

WorkQuest

FOCUS

on Jobs for People with Disabilities

WorkQuest Newsletter LXIII

March 2024

RGR Industries: Providing life-changing jobs while protecting the community



David Caballero Jr., RGR Industries, prepares to work on a drain pipe and inlet cleaning contract for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Since 2007, RGR Industries has been devoted to providing employment and training opportunities to individuals with disabilities to help them be self-sufficient members of society.

RGR Industries is also a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) in the *WorksWonders* Program, which connects them with State Use contracts that allow the organization to continue to grow.

David Caballero Jr. is one of the employees whose life has significantly changed through employment at RGR Industries. He began working in the guardrail crew and has since moved up to be the supervisor of the guardrail contract in Laredo, Texas.

“I began working here as a rookie and they were able to teach me everything I know until I was able to do it on my own,” said Caballero. “I now have my own truck and my crew to supervise.”

As a guardrail contract supervisor, Caballero is responsible for overlooking and assisting in installing and repairing highway guardrails throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Additionally, he also assists in cleaning drainpipes and inlets for the Texas Department of Transportation.

Caballero says his job is meaningful to him because he knows that his work helps keep his community safe. “The most important thing to me is safety, it is my top priority,” said Caballero. “Our

guard rails help keep my community safe and in a way, I help save people’s lives through my job.”

RGR Industries employees currently work on multiple *WorksWonders* Program contracts where they fulfill roles in landscaping, debris pickup, inlet cleaning and guardrail installation projects to name a few. These opportunities allow employees with disabilities to gain skills that allow them to grow in their careers and personal lives.

“We impact our community by not only employing a lot of people but by keeping them employed,” said Ricardo Guerra, president of RGR Industries. “We give employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities because we see the potential in them and we see how hard they work.”

RGR Industries is proud to provide meaningful employment opportunities to Texans with disabilities throughout South Texas and has employed 30 individuals since joining the *WorksWonders* Program.

As for Caballero, he is proud to have a job that allows him to be independent and gives him a welcoming environment. “This job means a lot to me,” said Caballero. “It puts food on my table and the people I work with are like family to me.”

Message from President/CEO Fred M. Weber, Jr.



Encouraged by the growth that was observed throughout 2023, WorkQuest is working to make the upcoming year one of the most successful in *WorksWonders* Program history.

In addition to the steady increases to wages and benefits paid to individuals with disabilities who are employed at Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) across the state of Texas, WorkQuest is invested in continuing to grow the Program through its partnerships with its customers, CRPs and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

WorkQuest intends for these partnerships to continue to help facilitate initiatives that will further grow the Program throughout the upcoming year. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- The expansion of existing and new contracting options available to CRPs participating in the Program
- The development and growth of new and existing CRPs through training
- The expansion of competitive integrated employment (CIE) opportunities provided to individuals participating in the Program

This spring and summer, WorkQuest will hold its annual compliance seminars. With additional curriculum and guidance provided by WorkQuest's Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, these seminars serve to update and inform CRPs about rules and regulations that they are required to follow in order to continue participating in the Program. WorkQuest is also hiring contract and program compliance staff in order to better assist CRPs in maintaining compliance while working on Program contracts.

In addition to these seminars, WorkQuest plans to hold customer trainings and CRP tours to strengthen the relationship between Program customers and the CRPs providing products and services. Please monitor the WorkQuest website to see when and where a seminar will be available near you.

WorkQuest thanks you for your dedication and looks forward to making 2024 another outstanding year for the *WorksWonders* Program.

A white, handwritten signature of Fred M. Weber, Jr. on a dark teal background. The signature is stylized and cursive, starting with a large 'F' and ending with a long, sweeping tail.

Fred M. Weber, Jr.
President/CEO

Overview of *WorksWonders* Program CRP Compliance Measures

One of the responsibilities WorkQuest has as the central nonprofit agency administering the *WorksWonders* Program is to make sure that Program Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) maintain compliance standards outlined by Texas Administrative Code §806.41 (TAC §806.41).

One of the rules outlined in TAC §806.41 requires that a CRP must “be a government or nonprofit private program operated under criteria established by the Commission and under which individuals with severe disabilities produce products or perform services for compensation.”

Nonprofit organizations are required to file an annual information return or notice with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Organizations that do not file required Form 990-series returns for three consecutive years are automatically revoked.

With that tax exemption requirement, TAC §806.41 outlines that a CRP must “maintain payroll, human resource functions, accounting and all relevant documentation showing that the employees who produce products or perform services under the state use program are individuals with disabilities.”

All employees doing direct labor on Program contracts, including individuals with and without disabilities, must be classified as W-2 employees. Individuals working as independent contractors or 1099 workers may not be used as direct laborers on Program contracts.

Maintaining compliance with requirements related to “unemployment insurance tax (UI), wage claims, state licensing, regulatory and tax requirements” are also obligations that must be followed for CRPs participating in the Program, as outlined in TAC §806.41.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has instructed all CRPs without a UI tax account to register for one through the online portal found on TWC’s website. This request applies only to CRPs that do not have a UI account or are unsure if they have one. As you go through the process of establishing the account, the system will determine whether you need to set one up based on the answers you provide.

Both the IRS Automatic Revocation and Exemption List ([irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)) and UI Tax Status (twc.texas.gov) will be checked at the time of re-certification or at other times as directed by TWC.

Failure to maintain compliance with the above rules may result in revocation of the CRP’s certification to participate in the *WorksWonders* Program.

Upcoming *WorksWonders* Program Submission and Deadline Dates

March 31st – CRP Quarterly State Use Wage Report due to WorkQuest

June 30th – CRP Quarterly State Use Wage Report due to WorkQuest

April 9th – CRP submission of Products and Services Booklet Information to WorkQuest

May 21st – CRP submission of Products and Services Booklet Information to WorkQuest

July 7th – CRP submission of Products and Services Booklet Information to WorkQuest

March 26th – WorkQuest submission of Products and Services Booklet to TWC

May 7th – WorkQuest submission of Products and Services Booklet to TWC

June 18th – WorkQuest submission of Products and Services Booklet to TWC

July 30th – WorkQuest submission of Products and Services Booklet to TWC

WorkQuest

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17th Annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner
Monday, September 23, 2024
Doubletree Hotel Austin
6505 N IH-35
Austin, Texas 78752

2024 Products and Services Expo
Tuesday, September 24, 2024
Doubletree Hotel Austin
6505 N IH-35
Austin, Texas 78752

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