

# Texas Business Today

Chairman Joe Esparza  
Commissioner Representing Employers

April 2026

Texas Employers,

Welcome to the April issue of *Texas Business Today*!

In recognition of April as National Internship Awareness Month, I want to highlight the importance of work-based learning in creating career pathways for students and a talent pipeline for employers. The Texas Workforce Commission announced the launch of the new and improved [TexasInternNetwork.com](https://www.texasinternnetwork.com). On this website, employers can post internship opportunities and students can search for internships that meet their career interests.

For Texas employers, the Texas Intern Network website opens a direct pipeline to motivated students who are seeking meaningful careers with upward mobility. **This new website is a powerful tool for employers** to recruit and train their future workforce with the workforce readiness and technical skills that will boost their business and drive their bottom line.

**I also want to invite Austin-area employers to join me** at the Texas Intern Network Conference on April 23 at Austin Community College. We're recruiting employers to conduct mock interviews with students so they can get real-time feedback, setting them up for success in their next job interview. By participating, you're getting an early look at top-tier candidates who are eager to contribute to your business' success.

[Register here today.](#)

Lastly, I'm pleased to share that TWC has announced **a new grant opportunity for employers** in the targeted industries of advanced manufacturing, information technology, aerospace/aviation and defense, nuclear energy, artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, healthcare, and shipbuilding. We are currently accepting applications for the program, called Advancing Skills, Capabilities, and Expertise for New Development (ASCEND). For more information, visit [TWC's website](#).

From internships to grants, I hope you take advantage of the many opportunities TWC provides for you to strengthen your business!

- Joe Esparza



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Esparza'. The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Chairman Joe Esparza**  
**Commissioner Representing Employers**  
**Texas Workforce Commission**

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# Texas Business Minute



[Click here to watch the video](#)

## Texas Conference for Employers



- April 17: Baytown - [Sign Up](#)
- May 1: Lancaster - Sold Out
- May 29: Corpus Christi - [Sign Up](#)
- June 12: Eagle Pass - [Sign Up](#)
- June 26: Harlingen - [Sign Up](#)
- August 6-7: Waco - [Sign Up](#)
- August 28: Seguin - [Sign Up](#)
- September 18: San Angelo - [Sign Up](#)

[More Info](#)



# Time-Off Refresher as We Enter New Seasons

**By: Samantha Acuña**

*Legal Counsel to Chairman Esparza*

Now is a great time to begin thinking about how time off, both paid and unpaid, will have an impact on your workforce as we enter the warmer seasons. More people are inclined to take time off as loved ones and children are on holidays or summer break and the weather warms up across the state.

This article will discuss time off policies and how to set yourself up for success during these times.

## **General Rules**

Generally, you want to have processes and policies about time off clearly in writing, as the Texas Payday Law will enforce what the written policy says. No current Texas state law or U.S. federal law requires private sector employers to provide paid or unpaid leave, although be mindful, unpaid leave may be necessary as a reasonable accommodation in the event of a disability, pregnancy, or other circumstances. Regardless, these types of leave are common in various workplaces as a fringe benefit.

Employers have various structures for paid time off (PTO) and unpaid time off based on their business needs and the size of the workforce. For instance, certain types of employees may be eligible for paid time off, and employers may even elect for employees with more years worked to qualify for additional time off. This is all a part of the policy-making process and important for retaining talent in your workplace. For guidance on how to structure your policies relating to time off, check out:

[https://efte.twc.texas.gov/vacation\\_and\\_sick\\_leave.html](https://efte.twc.texas.gov/vacation_and_sick_leave.html).


As employees request leave, it is important to keep track of who is out on what dates and times. This is mainly to keep everyone informed and up to date, but also to ensure the workflow is still moving as it should. With all this in mind, if you find yourself modifying your time off policies, ensure that everyone is aware of any changes made. It is a best practice to have employees sign an acknowledgement as to the updates.



## Setting Yourself Up for Success

1. **Same page, same goals:** Having a shared system to confirm employees know who is working certain shifts or who will be out of office. Some employers use applications while others rely on shared calendars. Finding a best fit may require some trial and error, so do not be dissuaded from giving other methods a try should it be needed.
2. **Document, document, document:** Ensure you are fully documenting attendance and hours worked by all employees. For longer periods of leave, such as FMLA leave or a leave of absence, it is a best practice to have these requests and any related correspondence documented in writing.
3. **We are here to help:** Do not hesitate to reach our office at [employerinfo@twc.texas.gov](mailto:employerinfo@twc.texas.gov) or through the Employer Hotline (800-832-9394) if you need additional guidance related to time off or other happenings at your workplace.

# Another Week of Available Work: A Podcast with Chairman Joe Esparza



Podcast Episode

## Texas Mutual's Innovative Solution to Child Care Challenges

### Another Week of Available Work

Video • Mar 16 • 23 min 41 sec

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**Description**    Transcript

In today's episode, we dive into the powerful story of Texas Mutual and their innovative childcare initiative. When CEO Jeanette Ward learned about the dire childcare shortage in Austin, she didn't just talk about it—she took action.

[Click here to listen](#)

# TEXAS EMPLOYER HOTLINE

## 1-800-832-9394

Hiring Issues | Medical Leave-Related Laws | Personnel Policies and Handbooks  
Independent Contractors and Unemployment Tax Issues | The Unemployment Claims and  
Appeals Process | Texas and Federal Wage and Hour Laws



Employer Hotline Hours: M-F, 8am - 5pm

*Information provided by employment law attorneys in the Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers at the Texas Workforce Commission*

## **Texas Business Today is provided to employers free of charge**

Texas Business Today is a monthly update devoted to a variety of topics of interest to Texas employers. The views and analyses presented herein do not necessarily represent the policies or the endorsement of the Texas Workforce Commission. Articles containing legal analyses or opinions are intended only as a discussion and overview of the topics presented. Such articles are not intended to be comprehensive legal analyses of every aspect of the topics discussed. Due to the general nature of the discussions provided, this information may not apply in each and every fact situation and should not be acted upon without specific legal advice based on the facts in a particular case.

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## **Connect with the Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers**

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