

# Texas Workforce Commission

## Adult Education and Literacy



## Fall Institute 2020

### Handout

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Day 1, Session 5

## COVID Connections: Houston Community College, Gallery Furniture, and WorkTexas

Presenters: Dr. Christina Robinson, [Christina.robinson@hccs.edu](mailto:Christina.robinson@hccs.edu)

Vanessa Ramirez,

Session Description: HCC and WorkTexas will discuss how they partnered together to provide the community with a new trade school during COVID which is now impacting a high-risk population in Houston's inner city. In this

session, the audience will learn how to approach community leaders, how to advocate with local employers, and how to identify critical pathways for partner success.

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## Objectives

- The Partnership Approach
- Advocating with Employers
- Identifying Critical Pathways

## Introductions

Dr. Christina Robinson

Executive Director, Adult Education & Literacy Houston Community College

**HCC:** 58,276 students across Houston (29 locations)

**Funding:** 5m in grant funding

**Students:** over 7000 AEL students across system

**Programs:** HSE, ESL, ESLP, TSI BOOTCAMP, CAREER4U ACADEMY

**Member:**

- TX Peer Mentor Network
- City of Houston Adult Education Advisory Board

**Funding:**

- Houston Galveston Area Council Consortium
- Accelerate Texas

**Vanessa Ramirez**

Co-Founder & Board Chair of WorkTexas

**Past:** Chief Operating Officer and Chief Program Officer at Ser Jobs

The focus of WorkTexas is Applications vs. Slots Industry.

**History**

Career4U Academy launched 2018. The academy houses 5 core program clusters.

**5 academy clusters:**

- Business technology
- Construction management
- Information technology
- Healthcare
- Transportation

Seeking employment partners for fully integrated credit and non-credit programs across Houston, currently 500+ students. These programs serves

as the model for IET programs for HCC. In 2019, we began work with Gallery Furniture to launch Career4U Academy onsite with a core of specific programs.

## WorkTexas

- Mattress Mack's vision
- The WorkTexas story: furniture store with a trade school inside, becomes a one-stop community center that happens to sell furniture.

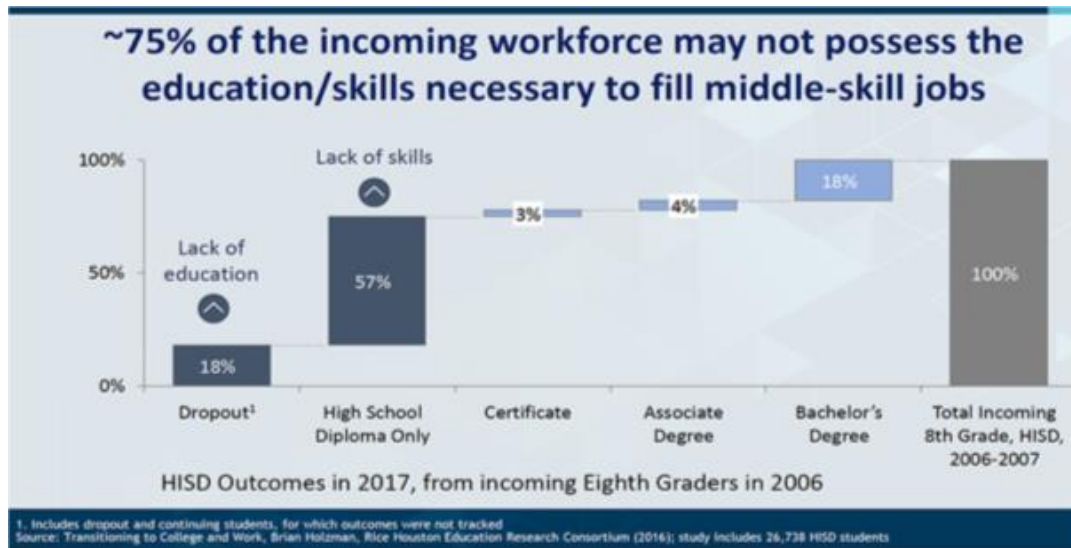
## The Approach

### Two Gap Challenge

- **Skills Gap:** People lack the skills they need for the Careers the industry offers.
- **People Gap:** Employers cannot find the workers they need, when and where they need them.

According to the Greater Houston Partnership and Upskill Houston, the two major challenges in Houston is a Skill Gap, where people lack the skills they need for the Careers the industry offers and the People Gap where employers cannot find the workers they need when and where they need them.

## Education/Skills Needed



According to Rice Houston Education Research and a study that includes 26,738 HISD students, 18% of those drop out and 57% of these students will lack the necessary skills for a high need job. Covid-19 has increased this need where more and more students have disappeared from the system and are needed more than ever before. As of August 10, 2020, 7600 students were unable to be located according to HISD Superintendent Lathan said since the district switched to virtual learning in March.

## COVID Connections

### **COVID was the perfect time: Partnership and Location was critical**

The total population of the Acres Homes Super Neighborhood was 27,831 during 2012. The majority of the residents were non-Hispanic Blacks (71%) followed by Hispanics (23%). Nearly two-fifths (39%) had an annual household income less than \$25,000 with a median income of \$39,315. ([www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov))

## Be the Glue

- Partner with a successful training partner (Thank you, HCC!)
- Find the unemployed and/or underemployed community members and connect them to:
  - Support services
  - Job readiness training
  - Financial coaching
  - Employment placement and retention services

## Advocacy

### Finding Partners

- Space
- Employers
- Technology
- Tools
- Braided Funding

In order to launch a project like Adult Trade School it was critical to find partners that could provide specific items needed for students to be successful. Space, Employers, Technology, Tools, and Braiding funding were all critical to success. But more importantly, they needed to be free resources.

### New Space

- Dual Use
- High School
- Adult Trade School



Here is a picture of Gallery Furniture's front entrance. Students enter through her for both the High school and the Adult Trade School. Pictured here is one of the Adult Trade School Classrooms. These classrooms were set up to encourage great student interaction while maintaining social distancing. Currently, the school is operating 6 days a week. Morning classes are dual credit and evening classes are Adult Trade School.



## Employment Partners

In order to launch Adult Trade School, we knew that employment partners were critical. As you will see we have Construction partners like S&B Construction, Linbeck Construction and MOC Central. For our electrical programs we have Trio Electric and for Diesel we have both Kinsel Motors and Here are just a few of the partners making Adult Trade School operation a reality. MOC Central. Element Architects – provided pro bono architectural work to convert 12,000 square feet of Gallery Furniture showroom space into a high school and CTE shop area. XVAND is providing pro bono IT Support to set up the job center and trade school intake center. Also, Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation (CMEF) – educational affiliate of ABC Greater Houston, and a non-profit 501 (c3) solely devoted to servicing the workforce development needs of the contractor community.

## Technology

- Gallery Job Center Relocated
- Mock Interviews
- Testing
- Enrollment
- Applications
- Contextualized Learning

Gallery Furniture was able to let HCC leverage to relocation of their Job Intake Center from Fort Bend. With it came all of the computers and technology for the programs. This allowed HCC to complete online enrollment, testing, and classes virtually until the site officially opened.

## Braiding Funding

- WIOA
- Gallery
- TPEG
- Accelerate Texas
- Ability to Benefit
- WorkTexas
- HCC Foundation
- Employer Grants

## Programmatic Advocacy

In reviewing programs, we took Career4U Academy programs and added to them. This took development to ensure if the program was not offered on-site at Gallery, they can also attend an HCC Campus. Hence, the programs were critical to ensure meeting all requirements. On-site programs are non-credit programs only.

## Home Builders Institute

What students will learn?

1. Carpentry
2. Electrical
3. Plumbing
4. Masonry
5. Landscaping
6. Painting and Finishing

## 7. Weatherization

COVID provided the perfect opportunity to launch the Homebuilder's Institute. This featured program housed at Gallery now offers students an opportunity to get 7 key skills. Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing, Masonry, Landscaping, Painting & Finishing, and Weatherization.

### Program Credentials

- HCC certificate of completion in home building construction
- Home builders institute pre-apprenticeship certificate
- Recognized department of labor credential

Students who attend Adult Trade School also will receive an HCC Certificate in Homebuilding Construction under our Construction Engineering Tech program as well as enter in the HBI Pre-Apprentice programs ultimately leading to a credential.

## Identifying Critical Pathways

### Focus Areas

- Formalizing employer engagement
  - Employer-informed training offerings
  - Employers as training site hosts
  - Employers as hands on experience hosts
- Retaining students in jobs
  - Provide ongoing soft & occupational skills training
  - employer partnerships
  - Ongoing support services
- Wage increases
  - Upskilling students

## Promise to Pathway – One Stop Solution

- College
- HS Diploma
- Contextualized Learning
- Testing
- Financial
- Mental Health
- Healthcare
- Daycare
- Food
- Legal Services
- Coaching
- Employment

## What's not on the list?

- College
- Contextualized Learning
- Testing
- Financial
- Mental Health
- Healthcare
- Daycare
- Food
- Legal Services
- Coaching
- Employment