



MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

DATE

JULY 15, 2025

1 Tuesday, July 15, 2025

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Good morning,
3 all. This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone
4 signed up for public comment?

5 MR. TROBMAN: Good morning, commissioners.
6 Les Trobman, general counsel. We have three individuals who have
7 registered for public comment this morning. When I call your
8 name if you could unmute, introduce yourself, and then begin. We
9 have Tammy Chavira.

10 TAMMY CHAVIRA: Hello.

11 MR. TROBMAN: Good morning.

12 TAMMY CHAVIRA: Good morning. Thank you for
13 having me. Dear board members and community guests and Texas
14 Workforce Commission, I'm writing as a mother of an incredible
15 young adult with an intellectual disability and as a passionate
16 special education teacher. Julia is a beautiful college hopeful
17 and has been accepted to the highly competitive program of
18 ELEVAR at UNT. She is eager to start her four-year journey with
19 them to help put her on a path in life that would otherwise not
20 be afforded. Being a nontraditional student Julia doesn't
21 qualify for 98 percent of scholarships and grants from outside
22 sources. Julia is a very high-functioning student and couldn't
23 be more ready for this opportunity. We've been to orientation
24 and she has tasted the excitement as well as the challenges
25 ahead in this transition. This opportunity has already shown

1 Julia what is possible. We have a current case manager and are
2 connected with TWC already. Therefore we are a current client
3 but I'm uncertain of our fate in funding for UNT this year and
4 beyond. Since we got acceptance to ELEVAR and UNT in March of
5 2025, TWC services were put on hold at the recommendation of our
6 case manager and service providers. I have been diligent in
7 keeping in contact to ensure we are not missing any important
8 steps, yet since March we haven't made progress for Julia. We're
9 currently between offices as part of this transition season from
10 the Dallas to Denton, uh, TWC office. As a result we are
11 uncertain of Julia's current status as it stands relating to our
12 funding. We're eagerly waiting, awaiting information in regards
13 to her status as a new student or current student and that's
14 where the question lies. At the rate that things have been going
15 we will be well into the program and its costs before knowing
16 what financing looks like, which is unfair to any responsible
17 household. This support's vital as we have a younger daughter
18 who is very capable of incredible things, and we also need to
19 afford support for her as it's her senior year in high school as
20 well. But what does this funding mean in a bigger picture? As a
21 society, what does TWC programming funding offer? Speaking as a
22 special education teacher there is something in education that
23 we are unable to tie a monetary value to in building confidence
24 through a supportive learning environment. That confidence and
25 experience can often be more of a person, more for a person than

1 any other service, procedure, medicine, training, etc. ELEVAR
2 has created that level of opportunity for students like Julia. I
3 have also been privileged to see the impact of this program in
4 the community as well. As a society, quality community members
5 are honored to support and eager to see the success of these
6 individuals. That success of the program therefore for these
7 individuals allows them to have the independence and safety they
8 wouldn't have otherwise. That hopefully comes with a much lower
9 if not eliminated need for financial support in the long run,
10 not to mention the immense pleasure they bring to everyone they
11 meet. Their zest for life rather than a growing need for support
12 would contribute to society in yet another way that we are
13 unable to put a price on. Thank you for the opportunity to be
14 heard and appreciate that we all want what's best for our own
15 children but this is so much bigger than that. Our world needs
16 that what these individuals have to offer and can fill gaps in
17 the workforce and our world at large. Thank you for doing your
18 best to find a way to continue this funding or create new
19 opportunities to provide for these many individuals of all
20 kinds, not just mine. Thank you so much.

21 MR. TROBMAN: Thank you. Dennis Raso. Dennis
22 Rasso, if you could unmute yourself and begin.

23 DENNIS RASO: Can you hear me?

24 MR. TROBMAN: Yes, sir.

25

1 DENNIS RASO: OK. My name's Dennis Raso and
2 I'm an alum of the University of North Texas, and I am a proud
3 supporter of the ELEVAR program. I have known of this program
4 since its inception four years ago and I have been greatly
5 impressed by the achievements of the students who have
6 participated in this program. Not only do they take specialized
7 courses to help them through their college career, they also
8 take courses that are mainstream and take course, take classes
9 with the mainstream students. The professors that I have talked
10 to are very pleased with these students' performances and since
11 this is an underserved, uh, segment of our population, students
12 with intellectual disabilities, the importance of giving them
13 the chance to have their independence and success is critical to
14 our society. By cutting the funding at such a late date, it puts
15 the parents in such a predicament that their student may not be
16 able to attend due to financial constraints. Since the
17 [inaudible], the students are moving into their dormitories in
18 three weeks, trying to come up with the additional funding can
19 be very difficult for these families. But it's the students that
20 are losing out. They're losing out on their opportunities to
21 find themselves, to find what their passions are, to develop
22 those passions, and become independent and productive members of
23 our society today. These are all very important things for this
24 underserved group. Thank you for your time.

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1 MR. TROBMAN: Thank you. Kara Waddell. Kara
2 Waddell, if you could unmute yourself and then begin.

3 KARA WADDELL: Hello, good after-good
4 morning.

5 MR. TROBMAN: Good morning.

6 KARA WADDELL: Good morning. Chairman
7 Daniel, Honorable Commissioners at TWC, for the record, my
8 name's Kara Waddell. I serve as president and CEO of Child Care
9 Associates, based in Fort Worth and we do operate 15 early
10 learning centers for Head Start, Early Head Start, PreK, and
11 child care, and we partner with two large Workforce Boards in
12 North Texas to deliver the TWC Child Care Scholarship program as
13 well as quality improvement efforts. Comments today are my own.
14 They don't con, represent Child Care Associates necessarily or
15 that of the two Workforce Boards with whom we contract. I did
16 submit written testimony. I'll avoid reading those to you. I
17 wanted to come today to amplify the voice of our child care
18 providers and parents. We hear directly and frequently from them
19 and put simply, they're frustrated and scared. Two main areas of
20 concern I wanted to highlight. First, TX3C has been rolled out
21 and there's an additional \$100,000,000 for the child care
22 services program, which has been celebrated and there is a
23 widespread sense of relief among child care providers that
24 relief is on the way. They believe that their families will soon
25 be pulled from the wait list. The hearing last week that the new

1 child care targets will actually lower the number of children to
2 be served starting in October. This will come as a shock to
3 them. I understand why. There's an increase in rates. You're
4 serving at 75 percent of the market rate survey amount. We have
5 more Texas Rising Star programs than ever before. Those are good
6 things. But in our area especially, families have been sitting
7 on the wait list for a long time and programs are fully
8 expecting that we're going to start pulling them in a matter of
9 months. Also, the second issue is the child care scholarship,
10 the new priority group category that would enable scholarships
11 for eligible child care educators to receive the child care
12 assistance funding. We've already been receiving calls. They're
13 very eager to pull their teachers off the wait list and their
14 expectation is immediate. The rollout's happening now, not
15 months from now. So given this extensive period of uncertainty,
16 I just want to encourage TWC, please offer timely communication
17 in the next few weeks from the state. Numbers are not, are going
18 down. They're not going to be going up. And by what date they
19 can expect to pull their child care educators for priority
20 service. Providers and families don't want to be in the dark and
21 I know you don't want that to be the case either. Workforce
22 Board areas I believe will also appreciate having the state help
23 message this. It's very difficult on the ground and it's helpful
24 when you back us up to provide the justification and
25 understanding. We stand ready to help in any way we can and

1 thank you for your continued commitment to the working families
2 and children of Texas.

3 MR. TROBMAN: Commissioners, those are the
4 comments we have this morning. Thanks.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The motion passes with the
6 exceptions noted. We got a real quick executive director's
7 report we're going to hear.

8 MR. SERNA: Um, Eric Holen's going to
9 provide us—Eric Holen's going to provide us with an update on
10 DUA. Eric.

11 ERIC HOLEN: Good morning. Eric Holen with
12 the Unemployment Insurance Division. I have an update on
13 declared disaster 4879 for the severe storms and flooding that
14 occurred beginning July 2nd. On July 6th federal disaster aid was
15 authorized for individual assistance which includes disaster
16 unemployment assistance or DUA, uh, for Kerr County. On July 10th
17 the disaster declaration was amended to add Burnet, San Saba,
18 Tom Green, Travis, and Williamson Counties for individual
19 assistance. The deadline to apply for DUA benefits under this
20 disaster is September 4, 2025, and the last payable week for DUA
21 benefits is the week ending January 10, 2026. As of this morning
22 customers submitted 28 DUA claims and another 215 regular claims
23 stating they were affected by the disaster. When the disaster
24 occurred the Unemployment Insurance Division took the following
25 additional actions to [inaudible] our customers. First, we

1 activated disaster tracking on the unemployment benefits service
2 system. This allowed customers to indicate that they are, uh,
3 affected by the disaster to allow better tracking and us to
4 monitor the impact. Also when those customers exhaust their
5 unemployment benefits, it allows us to identify them and move
6 them to disaster unemployment assistance. Uh, we added area code
7 830 which covers Kerr County and the surrounding areas to our
8 telephone system to let anybody who is calling our unemployment
9 insurance telecenters from those telephone number to get in
10 regardless of call volume so that we should focus our efforts to
11 serve them. We partner with our finance division to put
12 collection actions on hold for employers that are affected, and
13 since July is a, uh, report filing month for quarter reports for
14 employers, our UI tax team will be monitoring and waiving any
15 penalties for late [inaudible] reports for affected employers.
16 And finally, this week we're deploying a UI street—a UI field
17 specialist to the affected area to make sure that we distribute,
18 uh, UI full—UI posters and flyers, and that completes my update.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Any comments or
20 questions?

21 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, none here.

22 COMMISSIONER ESPARZA: No, chair.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there any other order
24 of business to come before the commission? No?

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1 COMMISSIONER ESPARZA: Chairman, uh, can we
2 ensure that the public comments that there was—the third public
3 commenter, uh, mentioned that she had a written statement but
4 didn't read it. You make sure that gets filtered down? Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Mr. Trobman? Yep, thank
7 you.

8 COMMISSIONER ESPARZA: Thumbs up.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any other order of
10 business? None? Is there a motion to adjourn?

11 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Chairman, I move to
12 adjourn.

13 COMMISSIONER ESPARZA: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
15 seconded to adjourn and we're adjourned.

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Texas Workforce Commission Meeting
JULY 15, 2025

Item 2: Public Comment

Written Comments

Chairman Bryan Daniel & Honorable Commissioners
Texas Workforce Commission
101 E. 15th St
Austin, TX 78778

Chairman Daniel & Honorable Commissioners of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC),

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment at today's Commission Meeting (7.15.2025). I serve as President-CEO of Child Care Associates (CCA), one of the largest early education nonprofits in North Texas. CCA operates many aspects of the early learning system in North Texas, including serving as the local contractor for two Workforce Board areas and supporting approximately 20,000 working families and over 1,200 licensed child care programs. Comments today are my own and do not constitute representation of Child Care Associates or workforce boards with whom we contract.

Today, I would like to speak to you as a community member who frequently hears directly from child care providers and working parents. Put simply, they are all frustrated and scared. Coming off the latest legislation session, there was a lot of initial excitement around two big wins: an additional \$100M for the Child Care Services program and a new child care scholarship priority group category for eligible child care workers. With over 90,000 children of working parents feeling stuck on the child care waitlist statewide, including many children of child care providers, it felt like a much-needed lifeline might be coming.

However, with the recent child care performance targets showing a decrease in the number of children served through the Child Care Scholarship program in all 28 board areas, amounting to a nearly 7,000 child decrease in scholarships statewide, parents and providers who previously were growing impatient and fearful are now worried about staying afloat. I understand that the lower performance targets are due to increased participation in Texas Rising Star and an overall increase in rates from the market rate survey, both resulting in greater per-child reimbursement rates. While strong per-child rates are a good thing, the expectations of families and providers had "been relief was on the way" after this legislative session. **Given the extensive period of uncertainty, we strongly encourage TWC to offer timely communication in upcoming weeks to providers to ensure they are aware of the full context impacting board performance targets.** Providers and families should not be left in the dark, waiting for a lifeline that is not going to arrive. I also think it may be difficult for workforce board areas to message this without the timely support and guidance from TWC.

As it relates to the addition of child care workers into the priority group two category for child care scholarships, it is critical that TWC work as swiftly as possible towards implementation. Our team is already receiving calls from child care program directors asking how they can support their staff in accessing their legislatively permitted priority group. We recognize that this will require technical updates to the new TX3C system, as well as process updates at the local board level. We stand ready to assist in any way necessary.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the working families of Texas. We know that as Commissioners you have many responsibilities to carry out each day and are grateful for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,
Kara Waddell
President-CEO, Child Care Associates