

HB 2302 (A. Johnson, Shine and Ordaz)

Relating to certain requirements for the operational component of a local workforce development board's local plan.



Scope of the Problem

Local Workforce Boards (LWBs) are groups of community leaders that serve as one of the main supporters of our opportunity youth, yet there is inconsistency in funding and planning across the state. Opportunity youth and young adults (OYYA) are defined as those aged 16-24, who are not in school, and are not working. **In Texas, OYYA make up 13.8%, or approximately half a million of those aged 16-24.** This is higher than the national average, of 11.5%. OYYA are at a higher risk of being incarcerated, having a disability, living in poverty, and dropping out of high school.

OYYA are at a higher risk of being incarcerated, having a disability, living in poverty, and dropping out of high school. The needs of this population can vary quite a bit, but many opportunity youth need help getting back into school, getting into the workforce, finding childcare, fulfilling their basic needs, accessing physical and mental healthcare, and finding transportation, amongst other barriers.

The LWBs are positioned to oversee workforce programs and other services in their area and tasked with the management of WIOA (Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act) dollars that should be spent on preventing youth from becoming disconnected or assisting young adults in reconnecting to school or employment. **Although every Local Workforce Board has WIOA dollars that can be spent to better support OYYA, only 20 (of 28) LWB's even mention OYYA in their strategic plans or have a loose plan for their WIOA funds.**

Policy recommendations

Require local workforce boards to include an OYYA section in their strategic plan with specific goals, metrics, and transparent reporting requirements. These strategic plans should be posted on LWB websites and sent to local officials. **This requirement will encourage LWBs to be more strategic, transparent, improve youth outcomes and maximize taxpayer dollars.**

FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PLEASE CONTACT:

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