

24th ANNUAL TEXAS WORKFORCE CONFERENCE DRAFT AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021

Workshops
2:15 - 3:30 PM

Super Session
Statewide Workforce Strategy
Salon F, Level 4

Session Description - To Be Determined

Robert Allen
President and CEO
Texas Economic Development Corporation

Bryan Daniel
Chairman and Commissioner Representing the Public
Texas Workforce Commission

Caring for Our Caregivers by Identifying Disparities in the Workplace
Salon G, Level 4

Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws do not specifically prohibit discrimination against caregivers, but there are instances in which discrimination against caregivers might constitute unlawful disparate treatment. The purpose of this session is to illustrate circumstances in which stereotyping or other forms of disparate treatment may violate Title VII or be prohibited under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) based on specific conditions of an individual with a disability.

Learning Objectives

- Identify caregiver disparities in the workplace
- Understand what Title VII and the ADA say about caregivers and sex discrimination
- Identify solutions to overcome caregiver disparities in the workplace

Marilyn Diaz
Trainer, Civil Rights Division
Texas Workforce Commission

Career Pathways: Serving Priority Populations with Your AEL Partner
Salon H, Level 4

How can a career pathways approach to education and training serve priority populations under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and build pipelines to middle skills jobs available in the Texas economy? This presentation describes three ways that through collaboration and partnership, programs can expand services for employment, stackable credentials, and career ladders that make job seekers ready and upskill the existing workforce. The presenters will outline how the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs work with their Local Workforce Development Board and postsecondary partners, establish shared outcomes, and build better pipelines for customers through case management, advising, coenrollment, and referrals serving those most in need across the Texas workforce system.

Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of career pathways under WIOA
- Identify three ways career pathways serve customers
- Learn referral and case management approaches that support customer success and program performance

Sandra Cortez

Dean of Community Education
Laredo College

Jauneen Maldonado

Director of Adult Education and Literacy
Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

Ann Savino

Program Specialist, Adult Education and Literacy
Texas Workforce Commission

Sector-Based Approach to Workforce Solutions Office Operations

River Oaks, Level 3

How do you meet both the needs of workforce participants and the demands of employers? This is a question being asked throughout the United States as we move into the future of workforce services and require collaborations for funding and partnership. For Workforce Solutions Alamo, the answer is to focus on sector-based employers and elevate the economic development efforts of the City of San Antonio and its surrounding communities. Being focused is not enough; the sector-based ideology has to run throughout the entire operation's veins, from Board members to Board staff to operations on the front lines. More than a message, taking action toward filling the sector gaps requires rethinking culture and procedure. This workshop will offer the tools to begin your sector-based approach to Workforce Solutions Office services and meeting your local workforce development area's goals.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to connect the sector-based employers of focus with collaborative partners
- Identify and outreach sector-based job seekers
- Discover best practices and lessons learned with the sector-based approaches to Workforce Solutions Office operations

John Hershey

Deputy Director, Business Solutions
Workforce Solutions Alamo

Adrian Lopez

Chief Executive Officer
Workforce Solutions Alamo

Mark Milton

Chief Operating Officer
Workforce Solutions Alamo

The Power of Engagement

Meyerland, Level 3

Repeat workshop on Thursday, November 18th at 4:15 – 5:30 p.m., Hunters Creek, Level 3

Anyone serving the youth population can attest to the fact that there is a disconnect with our “opportunity youth.” If an out-of-school youth is not engaged in a program or service, the likelihood of getting him or her to commit and complete something is minimal. If you are management or program staff trying to figure out how to engage opportunity youth, then this workshop is for you. You’ve tried partnerships, outreach, training on services that staff provides, but you still can’t get a grasp on how to engage your out-of-school youth population. There are critical strategies that must be implemented in order to get this demographic to fully commit. Youth may further their education or find employment, but never finish or retain employment. The best practices discussed in this workshop will truly change the lives of these young people if they are implemented correctly. These objectives will equip youth with the skills needed to connect to potential employers and help these youth start a career path of their own, leading to self-sufficiency.

Learning Objectives

- Identify how reengaging youth will ultimately lead to successful employment and education opportunities
- Implement strategies to effectively gain the relationship with youth to keep them engaged in participating in Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act or youth service programs

Shantelle Artis

Youth Program Specialist
Workforce Solutions Alamo

Opening Keynote Address
4:00 - 5:15 PM

Lighten Up and Lead: Leverage Levity for Customer Connection and Employee Engagement
Houston Ballroom, Level 2

A happy workplace is imperative to success and longevity, but how do you remain positive while being professional? Attendees laugh as they learn key characteristics to create levity in the worker, workforce, and workplace, with tools that help the employee reach his or her personal and professional potential through the power of fun. Connection creates culture, and culture creates employee engagement and customer confidence—and one of the fastest ways to connect is through levity. Engagement empowers employees to collaborate through challenges, create innovative solutions, and communicate confidently.

The background combination of corporate manager and professional actress allows Tami Evans to deliver a powerful and memorable keynote using humor-based storytelling, captivating visuals, videos, and music. Audience members become part of the program during hilarious interactive moments that they may repeat later on the dance floor. Attendees learn about powerful tools to improve both their professional and personal lives. Ms. Evans believes that if the audience members are laughing, then they are listening, and if they are listening, then they are learning.

Tami Evans
Speaker and Author
Speaker Exchange Agency, LLC

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021

Workshops
10:15 - 11:30 AM

Super Session
Booties to Boots: Quality Early Childhood Education and the Future Workforce
Salon F, Level 4

How does quality early childhood education impact our future workforce? Why does quality early childhood education matter? How does professional development affect quality child care? How can communities provide a framework of nurturing and caring for children, from baby booties to working boots? Join an intriguing discussion that will have you reimagining how we care for and play a part in the development of all young Texans.

Julian Alvarez III
Commissioner Representing Labor
Texas Workforce Commission

Karla Cisneros
District H Council Member
Houston City Council

Reagan Miller
Director, Child Care & Early Learning Division
Texas Workforce Commission

Quianta Moore, MD, JD
Huffington Fellow in Child Health Policy, Center for Health and Biosciences
Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University

Belinda Rojas, M.Ed.
Director of Development and Evaluation
Together4Children

CenterPoint Energy's Disability Inclusion Journey to Success
Salon G, Level 4

Discover how CenterPoint Energy partnered with disability consulting firm Disability Solutions to proactively attract, hire, and retain talented individuals with disabilities, resulting in a partnership network of 400-plus talent partners and the hiring of more than 90 individuals with disabilities. Presenters from CenterPoint Energy and Disability Solutions will discuss in detail the strategy of their approach, the importance of partnerships, and the use of data to prove results. A CenterPoint Energy representative will also discuss the next steps in the company's journey.

Learning Objectives

- Discover how to successfully engage with an employer
- Learn what employers are doing with talent partners to be successful

Bryan Glines
Manager, HR Compliance and Diversity
CenterPoint Energy

Kevin McCloskey
Director, Partnership Development
Disability Solutions

Getting There and Getting Ahead: Talent On-Ramps and Upskilling Pathways
Salon H, Level 4

In a competitive job market, how can employers fill critical positions and retain high-performing staff? Workforce Solutions Capital Area will explore the tools available to industry as well as its

partnership with the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and business leaders—including Samsung Austin Semiconductor—to design customized trainings that fill their entry-level positions. Presenters will discuss how the middle skills gap has affected how they partner with employers to meet their talent needs. Presenters will share the road map they created to navigate employers and their employees through upskilling and advancement. Additionally, they will share a tool kit developed to help employers understand the resources available to grow their own talent. The presenters will also discuss successes and lessons learned from their partnerships with industry.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to design customized training
- Differentiate among upskilling resources
- Discover the elements of a successful industry partnership
- Understand how to use data to inform program design and delivery

Melanie Flowers

Head of Technical Training
Samsung Austin Semiconductor

Amber Warne

Director of Upskilling and Advancement
Workforce Solutions Capital Area

Transforming the Student Experience During a Pandemic: A Case Study of Two Texas Colleges

River Oaks, Level 3

COVID-19 deeply impacted many colleges' most underserved students. With the digital divide so broad, it was critical to provide equitable access to diverse populations. Achieving these results required a re-envisioning of the student experience. In this session, attendees will learn how Dr. Christina Robinson, Houston Community College's Executive Director of Adult Education, and Dr. Sammi Morrill, Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic and Workforce Development Operations at Alamo Colleges District, rewrote the script for adult students, improving student access and outcomes by digitally reinventing the student journey from intake to employment.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how to increase student access by providing the necessary online tools for students
- Discover how to remove enrollment barriers and ensure that students are connecting with the proper resources at the right times
- Learn how to create a student-centric approach across multiple offices that provides key insights into next steps

- Discover other aspects of the digital transformation that are required for success, such as operational change, processes, policies, and staff roles

Sammi Morrill

Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic and Workforce Development Operations
Alamo Colleges District

Christina Robinson

Executive Director of Adult Education
Houston Community College

Veterans Triage/Screening Procedures and an Introduction to the Veterans Reemployment Program

Meyerland, Level 3

This session will demonstrate real-world examples of conducting triage/screening of veterans and eligible individuals in order to properly route them to the appropriate programs. The presenters will introduce veterans reemployment programs in accordance with House Bill 714, passed in the 86th Legislature (Regular Session), 2019.

Learning Objectives

- Learn best practices in triaging/screening veterans and eligible individuals in Workforce Solutions Offices
- Understand the difference between triage/screening and veterans' priority of service
- Hear about the basics of veterans reemployment programs

Norman Bearden

Regional Team Lead, Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Workforce Solutions Panhandle

Charles Connor

Regional Manager, Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Workforce Solutions Texoma

Bob Gear

Director, Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Texas Workforce Commission

Gabriel Lopez

Assistant Director, Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Workforce Solutions for South Texas

Blair Mosley

Program Manager, College Credit for Heroes, Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Texas Workforce Commission

Policies, Procedures, and Practices, Oh My!—Mitigating EEO Risk in the Private Sector

Briargrove, Level 3

Repeat workshop at 2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Unlike the mandatory review that Texas agencies must undergo for compliance, Texas' employer discrimination statute (Texas Labor Code Chapter 21) does not require that employers in the private sector have their policies, practices, and procedures reviewed for compliance. But voluntarily reviewing your business policies and procedures for compliance will protect your employees and save you valuable time and money wastefully spent on procedural mistakes that lead to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination charges. The purpose of this session is to communicate how a self-evaluation of your business can be beneficial and review the checklist created and used by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division's EEO Compliance Monitor, which provides an easy-to-use system for cataloging personnel strengths and weaknesses. Find out how the private sector can leverage the knowledge gained to create long-term benefits in employee retention and reduce legal costs.

Learning Objectives

- Use the EEO Personnel Policies and Procedures System Review (PPPSR) Checklist to understand your organization's current level of compliance
- Identify common areas that create potential opportunities for discrimination
- Understand the consequences of poorly written policy and the value of full compliance with EEO law for a private business

Erin Humphreys

EEO Compliance Monitor

Texas Workforce Commission

Key to Local Control—New Board Member Orientation

Hunters Creek, Level 3

Local control is a key to the success of the Texas Workforce Solutions system. The Local Workforce Development Board (Board) member is the catalyst for changing the Texas workforce system from being supply-driven to being market-driven. Board members must be flexible and willing to discard former paradigms in order to lead others in shaping an effective Texas workforce system, with skills that include engaging local employers, aligning local resources, forging partnerships, and planning strategies. This orientation for new Board members provides an overview of Texas Workforce Solutions and the roles and responsibilities of Boards and Board members. Texas Workforce Commission staff members help Board members understand both their role as it relates to Board staff and service providers and their responsibility for strategic direction and planning.

Learning Objectives

- Learn about Texas Workforce Solutions roles and the responsibilities of Board members compared to those of Board staff
- Discover employment and training programs and services available in the Board's local workforce development area
- Identify characteristics of successful Board members

Mike Nolen

Training Specialist

Texas Workforce Commission

Les Trobman

General Counsel

Texas Workforce Commission

Workshops

1:15 - 2:30 PM

Super Session

Words of Wisdom from Women who Lead

Salon F, Level 4

Join this session to hear powerful Texas women share their stories of grit and grace and how they persisted and pivoted when necessary to ensure success both professionally and personally. Their stories will inspire while highlighting the impact of the Texas Workforce Commission on employers and communities in Texas. Texas ranks second in the United States in its number of women-owned firms. The state ties for first in the nation for the economic “clout” of its women-owned businesses—a measure combining the growth in their number, employment, and revenue. San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, and Austin are among the top 10 US metropolitan areas for economic clout for women-owned businesses. The featured keynote speaker and panelists will prove that these statistics are true and that rankings are only the starting line for Texas women leaders.

Aaron Demerson

Commissioner Representing Employers

Texas Workforce Commission

Speakers—Awaiting speaker confirmation

Shared Services: Supporting Child Care Business Needs

Salon G, Level 4

This session will highlight several shared services models in place across Texas. Often, child care directors are experts in child development but may need assistance in better managing the

administrative aspects of their early learning programs. Learn how child care centers and homes can improve their business management practices and more effectively manage and operate a successful early learning center. Attendees will hear about models in Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin as well as how they started, key elements of their models, lessons learned, and Local Workforce Development Boards can coordinate with these Alliances. There will also be time for audience Q&A.

Learning Objectives

- Learn about shared services models
- Understand how Boards can support shared services

Shari Anderson

Vice President

Child Care Group

Shay Everitt

Senior Advisor, Child Care & Early Learning

Texas Workforce Commission

Madison Mattise

Director of Pre-K Partnerships

United Way for Greater Austin

Larrisa Wilkinson

Director, Professional Learning and Program Innovation

Pre-K 4 SA

WIOA Title I and Title II Partnerships: Building Quality Services for Low-Skilled Adults through Collaboration

Salon H, Level 4

Repeat workshop at 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.

Most jobs (52 percent) require training beyond high school, yet 13.9 percent of adults ages 18–25 do not have a high school credential and 20 percent of adults cannot read a label on a soup can. With employers struggling to fill jobs for middle-skilled workers in Texas, this basic skills gap requires cross-sector strategies that address the basic skills and employment gaps across the economy. What structural supports exist under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to better prepare workers for middle-skilled jobs through effective dual enrollment in education and training? Presenters will explain how state policy and technical assistance support collaboration between Local Workforce Development Boards and Adult Education and Literacy programs, in addition to describing a local perspective on eligibility, enrollment, and shared resources that drive system efficiencies and better serve all customers with quality services.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the impact of basic skills deficiency on employers, the economy, and social services
- Review WIOA priority populations for Title I and Title II programs
- Describe strategies for collaboration that support customers across the Texas workforce system

Mahalia Baldini

Director of Adult Education and Literacy
Texas Workforce Commission

Jauneen Maldonado

Director of Adult Education and Literacy
Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

Norma Olivarez

Program Specialist, Workforce Board Strategic Support
Texas Workforce Commission

TX FAME: A Holistic Approach to Workforce Innovation

River Oaks, Level 3

This workshop will provide an introduction to the Texas Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (TX FAME) and its efforts to use workforce development as a bridge between community development and economic development. Attendees will see how TX FAME works to ensure a bright workforce future through projected career pathways, firsthand skills-based training, and collaborative partnership building. Presenters will show how TX FAME has created diversity and inclusion strategies for successful talent pipeline development.

Learning Objectives

- Discover how to develop and foster successful partnerships
- Establish training initiatives to mitigate skills gap crisis
- Learn how to see return on investment from industry's perspective

Leslie Cantu

Assistant Vice President of Administration
Toyotetsu Texas

Pooja Tripathi

Manager of Workforce Development
Bexar County Economic & Community Development

Creative Solutions for Employer Engagement

Meyerland, Level 3

Repeat workshop at 2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

The focus of this workshop will be on the development and launch of Skillpoint Alliance’s industry mentoring program. Attendees will learn best practices for marketing their training programs to local employers and receive advice and insight about how to engage with and involve local employers in the development of workforce programs. Specific focus will be given to Skillpoint Alliance’s Pre-Apprentice Electrical program and the success it had in meeting employers’ needs for a qualified workforce while also ensuring quality outcomes for students.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to market your training program to employers
- Understand how to balance classroom objectives with employer requests

Kevin Brackmeyer

Executive Director

Skillpoint Alliance

Weston Sythoff

Partnerships Manager

Skillpoint Alliance

Policies, Procedures, and Practices, Oh My!—Mitigating EEO Risk in the Private Sector

Briargrove, Level 3

Repeat workshop

Unlike the mandatory review that Texas agencies must undergo for compliance, Texas’ employer discrimination statute (Texas Labor Code Chapter 21) does not require that employers in the private sector have their policies, practices, and procedures reviewed for compliance. But voluntarily reviewing your business policies and procedures for compliance will protect your employees and save you valuable time and money wastefully spent on procedural mistakes that lead to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination charges. The purpose of this session is to communicate how a self-evaluation of your business can be beneficial and review the checklist created and used by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division’s EEO Compliance Monitor, which provides an easy-to-use system for cataloging personnel strengths and weaknesses. Find out how the private sector can leverage the knowledge gained to create long-term benefits in employee retention and reduce legal costs.

Learning Objectives

- Use the EEO Personnel Policies and Procedures System Review (PPPSR) Checklist to understand your organization’s current level of compliance
- Identify common areas that create potential opportunities for discrimination

- Understand the consequences of poorly written policy and the value of full compliance with EEO law for a private business

Erin Humphreys

EEO Compliance Monitor

Texas Workforce Commission

Open Meetings Training for Public Officials

Hunters Creek, Level 3

In this session, participants will receive the Open Meetings Act compliance training that is required for Local Workforce Development Board members and other public officials.

Learning Objective: Receive mandatory open meetings training

Nicholas Lealos

Open Records Manager and Assistant General Counsel

Texas Workforce Commission

Workshops

2:45 - 4:00 PM

Less Talk, More Walk—Creating a Culture of Trust and Accountability

Salon F, Level 4

One of the greatest challenges a leader faces is dealing with issues of trust and accountability. How do you ensure that the people whom you're leading demonstrate integrity on a daily basis? Do you merely "talk the talk," or do you "walk the walk" by modeling accountability in your interactions, in operating practices, and in your work habits? Personal and organizational ethics are one of the easiest things to talk about but the hardest to walk. This highly interactive session will address trust and accountability through a practical, proven methodology that you can employ to build trust and accountability throughout your organization. Using a collaborative and positive approach, attendees will participate in an experiential assessment and use the results to focus on how to get themselves, their team, and their organization not just talking, but also walking, when it comes to trust and accountability.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the business impacts of ethics and accountability
- Recognize the factors that cause gaps in integrity
- Apply at least three tactics to improve personal and organizational integrity and accountability

Josh Davies

CEO

The Center for Work Ethic Development

Creating Systems of Equity and Empowerment in Vocational Rehabilitation Organizations

Salon G, Level 4

Equity in the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and organizational culture are critical to the successful completion of programs and projects for customers with diverse backgrounds. Youth and adult populations of color tend to have less success overall relating to employability, academic achievement, and completion of programs than their peers in other cultures. Darrell “Coach D” Andrews will share strategies from his Equity 3M Framework, which is designed to help VR experts better understand how to empower and engage youth and adult customers from diverse backgrounds.

Learning Objectives

- Learn about a simple framework to help VR professionals understand the importance of mindset to diversity, equity, and inclusion success
- Discover tools to embrace personal and organizational motivation as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Help VR professionals understand tools to weave diversity, equity, and inclusion into their interactions with customers, fellow staff members, and their communities

Darrell “Coach D” Andrews

Speaker and Author

Darrell Andrews Enterprises, Inc.

Pursuit of Advanced Training in High-Demand Skills (PATHS) for Texas—Meeting the Retail Apocalypse Head On

Salon H, Level 4

Come join a panel discussion with PATHS for Texas representatives from Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, Workforce Solutions North Texas, and Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area moderated by Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas. It has been two years since Governor Greg Abbott joined the Texas Workforce Commission, Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas, and the Walmart Foundation to announce a workforce development grant aimed at narrowing the middle skills gap by upskilling frontline retail and other customer-facing workers in Texas. Walmart.org presented the \$5.4 million for workforce programs to the PATHS for Texas initiative. Then, in March 2020, after the COVID-19 pandemic hit Texas, the “retail apocalypse” began. Fortunately, the PATHS for Texas initiative helped Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) and Board staff think strategically, collaborate effectively with training and business partners in their communities, and provide innovative solutions to increase their impact on the economy.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss collaboration among Boards
- Learn how to implement a unified initiative through private and public funding
- Discover how to develop innovative upskilling strategies that narrow the middle skills gap

Kendra Ball

Business and Outreach Manager
Workforce Solutions North Texas

Crosby Brito

Project Manager, Employer Services
Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Lynn Hoffman

Senior Innovation Strategist
Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

Nellie Reyes

Contract Specialist
Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area

Alba Silvas

Senior Workforce Planner
Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend

Untapped Talent: Serving Highly Skilled English Language Learners under WIOA

River Oaks, Level 3

How does the untapped talent of internationally trained professionals affect the US economy and the Texas workforce? Across the country, an astounding 2 million highly skilled English language learners (ELLs) are college-educated yet unemployed or in low-wage jobs outside their careers. The economic impact is a \$10.2 billion loss in taxes alone. What WIOA services can bridge this population from brain waste to brain gain and better serve the Texas economy and families?

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the customer needs of highly skilled ELLs with foreign degrees
- Identify employment barriers and intake strategies that support enrollment
- Address ways to build economic independence through educational partnerships

Leticia Farrera

Career Pathways Coordinator, Adult Education
Austin Community College

Mechelle Marler

Career Pathways Supervisor

Austin Community College

Elizabeth Moya

Professional Development Center Specialist

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning

Texas A&M University

Kelli Rhodes

Executive Director

Restore Education

Creative Solutions for Employer Engagement

Meyerland, Level 3

Repeat workshop

The focus of this workshop will be on the development and launch of Skillpoint Alliance's industry mentoring program. Attendees will learn best practices for marketing their training programs to local employers and receive advice and insight about how to engage with and involve local employers in the development of workforce programs. Specific focus will be given to Skillpoint Alliance's Pre-Apprentice Electrical program and the success it had in meeting employers' needs for a qualified workforce while also ensuring quality outcomes for students.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to market your training program to employers
- Understand how to balance classroom objectives with employer requests

Kevin Brackmeyer

Executive Director

Skillpoint Alliance

Weston Sythoff

Partnerships Manager

Skillpoint Alliance

The New Normal: Understanding the Post-COVID-19 Economy and Middle Skills Jobs

Briargrove, Level 3

Repeat workshop at 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.

The Texas labor market's recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 has varied significantly by industry and region. What do job seekers and business leaders need to know about the new Texas employment market? How can local workforce leaders get the information needed to give good advice to customers? How can the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) help job seekers who are seeking middle skills jobs? This presentation will

review industry and regional trends in the Texas economy and sources of information that workforce professionals can access to understand their local economy.

Learning Objectives

- Identify industries with above-average employment growth in the past 12 months
- Understand how the economy recovery varies by region, even within the same industry
- Identify middle skills occupations that meet wage and employment growth criteria
- Gain access to labor market information on the TWC website to help stakeholders understand the current economic climate

William Lutz

Economist, Labor Market and Career Information

Texas Workforce Commission

Nancy Moore

Economist, Labor Market and Career Information

Texas Workforce Commission

Employer Engagement Strategies

Hunters Creek, Level 3

Employer engagement is critical to ensuring strategic alliances that will support workforce program participants and the many Texans who have been dislocated from their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While workforce programs tend to be job seeker– and/or participant-focused, we must also include employers as key customers and stakeholders. This requires a strong customer service approach to ensure that employers are engaged and provide candid feedback and actionable intelligence that support the success of the workforce programs and, ultimately, job seekers. Establishing these employer collaboratives is critical for employer support of on-the-job training and other work-based learning opportunities to facilitate getting job seekers back to work.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to establish successful employer collaboratives
- Discover how to leverage employer/industry intel to inform sector-focused marketing campaigns

Romanita Matta-Barrera

Executive Director

San Antonio Works

Workshops

4:15 - 5:30 PM

2020: Foresight, Not Hindsight

Salon F, Level 4

We all know there is only one constant in this world—change—and nothing exemplified that better than 2020. Last year accelerated systemic shifts in the workforce, educational system, and society. Multiple technological and societal disrupters will create even more change. The combination of the impact of 2020 and these disrupters will result in further transformation that will impact all of the services we deliver. Rather than sitting back, we need to prepare for the coming reality. The year 2020 gave us insight on the coming changes. We need to develop our job seekers for these changes to build a resilient and inclusive workforce with the skills needed to be successful today and in the future. Using the lessons learned from last year, participants will discover four strategies that can be implemented immediately. Now is the opportunity for us to evolve our practices and ensure that we develop solutions to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity for success. While it is often said that hindsight is 20/20, great workforce professionals are realizing that foresight is actually 20/20.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the national meta trends that have been accelerated by the events of 2020
- See how these trends impacted our economy, workforce, and education
- Discover strategies to better prepare the workforce of the future

Josh Davies

CEO

The Center for Work Ethic Development

Understanding Section 503 to Create Better Partnerships with Employers

Salon G, Level 4

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain these individuals. The presenter will discuss how providers can use this regulation when establishing new employer contacts and increase those relationships with established employer partners. The presenter will also give an overview of Section 503, discuss how providers can use this knowledge to become a resource for employers, and share best practices to help create successful programs for employer partners.

Learning Objectives

- Learn what Section 503 is and how it can help employers with compliance
- Discover tips and best practices for working with employers
- Learn how to best partner with employers for success

Kevin McCloskey

Director of Partnership Development

Disability Solutions

WIOA Title I and Title II Partnerships: Building Quality Services for Low-Skilled Adults through Collaboration

Salon H, Level 4

Repeat workshop

Most jobs (52 percent) require training beyond high school, yet 13.9 percent of adults ages 18–25 do not have a high school credential and 20 percent of adults cannot read a label on a soup can. With employers struggling to fill jobs for middle-skilled workers in Texas, this basic skills gap requires cross-sector strategies that address the basic skills and employment gaps across the economy. What structural supports exist under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to better prepare workers for middle-skilled jobs through effective dual enrollment in education and training? Presenters will explain how state policy and technical assistance support collaboration between Local Workforce Development Boards and Adult Education and Literacy programs, in addition to describing a local perspective on eligibility, coenrollment, and shared resources that drive system efficiencies and better serve all customers with quality services.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the impact of basic skills deficiency on employers, the economy, and social services
- Review WIOA priority populations for Title I and Title II programs
- Describe strategies for collaboration that support customers across the Texas workforce system

Mahalia Baldini

Director of Adult Education and Literacy

Texas Workforce Commission

Jauneen Maldonado

Director of Adult Education and Literacy

Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County

Norma Olivarez

Program Specialist, Workforce Board Strategic Support

Texas Workforce Commission

Full-Circle Employer Engagement Through Recruitment, Education and Training Services

River Oaks, Level 3

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast invites you to a conversation about strategies for building deeper employer relationships throughout your entire region. Hear perspectives from Employer Service on how to find and work with employers, professional organizations, and community partners who offer quality opportunities for the individuals you serve. Learn more about how to

market and deliver recruitment, adult education & literacy, current worker training, and other talent development strategies to employers and partners. Tight budget or limited resources? We will identify methods for expanding business services and keeping employers engaged at little to no cost.

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate processes for engaging employers at deeper levels
- Teach strategies to help employers recruit, upskill and retain employees
- Identify methods for expanding business services and keeping employers engaged

Lisa Bogany

Strategic Projects Manager

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Michael Gutierrez

Special Projects Manager

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Benito Guzman

Outreach and Recruitment Manager

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Leveraging Resources to Meet the Needs of the Community in a Pandemic

Meyerland, Level 3

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of more individuals than traditional service delivery programs within the Texas workforce system could effectively support. Featured as a best practice in the *Bloomberg Report*, Workforce Solutions Alamo (Alamo) partnered with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County to use Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (C.A.R.E.S.) Act and general funding from these two agencies to reach and serve numerous individuals who lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic. With more than \$25 million secured through these partners, Alamo was able to train myriad individuals and provide stipends to San Antonio residents who were affected the most by the loss of employment.

This session will discuss the *Bloomberg Report* results, how to partner with your city and county to use general funds for workforce development initiatives, the model of funds distribution and partnering with delegate agencies to assist in the roll out of initiatives, lessons learned, and the workforce ecosystem and how each agency plays a part.

Learning Objectives

- Discover how to secure funding from non-TWC sources
- Understand braiding funding with workforce systems
- Learn long-term strategies and sustainability for collaboration

John Hershey

Deputy Director, Business Solutions
Workforce Solutions Alamo

Adrian Lopez

Chief Executive Officer
Workforce Solutions Alamo

Mark Milton

Chief Operating Officer
Workforce Solutions Alamo

The New Normal: Understanding the Post–COVID-19 Economy and Middle Skills Jobs

Briargrove, Level 3

Repeat workshop

The Texas labor market’s recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 has varied significantly by industry and region. What do job seekers and business leaders need to know about the new Texas employment market? How can local workforce leaders get the information needed to give good advice to customers? How can the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) help job seekers who are seeking middle skills jobs? This presentation will review industry and regional trends in the Texas economy and sources of information that workforce professionals can access to understand their local economy.

Learning Objectives

- Identify industries with above-average employment growth in the past 12 months
- Understand how the economy recovery varies by region, even within the same industry
- Identify middle skills occupations that meet wage and employment growth criteria
- Gain access to labor market information on the TWC website to help stakeholders understand the current economic climate

William Lutz

Economist, Labor Market and Career Information
Texas Workforce Commission

Nancy Moore

Economist, Labor Market and Career Information
Texas Workforce Commission

The Power of Engagement

Hunters Creek, Level 3

Repeat workshop

Anyone serving the youth population can attest to the fact that there is a disconnect with our “opportunity youth.” If an out-of-school youth is not engaged in a program or service, the

likelihood of getting him or her to commit and complete something is minimal. If you are management or program staff trying to figure out how to engage opportunity youth, then this workshop is for you. You've tried partnerships, outreach, training on services that staff provides, but you still can't get a grasp on how to engage your out-of-school youth population. There are critical strategies that must be implemented in order to get this demographic to fully commit. Youth may further their education or find employment, but never finish or retain employment. The best practices discussed in this workshop will truly change the lives of these young people if they are implemented correctly. These objectives will equip youth with the skills needed to connect to potential employers and help these youth start a career path of their own, leading to self-sufficiency.

Learning Objectives

- Identify how reengaging youth will ultimately lead to successful employment and education opportunities
- Implement strategies to effectively gain the relationship with youth to keep them engaged in participating in Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act or youth service programs

Shantelle Artis

Youth Program Specialist
Workforce Solutions Alamo

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2021

Workshops

8:30 - 9:45 AM

Apprenticeship “Straight Talk”

Salon F, Level 4

Join Commissioner Julian Alvarez III, two Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors, and an employer with an established Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) for an informative and passionate discussion on RAPs in Texas. Come and listen to an engaging conversation regarding the positive impact of strengthening middle skills using RAPs that ultimately result in highly skilled individuals.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how Registered Apprenticeship career pathways are critical for today's talent pool
- Discover how using RAPs is a workforce development strategy

Julian Alvarez III

Commissioner Representing Labor
Texas Workforce Commission

Tamara Atkinson

Chief Executive Officer
Workforce Solutions Capital Area
Stephen Dodd, PMP®
IBM Certified Project Executive
IBM Public Partnerships
IBM Corporation

Mike Temple
Executive Director
Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Expanding and Promoting Pre-K Partnerships in Your Region

Salon G, Level 4

Prekindergarten (pre-K) partnerships are collaborations between public schools and early learning programs to provide high-quality pre-K to eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. Pre-K partnerships expand quality programs to more children, provide wraparound care that parents need for extended hours year-round, allow for sharing of expertise across settings, increase continuity of care, and stabilize child care businesses. Presenters will share different models, benefits, and steps to explain how Local Workforce Development Boards and their contractors can implement or expand partnerships. Audience Q&A will be offered.

Learning Objectives

- Understand types of pre-K partnerships, benefits, and opportunities
- Discover how you can support pre-K partnership implementation in your area

Shay Everitt
Senior Advisor, Child Care & Early Learning
Texas Workforce Commission

Rachel Robinson
Education Specialist, Early Childhood Division
Texas Education Agency

Kara Waddell
President and CEO
Child Care Associates

Employers Who Hire Foster Youth

Salon H, Level 4

Individuals formerly in foster care sometimes experience unique barriers to education, resources, and employment that limit their earning potential and independence. To address this disparity, Texas state agencies are required to give employment preference to former foster youth (who

aged out of foster care), until age 26, over equally qualified applicants. Companies that hire former foster youth provide life-changing opportunities and gain hardworking employees. These employers create a culture of inclusion that reaps major benefits for all. This panel features firsthand, expert advice from a Texas employer, La La Land Kind Café, that hires youth in foster care and nurtures their entrepreneurial spirits through kindness. Grads of Life, a national organization that supports employers in hiring and supporting youth, will let you in on their secrets to success.

Learning Objectives

- Discover best practices in hiring youth currently or formerly in foster care
- Learn about barriers that hinder opportunities for youth's success

Aaron Demerson

Commissioner Representing Employers
Texas Workforce Commission

Francois Reihani

Founder
La La Land Kind Café

Elyse Rosenblum

Managing Director
Grads of Life

Create an Online, Remote Workforce Solutions Office to Serve and Engage Job Seekers, Partners, Employers, and Staff

River Oaks, Level 3

Learn how places such as East Texas, Tarrant County, Kentucky, Tampa, and Washington, DC, are revolutionizing their employment programs. Discover how to use online, mobile-friendly learning management systems, case management systems, content, and tools during a pandemic or for more rural populations. This presentation includes insight on the application and intake process, delivering online trainings, connecting job seekers and employers remotely, and tracking progress through digital time sheets and customized reporting.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to convert your workforce programs into fully online, remote systems
- Discover how to innovate and automate intake, training, placement, and process through technology

Doug Shryock

Director of Workforce and Economic Development
East Texas Council of Governments

Harrison Tonne

Chief Innovation Officer

Career TEAM

Closing Keynote Address

10:15 - 11:30 AM

1MT1MT: One More Thing, One More Time

Houston Ballroom, Level 2

When Josh Sundquist was training for the Paralympics, his motto was “1MT1MT” (one more thing, one more time). His high-energy blend of humor and inspiration motivates audiences to adopt his motto to elevate their performance.

Mr. Sundquist tells stories about losing his leg to cancer, ski racing in the Paralympics, and playing jokes with his artificial leg in order to help attendees:

- become resilient during times of change;
- maintain a sense of humor within stressful circumstances;
- face adversity with strength and courage;
- reverse negative trends and rebound from disappointment; and
- plan for the future, with an expanded vision of what could be possible.

He asks: What’s the 1MT1MT you could do today to get closer to the future you are working toward? What’s that little bit of extra effort you could make to better serve your customers? Mr. Sundquist’s life story is a reminder of how all our stories are interconnected—how even our smallest actions and decisions impact the world around us.

Josh Sundquist

Speaker and Author

SpeakInc