

Julian Alvarez III

Texas Workforce Commission
Commissioner Representing Labor
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Awards

2021 Texas Public Policy Foundation

“An Uncommon Way: Achieving Economic Independence in the Black Community”

2020 Fellow

Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the University of Texas School of Law

2019 CTE Champion Award

from the Career and Technical Association of Texas

2018 Appointed Official of the Year

by the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education

from Texas A&I University in Kingsville.

Background

Julian Alvarez III is the Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission. Gov. Greg Abbott reappointed him to the three-member Commission on March 7, 2017. His Commission appointment expires February 1, 2023.

As Labor Commissioner, Julian Alvarez represents the interests of more than 14 million Texas workers with respect to TWC services and ensures that their concerns are considered in all Commission actions.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Alvarez served as President and CEO of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership fostering relationships and coordinating programs to advance regional economic development and employment opportunities. He also served as the Texas Regional Director for U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson advising on legislative and policy issues related to South Texas. Prior to that, Alvarez served on the South Texas Drug Task Force as a State Trooper for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). After his service with DPS, Alvarez inspired stewardship and leadership as the Director of College Information for Texas State Technical College in Harlingen.

Recognition:

- 2021 SXSW EDU (South by Southwest Education Conference) panel presenter “Getting Back to Work: Upskilling and Retooling” discussion on how Texas Workforce upskilled and retooled unemployed Texans impacted by the pandemic. <https://youtu.be/sE5f llnkPQ>
- 2020 SXSW EDU (South by Southwest Education Conference) panel presenter “Workforce Counselors Guiding Pathways for Seniors” Ever-struggled with supporting high school students with “best-bet” college and career steps? Most of future job growth will be in middle skill occupations, yet students and parents are largely unaware of jobs and the education to get them. Texas Workforce Commission is piloting an initiative that places Workforce Counselors at schools to provide direct guidance to students in demand jobs and related training. Commitments to be celebrated at Texas Career Technical Education signing day <https://youtu.be/6D img-uKrg>.

- 2019 Texas Tribune Festival panel presenter “The Future of Jobs” Austin, Texas
- Appointed by the Texas Secretary of State to the Border Transportation Advisory Committee, serving from 2018 to 2020.
- Retired Collegiate Football Referee, Southland Conference

Special Initiatives:

- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) presentation “Registered Apprenticeship - The Other Higher Education” – why Registered Apprenticeship completers should be counted in the state’s higher education attainment goals, January 2019.
- IT Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Initiative \$3 million dollar request for applications utilizing WIOA Statewide funding and SAE (State Apprenticeship Expansion) funding to expand or develop IT Registered Apprenticeship programs, April 2021.
- Spearheaded effort to articulate DOL Industry Recognized Certifications into college credit (crosswalk) with Institutions of Higher Education in Texas. Secured WIOA statewide and Higher education Perkins funding to support work of the steering committee. Steering Committee established November 2017.
<https://twc.texas.gov/files/students/crediting-learning-from-registered-apprenticeship-twc.pdf>
- Pre-Apprenticeship Pilot - \$1.1 million initiative made possible from a grant from IKEA corporation to support the enrollment of youth and adults into new or existing RAPS and ensure that supportive services are provided for success. Successful applications will also receive funding for consumables needed for training.
- Camp Code – Summer camps for Texas middle school girls Grades 6 through 8 to provide computer coding/programming. Goal is to increase the interest of Texas middle school girls in coding and programming by providing hands on experiences that include challenging, innovative concepts and experiences in learning, problem solving while fostering an interest in STEM related careers. Camp is in its fourth year and has expanded to include boys. Request for Proposals funded with TANF statewide funding.
- Education Outreach Workforce Specialist Program – The Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist Program provides career services to students at certain public middle and high schools. Students receive in-depth education and direction on career choices as well as access to up-to-date labor market and career data to direct them towards: 1) high growth, high demand occupations; 2) opportunities and training in middle-skills jobs; 3) apprenticeship training programs; 4) internships; 5) community and technical colleges; and 6) occupations experiencing existing or projected workforce shortages.

- The purpose of this initiative is to help fill the gap in Skill Trades and Middle Skill occupations. Seven Boards piloted the program using TANF statewide funding. Using a portion of their TANF allotment an additional six Boards have submitted letters of intent.
- Texas CTE Signing Day – Working in conjunction with Texas Legislator James White, CTE Signing Day brings awareness to career options in middle skill jobs. Texas CTE Signing Day celebrates the commitments of high school seniors to continue their education at community and technical colleges or apprenticeship programs. Scholarship signing highlights the ceremonial event.
- Texas Hireability Decal – worked with Vocational Rehabilitation staff to initiate the “We Hire Ability Employer Recognition Program”. The “We Hire Ability” is an employer recognition decal and year-round program that highlights the critical role of employers in helping to create a Texas Workforce that is inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Pre ETS Letter to RSA Commissioner Schultz. July 2020 requested flexibility from RSA to allow students to engage in pre-apprenticeship activities, and that these pre-apprenticeship activities be an allowable use of Pre-ETS funds as work-based learning, work readiness training, and career exploration activities. In addition, I asked Commissioner Schultz to consider allowing Texas to conduct a model transition demonstration project using pre-apprenticeship as an allowable Pre-ETS activity, pursuant to the flexibility provided in 34 CFR §361.48(a)(3)(vii). Such demonstration projects would provide Texas the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of these models for consideration as an ongoing, allowable use of Pre-ETS funds. Received favorable letter November 2020 from Commissioner Schultz. Pilot Program is in development.
- Foster Youth letter to HHS, Acting Assistant Secretary Joo Yeung Chang. March 2021. Recognizing that Foster Youth are a priority population for service in Texas and Texas Workforce supports Foster Youth Transition Centers that serve approximately 1405 foster youth. Requested HHSC flexibility in allowing foster youth to use their Education and Training Vouchers (which are currently only for college) for support while they attend Registered Apprenticeship programs. Known as “earn-and-learn” programs, RAPs introduce youth to apprenticeship programs and serve as a pathway to careers in high-skill, high-wage occupations early in their secondary education.
- Helped establish the Office of Apprenticeship within Texas Workforce Commission, November 2016 to oversee expansion of apprenticeship in Texas as a proven training model to support businesses and connect individuals with demand careers. This allowed the agency to become a Standards Recognition Entity in September 2020.
- Labor Commissioner Newsletter semiannual publication to inform constituents of innovative programs and services available through the Texas Workforce Commission
- <https://twc.texas.gov/office-commissioner-representing-labor>

- Video Series Coffee with Commissioner topical conversations relevant to job seekers and unemployment insurance claimants, school educators, economic developers etc.
<https://youtu.be/HHLINnodYHU>
- Boot Tour (Biannual)– Education and outreach tour of Texas Workforce Commission grant opportunities that support the training of new, incumbent and future workforce. Tour five local workforce board areas and provide information to local community and technical colleges, employers, economic development corporations, independent school districts and grant writers. Tour group included Apprenticeship Director; Adult Education and Literacy Director; Vocational Rehabilitation Representative and Representatives from the Office of Employer Initiatives.
- Labor Focus Group (Biannual) meetings including Texas Building Trade representatives and Teamsters locals to educate members regarding services provided by Texas Workforce Commission to support their employer partners such as Grant opportunities, Fidelity bonding, Work opportunity Tax Credits.