



# HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



## *Creating Workforce Solutions for Vaccination Rollout During COVID-19 Pandemic*

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Funded by all or in part of, the Department of Labor/ETA WIOA Formula Grants and Wagner-Peyser; the Department of Health and Human Services TANF and Child Care Development Fund; and the Food and Nutrition Service SNAP Employment & Training.

## Impetus

As part of the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, the vaccine needed to be administered to healthcare professionals on the front lines at hospitals throughout El Paso. Some of the workforce positions most needed in these efforts were administrative in nature, creating an opportunity to fill these vacancies. Thus, Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) collaborated with healthcare partners in the community to identify gaps in the workforce and align UI Claimants and/or students with these temporary employment opportunities. Through our partnership, WSB subsidized wages for UI Claimants with healthcare experience as well as students from the Hunt School of Nursing and the Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) El Paso to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to staff at University Medical Center of El Paso (UMC)—a vaccine mega site center for the region.

## Program Goals and Funding Sources

The Hunt School of Nursing and Foster School of Medicine students working to administer vaccines were supported by University Medical Center through a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) through the Texas Workforce Commission and Department of Labor, administered by WSB. As stated on the Department of Labor’s website:

“NDWGs provide resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. This funding is intended to temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers, including military service members, and meet the increased demand for WIOA employment and training services, with a purpose to reemploy laid off workers and enhance their employability and earnings. Disaster DWGs provide funding to create temporary employment opportunities to assist with clean-up and recovery efforts, when an area impacted by disaster is declared eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or otherwise recognized by a federal agency with authority or jurisdiction over federal response to the emergency or disaster.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, WSB was able to leverage these funds to partner with TTUHSC El Paso and UMC to employ healthcare students and UI Claimants into jobs administering COVID-19 vaccines. Partnerships like these are a win-win for the health care industry and the community in the battle against the public health crisis of COVID-19.

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<sup>1</sup>

U.S. Department of Labor. *National Dislocated Worker Grants*. 2021.  
<<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers>>.

## Program Challenges

There were only a limited number of jobs available through this grant opportunity with our employer partner, UMC. Thus, we were not able to fund all the students that indicated interest in participating in this program. In the future, it may be helpful to identify other partners and match-funds or additional grants that could help us expand the number of workers eligible and able to participate in these community efforts.

## Outcomes and Successes

Our Healthcare Community Partnerships have allowed us to assist vaccine rollout efforts as well as UI Claimants in need of financial assistance as they search for more permanent employment opportunities. By collaborating with several organizations, we have provided temporary employment and training opportunities to those in need. Students ultimately qualified under the eligibility of the grant and earned wages that could assist them while they were still in school. We have also assisted the community efforts in vaccine rollout throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a greater positive impact on the region. The following lists break down the specific outcomes per partnership:

### Partnership with UMC Vaccine Project

- Phase 1 Vaccine Project - subsidized and provided work-based learning opportunities for 21 nursing students and 17 medical students to help with administering vaccines;
- Ongoing collaboration with UMC;
- Funding for 14 Administrative and Medical Assistants – all UI Claimants; and
- 7 workers administering vaccines.

### Partnership with Texas Tech Health Sciences Center El Paso

- Vaccine and Community Promotoras Project; and
- Funding for 5 Administrative Support, 3 Medical Assistants – all UI Claimants.

### Upcoming National Dislocated Worker Grant Projects

- Working with our rural communities to assist with vaccine support;
- Interest from smaller clinics in El Paso to utilize WSB support model; and
- Training opportunities.

## Solutions for the Future

WSB has further developed these Healthcare Community Partnerships through Phase I and Phase II by identifying workers to fill the gaps in services needed throughout the vaccine rollout efforts. As an economic development partner in the region, WSB continues to focus on innovative and proactive engagement. We have been able to do this by successfully leveraging the Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant funds towards partnerships that have furthered these goals in times of economic crisis. Overall, these healthcare community partnerships have been essential not only for students or workers that have suffered from unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic – but also public health efforts and the community at-large.

### About Workforce Solutions Borderplex

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) is the public workforce system in the six-county Borderplex region that assists employers in finding quality employees, and training individuals with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace. We administer a broad range of programs and services to effectively address local workforce issues. Workforce Solutions also establishes partnerships with various stakeholders within the region to improve education, employment, and economic development. Our organization aims to provide skilled workers for employers by advancing education, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development opportunities in support of global competitiveness and regional prosperity. Ultimately, we are interested in empowering the most dynamic workforce to achieve global competitiveness and regional prosperity.