



A System to Meet the Needs of Our Region

OUR CORE VALUES

INNOVATION

We Drive Creative Solutions.

INCLUSIVITY

We Value Every Voice.

EXCELLENCE

We Aim for Exceptional Results.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We Honor Our Commitments.

CONNECTION

We are Committed to the Community We Serve.

COLLABORATION

We Achieve More Together.

FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Welcome to our final newsletter of 2025. This year has been one of progress, partnership, and preparation for the future. In this issue, we reflect on key milestones from across the region - from strengthening apprenticeships and talent pipelines, to expanding Hiring Gulf Coast Youth, to launching tools that enhance access to services.

You'll also find details on new ways to stay connected, our upcoming events and initiatives for 2026, and continued efforts to support families, learners, and employers with high-quality information and resources.

We are extremely proud of our efforts this past year and excited for the road ahead.

Juliet Stipeche



MISSION

We help employers meet their workforce needs and individuals build careers so both can compete in the global economy.

VISION

To strengthen business and industry, drive the economic growth of our region, and create thriving, inclusive communities where everyone has opportunities to earn, learn, and prosper.



Every so often, a system reaches a crossroads where it must decide whether to evolve or remain defined by inertia. Last year, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board created a new strategic plan, calling for transformation and greater community connection.

In 2025, we committed to becoming the regional engine of economic mobility in the Gulf Coast, not just a connector of jobs, not just a service provider but a system capable of changing lives across 13 counties at scale, with intention, and with measurable outcomes.

We pushed past comfort. We rewired old structures. We created new advisory councils, new tools, new partnerships, and a new culture. We stepped into excellence, not as an aspiration, but as an operational expectation.

Most importantly, we leaned into a truth supported by research: where you grow up shapes your future unless systems intervene. And in 2025, we built the foundation of a workforce ecosystem that prioritizes upward economic mobility, family stability, and generational opportunity.

This was the year we shifted from maintaining a system to transforming it.

In 2025, we didn't just implement changes; we changed the trajectory of our system based on the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's new strategic plan. We built the architecture of a workforce ecosystem capable of expanding opportunity, strengthening families, supporting employers, and reshaping the economic landscape of the Gulf Coast.

In 2026, we will rise even higher, deepening our impact, expanding our reach and leading with courage, purpose, and an unwavering belief in our residents and employers.

With gratitude and determination,

Juliet Stipeche



Hiring Red, White, and You!

The 14th Annual Hiring Red, White & You! job fair on November 10 brought together more than 100 employers and Veteran Service Organizations at NRG Arena, offering veterans and their families direct access to quality career opportunities across the Gulf Coast.

Supported by partners including the Texas Veterans Network, Combined Arms, and the VA, the event saw strong turnout, steady engagement, and overwhelmingly positive feedback.

This year's success reinforced Workforce Solutions' commitment to serving those who have served and its role as a leading convener for veteran-focused workforce initiatives.



Teacher Apprenticeships

In November, the Workforce Solutions Board Career Pathways Teacher Apprenticeships team proudly hosted an education panel at the Houston City College Apprenticeship Conference.

The discussion featured leaders from Aldine ISD and the University of Houston–Downtown, who shared valuable insights on advancing teacher apprenticeships and strengthening career pathways.



Apprenticeships and Talent Pipelines

We launched Apprenticeships Work! and expanded Registered Apprenticeships, Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeships (TIRAs), and pre-apprenticeships across priority industries: healthcare, construction, manufacturing, IT, logistics, education, maritime, and more. Apprenticeship is now a core mobility strategy, not a niche program.

Across our region, we are focused on a community where:

- Workers are earning while learning.
- Employers are gaining loyal, skilled talent.
- Communities are strengthening long-term opportunity pipelines.



Hiring Gulf Coast Youth

We celebrated 10 years of Paving the Pathways and delivered a record number of internships and paid work experiences through Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGKY) and Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL).

These programs do not just expose young people to work; they open doors to future earnings, independence, and networks. Mobility begins early, and we are leading this work.

Complete Guide of Services

This year, we introduced the Complete Guide of Services - a streamlined, easy-to-use reference that brings together every Workforce Solutions offering in one place. Designed for job seekers, employers, and our service providers, the guide provides clear program overviews, regionwide services at a glance, and direct links to key tools and contacts.

More than a catalog, it reflects the full breadth of what we deliver across all 13 counties: support for families, pathways for young people, upskilling options for workers, and resources that help businesses grow. By putting our entire service ecosystem into one accessible document, we've made it easier than ever for our community to understand, navigate, and benefit from the opportunities available through the Workforce System.



Ways to Connect

Social Media



Visit our [official LinkedIn page](#) to explore updates on workforce trends, employer-service highlights and region-wide program spotlights. It's a great way for employers, partners, and job-seekers to stay connected to what's happening across the Gulf Coast workforce community.



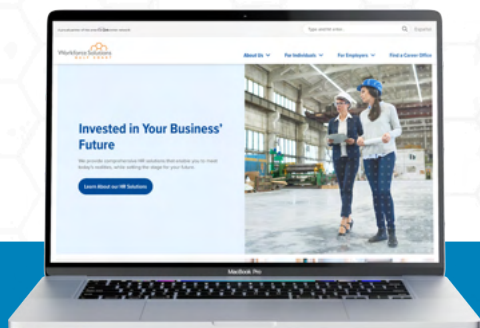
On our [YouTube channel](#) you'll find helpful videos showcasing our services, success stories, and guidance on job search tools - perfect for anyone looking for a deeper dive into what we offer.



Our [Facebook feed](#) shares real stories from clients and partners, updates on hiring events and resources, and community news - a good place to see workforce impact across the region.



[Follow us on Instagram](#) for engaging visuals and short-form highlights of hiring events, training opportunities, and member stories that bring our mission and services to life in a relatable, day-to-day way.



New Website!

Workforce Solutions will launch a new, improved website expected to arrive in January 2026 - designed to better serve job seekers, employers, and partners across the Gulf Coast. The refreshed site offers clearer navigation, easier access to programs and services, and timely workforce news, updates, and resources.

With a more intuitive design and regularly updated content, the new website will make it easier for the community to stay informed and connected to workforce information, opportunities, and services.



Workforce Solutions News

The Workforce Solutions News website is your go-to source for timely updates, insights, and resources related to the Gulf Coast workforce ecosystem. From in-depth articles on labor market trends and strategic investments to practical "how-to" guides and job seeker resources, it keeps community members, employers, and partners informed and empowered with the knowledge they need to navigate jobs, training, and economic opportunities across the region.

The Vision Ahead: A Region That Works as One

As we look toward 2026, our strength comes from acting as one region. Workforce Solutions–Gulf Coast now operates through three service regions (North, East, and West) working together as a unified system to better serve our communities and employers. At the center of this work is the Regional Operations & Coordination Council (ROCC), which serves as an advisory council of our service providers.

The ROCC creates a structured space for providers to collaborate with Board staff, share operational insight, and share best practices on how Board strategy is carried out across the system. Through this council, we are aligning operations, standardizing workflows, sharing data, and identifying challenges early, so customers experience consistent, high-quality service no matter where they enter the system.

By strengthening communication and coordination, the ROCC helps move us away from siloed approaches and toward collective problem-solving and shared accountability. It ensures that decisions are informed by frontline experience and implementation reflects both regional priorities and community needs.

With this foundation in place, the Gulf Coast is positioned to be a national example of a modern workforce system: agile, coordinated, data-informed, employer-centered, accessible, and forward-looking. We are building a workforce system ready for tomorrow's economy, and we will get there, as one Board, one team, and one region.

We have struggled with inconsistency and siloed decision-making, not anymore. Today, the ROCC is the engine translating Board strategy into daily action. This is what mature systems do. This is what our system does.



Monthly Jobs Report



Houston added 13,800 jobs in September, led by gains in Government, Private Education & Health Services, and Construction. Declines in Leisure & Hospitality, Trade, Transportation & Utilities, and Professional & Business Services offset some of that growth.

The regional unemployment rate improved to 4.8%, signaling steady labor market stabilization.

Quarterly Trends

This quarter's labor market reflects a region balancing steady employment with moderating growth. While hiring has slowed from last year's pace, overall employment remains above 2024 levels, and demand continues in key sectors such as healthcare, government, and construction. Employers are adjusting to shifting industry needs amid a more cautious hiring environment.

The Workforce Solutions Index (WSI) registered 3.50 in September, signaling a labor market that remains competitive but increasingly balanced, with more job seekers relative to available postings. As the region moves into the next quarter, Houston's outlook points to continued job growth at a measured pace, particularly in high-skill and service-driven industries.

Demographic Updates



Houston's labor market continues to be supported by strong population growth and a broad, diverse workforce. Ongoing growth across the region has sustained demand in education, healthcare, retail, and service industries, reinforcing long-term economic resilience even as hiring activity moderates.

Economic Insights Video

Workforce Solutions Executive Director Juliet Stipeche and Economist Parker Harvey discuss how real-time data is shaping smarter investments in talent across the Gulf Coast. From healthcare to clean tech, the conversation explores how labor market insights help align training with economic goals—and why employer input is critical. It's a must-watch for businesses navigating today's workforce challenges.



[Click here to watch the video](#)

A Special Thank You

Thank you to the members of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, board staff, service providers, and community partners for a year of meaningful work and collaboration.

Check out the [Workforce Solutions: A Year in Review 2025](#) video on YouTube!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2026!

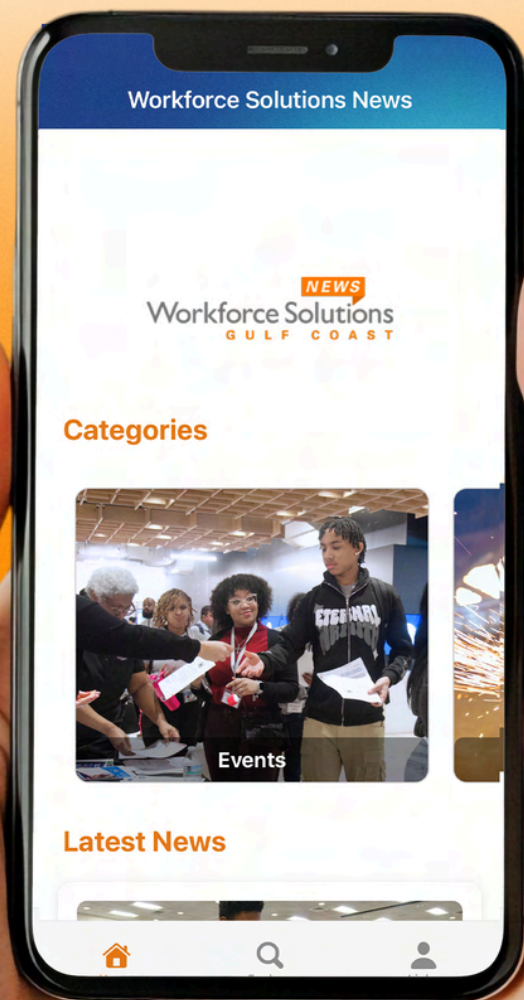




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