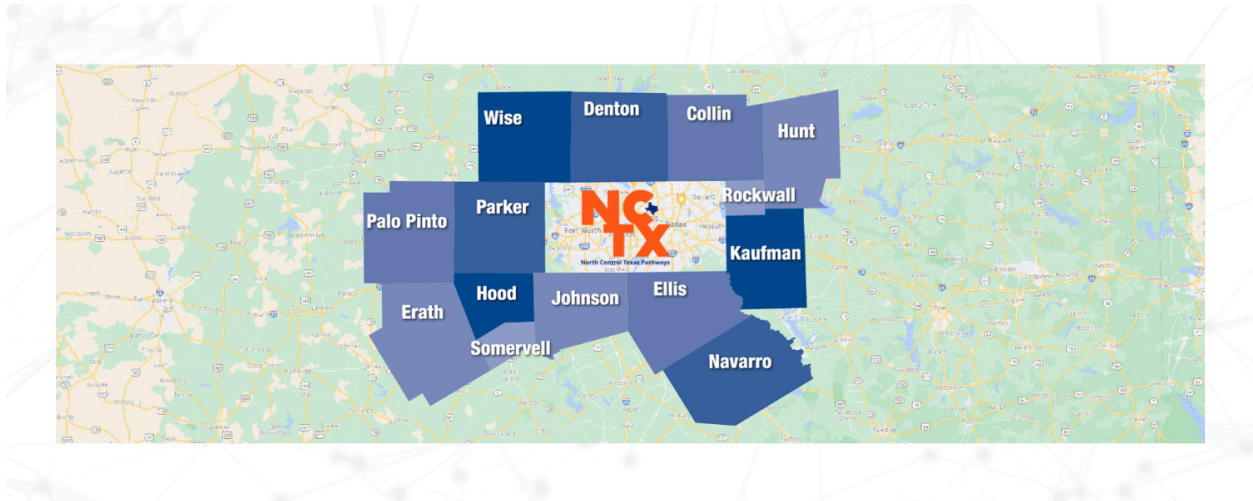


Table 1 – Population North Central Texas Counties

North Central Texas Counties

NCTX is a dynamic and varied region comprising counties with unique characteristics and qualities, weaving together a rich tapestry of cultural, economic, and social diversity.



Collin County, located in the heart of North Texas, is a vibrant and rapidly growing area known for its unique blend of urban sophistication and suburban charm. It boasts a diverse and thriving economy, excellent educational institutions, and a high quality of life. Known for its affluence and a strong job market, Collin County is home to numerous corporate headquarters, bustling retail centers, and picturesque residential communities. Collin College has campuses sprinkled all throughout the county which has grown the area into a hub for technology and business. Home to thriving cities like Plano, Frisco, and McKinney, and smaller, more rural communities like Farmersville and Nevada, Collin's booming, rich cultural scene, extensive recreational facilities, and high quality of life attract families and professionals alike.

Denton County is in the northern part of the region and stands as a vibrant and rapidly growing area, blending rich history with modern development. The county seat, the city of Denton, is known for its lively music scene and educational institutions, including the University of North Texas, Texas Woman's University, and North Central Texas College, infusing the area with a youthful and dynamic atmosphere. The county's growth has been fueled by its proximity to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, attracting businesses and residents alike who seek a balance between urban opportunities and the charm of smaller communities. Denton blends academic vibrancy with a creative spirit, fostering a community that values innovation and cultural richness.

Ellis County boasts a rich heritage that is deeply rooted in its agricultural and industrial past. Waxahachie, the picturesque county seat, is renowned for its charming historic architecture and serves as the cultural heart of the county. Ellis is distinguished by its vibrant economy, propelled by a mix of manufacturing,

distribution, and agricultural sectors. The region's scenic landscapes, coupled with its proximity to the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, make it a desirable location for families and businesses seeking a balance between rural charm and urban convenience. With its array of community festivals, historical sites, and natural beauty, Ellis County epitomizes the spirit of Texas.

Erath County is steeped in history and tradition, with a vibrant blend of agricultural heritage and modern living. The county seat, Stephenville, is famously known as the 'Cowboy Capital of the World', reflecting the area's deep connection to rodeo culture and cowboy heritage. This dynamic county is also home to Tarleton State University, adding a youthful energy and educational dimension to the community. With its rolling hills, lush farmlands, and a friendly, close-knit community, Erath County offers a unique blend of rural tranquility and a progressive, active lifestyle, making it an appealing destination for residents and visitors seeking a taste of authentic Texas culture.

Johnson County is home to communities like Cleburne, Burleson, Joshua, and Godley; one finds a balance between suburban development and open, natural spaces. Johnson County's proximity to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex enhances its appeal, providing residents with easy access to urban resources while maintaining a distinct, small-town feel. The county's diverse economy, scenic natural surroundings, and keen sense of community pride make it an ideal place for families and individuals seeking a balance of rural tranquility and suburban convenience in the Texan landscape.

Kaufman County has evolved from its early agricultural roots to become a thriving area that balances rural charm with suburban development. Its county seat, the city of Kaufman, serves as a central hub for the county's diverse activities and communities. With its proximity to Dallas, Kaufman County offers residents and visitors a blend of small-town hospitality and access to urban amenities. Trinity Valley Community College provides many exciting career training programs for dual credit and adult learners. The county's landscape is characterized by its picturesque plains, making it an attractive location for families, businesses, and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Hood County is situated southwest of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and is famous for its well-preserved 19th-century architecture and the iconic Lake Granbury, a popular destination for boating, fishing, and leisure activities. This charming county melds its historical roots, evident in its historic courthouse and town square, with modern living, making it a desirable location for those seeking a blend of tranquility and convenience. Hood County's inviting small-town atmosphere, coupled with its proximity to larger cities, offers residents and visitors a unique experience of living in Texas, where community ties are strong, and the natural landscape is a central part of everyday life.

Hunt County, Texas, located in the northeastern part of the region, is a region rich in history and characterized by its blend of rural charm and evolving urban development. Greenville, the county seat, is known for its historical significance and as a center for commerce and culture within the county. Hunt County's economy historically revolved around agriculture, but it has diversified over the years, now encompassing manufacturing, retail, and other industries. Paris Junior College – Greenville Campus provides dual credit and career training programs aligned to many high-wage, high-need careers. This blend of economic activities contributes to the county's growth and attractiveness. Its proximity to the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area adds to its appeal, offering residents and visitors the benefits of rural living with convenient access to urban amenities.

Navarro County is a region defined by its rich history, cultural heritage, and scenic landscapes. Corsicana, the county seat, is not only the economic and cultural hub of the county but also known for its historic significance, including being the site of the first commercially significant oil discovery in Texas. Navarro's history is deeply intertwined with the oil, cotton, and railroad industries, which have shaped its development over the years. Today, Navarro College, as a proud member of the community, blends its historical roots with modern growth, offering a diverse economy and a quality of life that appeals to families and businesses alike.

Palo Pinto County, situated in the rugged and picturesque terrain of North Central Texas, is an area steeped in history and natural beauty. The county seat, Palo Pinto, reflects the rustic charm and historical richness of the region. This county is renowned for its stunning landscapes, including the striking Palo Pinto Mountains and the serene waters of Possum Kingdom Lake, a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Palo Pinto County's history is deeply rooted in ranching and agriculture, which continue to play a significant role in its economy and culture. The blend of its historical heritage, natural wonders, and a close-knit community atmosphere makes Palo Pinto County a unique and captivating part of Texas, offering a tranquil escape and a glimpse into the state's storied past.

Parker County is a dynamic region that harmoniously blends its rich historical heritage with modern growth and development. Weatherford, the county seat, is known for its charming historic districts and as a hub of activity in the county. Weatherford College is poised to connect Parker County students to high-wage, high-need careers through its training programs. Famous for its peaches, Parker County celebrates its agricultural roots, while also evolving into a vibrant suburban area. Its proximity to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex makes it an attractive location for those seeking a balance between the tranquility of rural life and the convenience of urban amenities.

Rockwall County, the smallest county in Texas by land area, is known for its unique blend of small-town charm and suburban growth. The county seat, Rockwall, mirrors the county's overall character—a vibrant

community that combines historical allure with modern development. Nestled East from Dallas, Rockwall County offers easy access to urban amenities while maintaining a distinct, close-knit community feel. The county is characterized by its scenic lake views, particularly from Lake Ray Hubbard, a popular destination for boating, fishing, and leisure activities. Rockwall County boasts a thriving economy and excellent schools.

Somervell County is a small but vibrant area known for its natural beauty and rich history. Glen Rose, the county seat, is famously known as the "Dinosaur Capital of Texas," due to the remarkable dinosaur tracks found in the Paluxy Riverbed, drawing visitors from all over for a glimpse into prehistoric times. The county's economy is bolstered by tourism, agriculture, and energy production, contributing to its growth and development. The combination of its natural wonders, such as Dinosaur Valley State Park and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, along with a keen sense of community, makes Somervell County a unique and enchanting part of Texas.

Wise County balances its rustic attractiveness with major contributions to the region's economic prosperity. Decatur, the county seat, embodies the historical and cultural essence of the area, with its well-preserved architecture and welcoming atmosphere. Historically, the county's economy was rooted in agriculture, but it has since diversified, encompassing various industries that contribute to its growth and vitality. With its abundance of natural resources, Wise County is a leader in energy production, particularly natural gas. Wise County's landscape is a mix of rolling hills, lush farmlands, and scenic natural features, providing a picturesque backdrop for its towns and communities.

Together, these 14 counties create a region that is more than just a business area; it is a thriving community with a common goal of development and prosperity. Texas is a state rich in diversity, as evidenced by the North Central Texas Workforce Development Area, which spans the creative hotspots of Collin and Denton to the serene landscapes of Palo Pinto and Somervell.

As one can see, the North Central Texas Region is an exceptional, noteworthy part of Texas.

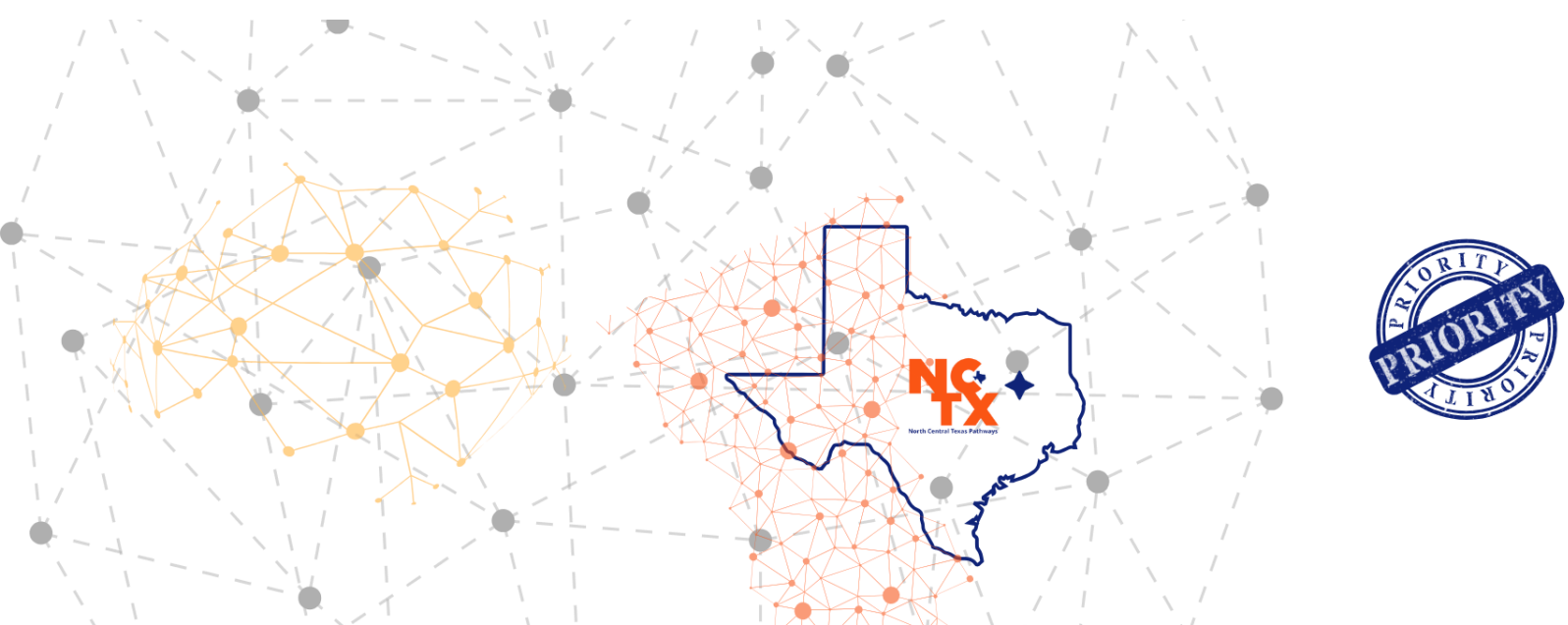


Priority Industry Sectors

According to the Texas Workforce Commission, the definition of high-wage, high-demand jobs is those whose annual median pay is estimated to exceed the statewide median, \$39,637 a year, with an expected employment change greater than or equal to 400 jobs. The NCTX Pathways Executive Leadership Council completed asset mapping work in North Central Texas in the Fall of 2023. The process involved analyzing the economic, educational, and workforce landscape across all 14 counties, K-12 school districts, higher education organizations, and other career training programs in North Central Texas. The team used different reliable sources, including the Workforce Solutions of North Central Texas (WFSNCT) 2024 Targeted Occupations List (WFSNCT, 2024), The University of Texas (UT) Labor Market Dashboard (UT, 2024) the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) (USBLS, 2024) and North Central Texas InterLink's Targeted Occupation List (NCTX InterLink, 2023).

NCTX Pathways Executive Leadership Council members attended Workforce Solutions of North Central Texas Accelerator Sessions delineated by Counties. Attendance at these sessions connected team members with industry leaders and community stakeholders who genuinely have their fingers on the pulse of each location.

Months of gathering and analyzing information resulted in the [2024 North Central Texas Leading Career Pathways Landscape Map](#). The initial report defined six industries and 18 leading occupations within each. Discussions with stakeholders and the leadership team led to a narrower focus for the 2025 Leading Career Pathways Map, resulting in 9 occupations of focus. While useful, the [2025 NCTX Leading Career Pathways Landscape Map](#) should not be considered an all-inclusive list of high-need, high-wage careers within the region. Each annual update provides a list of industries and occupations that North Central Texas Regional Pathways will intently focus on for the year.



2025 NCTX Leading Career Pathways

Occupational Title	Growth Rate	Regional Entry Wage	Median Annual Wage	Growth Wage Category	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Total Annual Openings	Competitive Education Requirement
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	30%	\$48,305	\$62,494	ABOVE/ABOVE	12,065	15,714	1,296	Bachelor's degree
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	30%	\$47,552	\$61,671	ABOVE/ABOVE	14,462	18,755	1,605	Bachelor's degree
Firefighters	27%	\$34,912	\$59,072	ABOVE/ABOVE	1,862	2,366	206	Industry-Based Certification
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	24%	\$47,632	\$72,800	ABOVE/ABOVE	3,601	4,469	393	Associate degree
Electricians	33%	\$28,776	\$55,070	ABOVE/ABOVE	5,029	6,665	763	Industry-Based Certification
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	27%	\$27,420	\$52,837	ABOVE/ABOVE	3,996	5,087	568	Industry-Based Certification
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	27%	\$22,531	\$49,227	ABOVE/ABOVE	1,903	2,420	255	Industry-Based Certification
Software Developers	53%	\$86,311	\$122,325	ABOVE/ABOVE	19,593	29,891	2,817	Associate degree
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	41%	\$39,334	\$129,182	ABOVE/ABOVE	1,158	1,629	136	Associate degree

Asset Map & Gap Analysis

[View the full NCTX 2030 Asset Map & Gap Analysis including all supporting data here.](#)

North Central Texas K-12 Schools and Post-Secondary Educational Institutions use career pathways in numerous ways, in various settings, and under vastly different circumstances to give young people access to meaningful careers and stable lives. Through research and interviews with education stakeholders, NCTX Leadership gathered insight into how legislators, policymakers, and program operators build high-quality programs and address systemic barriers. A comprehensive analysis of the policies and systems woven

throughout implementation, or the desire to implement career pathways in North Central Texas, has surfaced themes about the factors that may hinder implementation. While themes may vary slightly across the 14 counties in North Central Texas, for good or for ill, those highlighted below have the most significant impact on the effective facilitation of career pathways and, more specifically, high-quality work-based learning programs in North Central Texas:

- Stigma or lack of understanding about career pathway programs. Stakeholders agree that career direction decisions should happen first or simultaneously with post-secondary plans.
- Presence or absence of quality partnerships. The challenges affecting the sustainment or implementation of high-quality partnerships are multi-faceted. Industry partners explain that they often reach out to educational organizations and have issues figuring out the right contact at the right time, or interest is there, but follow through is slow or doesn't happen at all. Industry partners also expressed mild frustration in repeatedly receiving the exact requests after explaining their view of the opportunity. Example: mock interviews. Applicant resumes, and interviews are specific to the job skills needed for the position in the current workforce climate; mock interviews of large groups of students without any thought of the type of career field a student is pursuing are not helpful for a potential applicant or industry. Recommendations included recent experiences such as reverse interviews or career fairs where students browse industry partners and ask about career opportunities.
- When applying partnerships to a work-based learning scenario, several themes consistently arise: liability (insurance) concerns about students in the workplace and the lack of basic soft skills such as communication, professionalism, and problem-solving.
- There is a widespread communication gap concerning what a secondary student can contribute to a work site and how LEAs can address employer liability issues through school district insurance. Texas HB 639 (2017) was signed into law to reduce this barrier. This law authorizes the purchase of specific insurance coverage by public schools for the benefit of businesses and students participating in career and technology education programs and provides immunity from liability of certain public school students participating in career and technology education programs. As a result of this new law, the Texas Education Code was modified. Specifically, see TEC §29.191 and TEC §29.192.
- Access to quality teachers and administrators. When secondary school district administrators respond to questions about the decision-making process on which CTE programs of study to offer for students, they explain that programs of study are driven by the CTE teachers currently on staff or student interest. If an organization wants to add a high-wage, high-need program of study and

has the funding to do so, it may be unable to find a qualified teacher. Another administrator shared that CTE programs for students with little to no labor market demand led by a long-term teacher are difficult to change. If student interest is there, unless a teacher leaves, they may not have the headcount to add to the program.

- Lack of data on work-based learning student participation and program quality at any level. Students enrolled in Career Preparation or a CTE practicum course must have a TEA-approved paid or unpaid training plan. However, this information is maintained locally. Other than enrollment in a course, TEA does not gather any further details. The NCTX Council recommended collecting this information through the annual PEIMS submission as a starting point for gathering K-12 work-based learning data.
- Ensure employer-identified credentials of value are utilized to render a positive impact on the North Central Texas Workforce. Texas K-12 school district leaders who are knowledgeable about the A-F accountability manual know that graduating a high percentage of students who meet the requirements for college, career, and military readiness is critical to the overall district rating.
- Aligning state and federal education and workforce funds supporting high-quality training programs to high-wage, high-need career fields in North Central Texas. Recommendations include a CTE funding model that incentivizes CTE study programs aligned with high-need regional industries and occupations. The high percentage of students enrolled in CTE programs within career clusters that do not provide occupations with a living wage or a minimal number of regional openings is alarming.
- The gap analysis outlined that during the 2022-2023 school year, approximately 24 (approximately 21%) NCTX School Districts offered a CTE practicum course. 32 NCTX teachers were assigned to teach a CTE practicum course, with 880 students enrolled in these sections (TEA, 2023). This is undoubtedly a positive step in the right direction. The LEA practicum course industries were not aligned to high-wage, high-need careers. Future recommendations include an incentive funding model for CTE practicum plans aligned to leading career pathways.

The commitment to developing career pathways in North Central Texas reflects a strong regional dedication to fostering economic growth and improving the lives of young people. Our extensive research and interviews have revealed a landscape rich with potential but also marked by significant challenges that require strategic attention. The emerging themes point to a need for greater collaboration between educational institutions, industry partners, and policymakers to streamline program implementation and expand access to these vital opportunities.

When career pathway programs are well-constructed and effectively delivered, they substantially benefit

students, employers, and the community. Innovative solutions, adequate funding, and policy support can address these systemic barriers. The insights gathered from stakeholders in the 14 counties of North Central Texas shed light not only on existing impediments but also on the collective resolve to overcome them.

The way forward involves leveraging the shared learnings to build high-quality, adaptable programs responsive to the evolving economic landscape. By prioritizing the facilitation of career pathways and high-quality work-based learning programs, North Central Texas can ensure that it equips young individuals for jobs and meaningful careers that contribute to their lives and the region's stability. This report serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to double down on their efforts, ensuring that every young person can engage with work-based learning that is as diverse and dynamic as North Central Texas.

Strategies for Regional Engagement

To enhance regional collaboration and support career pathways in North Central Texas, the following strategies are proposed:

1. Cross-Sector Partnerships - Strengthening Industry-Education Partnerships

- Develop and expand partnerships with employers, workforce boards, chambers of commerce, and postsecondary institutions to align programs with labor market needs.
- Host bi-annual stakeholder roundtables to gather input, strengthen partnerships, and adjust programs based on regional demands.
- Convene full North Central Texas Council for High Quality Pathways a minimum of once per quarter beginning in January 2025.
- Convene North Central Texas Executive Leadership Council once monthly ensure continuous feedback and collaboration on curriculum relevance, internship needs, and credentialing pathways.
- Host biennial Education - Industry "Pathways to Partnership Fair" to facilitate creation of new pathways between education and industry.

2. Alignment with High-Wage, In-Demand Labor Market Information

- Update NCTX Pathways Landscape Maps course and credential offerings to ensure students are prepared for jobs that meet wage and growth benchmarks.
- Annual inventory of existing CTE programs and identify gaps in alignment with high-demand career pathways.
- Develop and market targeted recruiting campaigns to increase awareness and interest in NCTX

Leading Career Industries and Occupations such as Education and Protective Service Careers.

- Increase awareness and advising services to guide students towards dual credit opportunities.
- Promote the use of self-assessment tools related to the quality of career pathways and work-based learning programs.

3. Links Between Secondary & Post-Secondary Education

- Collaborate with stakeholders to develop multiple entry and exit points through dual credit, stackable credentials, and articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions.
- Create clear pathways from high school programs into postsecondary degrees and industry-recognized certifications.
- Explore the possibility of offering college credit for work-based learning experiences.

4. Credential and Degrees with Value in the Labor Market

- Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure resources are allocated to support industry-recognized certifications and credentials that have clear value in the labor market.
- Implement stackable credential pathways to allow progressive skill-building.
- Partner with employers to validate credentials and degrees to ensure alignment with industry standards.

5. Integration of Rigorous Academics and Career-Focused Learning

- Publish resources to support embedding rigorous academic standards within career-focused learning to ensure students graduate college and career ready.
- Guide integration of soft skills training with technical training, and academic components into pathway programs.
- Collaborate with educators and stakeholders to align course curricula with industry needs and academic rigor.

6. Strong College and Career Advising, and Counselor Supports

- Embed discussions about work-based learning (WBL) opportunities into individual advising sessions, highlighting their role in career exploration and skill development.
- Recommend and guide the use of advising tools to match students' interests and career aspirations with WBL opportunities available in the region.
- Guide and assist stakeholders through evaluation of work-based learning programs.

NOTE: Persistent question amongst ALL stakeholders - how can we return the role of the counselor to the duties of counseling?

- Address student to counselor ratio.
- Recommendations for a college and career advisor role that does not require a counselor certification.

7. Work-Based Learning

- Expand work-based learning opportunities across a continuum, including job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid work experiences.
- Create structured frameworks to support students through various work-based learning stages.
- Partner with employers to ensure work-based experiences align with industry needs and provide meaningful skill development.

NOTE: Lack of Data Sources

- K-12 Data is non-existent. Stakeholders feel that collecting the paid or unpaid status of training plans in career preparation and practicum courses would be a solid start.
- Workforce and Tri-Agency data reports related to work-based learning are undefined. Example, TWC reports 191 participants in 2023 as an internship under the title “PROJECT Search”. Desk research led to understanding that PROJECT Search is a vocational rehabilitation program for a 36-week internship program that follows the school calendar.
- Problems:
 - Many public stakeholders will not know what a vocational rehabilitation program is.
 - Data reports pertaining to this program do not demonstrate impact to statewide or regional labor markets. Example: did participants who completed the program gain permanent employment after completion? Entry and median annual wage?
- Recommendations: Explanation page or glossary defining programs on public data reports and follow up data reports demonstrating short/long-term outcomes of each work-based learning experience. Both will allow a regional perspective related to the quality indicators of high-quality work-based learning.

NCTX 2030

North Central Texas Pathways Strategic Plan

The NCTX 2030 Strategic Plan is a forward-thinking five-year roadmap designed to align with the three core priorities of the Texas Tri-Agency Initiative: Pathways, Support, and Infrastructure. The NCTX 2030 Strategic Plan, Data Dashboards, and Metrics can be viewed online at nctxpathways.org.



This plan supports efficient and flexible pathways to earning degrees, certificates, and other credentials linked to high-wage, in-demand jobs. It ensures that students receive the necessary support to succeed at all stages of their education and transition to the workforce. Additionally, it focuses on creating a robust infrastructure for interagency collaboration around common goals, data, and processes to improve student outcomes and meet employers' needs. The plan incorporates the seven components of high-quality work-based learning programs, including cross-sector partnerships, alignment with high-wage, in-demand labor market information, links between secondary and postsecondary education with multiple entry and exit points, credentials and degrees with labor market value, integration of rigorous academics and career-focused learning, strong college and career advising and counseling supports, and a continuum of work-based learning experiences. Together, these elements create a comprehensive strategy to drive educational excellence and economic vitality in North Central Texas.

Support

- Ensuring robust systems are in place to provide resources and assistance to our stakeholders, enabling success and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Pathways

- Developing clear, accessible pathways for career and personal growth, ensuring everyone has the tools they need to achieve their potential.

Infrastructure

- Investing in cutting-edge data analysis and infrastructure to support our operations, enhance our capabilities, and ensure resilience in the face of future challenges.

Communication

- Elevating our communication strategies to foster transparency, collaboration, and engagement with all our stakeholders.



North Central Texas Pathways

Strategic Plan





Tri-Agency Priority: Support



GUIDING NORTH STAR

In alignment with the Texas Tri-Agency Priority, NCTX Pathways will provide students, educational organizations, and employer partners with the support and resources necessary for success at every phase of their journey. This dedication extends to facilitating an individual's transition into an exciting NCTX-leading career occupation or industry.



GOALS


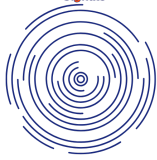


By 2030, we aim to significantly enhance the educational and economic landscape of North Central Texas (NCTX) by achieving a dual-focus expansion. We will increase student enrollment in training programs aligned with Leading Career Occupations by 20% annually while simultaneously boosting the number of organizations utilizing NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports, technical support, and grant strategy assistance by 20% annually. This dual approach will ensure a robust pipeline of skilled professionals and a well-supported network of organizations, driving regional growth and innovation.



PULSE POINTS



S.1. Accelerate the number of students enrolled in training programs aligned to Leading Career Occupations available in NCTX schools by 20% annually through 2030.

S.2. Expand the number of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports and grant application assistance 20% annually through 2030.

	<p>S.1. Accelerate the number of students enrolled in training programs aligned to Leading Career Occupations available in NCTX schools by 20% annually through 2030.</p> <p>S.2. Expand the number of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports and grant application assistance 20% annually through 2030.</p>	
<p>Signals</p> 	<p>Career/Workforce Preparation Programs</p>	<p>Data-Driven Approach & Collaboration</p>
<p>Measures</p> 	<p>S.1.a. Annual enrollment in training programs aligned to NCTX leading career pathways</p> <p>S.1.b. Annual # of regional training programs aligned to leading career occupations</p>	<p>S.2.a. NCTX Leading Career Occupations & Pathways - Annual Update 2025</p> <p>S.2.b. Annual Regional Skills Gap Report</p> <p>S.2.c. Annual # of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports</p> <p>S.2.d. Number of education partners participating in technical support, professional development, or grant strategy</p>
<p>Target</p> 	<p>Increase 20%</p> <p>The goal is to ensure more students have access to training for jobs in high demand in North Central Texas. By increasing enrollment by 20% annually, we can better prepare a workforce that meets the needs of key industries, ensuring both economic growth and ample job opportunities for students. This aligns education with real-world job demands, benefiting employers and the community.</p>	<p>Increase 20%</p> <p>This target aims to amplify the impact of NCTX Pathways by increasing the number of organizations that use its resources. By doing so, we can ensure more entities can access critical labor market data and support in securing grants. This, in turn, bolsters regional economic development, supports workforce planning and enhances the ability of organizations to meet labor demands efficiently. Through this growth, we foster stronger partnerships, drive economic resilience, and create more opportunities for local communities.</p>



Tri-Agency Priority: Infrastructure

 <p>GUIDING NORTH STAR</p>	<p>In alignment with the Tri-Agency's priority of fostering interagency collaboration, we aim to create a robust infrastructure that supports shared goals, data integration, and streamlined processes. This will enhance student outcomes and meet workforce demands.</p> <p>We will build a reliable and inclusive data infrastructure and resource toolkit tailored for the North Central Texas Region, guided by key goals and metrics.</p>
 <p>GOALS</p>	<p>The primary goals for North Central Texas by 2030 focus on enhancing work-based learning programs and increasing engagement with data-driven resources. By 2030, 40% of work-based learning programs in the region aim to improve the quality of their offerings, providing better skill-building opportunities for participants. Additionally, the goal is to boost the number of organizations and individuals involved in process standardization, while also encouraging a 20% annual increase in the adoption of NCTX data dashboards, resources, and support services to enhance program outcomes and efficiency.</p>
<div data-bbox="751 1371 854 1482"> </div> <p>PULSE POINTS</p>	
<p>I.1. 40% of work-based learning programs in North Central Texas will improve the quality of their work-based learning programs by 2030.</p>	
<p>I.2. The number of organizations and individuals participating in process standardization and accessing or adopting NCTX data dashboards, resources, and support services will increase by 20% annually through 2030.. Expand the number of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports and grant application assistance 20% annually</p>	

through 2030.



I.1. 40% of work-based learning programs in North Central Texas will improve the quality of their work-based learning programs by 2030.

I.2. The number of organizations and individuals participating in process standardization and accessing or adopting NCTX data dashboards, resources, and support services will increase by 20% annually through 2030.. Expand the number of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports and grant application assistance 20% annually through 2030.



Work-Based Learning

Process Standardization & Adoption



I.1.a. Annual # of students in work-based learning programs in the region

I.1.b. Annual # of work-based learning programs in the region aligned to leading career industries and occupations

I.1.c. Annual # of work-based learning programs at the initiating level

I.1.d. Annual # of work-based learning programs at the developing level

I.2.a. Annual # of New Users

I.2.b. Annual # of Returning Users

I.2.c. Data requests monthly & annually

I.2.d. Annual # of processes (e.g., student assessment methods, certification standards) jointly developed and adopted by agencies annually.

I.2.e. Participation in process standardization

I.2.f. Speed and extent of process adoption across participating agencies annually.

I.2.g. Rate of data errors and delays in real-time data exchange between agencies/organizations.



Increase 40%



Achieving a 40% enhancement in work-based learning (WBL) programs across North Central Texas by 2030 is not just a goal—it’s a strategic imperative driven by current trends and future needs. With many WBL programs in their initial stages, quality enhancement has immense potential. As the demand for skilled professionals in key sectors like healthcare and technology surges, our programs increasingly align with these high-growth industries. By focusing on robust professional development, forging dynamic employer partnerships, and standardizing curricula, we can systematically elevate 40% of our WBL programs. This ambitious yet attainable target ensures that our programs meet and exceed quality standards, benefiting our students and fueling regional economic growth.

Increase 20%

The goal of increasing the number of organizations and individuals participating in process standardization and accessing or adopting NCTX data dashboards, resources, and support services by 20% annually through 2030 is both ambitious and essential. Expanding our user base ensures that more entities benefit from critical labor market data and receive the support needed to secure grants. This growth will bolster regional economic development, support workforce planning, and enhance the ability of organizations to meet labor demands efficiently. Key metrics such as the monthly number of new and returning users, data requests, and the annual development and adoption of standardized processes will track our progress. Additionally, monitoring participation rates in process standardization and the speed and extent of process adoption across agencies will help us measure success. Reducing data errors and delays in real-time data exchange will further streamline operations. Through this comprehensive approach, we aim to foster stronger partnerships, drive economic resilience, and create more opportunities for local communities.



<div> <div></div> <div>Tri-Agency Priority: Pathways</div> </div>	
<div>  <div>GUIDING NORTH STAR</div> </div>	<p>With the Tri-Agency's priority of empowering individuals to pursue sustainable and diverse pathways toward earning degrees, certificates, and credentials that lead to rewarding careers in high-demand industries, NCTX aims to increase the number of secondary and post-secondary students completing career training programs.</p>
<div>  <div>GOALS</div> </div>	<p>We are committed to two ambitious goals to meet the evolving demands of North Central Texas' high-growth industries. First, we aim to increase and expedite the number of students completing career training programs aligned with the region's high-demand occupations by 20% by 2030. Second, we strive to improve the number of students earning degrees, IHE certificates, or credentials of value that align with NCTX's Leading Career Occupations and Industries by 20% by 2030. We will implement targeted strategies to increase and expedite program completion and improve educational outcomes to achieve these goals. Through these efforts, we will ensure our students are well-prepared to thrive in the workforce and contribute to the region's economic vitality.</p>
<div>  <div>PULSE POINTS</div> </div>	
<div>P.1. Increase and expedite the number of students completing career training programs aligned with North Central Texas' high-demand occupations by 20% by 2030.</div>	
<div>P.2. By 2030, the number of students earning a degree, IHE certificate, or credential of value aligned to NCTX Leading Career Occupations will increase by 20%.</div>	

	<p>P.1. Increase and expedite the number of students completing career training programs aligned with North Central Texas' high-demand occupations by 20% by 2030.</p>		<p>P.2. By 2030, the number of students earning a degree, IHE certificate, or credential of value aligned to NCTX Leading Career Occupations will increase by 20%.</p>
	<p>Increase & Expedite Completion</p>		<p>Improve Outcomes</p>
	<p>P.1.a. Annual # of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments in NCTX</p> <p>P.1.b. Annual # of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments aligned to Leading Career Industries</p> <p>P.1.c. Annual % of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments aligned to Leading Career Industries</p> <p>P.1.d. Annual % of Secondary POS Completers</p> <p>P.1.e. Annual # of CTE Students earning college credit</p> <p>P.1.f. Annual # of college credit hours earned by Secondary CTE students</p> <p>P.1.g. Annual # of NCTX Secondary Students earning college credit (All Students)</p> <p>P.1.h. Annual # of college credit hours earned by Secondary Students (All Students)</p> <p>P.1.i. Annual # of high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary education</p>		<p>P.2.a. Annual # of new NCTX career training programs</p> <p>P.2.b. Annual # of new NCTX career training programs aligned to leading career pathway</p> <p>P.2.c. Annual # of enrollments in career training programs aligned with leading career occupations</p> <p>P.2.d. Annual implementation of flexible learning options such as dual credit, virtual training programs, etc.</p> <p>P.2.e. Annual # of degrees conferred</p> <p>P.2.f. Annual # of IHE certificates</p> <p>P.2.g. Annual # of credentials of value</p> <p>P.2.h. Annual # CTE FTEs</p> <p>P.2.i. Annual # CTE FTEs aligned to leading career pathways</p> <p>P.2.j. Annual employment rates of leading career occupations</p>






Increase 20%


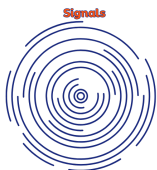


We must focus on several key measures to increase and expedite the number of students completing career training programs aligned with North Central Texas' high-demand occupations by 20% by 2030. Tracking the annual number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) students, the percentage of Secondary Program of Study (POS) completers, and the employment rates in leading career occupations will provide valuable insights into our progress. Additionally, monitoring the annual number of college credit hours earned by NCTX secondary students, including those in CTE programs, will highlight the effectiveness of dual credit and other flexible learning options. By ensuring that more students earn college credits and transition smoothly into postsecondary education, we can better prepare them for high-demand careers. These measures collectively support our mission to create a skilled workforce that meets the region's economic needs.

Increase 20%

We must focus on improving outcomes to meet the ambitious goal of increasing the number of students earning a degree, IHE certificate, or credential of value aligned to NCTX Leading Career Occupations by 20% by 2030. This involves launching new career training programs and ensuring they align with leading career pathways. By tracking annual enrollments in these programs and implementing flexible learning options such as dual credit and virtual training, we can make education more accessible and relevant. Monitoring the annual number of degrees conferred, IHE certificates, and value credentials will help us measure our success. Additionally, tracking the number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) and those aligned to leading career pathways ensures that our resources effectively support high-impact programs.



<p><u>Tri-Agency Priority: Communication</u></p>	
 <p>GUIDING NORTH STAR</p>	<p>In alignment with the Tri-Agency’s strategies to enhance access to effective college and career advising and to promote high-quality teaching and learning, NCTX will develop a comprehensive technical assistance and communication calendar for the region. Furthermore, NCTX will increase the number of secondary and post-secondary educators and administrators who implement NCTX strategies and tools.</p>
 <p>GOALS</p>	<p>To fully realize the potential of the NCTX 2030 Strategic Plan, effective communication is pivotal to achieving our ambitious goals. By 2030, we aim to enhance NCTX stakeholder interactions through targeted technical assistance, expanding access to effective college and career advising, and promoting high-quality teaching and learning. Additionally, we seek to increase the interactions and partnerships between NCTX K-12 and post-secondary educators and employers. We will focus on expanding our capacity and growing partnerships to realize these objectives, ensuring our strategies align with our mission to foster educational excellence and career readiness.</p>
 <p>PULSE POINTS</p>	
<p>C.1. Increase the number of NCTX stakeholder interactions through technical assistance by 25% by 2030 to expand access to effective college and career advising and promote and support high-quality teaching and learning.</p>	
<p>C.2. By 2030, NCTX K-12 and post-secondary educators' interactions and partnerships with employers will grow by 25%.</p>	

	<p>C.1. Increase the number of NCTX stakeholder interactions through technical assistance by 25% by 2030 to expand access to effective college and career advising and promote and support high-quality teaching and learning.</p>		<p>C.2. By 2030, NCTX K-12 and post-secondary educators' interactions and partnerships with employers will grow by 25%.</p>
	Expand Capacity	Increase Partnerships	
	<p>C.1.a. Annual # of NCTX K-12, post-secondary educators, and potential employers leveraging technical assistance</p> <p>C.1.b. Annual # of technical assistance sessions offered</p> <p>C.1.c. Annual # of new & returning participants</p> <p>C.1.d. Annual stakeholder survey participation sessions offered</p>	<p>C.2.a. Annual % of the region hosting advisory committee meetings</p> <p>C.2.b. Annual # of employers reporting interaction with educators virtually and/or by attending advisory committee meetings</p> <p>C.2.c. Annual # of educators who have reported consulting with employers to better understand labor market needs</p> <p>C.2.d. Annual # of employer partnerships</p>	
	<p>Increase 25%</p> <p>To achieve our goal of increasing NCTX stakeholder interactions through technical assistance by 25% by 2030, we must focus on expanding our capacity. This involves increasing the annual number of NCTX K-12, post-secondary educators, and potential employers leveraging technical assistance. By offering more technical assistance sessions annually, we can accommodate a growing number of new and returning participants. Additionally, conducting annual stakeholder session participation surveys will provide valuable feedback to refine our approach and ensure that our efforts effectively promote and support high-quality teaching and learning. These measures are essential to track our progress and validate the impact of our initiatives.</p>		<p>Increase 20%</p> <p>To achieve our goal of increasing NCTX K-12 and post-secondary educators' interactions and partnerships with employers by 25% by 2030, we must focus on growing partnerships. This involves boosting the annual percentage of the region hosting advisory committee meetings and the number of employers reporting interactions with educators, whether virtually or through attendance. Additionally, tracking the yearly number of educators consulting with employers to better understand labor market needs and the number of employer partnerships will provide critical insights into our progress. These measures will ensure that our strategies effectively foster meaningful collaborations that enhance educational outcomes and workforce readiness.</p>

Actions Supporting NCTX 2030 Goals & Pulse Points

7 Components of High Quality Pathways

Cross-Sector Partnerships	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand partnerships with employers, workforce boards, chambers of commerce, and postsecondary institutions to align programs with labor market needs. • Host bi-annual stakeholder roundtables to gather input, strengthen partnerships, and adjust programs based on regional demands. • Convene full North Central Texas Council for High Quality Pathways a minimum of once per quarter beginning in January 2025. • Convene North Central Texas Executive Leadership Council once monthly ensure continuous feedback and collaboration on curriculum relevance, internship needs, and credentialing pathways. • Host biennial Education - Industry "Pathways to Partnership Fair" to facilitate creation of new pathways between education and industry.
Domain Alignment	Communication
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.2.a. Annual % of the region hosting advisory committee meetings • C.2.b. Annual # of employers reporting interaction with educators virtually and/or by attending advisory committee meetings • C.2.c. Annual # of educators who have reported consulting with employers to better understand labor market needs • C.2.d. Annual # of employer partnerships
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 5 new partnerships and collaborate/participate in 2 stakeholder advisory meetings no later than December 31, 2025. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-event survey and reflection from Pathways to Partnership Fair to commence no later than Spring 2027.

Alignment with High-Wage, In-Demand Labor Market Information	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update NCTX Pathways Landscape Maps course and credential offerings to ensure students are prepared for jobs that meet wage and growth benchmarks. • Annual inventory of existing CTE programs and identify gaps in alignment with high-demand career pathways. • Develop and market targeted recruiting campaigns to increase awareness and interest in NCTX Leading Career Industries and Occupations such as Education and Protective Service Careers. • Increase awareness and advising services to guide students towards dual credit opportunities. • Promote the use of self-assessment tools related to the quality of career pathways and work-based learning programs.
Domain Alignment	Pathways
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.1.a. Annual # of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments in NCTX • P.1.b. Annual # of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments aligned to Leading Career Industries • P.1.c. Annual % of Secondary CTE Student Enrollments aligned to Leading Career Industries • P.1.d. Annual % of Secondary POS Completers • P.1.e. Annual # of CTE Students earning college credit • P.1.f. Annual # of college credit hours earned by Secondary CTE students • P.1.g. Annual # of NCTX Secondary Students earning college credit (All Students) • P.1.h. Annual # of college credit hours earned by Secondary Students (All Students) • P.1.i. Annual # of high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary education
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning with the end of the 24-25, and 26-27 school years, revise and publish updated Pathway Landscape Map and Occupational Gap Analysis. • By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, design, publish, and distribute marketing items to all stakeholders to promote 2026 NCTX Leading Career Pathways. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to January 2026, collaborate with NCTX IHE partners to develop, publish, and distribute a K-12 Administrator/Counselor guide to Dual Credit Pathways in North Central Texas to highlight programs aligning to high-wage, high-need careers easily accessible for students from small, rural school districts, and offering multiple entry and exit points. • Conduct outreach and technical assistance to grow the number of IHE and K-12 organizations participating in self-assessment strategies related to high-quality pathways and work-based learning.

Links Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive leadership council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate with stakeholders to develop multiple entry and exit points through dual credit, stackable credentials, and articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions. create clear pathways from high school programs into postsecondary degrees and industry-recognized certifications. explore the possibility of offering college credit for work-based learning experiences.
Domain Alignment	Pathways
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P.2.a. Annual # of new NCTX career training programs P.2.b. Annual # of new NCTX career training programs aligned to leading career pathway P.2.c. Annual # of enrollments in career training programs aligned with leading career occupations P.2.d. Annual implementation of flexible learning options such as dual credit, virtual training programs, etc. P.2.e. Annual # of degrees conferred P.2.f. Annual # of IHE certificates P.2.g. Annual # of credentials of value P.2.h. Annual # CTE FTEs P.2.i. Annual # CTE FTEs aligned to leading career pathways P.2.j. Annual employment rates of leading career occupations
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On or before December 31, 2025, publish and distribute The North Central Texas Executive Leadership Council report on Links between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education. Publish annual report evaluating the outcomes of partnerships with postsecondary institutions by tracking the number of dual credit programs and stackable credentials offered and achieved. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On or before April 30 2026, publish white-paper highlighting opportunity and experience gaps in the links between secondary and post-secondary education in the areas of articulated credit, possible embedded faculty, or credit for work-based learning experiences.

Credentials and Degrees with Value in the Labor Market	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure resources are allocated to support industry-recognized certifications and credentials that have clear value in the labor market. • Implement stackable credential pathways to allow progressive skill-building. • Partner with employers to validate credentials and degrees to ensure alignment with industry standards.
Domain Alignment	Support
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S.1.a. Annual enrollment in training programs aligned to NCTX leading career pathways • S.1.b. Annual # of regional training programs aligned to leading career occupations • S.2.a.NCTX Leading Career Occupations & Pathways - Annual Update 2025 • S.2.b. Annual Regional Skills Gap Report • S.2.c. Annual # of organizations leveraging NCTX Pathways regional labor market reports • S.2.d. Number of education partners participating in technical support, professional development, or grant strategy
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or before March 31, 2025, design social media. Blog, white paper, and newsletter calendar for implementation phase of NCTX Pathways. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or before April 30, 2026, collaborate with the leadership council to provide stakeholder information sessions to gather input on realignment and transformation of existing career pathway programs to connect with high-wage, high-need industries. • On or before December 31, 2026, publish and distribute findings and recommendations from NCTX Pathways Transformation and Realignment Sessions.

Integration of Rigorous Academics and Career-Focused Learning	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish resources to support embedding rigorous academic standards within career-focused learning to ensure students graduate college and career ready. • Guide integration of soft skills training with technical training, and academic components into pathway programs. • Collaborate with educators and stakeholders to align course curricula with industry needs and academic rigor.
Domain Alignment	Infrastructure
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.2.d. Annual # of processes (e.g., student assessment methods, certification standards) jointly developed and adopted by agencies annually. • I.2.e. Participation in process standardization. • I.2.f. Speed and extent of process adoption across participating agencies annually.
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or before March 31, 2025, collaborate with the leadership council to develop a list of needed tri-agency processes and resources. • On or before May 31, 2025, attempt to obtain data sharing agreement with tri-agency organizations. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual evaluation of tri-agency data sharing collaboration process standardization.

Strong College and Career Advising and Counseling Supports	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed discussions about work-based learning (WBL) opportunities into individual advising sessions, highlighting their role in career exploration and skill development. • Recommend and guide the use of advising tools to match students' interests and career aspirations with WBL opportunities available in the region. • Guide and assist stakeholders through evaluation of work-based learning programs.
Domain Alignment	Infrastructure
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.1.a. Annual # of students in work-based learning programs in the region • I.1.b. Annual # of work-based learning programs in the region aligned to leading career industries and occupations • I.1.c. Annual # of work-based learning programs at the initiating level • I.1.d. Annual # of work-based learning programs at the developing level
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or before March 31, 2025, develop, publish, and distribute resources for student advising sessions. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual update of data related to quality of regional work-based learning efforts.

Continuum of Work-Based Learning Experiences	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand work-based learning opportunities across a continuum, including job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid work experiences. • Create structured frameworks to support students through various work-based learning stages. • Partner with employers to ensure work-based experiences align with industry needs and provide meaningful skill development.
Domain Alignment	Communication/Pathways./Infrastructure
Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.2.a. Annual % of the region hosting advisory committee meetings • C.2.b. Annual # of employers reporting interaction with educators virtually and/or by attending advisory committee meetings • C.2.c. Annual # of educators who have reported consulting with employers to better understand labor market needs • C.2.d. Annual # of employer partnerships • I.1.a. Annual # of students in work-based learning programs in the region • I.1.b. Annual # of work-based learning programs in the region aligned to leading career industries and occupations • P.2.j. Annual employment rates of leading career occupations
Annual Evaluation	<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect self-reported data from educators on the frequency and outcomes of their consultations with employers regarding labor market needs. <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or before July 31, 2026, report annual employment rate of NCTX students completing high-quality work-based learning experiences.

Conclusion

The NCTX 2030 Strategic Plan outlines a comprehensive and forward-thinking framework to transform education and workforce systems across the 14 counties in North Central Texas. By aligning Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with high-demand industries such as education, public safety, skilled trades, and technology, the plan addresses critical labor market needs. Key initiatives include implementing stackable credential systems, expanding work-based learning (WBL) opportunities, and fostering robust industry partnerships through regular stakeholder meetings and biannual "Pathways to Partnership" events. Enhanced advising systems and the integration of academic and career-focused curricula further ensure that students are equipped for meaningful and sustainable careers.

The NCTX 2030 initiative underscores the region's commitment to building a workforce prepared for the evolving economic landscape. By fostering collaboration, aligning education with industry needs, and addressing systemic challenges, North Central Texas is poised to equip young individuals with the skills and opportunities necessary for meaningful careers. This strategic plan serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to invest in the success of regional pathways, ensuring sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the community.

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Appendix A

Texas Data Collection

Agency	Data Source	Level of Data	Type of Data
TEA	Districts	Early Childhood	Individual-level student data <i>Enrollment, demographics, program participation (e.g. special education, English language learners, gifted and talented, etc.), performance, progression, graduation, college readiness and enrollment.</i>
		K-12	School-level data <i>Enrollment & demographics, operations & finance info, staff data, student performance, accountability indicators</i>
	Teacher Certification Programs	K-12	Individual-level teacher data <i>Certification type, status</i>
THECB	Authorized Degree- Granting Postsecondary Institutions	Higher Education	Individual-level student data <i>Enrollment & demographics, HS info & performance, program & degree intent, financial aid status, graduation & degree conferred, employment status (1 year after grad)</i> Program-level data <i>Admissions data, facilities & campus information, faculty & staff, course offerings</i>
TWC	State-funded Workforce Development Programs	Workforce	Individual-level data <i>Program participation & demographics, educational background, employment status, earnings & wage data</i>
	Federally-funded Financial Assistance Programs	Workforce	Program- and state-level data <i>Employer needs, job/internship opportunities, job training resources, state-wide labor market data</i>
	Authorized Occupational Licensure Programs	Workforce	
	Subsidized Child Care Providers	Early Childhood	Program-level data <i>Enrollment, staffing</i>

Appendix B

Texas Data Tools

Agency	Tool
TEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o AskTED (Texas Education Directory), where users can view and download school- and district-level school directory and staffing information. o Certificate Look Up, where users can search and view the certification status of specific educators by name. o Completion, Graduation and Dropout Data, where users can search graduation and dropout data for each year by school, district, or county. o Discipline Annual Summary Reports, where users can view school-, district-, or region-level reports on discipline incidents. o District Action Group Summary Reports, where users can view district- or region-level reports on discipline incidents disaggregated by student group. o Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Database, where users can search districts' financial accountability rating system scores. o PEIMS Standard Reports, where users can view district-, region-, and state-level reports of PEIMS-reported data (including college credit hours earned; economically disadvantaged students; EL students by category/language/grade; foundational high school program enrollment and graduation; graduates, special education services; enrollment; student program enrollment; transfers; and graduates entering college by college, public school districts, or geographic area). o Snapshot: School District Profiles, where users can view reports containing district-level enrollment, demographic, performance, staffing, and financial data. o Staff FTE Counts and Salary Reports, where users can view FTE staff salaries by district, county, region, or state. o Superintendent Salary Reports, where users can view superintendent salary by district, county, region, or state. o Teacher FTE Counts and Course Enrollment Reports, where users can view course offerings and enrollment by district, county, region, or state. o Texas Academic Performance Reports, where users can view comprehensive academic performance reports by school or district. o TXschools.gov, where users can search for and view school report cards. o Waivers Online Report, where users can view waivers submitted by, in progress, and approved/denied for schools and districts.

THECB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CBM Reporting Status, where users can find the data reporting status of any institution in Texas. o College for All Texans, where users can view information on specific institutions including location and programs/degrees offered. Users can also use a calculator to figure out their net cost of attendance. o Tracking Postsecondary Outcomes, where users can search for postsecondary readiness, enrollment, and persistence of high school graduates by district, region, or statewide. o TX Consumer Resource for Workforce Statistics (CREWS), where users can explore programs and institutions based on resultant wages and student loan levels (developed in partnership with TWC). o TX Genuine, where users can search CTE programs by program area, institution, or career path. o TX Higher Education Accountability System, where users can view organizational information and data on student enrollment, marketable skills, and post-graduation debt by institution.
TWC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o TX Career Check, where users can view wages and openings by career path as well as enrollment and cost by postsecondary institution. o TX Consumer Resource for Workforce Statistics (CREWS), where users can explore programs and institutions based on resultant wages and student loan levels (developed in partnership with THECB). o TX Labor Analysis, where users can build reports on employment, wage data, and education by sector and region. o TX Labor Market Information (LMI), where users can explore employment, and wage data by metropolitan area, year, and sector. o TX OnCourse, a one-stop-shop site for career planning where users can explore high school performance and college readiness data through a platform called DataDive. o TX Reality Check, where users can calculate the costs of living and expected wages for different jobs and sectors. o TX Training Inventory, where users can access program-level data such as enrollment, graduation, and degree attainment for all postsecondary institutions in the state (including public and private universities, state colleges, career training institutions, and health training facilities). o TX Wages, where users can view local wage data by sector.

NCTX

North Central Texas Pathways

2030

