

# TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

## WORKFORCE FORUM AGENDA

May 1–2, 2023

DoubleTree by Hilton Austin Hotel  
6505 Interstate Highway 35 North  
Austin, Texas 78752

**Monday, May 1, 2023**

### Phoenix Ballroom

**1:00–1:15 p.m.**

#### Opening Remarks

*Ed Serna, Executive Director, TWC*

**1:15–1:30 p.m.**

#### 88th Texas Legislative Session Update

*Michael Britt, Director, Governmental Relations and Tom McCarty, Director, Customer Care Division, TWC*

**1:30–1:45 p.m.**

#### TWC Chairman Remarks

*Bryan Daniel, Chairman, Commissioner Representing the Public, TWC*

**1:45–3:00 p.m.**

#### Keynote Session

##### The Eight Essentials for Success in the Workforce

**Presenter:** *Dr. Michael Brown, Founder and Chief Consultant, DMB Coaching*

TWC staff, partners, and stakeholders do not wait for opportunities to emerge; they create them. This brand of team member starts with a bold perspective matched by a determined persistence to do whatever it takes to succeed, particularly during times of unprecedented uncertainty. Realizing that productivity and job satisfaction do not happen by accident is a result of keeping an eye on all eight essentials to success on and off the clock. This interactive session is a diagnostic tool for individuals and organizations to pinpoint roadblocks to effectiveness. No matter the attendance size, Dr. Michael Brown engages the audience with a compelling presentation and eight practical tips that leave attendees enlightened and empowered to eliminate or modify plans that are not working and to put great ideas into action for success.

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify areas that need to be started, stopped, or sustained for workplace and personal success
- Help attendees conceptualize strategic, measurable, and achievable goals to proactively plan, prioritize, and achieve organizational goals

**Break: 3:00–3:15 p.m.**

**3:15–3:30 p.m.**

#### Commissioner Remarks

*Aaron Demerson, Commissioner Representing Employers, TWC*

**3:30–4:45 p.m.**

#### Super Session



## **Workforce Solutions for Unsettled Times**

**Presenters:** *Van Ton-Quinlivan, Author and CEO, Futuro Health*

Workforce development is a team sport and not an individual sport. The speaker for this session, Van Ton-Quinlivan, is a nationally recognized expert in workforce development. Leaning on lessons learned from her private, public, and nonprofit sector experiences and principles from her best-selling book, *Workforce Rx*, participants will learn key concepts and best practices on how stakeholder teams can work together to offer solutions to the many workforce challenges. By hearing how these concepts were applied to actual industry challenges, participants will learn how to apply agile and inclusive strategies for employers, educators, and workers to use in unsettled times.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Discover workforce development best practices
- Learn how to connect diverse communities with in-demand jobs
- Apply instructional redesign options

**4:45–5:00 p.m.**

### **Commissioner Remarks**

*Alberto Treviño III, Commissioner Representing Labor, TWC*

**Tuesday, May 2, 2023**

**8:30–9:45 a.m.**

### **Phoenix North**

#### **Better Together: AEL and Local Workforce Development Boards Serving Out-of-School Youth**

**Presenters:** *Mahalia Baldini, Director, Adult Education and Literacy, Texas Workforce Commission; Jauneen Maldonado, Director, Adult Education and Literacy, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County; Linda Ross, Program Specialist, Adult Education and Literacy, Texas Workforce Commission*

This session will review how Adult Education and Literacy and Local Workforce Development Boards can collaborate to serve our out-of-school youth. Presenters will begin with a view of where we are as a state and end with success stories demonstrating the power of better together.

### **Learning Objective**

Increase understanding of the opportunities, benefits, and synergies of working together to serve our out-of-school youth

### **Phoenix South**

#### **Registered Apprenticeships—A Key Strategy for Workforce Sustainability**

**Presenters:** *Brandi Harrison Trotter, Industry & Workforce Development Specialist, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas; Desiree Holmes, Apprenticeship Director, Texas Workforce Commission; Kim D. Moore, Apprenticeship Navigator, South Texas College*

Apprenticeship program enrollment and funding opportunities are at an all-time high in our nation. Being in sync with the growing industry demands with respect to apprenticeships is key to accelerating the Texas workforce. This session will detail the importance and staying power of the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) training model and illustrate how Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas and South Texas College are engaging with industry to develop effective partnerships for program development and expansion.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Illustrate the benefits to employers when using RAPs as an attraction and retention strategy
- Identify flexible training options available through RAPs
- Discover the importance of partnerships to develop and expand RAPs

## Phoenix Central

### Maximizing Workforce Services and Enhancing Postsecondary Outcomes for Students

**Presenters:** *Deborah Dobis, Student HireAbility Navigator Mentor, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas; Aubrey McKenzie Jones, PhD, Student HireAbility Navigator Mentor, Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas; Imelda Trevino, Student HireAbility Navigator Mentor, Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend; Sonia White, Student HireAbility Navigator Mentor, Workforce Solutions East Texas*

During this session, attendees will learn about the role of the Student HireAbility Navigators and Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Attendees will also learn how they work within the Texas Workforce Solutions system to provide independent school districts and community partners with optimal service to help students and families reach their employability goals using Texas Workforce Solutions–Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

#### Learning Objectives

- Provide workforce leadership and attendees with best practices that the Student HireAbility Navigators have used to achieve capacity building and systems development
- Learn how to create community and state partnerships and collaborations
- Share how Student HireAbility Navigators provide information to employers and sustain employer engagement

## Austin Room

### Jobs in the Oil Patch: A New Dawning

**Presenters:** *Gabriel “Mike” Guzman, Manager, LMI Dissemination and Outreach, Texas Workforce Commission; William Lutz, Economist, Texas Workforce Commission*

Texas is often viewed as the energy capital of the free world. But recent world events and uncertainty surrounding those events have exacerbated cyclical trends in recent years. Where do we stand on oil-related and gas-related jobs now and what is the outlook for an industry sector critical to the state’s economy?

#### Learning Objectives

- Understand trends in the price of oil and near-term employment in the sector
- Examine the recent economic performance of regions of Texas where oil, gas, and petrochemicals are a substantial part of the local economy as well as use data to understand possible future developments
- Discover data on job postings and other statistics that convey future hiring patterns in this industry

## Dovers Room

### Improving Texas Outcomes: Evidence-Based Grant Making

**Presenters:** *Ryan Clinton, Manager, Special Initiatives and Grants, Texas Workforce Commission; Diane Tackett, Chief Operations Officer, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area; Sandra Williams, Director, Workforce Grants and Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission*

This session will discuss the reasons and expected outcomes of developing grants based on evidence.

#### Learning Objectives

- Share what evidence-based grant making is
- Explain why it is being implemented at this time
- Discuss how to build the evidence base
- Discover what outcomes are anticipated from this process

**Break: 9:45–10:00 a.m.**

**10:00–11:15 a.m.**

## Phoenix North

### Implementing Flexible and Innovative Programs and Practices for Transitioning Foster Youth

**Presenters:** *Chris Caballero, CTCM, CTCD, Foster Youth Liaison/Program Specialist, Strategic Workforce Initiatives and Federal Grants, Texas Workforce Commission; Breanna Haile, MS, Deputy Director of the HAY*

*Center, Harris County Resources for Children and Adults; Kathy Martinez, CTCM, CTCD, Program Specialist, Special Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission; Wayne Salter, Deputy Executive Commissioner Access and Eligibility Services, Texas Health and Human Services*

Through the Texas Works Path to Success (TWPS) program, the HAY Center and Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), with financial assistance from the Texas Workforce Commission and the HAY Center Foundation, have provided current and former foster youth with a comprehensive career training opportunity to prepare them for full-time employment as a Texas Works Advisor I in a local HHSC eligibility office. Presenters will discuss how the TWPS program came to fruition and review support services the HAY Center added to the program as a way to fit the needs of current and former foster youth in Region 6.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Understand the importance of partnerships with other stakeholders
- Learn how to develop programs that impact the lives of current and former foster youth
- Discover how to use support services to meet the needs of current and former foster youth to attain a positive outcome

### **Phoenix South**

#### **Want to Create a Megaregion? Ask us How!**

**Moderator:** *Mary York, Director, Outreach and Employer Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission*

**Presenters:** *Janie Bates, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions Texoma; Eric Batten, Workforce Development Director, Texas Instruments; Kristie Caviness, Employer Engagement and Community Outreach Manager, Outreach and Employer Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission; Dr. Veronique Tran, Vice Provost, School of Manufacturing and Industrial Technology, Dallas College*

Join this panel of experts as they explain how their seemingly diverse entities have created a powerful partnership. Texas Instruments (TI) is a global semiconductor company with 80,000 products and more than 100,000 customers. The Texoma Workforce Development Board is connecting partners and providing services to ensure that TI has a ready workforce. Dallas and Grayson Colleges have partnered to upskill workers through a TWC Skills Development Grant. The strong partnership among these giants is catapulting the semiconductor workforce as the industry is on the rise as it strengthens its footprint in America.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Cultivate collaborative partnerships across regional boundaries for best outcomes
- Discuss strategies to pool resources in rural areas and create a megaregion
- Learn how TWC workforce training grants advance the highly competitive semiconductor industry

### **Phoenix Central**

#### **Effective Partnerships for a Greater Impact**

**Presenters:** *Jasmine Hernandez, Student HireAbility Navigator, Community Engagement, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley; Elzie Martinez, Student HireAbility Navigator, Community Engagement, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley; Gabriela Martinez, MS, LPC, CRC, Program Specialist for Transition, Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State Office Transition and Pre-ETS Program; Art Vega, II, MS, LPC, CRC, Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor, Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Lower Rio Grande Valley Management Unit 6-3*

There is no doubt that effective collaborations are key when trying to make a positive impact in the community. In this session, attendees will learn about the holistic approach taken by the Student HireAbility Navigators from Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley and Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services Unit 6-3 to better prepare individuals with disabilities for a successful future. Additionally, knowledge on services and resources offered by each agency will be provided.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Discover best practices for collaboration between Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Student HireAbility Navigators that assist in closing the gap for a greater impact
- Gain knowledge regarding services and resources offered by both Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Local Workforce Development Boards

- Learn how to connect with your local Student HireAbility Navigator

## **Austin Room**

### **Data Modernization in Support of Texas Workforce Solutions**

**Presenters:** *Beth Durham, Director, Analytics Infrastructure Department, Texas Workforce Commission; Adam Leonard, Chief Analytics Officer and Director of Information Innovation & Insight, Texas Workforce Commission; Jennifer Palmer-Lee, Tableau Administrator and Data Visualization Manager, Texas Workforce Commission*

This session will explain where we are, how we got here, and where we are going in terms of access to and use of data for the success of Texans. Presenters will discuss recent efforts, offer a road map of future efforts, and share demos of the new modern tools that Information Innovation & Insight has begun rolling out to internal and external partners. The audience will be encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback for future enhancements.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Learn about the new data resources available today and over the next 12–18 months
- Provide input regarding new resources to help ensure they better meet the attendees needs
- Understand TWC’s vision and strategy to leverage data to support transformation of our services to Texans

## **Dovers Room**

### **Tools and Strategies for Reentry**

**Presenters:** *Tom Harris, Owner, New Horizons Employment Solutions; Stephanie Huerta, Manager, WIOA/ES/RESEA and Fidelity Bonding Coordinator, Texas Workforce Commission; Russell Hunter, Manager, Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, Texas Workforce Commission; Jaime D. Rodriguez, Deputy Project Director/Operations Manager, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area; Shunta Williams, Deputy Director, Board Support and Agency Administered Programs, Texas Workforce Commission*

This session will focus on strategies to help justice-involved individuals and veterans returning to the civilian workforce. The relationship of Fidelity Bonding and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) programs will be discussed, highlighting how the two programs work together.

**Learning Objectives:** Understand strategies for hiring justice-involved individuals and/or veterans

- Learn how to complete the WOTC application as a standard tool for onboarding
- Understand how Fidelity Bonding protects employers and can be continued beyond the initial six months

**Lunch Break: 11:15 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

**12:45–2:00 p.m.**

## **Phoenix North**

### **Workforce Case Management System—TWIST Replacement**

**Presenters:** *Debbie Carlson, Project Manager, Workforce Development Division, Texas Workforce Commission; Linda Hernandez, Senior Quality Assurance Specialist, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas; Sandy Landers, Project Manager/Test Lead, Workforce Case Management System, Texas Workforce Commission; Richard Woessner, Director, Workforce Automation and Technical Support, Texas Workforce Commission*

The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) was an amazing system when it was developed 20+ years ago. Texas was the envy of other states. However, as with all automation or technology, the shelf life is very short before a replacement needs to occur. The time has come to replace TWIST with a new workforce case management system. This session will discuss some of the functionality of the new system. Additionally, session participants will be provided with important dates regarding the implementation of the new system.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Become familiar with functionality of the new system
- Learn key dates regarding system implementation to share with coworkers



## Phoenix South

### **Regional Board Collaboration: Raising the Bar for K–12 Students into Exciting Careers**

**Presenters:** *Jessica Dersen, Director of Career Awareness and K–12 Partnerships, Workforce Solutions Capital Area; Kelly Moreno, Chief Solutions Officer, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area*

See how Workforce Solutions Capital Area and Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area have come together to create partnerships to expand resources and programming for K–12 outreach and awareness initiatives.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Discover how our Career and Education Outreach Teams support independent school districts
- Explore regional work-based learning activities, including career fairs, field trips, and events for K–12 students
- Hear about regional education externship programs and summer programs for youth
- Discuss how to leverage existing funding to support youth career exploration initiatives

## Phoenix Central

### **Performance and Partnership Solutions that Restore Dignity—The Mastercard Case Study**

**Presenter:** *Leila Melendez, CEO, Workforce Solutions Borderplex; Vanessa Preston, Executive Vice President, Grant Associates*

Some of the best lessons stem from missteps, and in this program management case, inefficiency issues birthed solutions toward performance and partnership. Discover how programmatic vulnerabilities were resolved in a partnership with Mastercard that “straightened the pipes” of an antiquated support service process while infusing a unique approach to the financial trauma perpetuating the root causes of poverty.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Learn steps to identify debt deficits in order to improve effectiveness and mine relevant Labor Market Information (LMI) data to benefit operations and financial literacy
- Discover how you can use the LMI toolbox to target data points that parallel economic prosperity metrics and lay the groundwork for program design
- Learn how to identify potholes in the participant journey for organizational effectiveness
- Identify ways to connect to partnership giants and envision possibilities that tackle more than one problem, leading to the design of a multilayered program that goes beyond performance into the hearts of Local Workforce Development Board missions and values

## Austin Room

### **Partnering with Military Transition Programs**

**Presenters:** *Bob Gear Jr., Director, Texas Veterans Leadership Program, Texas Workforce Commission; Gabriel Lopez, Assistant Director, Texas Veterans Leadership Program, Workforce Solutions for South Texas; Mark Phillips, DHR, Division Chief of TAP, Fort Hood TAP Center (Copeland)*

This unique breakout session provides the audience an opportunity to learn about the multiple transition programs and requirements for soldiers separating or retiring from the US Army as well as all branches of the US military. The audience members will also learn the best practices of integrating workforce programs with military transition programs from Workforce Solutions Central Texas, the Fort Hood Transition Assistance Program (TAP), and the Texas Veterans Leadership Program.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Learn about the US Army and Department of Defense Transition Programs available to transitioning service members
- Understand the requirements transitioning service members must meet to be considered career ready
- Discover the best practices of integrating workforce programs with military transition programs
- Hear about the Army Career Skills Program and Department of Defense Skillsbridge Program

## Dovers Room

### **Strategies for Developing Self Sufficiency Fund and Skills Development Fund Grants**

**Presenters:** *Reba Bacon, MBA, Program Specialist, Outreach and Employer Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission; Kristie Caviness, Employer Engagement and Community Outreach Manager, Outreach and Employer Initiatives, Texas Workforce Commission*

This session is specifically targeted to Local Workforce Development Board staff. The information provided is useful for anyone who is involved with the Employer Engagement and Community Outreach (EECO) workforce training grants such as the Skills Development Fund (SDF) and the Self-Sufficiency Fund (SSF) programs.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the various EECO grants and provide helpful tips
- Understand the SSF application review and highlights
- Review the SDF process flowchart
- Share success stories to leverage best practices in developing a grant project

**Break: 2:00–2:15 p.m.**

**2:15–3:30 p.m.**

#### **Phoenix North**

##### **Building Bridges—Connecting Youth to the Workforce**

**Moderator:** *Dawn Cronin, Deputy Division Director, Workforce Programs and Board Service Strategies, Workforce Development Division, Texas Workforce Commission*

**Presenters:** *LaToya Casimere, Program Administrator, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast; Lorena “Lori” Knight, Education Outreach Department Manager, Texas Workforce Commission; Odette Flores-Ruiz, Youth Program Coordinator, Workforce Solutions Borderplex; Mariana Vega, Director for Labor Market Information, Texas Workforce Commission*

We consistently hear of employers struggling to fill job vacancies. The existing mismatch between youth skills and employer needs threatens to become even wider as Industry 4.0 transforms business and jobs faster than workers can adapt. One of our primary responsibilities as partners in the Texas workforce system is preparing tomorrow’s workforce. Workforce is the bridge between education, employers, and youth. Jobs provide income, a sense of purpose, and a connection to community. Engaging youth and connecting them to the workforce through career exploration, career readiness training, and skills development helps them gain the job skills they need and connects them with employers that are seeking well-trained workers. This session explores innovative youth engagement strategies, what is working and what is not, and how to effectively connect with this population.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify career pathways and messaging to youth
- Discover skills through interest and aptitude assessments
- Develop necessary skills through short-term training models
- Transition youth to work and promote career growth

#### **Phoenix South**

##### **Infant/Toddler Child Development and Support**

**Presenters:** *Elise Cohen, MA, Coordinator, Education Outreach, Children’s Learning Institute at UT Health Houston Texas Infant Toddler Specialist Network; Lindsay Hill, Manager, Quality Initiatives, Child Care & Early Learning Division, Texas Workforce Commission; Madelynn Martinez, Quality Initiatives Program Specialist, Child Care & Early Learning Division, Texas Workforce Commission*

In this session, presenters will discuss the most critical period of brain development—the first three years—when the brain develops faster than at any other time in life. During this time, at least one million new neural connections form every second! Participants will learn how this critical period of brain development impacts children’s future abilities to learn and succeed in school, at work, and in life. Additionally, the Children’s Learning Institute will share information about the Texas Infant Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN) and how participants can support and participate in this initiative in their local workforce development area (workforce area). Presenters

will conclude with an overview of the Child Care Quality funding allocated to workforce areas and how this funding can be targeted to support early brain development.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Gain knowledge about the Texas ITSN
- Identify how brain development in the first three years impacts a child's future success
- Learn about allowable uses for Child Care Quality funding to support infants and toddlers

### **Phoenix Central**

#### **Using Innovative Networking and Outreach Strategies to Amplify Employer Relationships and Career Opportunities**

**Presenters:** *Kandolite Carson, Creative Media Manager, Workforce Solutions Borderplex; Bianca Cervantes, Communications Director, Workforce Solutions Borderplex*

Strategic outreach gains strength through networking and leveraging use of community partnerships to elevate your outcomes. This session will discuss how to reach more customers using your established partnerships and will provide guidance on making authentic connections to create new ones.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Learn to identify partners that align with target audiences and the Local Workforce Development Board mission
- Develop co-op outreach strategies and synergistic content that aligns with your audiences and brands
- Become proficient in audience messaging and communications channels
- Overcome apprehension in pushing the envelope for innovation

### **Austin Room**

#### **Employee Training and Placing Texans in High-Paying Jobs**

**Presenters:** *Cledia Hernandez, Associate Vice Chancellor, External Relations and Workforce Development, Texas State Technical College; Kyle Smith, Associate Vice Chancellor, Special Projects, Texas State Technical College*

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) is one of the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) eligible training providers (ETPs). TSTC and TWC have some fascinating developments underway for training employees and matching those employees to employers in Texas. During this panel session, presenters will discuss the approach TSTC uses to address the gap between the skills that Texas job seekers have, and the skills required by industry. This skills gap is a significant problem that has stifled economic growth and job prospects for many Texans. As an economic engine for the State of Texas, TSTC is charged with providing innovative, accessible training for Texans who need rapid access to high-demand, high-paying technical positions. In order to train more Texans faster and more efficiently, TSTC has implemented performance-based education in its technical programs.

The use of the Calibrate tool has also helped close the skills gap. Calibrate is a tool that compares area job postings to curricula to ensure that the courses are teaching the skills required by employers, as reflected in the job postings. Calibrate is also critical to ensuring that the most in-demand competencies are being taught within competency-based programs.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Discuss how Local Workforce Development Boards and ETPs can collaborate to produce a win-win situation for employees and employers
- Learn about TSTC's approach to industry-driven workforce development

### **Dovers Room**

#### **What's New in Cybersecurity and Information Technology?**

**Presenters:** *Chris Bunton, IT Infrastructure Director, Texas Workforce Commission; Lance Leatherwood, Chief Information Security Officer, Texas Workforce Commission*

Cybersecurity has become one of our nation's hottest topics. The Texas Workforce Commission plays an important role in providing many job-seeking services to the Texas workforce. Cybersecurity ensures that these services are secure and mitigates the risk of fraud. It is the practice of protecting individuals, enterprises, critical



systems, and sensitive information from internet attacks or cyberthreats. Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility. We need your help in staying informed—and on guard—to protect ourselves against criminal or unauthorized use of our electronic data.

**Learning Objectives**

- Understand the Governor's Prohibited Apps Mitigation Strategies
- Identify measures to deter and avoid data threats in and out of the workplace
- Discover preventive Office 365 tools used as countermeasures
- Learn about what's new in cybersecurity

Texas Workforce Commission • 512-463-8942 • [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org) • Equal Opportunity Employer  
Relay Texas • 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) • 1-800-735-2988 (Voice)