

ISSUE 8 | MAY 2026

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD NEWSLETTER



Workforce Solutions Podcast: A New Way to Stay Connected

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast has launched a new podcast series bringing workforce conversations directly to the community. Hosted by Executive Director Juliet Stipeche, the podcast takes an in-depth look at the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the Gulf Coast workforce - and the programs and partnerships working to address them.

The first episode features Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Communications Committee Chair Doug Karr, and ABC13's Nick Natario in a conversation about how the workforce system operates, how career pathways are changing, and why connecting people to opportunity matters for the region's future.

The second episode tackles one of the region's most pressing challenges: the growing gap between available jobs and skilled talent. Guests discuss how registered apprenticeships and other workforce strategies are helping employers respond to hiring shortages and build a stronger talent pipeline.

"This podcast is one more way we can bridge the gap between people who are ready to work and employers who are ready to hire," said Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Upcoming episodes will explore topics including Economic Mobility; Education, Wages, and Opportunity; Workforce Participation and Career Advancement; Employer Engagement Services; and Workforce Solutions services available in Spanish.

Listen to the Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Podcast and stay connected to conversations shaping the future of work across the region:



[YouTube](#)



[Spotify](#)



[Apple Podcasts](#)

Read more:

[Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Launches New Podcast](#)

[Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Episode 2 New Available](#)

Success Story: Rachel Hohman



Rachel Hohman was preparing to begin nursing school when the financial reality of continuing her education began to set in. After not qualifying for financial aid through FAFSA and falling short on scholarships, she found herself facing the same uncertainty many students experience when trying to take the next step.

At the time, Rachel was 22 years old and trying to figure out how she would pay for her education. During an orientation at Alvin Community College, representatives from WFS spoke to students about available training programs. Rachel decided to apply, and about a week later, she received the call that changed everything.

Workforce Solutions approved Rachel for assistance and covered the full cost of her tuition. The support extended beyond tuition alone, helping cover uniforms, fees and transportation costs.

“They paid for every cent of my tuition,” Rachel said. “I remember just bawling my eyes out. It was the coolest experience in the world.”

For Rachel, the impact went far beyond financial assistance. The support and encouragement she received throughout the program helped ease the stress and uncertainty that often comes with balancing school, finances, and the demands of education.

“They were always there for me in any way, shape, or form that I needed,” she said.

“They were checking in on you and making sure you felt good within your program and about your experience.”

The WFS staff who worked with Rachel remember her determination, professionalism, and drive throughout the process.

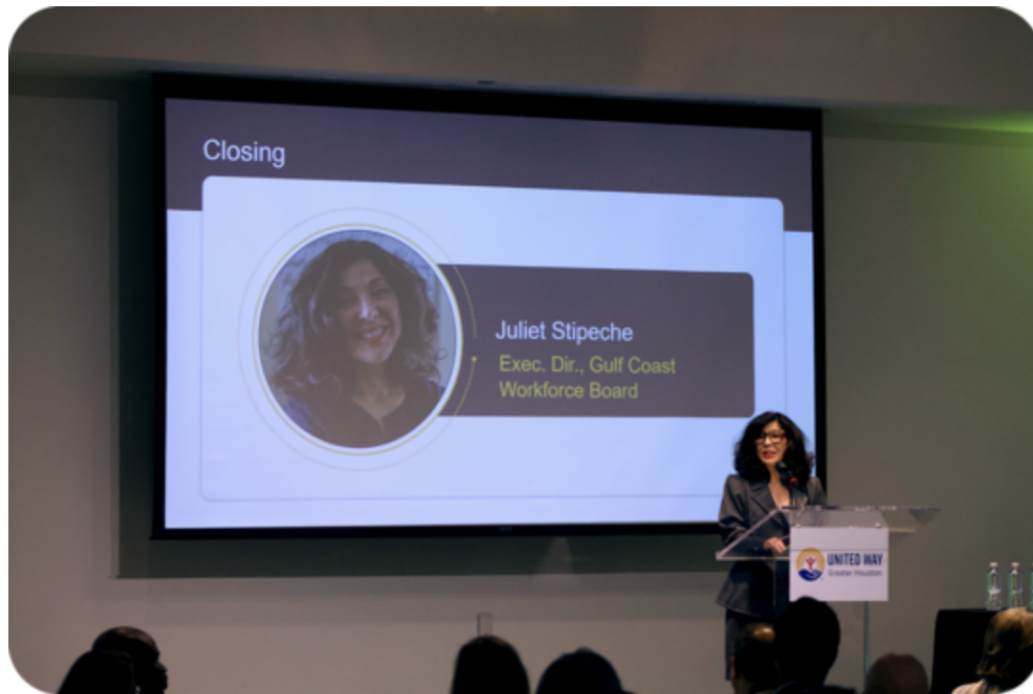
“One thing I admired a lot about Rachel was her enthusiasm, her energy, her professionalism, and her drive,” said one WFS team member.

“I knew she was ready for the next step.”

Today, Rachel works as a Nursing Support Specialist at Alvin Community College, helping students pursuing the same career path she once worked toward herself. Rachel says WFS gave her the opportunity to focus on learning, complete her nursing program, and begin a meaningful career.

“It changed my life,” she said. “I didn’t know how I was going to get through school. To Workforce Solutions, I will be eternally grateful.”

Houston Economic Mobility Summit



The Houston Economic Mobility Summit, hosted in partnership with United Way of Greater Houston, convened cross-sector leaders, workforce professionals, and community partners for important conversations about economic opportunity and long-term mobility across the Gulf Coast region.

Held on May 11, the summit focused on collaboration and discussion about the challenges and opportunities Houston is facing. Attendees were presented economic and educational data and discussed how coordinated efforts can help strengthen pathways to opportunity for individuals and families across the region.

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, was the closing speaker and talked about the critical importance of building stronger workforce systems and expanding access to opportunity across Houston. Her remarks emphasized the need for collaboration and intentional action to support economic mobility in the region.

“We don’t need to dream bigger. We need to build better.” She also highlighted the importance of strengthening systems that connect people to opportunity: “People in Houston are not lacking potential. Our system is lacking connection.”

Another message that resonated strongly with attendees focused on the importance of building systems that support long-term success for workers and families: “The people are here. The talent is here. The willingness is here. The need is here. What’s missing is the architecture.”

Table discussions explored the interconnected challenges impacting workforce and economic mobility, including transportation, childcare, housing, and workforce access. The event reinforced the importance of collaboration among employers, workforce organizations, educators, and community leaders. “We will not ask how many people we served. We will ask how many people advanced,” said Stipeche, underscoring the importance of measuring progress through long-term advancement and opportunity.

The summit reinforced a shared understanding that expanding economic mobility across Houston will require stronger collaboration, better-connected systems, and long-term investment in people and communities.



Texas Workforce Commission's 2026 Workforce Forum

Unlocking Economic Success: Expanding Partnerships for Community Impact

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast participated in the Texas Workforce Commission's 2026 Workforce Forum on May 12, joining workforce leaders from across the state for conversations focused on economic mobility, workforce innovation, and strengthening long-term outcomes for Texas families.

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, and LaToya Casimere, Manager of Youth Services, led a session on Advancing Intergenerational Economic Mobility, addressing the importance of building coordinated, family-centered workforce systems.

The presentation highlighted the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's MultiGen approach, which emphasizes aligning workforce training, education, supportive services, and employer partnerships to help families achieve long-term economic stability. The session also examined the barriers many families face, including childcare, transportation, housing costs, and workforce access, while emphasizing the importance of system alignment and coordinated support services.

The discussion also connected directly to Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast's broader strategic priorities around economic mobility, workforce participation, and creating stronger pathways to opportunity across the region.



Fleet Week VetConnect Career Exploration Event

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast and Combined Arms, a veteran-focused nonprofit supporting service members and military families, brought together employers, training partners, and members of the military community for the Fleet Week VetConnect Career Exploration Event at San Jacinto College on April 20, creating direct connections between transitioning service members, veterans, military spouses, and career opportunities across the Houston region. More than 50 employers and organizations participated in the event, representing industries including energy, healthcare, construction, transportation, and public service. Throughout the day, attendees connected directly with recruiters, explored training and career pathways, and accessed workforce resources focused on supporting successful transitions into civilian careers.

The event reflected a broader regional effort to strengthen career opportunities and employer connections for service members, veterans, and military spouses as they prepare for the next stage of their professional journeys.

Partner Spotlights



Gulf Coast Workforce Board Member Mia Garcia

Meet Mia Garcia, a Houston native and Gulf Coast Workforce Board member dedicated to supporting veterans as they transition into civilian careers.

With more than a decade of experience serving veterans, she has built her career around connecting transitioning service members with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed.

That commitment is what drew her to the Board. "The leadership and dedication to ensuring communities have access to the tools they need to thrive is what sets this Board apart."

As a board member, she brings a firsthand perspective on workforce access and opportunity for veterans navigating career transitions, and supports initiatives serving communities across all 13 counties in the Gulf Coast region.

Outside of her professional work, Mia stays busy with her two young children and a passion for service that shows no signs of slowing down.



Nick Natario, ABC13 Houston

For the past six years, ABC13 reporter Nick Natario has partnered with Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast to help expand public awareness of hiring events, workforce initiatives, and career opportunities throughout the Houston region. As part of the partnership, Nick hosts a monthly "Who's Hiring" segment highlighting job opportunities and employers across the Gulf Coast.

The partnership became especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Workforce Solutions and ABC13 collaborated on virtual hiring events and coverage aimed at helping residents navigate layoffs, career transitions, and rapidly changing hiring conditions.

Since then, Nick's reporting has continued to spotlight workforce challenges and opportunities throughout the Gulf Coast, including hiring events, youth initiatives, apprenticeship programs, and employer needs in high-demand industries.

The collaboration has strengthened community awareness of Workforce Solutions services while giving employers and partners an additional platform to reach job seekers across the region.

Labor Market Information: March 2026 Snapshot

Houston-area employment continued to trend upward in March, with total nonfarm employment reaching 3,481,100 jobs - an increase of 57,400 jobs over the year, according to the latest Houston Area Employment Situation Summary.

The March report also reflects steady momentum from the start of the year. In January, the region added 29,700 jobs over the year, while February showed stronger annual growth at 44,200 jobs. March built on that trajectory, with notable gains in Construction, Government, and Private Education and Health Services, driven by large-scale projects, healthcare demand, and regional population growth.

At the same time, hiring conditions remain more measured than the rapid expansion seen during the post-pandemic recovery period. Houston's labor market has shifted into what economists describe as a "low-hire, low-fire" environment - employers are still hiring, but at a slower and more sustainable pace than in previous years.

Employers are also adapting to workforce demands driven by technology and AI, with a growing emphasis on digital fluency, adaptability, and industry-specific technical skills as hiring needs continue to evolve across the region.

[View full labor market data](#)

Calendar: Upcoming Events


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METRO Live, Work & Ride Job Fair

Getting to work should not be the reason someone misses out on an opportunity.

The Live, Work & Ride Job Fair connects job seekers with employers located along METRO-accessible routes across Houston, helping remove transportation barriers that can often make employment difficult to access or maintain.

The event will feature more than 40 employers whose workplaces are accessible using public transportation, creating more direct connections between where people live and where jobs are located. Job seekers will also have the opportunity to learn more about available workforce resources and support services.

 The Women's Home – Mabee Whole Life Service Center | 1838 Johanna Dr., Houston, TX 77055

 Thursday, May 21, 2026

 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

 Accessible via METRO routes. 26 Long Point, Cavalcade 58, Hammerly 85, Antoine / Washington.

[Register and learn more](#)


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Cypress Assistance Ministries Workforce Support Sessions Pop-Up

WFS-GC will host a pop-up workforce support session at Cypress Assistance Ministries focused on helping job seekers strengthen their job readiness skills and connect with employment opportunities.

The session will include support with resumes, job preferences, salary and benefits discussions, and identifying local job leads. Participants will also receive guidance on career preparation and how to navigate today's job market.

 Cypress Assistance Ministries | 12930 Cypress North Houston Rd., Cypress, TX 77429

 Tuesday, May 26, 2026

 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.


[Learn more](#)


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Get Ready for Your Next Career Move

Whether preparing for a first job, changing careers, or returning to the workforce, a strong resume can make all the difference.

This interactive workshop is designed to help participants build polished, professional resumes that clearly highlight their skills, experience, and accomplishments. Attendees will also receive practical guidance on tailoring resumes for specific industries and improving overall job search readiness.

 Gulf Coast Community Services Association, Inc. | 9320 Kirby Dr., Houston, TX 77054

 Wednesday, May 27, 2026

 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

[Register to attend](#)

Stay Connected to Jobs and Career Resources



Stay connected with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWFB) for job opportunities, career resources, and workforce updates across 13 counties in the Texas Gulf Coast region.

Whether you're a job seeker or employer, the app provides the tools and updates you need.

With the app, you can:

- Find local jobs
- Access training programs
- Get career resources
- Stay connected on the go

Download the Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions App



Visit [Workforce Solutions News website](#) for the latest stories, events, and regional updates.



Contact Information

Main Career Office Line: 713-627-3200

Childcare Support: 713-334-5980 / Text: 346-249-7700

Email: jobs@wrksolutions.com

WorkInTexas Job Matching: WorkInTexas.com

