

WorkQuest

FOCUS

on Jobs for People with Disabilities

WorkQuest Newsletter XLVIII

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Austin Task, Inc: Remaining mission- focused from start to finish



Martin Becerra of ATI at work.

Martin Becerra has been a valued staff member at Austin Task, Inc (ATI) for the past three years. He works on a confidential document security contract where his responsibilities include stacking and cleaning the carts of documents brought in daily for destruction, loading empty carts back onto the truck and operating a paper shredder. Now, Becerra is taking on a new challenge as he trains to become a forklift driver.

As he works toward his goal, Becerra continues to uphold the high standards required of his work in document security. Because the documents he handles require confidentiality, Becerra had to meet additional requirements beyond those necessary for the rest of the ATI staff, something his supervisor says is indicative of his potential for advancement.

“He’s very cautious, which is a good trait to have in his current job and as a forklift driver,” Jim Thomson, ATI’s operations manager, said. “We’re trying to move him into a more difficult role since he always seems to be excited by new challenges.”

ATI is a *WorksWonders* community rehabilitation program (CRP) whose contracts with major state agencies are facilitated by WorkQuest. One of ATI’s focuses is on secure document destruction, including paper and electronic media, covering a service area stretching from Brownwood to Beaumont and south to Laredo.

ATI has WorkQuest-facilitated contracts with state agencies, including the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas State Library and Archives Commission and Texas Workforce Commission, as well as nearly 400 smaller agencies. Over the 20-plus years ATI has been certified with WorkQuest as a CRP, the organization has been able to provide job training and a sense of purpose to individuals with disabilities.

“ATI gives people certain opportunities many other places wouldn’t” Thomson said. “It’s a chance for the world to look beyond the obstacles our employees may face and see their talent.”

ATI’s commitment to providing jobs for people with disabilities is part of its mission. Additionally, it focuses on protecting confidential customer information and recycling.

ATI follows business practices similar to a competitive business while its mission makes it a nonprofit, Brian O’Connor, the organization’s CEO and president, said.

“We break the mold,” he said. “By investing time in people to develop their skills, we can change their lives while providing a valuable service.”

About 75% of ATI’s document destruction services are handled by employees with disabilities. Employees pick up customer materials and transport them to ATI, where they securely and confidentially shred paper documents and electronic materials and carefully separate out recyclable content.

“We’re a security company and self-sustaining nonprofit that also happens to deal with a lot of paper,” O’Connor said. “We have a really conscious commitment to the environment and have been recognized for that. In fact, some state agencies ship excess print materials here specifically to be recycled.”

Through its dedication to customers and the environment, ATI upholds its responsibility as a CRP by providing productive, meaningful work for individuals with disabilities.

A Message from President and CEO **Fred M. Weber, Jr.**



Hello and Happy New Year!

We're excited to announce that 2019 was another strong year for the State Use *WorksWonders* Program, especially considering the increase in wages and benefits paid to individuals with disabilities who are employed through the Program. During the reporting period reflected in the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) 2019 Annual Report, wages and benefits increased over \$4 million from the previous fiscal year. Additionally, of the nearly 6,000 individuals with disabilities employed through the Program for the 2019 reporting period, more than 300 of them—approximately 5.5 percent—were outplaced into competitive employment.

Last fall, administrative oversight of the *WorksWonders* Program was transferred within TWC to reside under the Office of Disability Employment Strategies. WorkQuest looks forward to evolving its relationship with TWC under this new administrative body in order to continue creating greater employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the state.

Of course, none of this growth would have been possible without the outstanding commitment of the *WorksWonders* Program's community rehabilitation program (CRP) partners and devoted customers, and WorkQuest is honored to work alongside each of them. For their dedication to excellence and unwavering support throughout 2019—and during the past 41 years—we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation. We look forward to many more years of partnership with these fine organizations.

WorkQuest is excited to build upon all of these achievements in order to make 2020 the Program's most successful year to date!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be 'F. Weber, Jr.', written over a dark teal background.

Fred M. Weber, Jr.
President and CEO

WorkQuest in the Community

WorkQuest was proud to be a sponsor for the 70th anniversary celebration of the Arc of the Capital Area (the Arc) this past November.

The Arc is a nonprofit organization that empowers Central Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families through innovative programs and case management.

The Arc hosted its annual fundraising gala on Nov. 8, 2019. The theme for the event, "Anyone Can Create", highlighted the interactive art experiences created by Arc artists featured throughout the evening. Proceeds for the event contributed to the Arc's mission of providing unique services to help families adapt to life with a child with a disability and to assist maturing adults with disabilities gain the skills they need to become independent.

WorksWonders Community Rehabilitation Program and Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Over the past year, WorkQuest has been administering surveys to community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and customers to track their satisfaction with the Texas State Use *WorksWonders* Program at the request of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Each survey is tailored to capture an impression of how satisfied individuals who utilize the Program are, both as product and service providers and procurers. Results from these surveys are analyzed to understand what WorkQuest is doing well and what possible changes it might implement to increase the efficiency of its administration of the Program for all entities.

The surveys administered to customers ask them to express their opinions about the value of the *WorksWonders* Program, specifically the effectiveness of the Program as a creator for employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and as a provider of products and services. These questions are aimed at measuring the following factors:

- 1) The value of the products, services and temporary employment services provided through the Program;
- 2) The quality of service purchasers receive from WorkQuest sales and marketing staff throughout the procurement process; and
- 3) The quality of training purchasers receive on how to best utilize and participate within the Program

The surveys administered to CRPs are designed to measure the satisfaction they feel as providers within the Program, as well as whether their needs for providing the best products, services and temporary employment services are being met. Questions found throughout this survey center around the following:

- 1) How effective CRPs feel WorkQuest is at promoting and advocating for the Program;
- 2) The quality of service CRPs receive from WorkQuest marketing and sales staff with Program compliance, contract procurement, and ordering procedures; and
- 3) The quality of the training opportunities provided to CRPs to inform them about the most effective ways to operate within and best utilize the Program

The results generated from these surveys, which are reported to TWC and used internally by WorkQuest, are critical to the growth of the *WorksWonders* Program. By analyzing the survey responses, WorkQuest is able to outline areas of exceeding satisfaction for both entities, as well as areas of opportunity, both of which can be used to further increase the effectiveness of WorkQuest in administering the Program.

WorkQuest is dedicated to providing the best service to its CRP and purchasing partners, and staff members appreciate the continued support of all survey respondents. As new insights and findings are discovered, WorkQuest hopes to make the surveys more streamlined and time-efficient in order to better understand the needs of all who utilize the *WorksWonders* Program.

Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas: Texas Workforce Commission's Small Employer of the Year

Last fall, Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas, a community rehabilitation program (CRP) within the State Use *WorksWonders* Program, was named "Small Employer of the Year" by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).



TWC recognized Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas for generating job opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment, such as physical disabilities or mental health conditions, as well as providing individuals with the training and skills needed to establish and maintain employment, including the tools necessary for advancement within their employment environments.

Located in Lubbock, Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas plays an essential role in increasing the employment rate for individuals with disabilities in a region where employment needs for this population could easily be overlooked. The organization embodies the *WorksWonders* Program's mission to create unique employment opportunities for individuals across the state.

WorkQuest is proud to partner with Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas, as well as all of its *WorksWonders* Program partners.

WorkQuest

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