

1 **High School Equivalency Virtual Provider**
2 **Using Adult Education and Literacy State Leadership Funds**
3 **Discussion Paper**

4 **Background**

5 On [July 7, 2021](#), the Texas Workforce Commission’s (TWC) three-member Commission
6 (Commission) held a work session on statewide initiatives and designated funding for a series of
7 comprehensive statewide strategies. In this meeting, the Commission approved adding a new
8 Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) statewide initiative with Budget Year 2022 (BY’22) and
9 AEL Program Year 2021–2022 (PY’21–22) state leadership funds.

10 In support of these efforts, approximately \$3.8 million in AEL state leadership funds from
11 BY’22 and AEL PY’21–22 is now available for projects to meet critical workforce needs.

12 **Proposed Initiative**

13 A proposed initiative, funded with AEL state leadership funds, and the proposed method of
14 distribution of the funds are as follows.

15 *Statewide High School Equivalency Virtual Provider—\$3,800,000 for Interagency Contracts*
16 *with the University of Texas at Austin and Texas Tech University*

17 This initiative¹ supports TWC AEL’s goal of increasing the number of adults in Texas with a
18 high school diploma or its equivalent. The funding would provide an option for adults in Texas
19 to connect to educational services virtually to attain such credentials. Staff has identified two
20 agencies, the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) and Texas Tech University (TTU), each
21 of which operates a special purpose school district, as designated in 19 Texas Administrative
22 Code [§61.101](#), and has established successful virtual high school diploma programs.

23 TWC will initiate interagency contracts with UT Austin and TTU to pilot two virtual provider
24 service options for Texans seeking to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent. This
25 initiative would assist AEL students without a secondary school credential to attain a high school
26 equivalency (HSE) or secondary school diploma by:

- 27 • providing flexible synchronous and/or asynchronous coursework options for adults to receive
28 secondary school credential preparation coursework;
- 29 • creating and/or incorporating interdisciplinary curriculum that is aligned with AEL content
30 and industry standards; and
- 31 • developing and/or offering bridge programs to postsecondary education and training
32 programs to support college readiness.

¹ A permissible state leadership activity under WIOA §223(a)(2)(B), which allows funds for “the development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology.”

1 This pilot will require each entity to develop best practices for implementing similar programs in
2 the future by using outcomes related to students' credential achievements as one measure of
3 determining service delivery effectiveness.

4 **Decision Point**

5 Staff seeks direction on implementing the AEL state leadership initiative through interagency
6 contracts with UT Austin and TTU, as outlined above and in the following table.

7 *Proposed Initiative Using AEL State Leadership Funds*

State Leadership Initiative	BY'22 Budget
High School Equivalency Virtual Provider	\$3,800,000

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