



Thriving in a Changing World
Innovation in Workforce Development

Texas Workforce Commission

Workforce Forum Agenda

May 12–13, 2025

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Austin
6505 Interstate Highway 35 North
Austin, Texas 78752
(512) 454-3737

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Workforce Forum will take place beginning at 1:00 p.m. Monday, May 12, 2025, through Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Austin. Workshops have been developed for Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), contractors, Vocational Rehabilitation stakeholders, and TWC staff members, as well as a special audience of public community and technical college staff. The following is the agenda for the Workforce Forum:

Monday, May 12, 2025

11:00 a.m.

Forum Registration

1:00 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Ed Serna, Executive Director, **TWC**

1:15 p.m.

TWC Chairman Remarks

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

1:30 p.m.

Keynote Session

Embracing the NEW Workforce Revolution: Recruit. Retain. Develop.

Andy Masters

Brief Description: We are experiencing a workforce revolution as we emerge from the staffing crisis and Great Resignation. Millions of enlightened employees have spoken. They want CHANGE, and they will only work for organizations that provide such change. Employees want family-friendly flex time, work-from-home and remote-work options, new perks and benefits, and the tools and skills to embrace AI and technological changes in their jobs (such as “upskilling” or “reskilling” opportunities) if their jobs become obsolete. Additionally, employees want this change while working in a positive environment where they can enjoy their jobs and be developed for the future, not overworked and underappreciated.

2:45 p.m.

Break

3:00 p.m.

Commissioner Remarks

Alberto Treviño III, Commissioner Representing Labor, **TWC**

3:15 p.m.

Super Session

Strengthening Workforce Integration Under Wagner-Peyser Final Rule: Strategies for Staffing, Service Delivery, and Partnerships

Shunta Williams, Dawn Cronin, Chaundra Brown, and Horacio Lopez Montes, **TWC**; Louis LeDoux, **Workforce Solutions of Central Texas**; and Russell Tomlin, **Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast**

Brief Description: The Wagner-Peyser Final Rule introduces significant shifts in Texas' workforce service delivery model, presenting both challenges and opportunities for TWC and its partners. This panel examines strategic approaches to strengthening an integrated workforce system while ensuring compliance, operational efficiency, and stakeholder collaboration.

4:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Mary York, Division Director, Workforce Development, **TWC**

5:00 p.m.

Adjourn Day One

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

8:30 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

Phoenix North

Creating Collaborative Solutions: Adult Education and Literacy and Local Workforce Development Board Partnerships

Mahalia Baldini, **TWC**; Rachael Berhe, **Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas**; Jodi Cobler, **Brazos Valley Adult Education Consortium**; and Tiffany Johnson, **Victoria College**

Brief description: Hear from Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grant recipients who manage Title II under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Learn how colocation, co-enrollment, and leveraging case management and specialized grants present opportunities to support performance and enhance customer service. What does a “No Wrong Door” approach look like under core programs? Which services (such as testing, enrollment, and eligibility) need to be aligned to support a seamless model for a workforce system that is customer-centric? Join AEL grant recipients (Boards and other entities) to hear about the models shaping up across Texas.

Phoenix South

Unlock the Power of Your Local Workforce Development Area with Strategies for Innovation

Camea Dukes and Mikayla Fasl, **TWC**; Bertha Milan, Guillermo Bermudez, and Pablo Martinez, **Workforce Solutions for South Texas**

Brief description: This comprehensive strategy delves into the latest trends and best practices for optimizing Board services and driving transformative change within your organization. Elevate Board area engagement. Foster a culture of active participation and meaningful contributions from all staff. Cultivate a culture of innovation. Encourage bold thinking, strategic foresight, and agile decision-making to unlock new opportunities. Strengthen governance and oversight. Provide best practices that align with driving sustainable growth. Develop future-ready Board areas. Equip Boards with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate complex challenges and capitalize on emerging trends.

Phoenix Central

Focusing on Team Development and Performance

Building a High-Performing Team in Workforce Solutions: Collaboration, Communication, and Shared Goals

Darron Fleming, **TWC**

Brief description: This session focuses on developing the key elements of high-performing teams within Texas Workforce Solutions Offices and covers topics such as team building and communication.

Austin

Navigating Barriers to Employment

Melinda Paninski, Tammy Martin, and Charles “Chase” Burgin, **TWC**

Brief description: This session delves into challenges participants encounter in workforce development programs and demonstrates how staff members who understand the full workforce system may enroll participants to help alleviate service barriers. Presenters will also discuss how using the workforce system enhances participant stability and employment opportunities.

Dezavala

Texas Cybersecurity Assessments

Lance Leatherwood and Jeff Peden, **TWC**

Brief description: This session will help attendees better understand what the Texas Cybersecurity Framework (TCF) is, what it is based on, why TWC has required Boards to participate in the TCF every two years, and the expected benefits to the workforce system completing the TCF assessments. For additional context, historical TCF assessment results from the past as well as current, year-to-date results from TCF assessments completed this fiscal year will be provided.

9:45 a.m.

Break

10:00 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

Phoenix North

Connect with Your Adult Education and Literacy Partner for Incumbent Worker Education and Training

Mahalia Baldini, **TWC**; Eduardo Honold, Linda Fehoko, and Ricardo Menchaca, **MAREK Brothers Systems**

Brief description: Hear how Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) can bring value to your workplace. Employer engagement is a cornerstone service for AEL grant recipients and their partners. AEL can offer transformative opportunities for Board Business Services Units or employers seeking to help workers who would benefit from no-cost education and job training. With services such as English as a Second Language, digital literacy, job training, and upskilling, AEL is dedicated to employer partnerships that foster incumbent worker promotions and career advancement. Be inspired by a recent project from the Harris County Department of Education, which culminated in a public “signing day” for AEL participants who completed the program and received job placements, promotions, and job upgrades.

Phoenix South

The “I Do” Dilemma: Navigating the Marriage Between Education and Workforce Development

Mike Mills, Leticia Rodriguez, Heath Tharp, Scott Burkett, and Tiffanie Cawley, **Access for Success**

Brief description: This session will explore the vital connections between public education and workforce development through the lens of a healthy marriage. Participants will gain insights into how mutual support, effective communication, shared goals, adaptability, and a commitment to growth can strengthen collaborations between educators and workforce development professionals.

Phoenix Central

Reemployment Services Similarities and Opportunities

Suzette Robinson, **TWC**; Georges Naufal and Emily Naiser, **Texas A&M University**

Brief description: Over the last two years, the Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute traveled to every local workforce development area across the state (and virtually to three other states) to observe how mandatory reemployment services are delivered. Attend this session to learn why they did it, what they learned, and how TWC plans to use their findings.

Austin

Case Closed: Compliance Made Easy

Melissa Hayman, Cindie Scanlon, and Madison Spradling, **TWC**

Brief description: This session explores common findings in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, Choices, and Noncustodial Parent Choices programs and provides strategic practices to help your local workforce development area with clarification.

Dezavala

From Paper to Pixels

NiQuisha Washington and Vanessa Preston, **Workforce Solutions Borderplex**

Brief description: The transition from paper to digital is not just technological. It is a fundamental shift in how workforce development services are delivered. By embracing digital transformation, Workforce Solutions Offices can significantly improve communication, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery. This workshop provides attendees with practical tips, real-world examples, and a roadmap for navigating this essential transition. Join us for an in-depth discussion about riding the wave of innovation to lead your office into a more efficient, effective future.

11:15 a.m.

Lunch (On Your Own)

12:45 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Phoenix North

Expansion of Texas' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Third-Party Partnership Program

Jennifer Miano and Lisa Medina, **TWC**; John Briscoe and Jimeka Haynes, **Texas Health and Human Services**; Robin Spilman, **Workforce Solutions Capital Area**; Allyson Riojas, **Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend**; and Helena Leday, **Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast**

Brief description: The session provides an overview of the planned expansion of the SNAP E&T Third-Party Partnership (TPP) program that began in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025. Objectives include understanding the basics of the TPP program and its impacts on Boards, hearing from FFY 2025 Board participants, and learning about the potential benefits of the TPP model.

Phoenix South

Tri-Agency Update and Special Projects Report

Kerry Ballast, **TWC**; Emma Gelsinger, **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**; and Cherylynn Jody Moody and Melissa Yoder, **Texas Education Agency**

Brief description: The Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and TWC have been working on exciting Tri-Agency projects that Boards can both participate in and benefit from. Join this session to learn about the Tri-Agency Teacher Apprenticeship framework, the Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) and the critical role of the Regional Conveners, and the upcoming Tri-Agency website revamp.

Phoenix Central

Navigating Texas Workforce Commission Tableau Reporting

Jennifer Palmer-Lee, **TWC**

Brief description: Attendees will gain an understanding of how TWC Tableau reporting can enhance and improve data interpretation through easy-to-understand dashboards and charts. Information Innovation & Insight (I|3) has created a data visualization reporting system by leveraging application data that enables users to manage performance measures and uncover hidden patterns, trends, and insights by simplifying complex data. Participants will gain an understanding of log-in procedures, navigating and filtering reports, and easy-to-use shortcuts.

Austin

Workforce Innovation Through Employer-Led Initiatives

Leslie Cantu, **Toyotetsu Texas**; Adrian Lopez, **Workforce Solutions Alamo**

Brief description: Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) serves as a network of service providers and contractors dedicated to connecting people with job opportunities. Representing taxpayers across 13 counties, WSA plays a key role in workforce development. In 2024, WSA was selected as the hub organization for the Texas Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (TX FAME), which is committed to advancing workforce development initiatives across Texas through employer-led efforts. Its primary mission is to cultivate a highly skilled workforce by engaging both current and future talent through strong partnerships with industry and the community. This collaboration aims to strengthen the manufacturing talent pipeline by integrating WSA's resources and programs with TX FAME's Advanced Manufacturing Technician program, ensuring optimal workforce outcomes and long-term industry success.

Dezavala

Screening Veterans for the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program

Bob Gear, Casey Wade, Samuel Blanks, Ivan Roundtree, and Gualberto Ortiz Rodriguez, **TWC**

Brief description: This session provides the audience with updated information on the new procedures for screening veterans to be referred to TWC's Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program. The session highlights changes in the roles and responsibilities of the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives at the Workforce Solution Offices.

2:00 p.m.

Break

2:15 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Phoenix North

89th Legislative Session Update

Michael C. Britt, **TWC**

Brief Description: Get an update on how the 89th Texas Legislature may impact TWC and the Texas workforce system.

Phoenix South

Unlocking Potential: Empowerment and Knowledge through Apprenticeships

Desi Holmes, **TWC**

Brief description: In this exciting session, learn about the power of apprenticeship, how the U.S. Department of Labor–Registered Apprenticeship and Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs work, and discover resources to fuel career growth. We'll explore the key differences between these programs and highlight funding opportunities to support your journey. Don't miss out—take your apprenticeship game to the next level.

Phoenix Central

How to Prepare for a Monitoring Review: A Cooperative Process Improvement Approach

Mary Millan and Brian Shaw, **TWC**

Brief description: This training provides the Boards, their subrecipients, and other grantees with an understanding of TWC's monitoring process. The Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department will discuss all aspects of preparing for their review, expectations during the review, and post-review responsibilities. The presenters discuss testing tools and how SRM tests fiscal and program attributes.

Austin

Discover Upcoming and Supplemental Labor Market Information Tools

Gabriel Guzman, David Muñoz, and Sarah Juarez, **TWC**

Brief description: Learn about TWC's new Tableau data analytics tools, designed to make it easier for Boards to see what's going on with their regional economy and measure the impact of their programs. This workshop covers the new labor market information dashboards along with Census demographic information and Lightcast's Help Wanted Online database, which helps workforce professionals understand and connect employer needs with local job seekers.

Dezavala

Skills and Data: Building Blocks of Career Pathways

Rich Froeschle, **Texas State Technical College**; Toni Templeton, **University of Houston**; and Erin Doshier, **Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas**

Brief description: This workshop explores the importance of skills in the current labor market, effectively advising students on acquiring skills for upward wage mobility in high-demand careers, and the importance of career and technical education in obtaining postsecondary credentials. Find out how the Heart of Texas region leverages career progression lattices and data to create a seamless, supportive system, helping students transition from high school to postsecondary education to rewarding careers in high-demand industries.

3:30 p.m.

Adjourn Workforce Forum

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special accommodations should contact Kim Bergmann at (512) 463-7903 two (2) working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.