

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

WORKFORCE FORUM **DRAFT** AGENDA

May 11–12, 2026

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 from 1:00 p.m. Monday, May 11, 2026, through 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 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 11, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Forum Registration

1:00 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Steve Pier, Executive Director, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

1:15 p.m.

Chairman Remarks

Joe Esparza, Chairman, Commissioner Representing Employers, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

1:30 p.m.

Keynote Session

Title

Presenter

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

Brief Description:

2:45 p.m.

Break

3:00 p.m.

Commissioner Remarks

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

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

3:15 p.m.

Super Session

Enhancing Our Service for Texans: Introducing “Project No Wrong Door”

Michael Hamilton, Tom McCarty, Shunta Williams, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

“Project No Wrong Door” is a strategic initiative aimed at fundamentally transforming and improving the customer experience with TWC. The core vision is to create a unified, seamless, and human-centric service delivery model. This means ensuring that no matter how a customer contacts us, they’ve come to the “right place.”

4:30 p.m.

Commissioner Remarks

Brent Connett, Commissioner Representing the Public, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

4:45 p.m.

Closing Remarks

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

Location: **Phoenix Ballroom**

5:00 p.m.

Adjourn Day One

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

8:30 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

TWC Performance Reporting and Virtual OneStop

Athena Burton, Rachel Slack, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Central**

Have you ever wondered why the reports produced by TWC and Virtual OneStop (VOS) do not always agree? This presentation will cover key differences between performance reporting from TWC and VOS along with a timeline of how we intend to align TWC performance reporting with the reporting in VOS. This session will cover the latest enhancements to TWC's performance reporting and the roadmap for future enhancements.

Agricultural Recruitment System: Fill Ag Jobs and Connect Texans

Russell Hunter, Horacio Lopez Montes, **TWC**

Location: **Dezavala Room**

Boost your employer services. Build capacity with the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to fill local agriculture positions and connect Texans with premium statewide and national opportunities such as paid travel/housing, guaranteed work, and more. Through real-world scenarios, see the ARS in action and gain skills to overcome labor shortages. Contribute, learn, and elevate your impact.

Evaluating Texas Industry Credentials: A Collaborative Review of Industry-Based Certifications

Lorena Knight, Christine Long, **TWC**

Location: **Austin Room**

Learn about TWC's Industry-Based Certification (IBC) Advisory Council and its work developing an annual inventory of IBCs. This session will define the inventory development process, the council's responsibilities, how to propose new credentials, and will address new legal requirements to solicit feedback from key stakeholders (including **you**). This collaborative session will allow you to provide insights into the inventory, share surveys with industry leaders in the field, and ensure Texas credentials meet employer needs.

9:45 a.m.

Break

10:00 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

Best Practices for Local Child Care Committees

Nicole Allen, Allison Wilson, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Central**

Learn best practices for establishing and sustaining child care committees in your local workforce development area from Local Workforce Development Board (Board) and TWC child care staff. Topics include leveraging data and committee member feedback to enhance the Child Care Services program impact, drive local quality improvement, and foster communication among Boards, Board child care contractors, and the child care sector. Leave the session with practical tools for engagement and lasting success.

From Trade to Entrepreneur: Building Small Businesses Successfully

Diane Cook, **Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area**; Shannon Black, **SCORE Austin**

Location: **Phoenix North**

Professionals attending this workshop will learn how to design and implement a trades-focused entrepreneurship initiative that helps skilled workers transition to business ownership. Participants will leave with a replicable program framework, including a launch event model, 12-week entrepreneurship curriculum outline, mentorship structure,

Advance Draft

earn-and-learn integration strategies, measurable outcome targets, and scalability tools to support small business creation, job growth, and regional economic impact.

11:15 a.m.

Lunch (on your own)

12:45 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Big Interview AI

Alexis Peralta, Suzette Robinson, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix Central**

Brief description: TBD

Libraries as Partners for Expanding Workforce Opportunity

Emily Hersh, **Texas State Library and Archives Commission**

Location: **Phoenix North**

Every day, Texas Workforce Solutions connects people to opportunities, but many job seekers still face barriers to access. They don't know where to go, or they're hesitant to walk into a Workforce Solutions Office for the first time. Public libraries already serve these individuals daily. They're trusted, accessible, and embedded in the community. Come learn about the workforce development resources offered at libraries and hear about successful workforce solutions/library collaborations that make opportunities easier to reach.

Working with Redeploying Texas Military Forces Service Members and an Update to the Veterans Readiness and Employment Referral Process

Bob Gear, Gabriel Lopez, **TWC**

Location: **Dezavala Room**

Learn best practices working with Texas Military Forces service members as they redeploy from their various missions, including program briefings, career expos, and benefit resource fairs. Hear about the new state workforce system's Veterans Readiness and Employment referral process.

Unlocking Economic Success: Expanding Partnerships for Community Impact

Rachael Berhe, **Greater Dallas Workforce Development Board**; Veronica Moore, **TWC**

Location: **Austin Room**

Join TWC Adult Education and Literacy, the Greater Dallas Workforce Development Board, and their dedicated local partners for a dynamic session that aligns with the 2026 Workforce Forum's priority of impact and highlights strategic partnerships that are instrumental in meeting and expanding the economic needs of Texans. This engaging session will provide actionable insights into leveraging critical resources and alliances, uncovering "hidden treasures" within local communities to drive positive change and measurable outcomes.

2:00 p.m.

Break

2:15 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Advancing Intergenerational Economic Mobility Through Workforce Innovation

LaToya Casimere, Juliet Stipeche, **Gulf Coast Workforce Board**

Location: **Phoenix Central**

How can workforce systems advance intergenerational economic mobility? The Gulf Coast Workforce Board identified regional IT and healthcare talent gaps and designed a two-generation model that strengthens parents' earnings while accelerating children's educational outcomes. Learn how they aligned employer partnerships; dual enrollment across Choices, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and measurable impact metrics including credentials, placements, and family stability. Gain a scalable framework to drive lasting economic mobility in your own community.

Maximize Skills Development Fund Impact: Boards, Grants, and Collaboration

Kristie Caviness, **TWC**

Location: **Phoenix South**

Unlock community potential by strategically using the Skills Development Fund. This session equips contract staff to build impactful employer partnerships, identify in-

demand industries, and use grant funds to address community needs. Maximize grant dollars for lasting economic impact.

Building Brand Awareness from the Ground Up

Jennifer Purcell, Connie Rash, Brenda Saldana, **Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas**

Location: **Dezavala Room**

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas built a small, yet mighty communications team that elevated an existing brand that lacked awareness and understanding. Through strategic communications, they developed brand guidelines, relaunched their website, expanded their social media presence, built an earned media program, and launched an annual report. In one year, they doubled daily website visits and increased their social following by 40 percent. Participants will learn about their approach, understand challenges they overcame, and come away with templates and best practices.

3:30 p.m.

Adjourn Workforce Forum

Request Accommodations

Requests may be made during the registration process for persons who need auxiliary aids, services, or special accommodations. Please register your request **at least two weeks prior to the meeting** so appropriate arrangements can be made.