

# **Texas Future-Ready Workforce Initiative**

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## SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas has always been built by people who know how to work, how to learn, and how to push forward when challenges stand in the way. Our state grows because Texans grow. Families move here because they believe Texas offers their children a future full of opportunity. Businesses come here because they know Texans are capable, resilient, and ready to take on any job that needs to be done. But our workforce system has not kept pace with the size, speed, and demands of a rapidly changing Texas. Students graduate without the skills they need. Teachers are stretched thin. Employers cannot find the workers required to keep our economy strong. And families are left wondering why so many young Texans struggle to find meaningful careers in a state full of open jobs.

The Texas Future Ready Workforce Initiative is built to fix that gap. It provides a clear, practical, real-world path for every student, not just the ones pursuing a university degree. It strengthens our schools without replacing them. It supports teachers without adding burdens. It gives parents confidence that their children will graduate with real skills they can use on day one. It connects students to local employers, industry training, apprenticeships, and certifications while still protecting the integrity of academic learning. A child in a rural town, a freshman in a big-city high school, or a homeschool student in a small community should all have access to the same opportunities. This initiative makes that possible.

We accomplish this by building a Texas centered system that follows the needs of our people and our economy. Regional Skills Hubs allow districts to share resources they could never afford alone. Employers help design the training they need instead of complaining that students are unprepared. Students gain hands-on experience so they can build confidence, choose their own path, and understand their strengths before they graduate. Teachers remain focused on instruction while trainers and industry partners support the technical programs that belong in the workplace. Instead of forcing students into early career tracks, this plan gives them more freedom to explore their options without losing academic grounding.

A future ready workforce is not a luxury. It is the foundation of everything Texas wants to accomplish. Our hospitals need nurses and medical technicians. Our rural towns need skilled tradespeople. Our agriculture industry needs young Texans prepared to continue the work that feeds our state. Our tech sector, manufacturing corridors, refineries, and small businesses all need people who are trained, confident, and capable. If we fail to prepare this next generation, Texas will fall behind. This initiative prevents that. It gives our young people the tools to succeed and gives employers the workforce they have been asking for.

Texas has always handled challenges with strength and determination. This initiative follows the same approach. It respects local control, protects parents' rights, supports teachers, expands opportunity, and keeps every decision inside the state. It strengthens our economy, uplifts our communities, and prepares our children for a future filled with possibilities. The Texas Future Ready Workforce Initiative reflects a simple promise. Every student in Texas deserves a real shot at success, and every employer deserves a workforce ready to meet the demands of a growing state.

This summary lays out that mission. The rest of this initiative explains how we achieve it together as Texans.

## **SECTION 2 - CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### ***2.1 Fragmented Education System***

Texas schools, colleges, and employers are disconnected. Students move through twelve years of schooling without a clear understanding of how their education leads to real careers. Teachers work hard but lack the support needed to link lessons to modern opportunities. Parents see the gaps every day.

### ***2.2 Workforce Shortages Across Texas Industries***

Texas faces shortages in nursing, trades, ranching, water operations, cybersecurity, construction, transportation, agriculture, and energy. These shortages raise costs, slow down growth, and reduce community stability. Texas students and adults want good careers, but training pathways are unclear or out of reach.

### ***2.3 Decline in Critical Thinking***

Texas students are increasingly evaluated through standardized assessments that prioritize test performance over applied learning. While accountability remains important, excessive reliance on high-stakes testing can limit instructional flexibility and reduce time spent on problem-solving, technical reasoning, and hands-on skill development.

This initiative recognizes the importance of strong academic standards while emphasizing the need for instructional models that better prepare students for real-world work environments. Critical thinking, adaptability, and applied skills are essential for a modern Texas workforce.

Any changes related to assessment practices will be pursued within existing state law or through legislative action where required.

### ***2.4 Disappearing Trades and Generational Skill Gaps***

Skilled trades keep Texas running, but the number of young workers entering these fields is shrinking. Many experienced tradespeople are retiring. School programs in welding, electrical work, HVAC, construction, and mechanical trades are limited or underfunded. Without new workers, costs rise and progress slows.

## ***2.5 Youth Disengagement and Weak Career Pathways***

Many students no longer feel connected to their education. They do not see clear links between what they learn in school and the careers available in Texas. This leads to frustration, low motivation, and missed opportunities.

## ***2.6 Student Mental Health Pressures***

Students face higher levels of stress and anxiety. Schools struggle to support them because staffing and resources vary widely between districts. Consistent, simple, stigma free support systems are needed.

## ***2.7 Rural Communities Falling Behind***

Rural schools often cannot offer the same courses, certifications, or training that larger districts provide. Transportation issues limit access. Yet rural Texas is home to essential industries that the entire state depends on. Rural training and rural opportunity must be a top priority.

## ***2.8 Threats to Ranching, Water Supply, and Food Security***

Texas ranchers face the combined weight of drought, rising costs, shrinking herds, and foreign beef competition. Water scarcity threatens agriculture and rural communities. Young Texans who want to enter ranching lack training pathways. These issues must be addressed through workforce education, water planning, and modern ranch management skills.

## ***2.9 Why a Future-Ready Workforce Determines Texas Economic Stability***

Texas is growing. New industries want to hire Texans. But without a trained workforce, companies may hire from out of state or outsource jobs. Strong communities depend on good jobs, and good jobs depend on skilled workers. This initiative builds that foundation.

## ***2.10 National shift toward state-level education control***

There is a national movement toward returning education authority to the states. Federal priorities change over time, but Texas must stay ready to direct its own education system. Texas must be ready to guide its own education system with

confidence and independence. A future-ready workforce requires Texas-based standards, Texas-based curriculum priorities, and Texas-based training systems.

### *2.11 Why Texas Must Act Now*

The challenges facing Texas are not distant. They are here today. Workforce shortages, drought pressures, rising costs, and the rapid expansion of new industries leave no time to wait. A future-ready Texas requires a coordinated, modern, Texas-first workforce system that meets the needs of families, communities, and employers.



## **SECTION 3 - EXPLANATION OF THE CORE PROBLEM**

### ***3.1 Memorization Instead of Critical Thinking***

For years, Texas classrooms have been dominated by high stakes testing. Students spend too much time memorizing information for exams and not enough time learning how to think, solve problems, communicate, or apply knowledge in real situations.

Texans need an education system that builds:

- judgment
- reasoning
- teamwork
- creativity
- confidence
- adaptability

These are the skills required in ranching, nursing, construction, energy, transportation, water operations, and modern technology jobs. If Texas does not shift from memorizing to thinking, students will graduate unprepared for the real world.

### ***3.2 Schools, Colleges, and Employers Are Not Aligned***

Texas has talent, but the system is disconnected. Schools teach one thing. Colleges teach another. Employers need something different. Students feel this gap every day.

Right now:

- high schools may not offer nursing, trades, or agriculture pathways
- colleges may not prepare students for emerging Texas industries
- employers struggle to find workers with hands on skills

This gap leaves students confused, puts pressure on families, and makes it harder for employers to find the people they need. Texas cannot thrive with three systems moving in different directions. Alignment is not optional. It is essential.

### *3.3 No Statewide Skill Pipeline for Future Industries*

Texas is attracting advanced industries at record speed. Semiconductor plants, data centers, water technology companies, manufacturing hubs, agricultural science firms, renewable and nuclear energy projects, transportation systems, and large healthcare networks all want to hire Texans.

But there is no statewide skills pipeline that leads students directly into these careers.

This creates shortages in:

- cybersecurity
- medical support
- trades
- agriculture
- ranch management
- transportation
- water operations
- energy systems
- manufacturing
- logistics
- emergency services

These shortages slow development, drive up costs, and force some employers to hire from outside Texas.

### *3.4 Nursing Trapped Behind Unnecessary Barriers*

Texas faces persistent nursing shortages driven by workforce demand, limited training capacity, and delayed entry into licensed roles.

This initiative seeks to improve access to approved nursing education pathways while maintaining patient safety and professional licensing standards.

The goal is to reduce unnecessary delays between training stages and expand access to accredited programs without lowering educational or licensing requirements.

### *3.5 Trades Shrinking Due to Inaccessible Training*

Skilled trades are the backbone of Texas. They keep homes built, power flowing, water moving, hospitals functioning, and communities operating. But fewer young Texans are entering these fields.

Many schools:

- do not offer trade programs
- lack instructors
- cannot fund modern equipment
- have limited scheduling options

Adults who want to retrain often cannot pause work or travel far to attend classes. Without a new generation of skilled tradespeople, Texas will struggle to meet housing, energy, water, and infrastructure needs.

### *3.6 Ranching Knowledge Disappearing With Aging Ranchers*

Ranching is a central part of Texas identity, but the industry is under pressure. Many experienced ranchers are retiring. Young people who want to enter agriculture struggle to find training, mentors, or pathways. Drought raises costs and reduces grazing land. Imported beef increases competition. Feed prices rise. Water shortages create long term risk.

Without structured training in:

- herd management
- grazing systems
- water conservation
- land planning
- animal health
- ranch economics

Texas may lose the next generation of ranchers who keep our food system strong.

### *3.7 Rapid Growth in Technology, Energy, Water, and Logistics*

Texas is becoming a national hub for:

- artificial intelligence
- data center operations

- cybersecurity
- robotics and automation
- advanced manufacturing
- water independence technologies
- transportation and rail innovation
- emergency response systems

These fields require skilled technicians, operators, analysts, and problem solvers. Without a workforce pipeline that prepares Texans for these roles, other states or countries will fill the gap.

### *3.8 Why Reform Cannot Wait*

Texas is moving fast. Industries are growing. Technology is advancing. Rural communities face drought. Healthcare needs more hands. Trades are aging out. Students need purpose. Employers need talent.

Every year the gap grows wider.

If Texas does not build a future-ready workforce system now, the state will face:

- a shortage of skilled workers
- rising costs for families
- slower economic growth
- increased dependence on outside labor
- weaker rural communities
- fewer opportunities for students

Texas must act now. A strong education and workforce system is the foundation for every part of Texas life: water, energy, food, healthcare, infrastructure, and community stability.

A future-ready Texas requires Texans who are prepared for the future.

## **SECTION 4 - DEEP BREAKDOWN OF THE MAIN SOLUTION**

### ***4.1 The Texas Skills Pipeline From Middle School to Adulthood***

Texas needs a single, clear path that guides students and adults into strong careers. The Texas Skills Pipeline connects learning to real jobs at every stage:

- middle school introduces career awareness and hands-on exploration
- high school provides trade, medical, ranching, technology, and workforce tracks
- adults can retrain without restarting their education
- veterans can transfer their service experience into civilian careers

This pipeline removes confusion and gives Texans a direct, step by step path from education to employment.

### ***4.2 Critical Thinking Over Memorization***

Texas will prioritize instructional approaches that strengthen critical thinking, technical reasoning, and practical application of knowledge, while maintaining academic accountability.

Where existing law allows, the Governor will direct the Texas Education Agency to review instructional frameworks, curriculum guidance, and assessment practices to identify opportunities to reduce low-value administrative burdens and improve classroom effectiveness.

This initiative does not eliminate academic standards or accountability systems. Any changes requiring statutory authority will be pursued through the Texas Legislature in coordination with educators, parents, and local school districts.

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### *4.3 Texas Workforce Alignment Councils*

To keep Texas competitive, schools, colleges, and employers must work together.

Texas Workforce Alignment Councils bring them to the same table:

- local school districts
- community colleges
- universities
- major employers
- rural industries
- medical centers
- agriculture and ranching leaders

Each region identifies the careers needed for the next 10 to 20 years and updates training programs to match.

Students gain clear pathways. Employers gain a prepared workforce. Communities grow together instead of drifting apart.

### *4.4 Modular Trade Pathways in High School and Adult Centers*

Texas will build flexible career tracks that students and adults can enter at any time.

High schools and regional hubs will offer:

- construction
- welding
- electrical work
- plumbing
- HVAC
- modular building
- water system operations
- hydroponics and agriculture
- logistics and transportation
- computer science and cybersecurity
- emergency management
- energy systems

Training centers will be local, practical, and built around Texas industries.

Adults can join these programs without leaving work or moving across the state.

#### *4.5 Nursing as a Streamlined Trade Entry Path*

Texas will strengthen existing healthcare career pathways, including certified nursing assistants, licensed vocational nurses, and registered nursing programs, while maintaining all professional licensing standards.

This initiative does not reduce education requirements, licensing exams, or scope-of-practice rules.

Any changes affecting credentialing, licensing structures, or professional oversight will be pursued through the appropriate regulatory bodies and legislative action where required.

#### *4.6 Texas Ranch and Beef Pathway*

Ranching is part of Texas identity, economy, and food security. This initiative restores a clear path for the next generation of ranchers.

Students and adults can train in:

- herd management
- drought resilience and water planning
- grazing systems
- feed strategies
- soil and land health
- ranch economics
- animal health and veterinary basics
- pasture rotation and water conservation

This pathway helps ranchers stay strong through drought and market pressure. It trains a new generation ready to protect Texas beef and Texas agriculture.

#### *4.7 Technology, AI, and Cybersecurity Tracks*

Texas is becoming a national center for advanced technology. To stay competitive, Texans need strong technical skills.

This initiative builds career pathways in:

- artificial intelligence support
- robotics and automation
- computer programming

- data center operations
- cybersecurity
- digital communications
- logistics technology
- advanced manufacturing

AI tools assist learning but never replace teachers. Students learn how modern technology works and how to manage, direct, and maintain it.

#### *4.8 Workforce Support for Other Texas Initiatives*

This initiative does not merge or enact other Texas policy initiatives.

Its role is limited to preparing a skilled workforce capable of supporting energy, water, food security, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure projects across the state.

Policy authority and operational control for those initiatives remain separate.

#### *4.9 Inclusion of Veterans, Rural Families, and Returning Citizens reentering the workforce after time in the justice system*

A strong Texas includes everyone.

This initiative ensures access for:

- veterans transitioning into civilian careers
- rural students and adults who need local training centers
- working parents who need flexible schedules
- returning citizens reentering the workforce after time in the justice system
- communities facing drought, depopulation, or job loss

This approach keeps families stable, supports regional economies, and builds a Texas workforce that leaves no one behind.



## **SECTION 5 — ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, AND SYSTEM DESIGN**

### ***5.1 Career and Skills Hubs***

Texas will build regional Career and Skills Hubs that give students and adults direct access to hands-on learning. These hubs operate as practical training centers for trades, agriculture, nursing, technology, and workforce programs.

Each hub includes space for:

- welding, electrical, and construction labs
- nursing and medical support simulation rooms
- agriculture and ranch management training areas
- water operations and drought resilience demonstrations
- robotics, coding, and cybersecurity labs
- logistics, manufacturing, and rail system training

These hubs serve as community assets, not isolated facilities. They support high schools, adult learners, and regional employers all at the same time.

All buildings and facilities follow existing Texas building codes.

### ***5.2 Digital Learning Spine and AI-Assisted Tutoring***

Texas will create a Digital Learning Spine that connects every district to the same high quality online tools, skill modules, and virtual support.

The Digital Learning Spine includes:

- AI-assisted tutoring that strengthens student learning
- digital course libraries aligned with Texas workforce needs
- online skill modules for trades, agriculture, and medical support
- access for rural students who need equal opportunity

AI helps students understand lessons and practice skills, but it does not replace teachers. Texas teachers remain the leaders in the classroom.

### ***5.3 Texas Skills Passport System***

The Texas Skills Passport will be a voluntary, individual-controlled digital record that allows Texans to document verified skills, certifications, apprenticeships, and approved training programs completed throughout their careers.

The purpose of the Skills Passport is to reduce duplicative training, improve job matching, and give Texans clear, portable proof of their skills without unnecessary barriers.

#### **Privacy and Ownership**

The Skills Passport will be owned and controlled by the individual Texan, not the state.

Participation will be voluntary. Individuals will choose what information to include and when to share it with employers or institutions.

The system will comply with all applicable state and federal privacy laws. No medical records, disciplinary records, or unrelated personal data will be included.

Any statewide implementation, data-sharing standards, or funding mechanisms required to support the Skills Passport will be pursued through legislative authorization.

### ***5.4 Workforce Simulation Labs***

Texas will develop Simulation Labs that let trainees practice real-world tasks in controlled environments.

Simulation labs include:

- nursing and emergency care simulations
- welding practice bays
- water system operation models
- small scale hydroponic and agriculture labs
- logistics and warehouse training layouts
- electrical and modular construction setups
- disaster response planning spaces

These labs prepare Texans for high pressure environments before they ever enter the field. It improves safety and builds confidence.

### ***5.5 Water, Agriculture, and Drought-Resilient Land Management Training***

Ranching and agriculture depend on water. To prepare Texas for ongoing drought cycles, the system includes training in:

- water conservation
- drought forecasting
- grazing land recovery
- pasture rotation
- feed strategy under drought conditions
- livestock water solutions
- land and soil health

This ties directly into statewide water resilience goals. Students learn how to protect land, conserve water, and keep ranching operations strong during harsh conditions.

### ***5.6 Transportation, Logistics, and Rail-Ready Skills***

Texas needs workers who can support modern transportation and supply chain systems. Career tracks include:

- rail maintenance and operations
- logistics and warehouse systems
- supply chain management
- commercial fleet technology
- autonomous vehicle support
- advanced manufacturing linked to transportation growth

These skills strengthen the statewide economy and support future mobility systems that reduce congestion and improve freight movement.

### ***5.7 Cybersecurity and Data Protection Systems***

Texas industries depend on strong digital protection. The workforce initiative includes cybersecurity training that focuses on:

- network safety
- data privacy
- digital risk management
- threat monitoring

- communication security
- responsible AI oversight

Simulation exercises prepare Texans to guard schools, hospitals, utilities, small businesses, and state systems against cyberattacks. This creates a workforce that can protect Texas digital infrastructure.

## **SECTION 6 - INTEGRATION WITH STATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGENCIES**

### ***6.1 Texas Education Agency Alignment***

The Governor will direct the Texas Education Agency to align workforce readiness efforts with instructional standards, career pathways, and existing accountability requirements.

TEA will be tasked with evaluating opportunities to improve instructional outcomes, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, and support skill-based learning where authorized under current law.

Any changes to statewide assessment systems, graduation requirements, or accountability frameworks that exceed existing statutory authority will be pursued through legislative action.

### ***6.2 Texas Workforce Commission Coordination***

The Texas Workforce Commission will match training programs to regional job needs and use workforce data to guide future decisions. This ensures that career pathways in high schools and adult centers stay aligned with real employer demand. TWC already has the tools required to support this statewide plan, including training grants, regional boards, and employer partnerships.

### ***6.3 Higher Education Coordinating Board Support***

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will help align community colleges and universities with regional workforce goals. This includes supporting faster nursing entry pathways, updating course offerings based on industry needs, and reducing barriers between two year and four year systems. Colleges will play a central role in providing advanced certificates and technical training.

### ***6.4 Texas A and M AgriLife Partnership for Ranching and Agriculture***

Texas A and M AgriLife already trains ranchers, landowners, and agricultural workers. This initiative builds on their existing programs to create clear pathways for young Texans and adults entering ranching or agricultural careers. AgriLife will support:

- drought resilience training
- herd and land management courses
- water conservation practices
- soil and grazing systems
- modern beef production techniques

This partnership strengthens ranching communities and helps protect Texas food security.

### ***6.5 Health and Human Services Integration for Nursing Tracks***

The Governor will direct relevant state agencies to coordinate nursing workforce planning within existing regulatory frameworks.

All licensure, accreditation, and scope-of-practice requirements will remain under existing regulatory authorities.

Legislative action will be pursued where necessary to support program expansion or structural changes.

### ***6.6 Texas State Guard Workforce and Training Programs***

The Texas State Guard may support workforce readiness efforts only within its existing mission scope, including emergency logistics, disaster response coordination, communications support, and infrastructure resilience training.

The Texas State Guard will not function as a general labor force or civilian job training program.

All activities will remain within existing state law and the Governor's constitutional authority as Commander-in-Chief.

### ***6.7 Workforce Support for Other Texas Initiatives***

A future ready workforce strengthens every major area of Texas planning. This initiative connects naturally to statewide priorities such as:

- water resilience
- agriculture and food security
- energy development
- construction and housing

- infrastructure and transportation
- digital communication and civic engagement

By training Texans in these fields, the state builds a strong foundation for long term growth, independence, and stability. This is not a separate plan. It is a support system for every major Texas priority.

## **SECTION 7 - DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY AND PRIORITIZATION**

### ***7.1 Phase One: Rural First Rollout***

Rural communities face some of the strongest workforce shortages in Texas. They also have fewer training options and longer travel distances. Phase One focuses on building early hubs and pathways in rural regions where the need is greatest.

This phase includes:

- opening regional Skills Hubs in rural counties
- expanding trade and nursing programs in rural high schools
- establishing agriculture and ranching training centers
- launching water operations and drought resilience courses
- supporting rural hospitals and clinics through workforce partnerships

A rural first model ensures that communities with the highest need receive the strongest support at the beginning of the rollout.

### ***7.2 Phase Two: Urban and Suburban High Need Districts***

Once rural hubs are established, the next phase focuses on large districts where student populations are high and workforce demand is intense.

This phase builds:

- expanded trades and technology labs in high schools
- nursing and medical support programs in population centers
- logistics and transportation training needed for major metro areas
- cybersecurity and technology education aligned with growing industries

Urban and suburban districts gain new career pathways that match the needs of their regional economies.

### ***7.3 Phase Three: Major Employer Integration***

Texas employers are ready to hire skilled workers, but they need training programs that match real job requirements. Phase Three brings employers directly into the system.



This includes:

- advisory roles in Workforce Alignment Councils
- internship and apprenticeship partnerships
- hiring pipelines from Skills Hubs
- co developed curriculum modules based on workplace expectations

Major industries such as healthcare, technology, agriculture, transportation, and energy will help shape training programs so Texans are prepared for high quality local jobs.

### *7.4 Phase Four: Statewide Expansion of Skill Hubs*

Once regional hubs and employer partnerships are in place, Texas will expand the system statewide.

This expansion includes:

- additional medical and trade training centers
- more agriculture and ranching sites
- expanded water and drought resilience programs
- new transportation and logistics training facilities
- advanced manufacturing and robotics centers

The goal is for every Texan, no matter where they live, to have access to workforce training within a reasonable distance.

### *7.5 Teacher and Instructor Recruitment Strategies*

Texas will recruit and support instructors from multiple backgrounds.

This includes:

- current teachers seeking additional certifications
- skilled tradespeople transitioning into instruction
- nurses and medical professionals teaching hands-on skills
- ranchers and agricultural experts mentoring students
- veterans bringing discipline and real world experience
- technology specialists leading cybersecurity and digital skills training

The system will provide support and flexible pathways for Texans who want to teach.

## *7.6 Industry and Community Partnership Development*

Texas communities and employers will help shape the system.

Partnerships include:

- local businesses offering internships and apprenticeships
- ranchers hosting agriculture and livestock demonstrations
- hospitals providing clinical hours
- technology firms helping build digital learning tools
- construction and manufacturing partners supporting lab equipment
- community colleges providing advanced courses

These partnerships make the training relevant and ensure that Texans are prepared for real jobs.

## *7.7 Workforce Alignment Council Review Cycle*

Workforce Alignment Councils will meet regularly to ensure that training programs stay current.

The councils will:

- review workforce data
- update career pathways
- assess regional economic changes
- recommend new high demand programs
- coordinate training across schools and colleges
- provide guidance to state agencies

This ensures that the Texas workforce system stays flexible, modern, and responsive.

## **SECTION 8 - WORKFORCE, LOGISTICS, AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### ***8.1 Teacher Pipeline Modernization***

Texas needs more teachers who can lead students through hands-on learning, career training, and practical problem solving. This initiative strengthens the teacher workforce by:

- expanding alternative certification programs
- providing stipends for teachers who add trade, technology, or medical support certifications
- creating fast track teacher training partnerships with community colleges
- offering financial incentives for teachers who serve in rural or high need districts
- supporting new teachers with mentorship and professional development

Teachers remain the core of Texas education. This plan gives them the tools, training, and support they need for a future-ready classroom.

### ***8.2 Recruiting Skilled Tradespeople and Professionals as Instructors***

Many Texans have decades of real world experience in construction, nursing, ranching, agriculture, logistics, cybersecurity, energy, and water systems. This initiative invites those Texans into the classroom.

Instructor pathways include:

- tradespeople teaching welding, electrical, carpentry, and HVAC
- nurses teaching medical support and clinical skills
- ranchers teaching land, herd, and drought management
- cybersecurity experts teaching digital protection
- water operators teaching conservation and drought resilience
- veterans teaching emergency operations and logistics

These instructors bring real world experience that cannot be learned from a textbook.

### ***8.3 Flexible Scheduling and Year Round Options***

Working families and adult learners need flexible schedules. This initiative creates:

- evening classes
- weekend learning
- short intensive courses
- year round access to Skills Hub facilities
- staggered schedules for high school students in career pathways
- blended online and in person options through the Digital Learning Spine

Flexibility allows Texans to build new skills without sacrificing work, family, or personal responsibilities.

### ***8.4 Apprenticeships and Internship Placement***

Texas students and adult learners will gain real experience through structured apprenticeship and internship placements.

These placements include:

- construction companies
- manufacturing and logistics centers
- hospitals and clinics
- ranches and agricultural sites
- energy and utility operators
- transportation and rail facilities
- technology and cybersecurity firms

Apprenticeships turn training into confidence and give employers a direct path to hire skilled Texans.

### ***8.5 Nursing Trade Pathway Structure***

Nursing pathways will be structured to improve progression efficiency between approved training stages while preserving patient safety and professional standards.

No reductions in licensing requirements or professional oversight are authorized under this initiative without legislative and regulatory approval.

## ***8.6 Texas Ranch and Beef Apprenticeship Network***

Ranching requires hands on experience that cannot be taught in a classroom alone. The Ranch and Beef Apprenticeship Network will pair students and adults with working ranchers who teach:

- grazing and pasture management
- drought and water planning
- herd rotation and animal health
- fence and infrastructure repair
- feed strategies during dry years
- land stewardship and soil health
- ranch economics and daily operations

This strengthens rural economies and builds the next generation of Texas producers.

## ***8.7 Veteran Upskilling Programs***

Veterans bring discipline, leadership, and hands on experience that Texas needs. The initiative provides:

- credit for military training
- fast track trade certifications
- direct pathways into emergency management, logistics, and medical support
- priority placement into state and private apprenticeship programs
- flexible scheduling for working veterans
- supportive services through Skills Hub counselors

Texas benefits when veterans move directly into strong civilian careers.

## ***8.8 Transportation, After School, and Workforce Support***

Reliable access is essential for students and adults in training programs.

Support systems include:

- late bus routes for high school students in after school programs
- transportation options for rural adult learners traveling to hubs
- child care partnerships for working parents
- career counselors who help Texans navigate pathways
- case management for adults reentering the workforce
- coordination with community organizations to remove barriers

These supports make the workforce system accessible to every Texan who wants to learn and work.

## **SECTION 9 - FINANCING MODEL AND LONG-TERM STABILITY**

### *9.1 Use of Existing Texas CTE and Workforce Dollars*

Texas already funds Career and Technical Education through state and federal sources that go unused or underused in many districts. This initiative redirects these dollars into:

- trades and construction programs
- nursing and medical support training
- agriculture and ranching pathways
- water and drought management courses
- cybersecurity and technology certifications

Schools and training centers receive support without adding new costs to Texas families.

## ***9.2 Redirecting High Stakes Testing Funds***

Texas will evaluate existing education expenditures to identify opportunities for cost savings and efficiency improvements, including administrative and testing-related expenses, where permitted by law.

Any reallocation of funds will comply with state and federal requirements and will not reduce academic accountability or transparency.

Budget adjustments requiring statutory authority or appropriations changes will be pursued through the Texas Legislature as part of the regular budget process.

## ***9.3 Industry Partnerships and Hiring Incentives***

Texas employers benefit directly from a skilled workforce. This initiative creates partnerships where employers can:

- sponsor equipment
- provide apprenticeships
- co develop training modules
- offer hiring commitments
- contribute to Skills Hub funding pools

Industry support reduces state cost, improves quality, and guarantees job placement opportunities for Texans.

## ***9.4 State Workforce Grants and Federal Matches***

Texas already manages workforce grant programs that can be used for:

- rural training centers
- nursing programs
- trades and construction
- water system training
- cybersecurity and technology instruction

Where appropriate, matching federal funds can be used while keeping Texas in substantial control of curriculum, standards, and oversight. This protects Texas independence while accessing available resources.

## *9.5 Economic Boost From New Skilled Workers*

A trained workforce strengthens the Texas economy from the ground up. The initiative increases state revenue through:

- higher wages
- stronger local economies
- more business activity
- improved job placement rates
- reduced unemployment

Skilled workers support local businesses, housing markets, hospitals, and agriculture. This creates long term economic benefits that outweigh the initial investment.

## *9.6 Subtle Links to Water, Housing, and Energy Cost Savings*

Workforce alignment may contribute to cost efficiencies across multiple sectors by ensuring projects are staffed by trained, qualified workers.

This initiative does not direct policy outcomes or operational decisions in energy, water, housing, or transportation programs.

## *9.7 Guardrails Against Hedge Fund or Outside Capture*

Texas families and Texas workers must remain the beneficiaries of this system. The initiative includes safeguards that prevent:

- hedge fund control over training systems
- outside corporations taking program ownership
- private groups controlling certifications
- any entity profiting by restricting access to skills training



All pathways remain publicly accessible, community supported, and Texas directed.  
Texas investment should stay in Texas hands.

## **SECTION 10 - SECONDARY BENEFITS AND LONG-TERM IMPACT**

### *10.1 Stronger Family Incomes and Job Stability*

A skilled Texas workforce leads to higher wages and more stable jobs. When Texans have training for high demand careers in healthcare, trades, agriculture, energy,

technology, and logistics, families gain financial security. Strong incomes support homeownership, local businesses, and long term community growth.

## ***10.2 Reduced Crime and Improved Mental Health***

Students who engage in hands on learning, after school programs, and clear career pathways are less likely to disengage or enter harmful environments. Workforce training builds confidence and purpose. Short, stigma free wellness checks help students manage stress and stay connected to supportive adults. These efforts work together to create safer communities.

## ***10.3 Rural Community Revival***

Rural Texas is the backbone of the state. This initiative strengthens rural regions through:

- new training centers
- access to high demand career pathways
- improved healthcare staffing
- expanded ranching and agriculture skills
- better water and drought management training
- increased job opportunities for adults

A strong rural workforce protects local economies and ensures that every region of Texas can grow.

## ***10.4 Ranching Stabilized and Youth Entering Agriculture***

Texas ranchers face pressure from drought, land costs, and foreign beef imports. By training new ranchers in water planning, herd management, grazing systems, and land stewardship, Texas protects its long term cattle and beef supply. A new generation of trained ranchers ensures that agriculture stays strong for decades.

## ***10.5 Reduced Strain on Water and Food Systems***

Workforce training in drought resilience, water conservation, and modern agriculture helps Texas protect its water resources. Students learn how to use water efficiently, manage land during dry years, and support food production in tough conditions. This improves statewide stability in water and food systems.

## *10.6 Texas Industries Staffed by Texans*

As technology, energy, healthcare, and infrastructure expand across the state, employers need workers who understand Texas industries. A future ready workforce gives companies confidence that they can hire locally instead of outsourcing. This keeps paychecks in Texas and strengthens local economies.

## *10.7 Long-Term Statewide Economic Resilience*

A skilled workforce attracts new businesses, encourages innovation, and protects Texas from national economic shifts. When Texans can build, repair, operate, and innovate, the state becomes more self-reliant. Strong skills support every major initiative in Texas, from energy independence to water security to modern infrastructure.

A future ready workforce is the foundation for a strong and stable Texas economy.

# **SECTION 11 - CONCLUSION: A TEXAS-FIRST PATH FORWARD**

## *11.1 Restating the Mission*

Texas deserves a workforce system that matches the strength and ambition of its people. The goal of the Texas Future-Ready Workforce Initiative is simple. Prepare Texans for the jobs of today and the challenges of tomorrow. Give students purpose.

Give adults opportunity. Give communities stability. Build a workforce that keeps Texas strong.

### ***11.2 Students Become Thinkers, Builders, Ranchers, Nurses, and Technicians***

This initiative helps students grow into confident adults with real skills. It prepares them to solve problems, work with their hands, use modern tools, and take on meaningful careers. Whether a Texan becomes a nurse, rancher, welder, coder, water specialist, teacher, or emergency responder, they will be ready.

Every student deserves a path that leads to a strong future. This initiative puts that path within reach for every community.

### ***11.3 Respect for Parents, Teachers, Rural and Urban Families***

Parents want their children prepared for real life. Teachers want support and meaningful training. Rural families want equal access. Urban families want opportunity and safety. This initiative honors all of them by creating a system that works for every region of the state.

Texas grows when all Texans have a chance to succeed. This plan treats education and workforce training as a shared responsibility that strengthens families, neighborhoods, and local economies.

### ***11.4 A Future-Ready Texas Built by Texans for Texans***

Texas cannot wait for federal systems or outside institutions to decide its future. A strong workforce is the foundation of water resilience, energy independence, food security, modern infrastructure, quality healthcare, and economic stability.

This initiative builds a Texas where:

- students are prepared
- adults have opportunity
- employers can hire locally
- ranchers are supported
- communities grow
- families thrive
- the state remains strong and independent

A future-ready workforce ensures that Texas stays in control of its destiny. With the right skills, Texas can lead the nation in innovation, resilience, and long term strength.

## **SECTION 12 — FAQ SECTION**

### *12.1 How does this help my child?*

This initiative gives every student a clear path to a good career. They learn real skills, not just test material. They get hands on experience in trades, nursing support,

agriculture, technology, water operations, and more. Students graduate with confidence and a plan for the future.

### *12.2 Will AI replace teachers?*

No. Teachers lead the classroom. AI is used only as a support tool for tutoring, practice, and personalized learning. It helps students learn, but teachers remain in full control of instruction, grading, and safety.

### *12.3 What happens to standardized testing?*

This initiative does not eliminate standardized testing.

Where existing law allows, Texas will seek to reduce unnecessary testing burdens and administrative inefficiencies while preserving academic accountability.

Any significant changes to statewide assessment systems will require legislative approval.

### *12.4 How does nursing as a trade pathway work?*

Nursing pathways will continue to follow existing licensing and education standards.

This initiative focuses on improving access, reducing unnecessary delays, and expanding approved training capacity.

Any changes to licensure or scope-of-practice rules require legislative and regulatory approval.

### *12.5 Does this replace college?*

No. It adds more options. Students can go to college, enter a trade, join a nursing program, start in agriculture, work in technology, or enter energy and water careers. College remains an option, not the only path.

### *12.6 How does this help ranchers?*

The initiative trains new ranchers in herd management, drought planning, water conservation, grazing systems, soil health, and ranch economics. This protects Texas beef, supports rural families, and prepares the next generation to keep ranching strong during tough conditions.

### *12.7 How does drought resilience tie into education?*

Training includes water conservation, land management, drought forecasting, and livestock water planning. Students learn how to protect land and resources. This supports ranchers, farmers, and rural communities across the state.

### *12.8 How are other statewide initiatives interconnected?*

This initiative supports workforce preparation only.

Other initiatives remain independent in policy authority and implementation.

### *12.9 How do rural areas benefit?*

Rural communities get training centers, nursing pathways, ranching programs, and water operations courses. Students and adults gain equal access to skills and careers. This brings new jobs, stronger hospitals, improved agriculture, and stable local economies.

### *12.10 Who qualifies for adult training?*

Any Texas adult can enroll. Programs support working parents, veterans, rural families, returning citizens, and adults seeking new careers. Scheduling is flexible so people can learn without losing work hours.

### *12.11 How is this funded long term?*

The initiative uses existing CTE and workforce dollars, reduces testing costs, builds employer partnerships, and leverages grants that Texas already controls. A trained

workforce grows the economy, which increases state revenue and keeps the program stable.

## **SECTION 13 - FINAL MESSAGE FROM STEPHEN**



Texas has always been defined by strong families, honest work, and the belief that our future is shaped by our own hands. We face challenges today that did not exist a generation ago. Our population is growing faster than our schools can adapt. Our industries need more skilled workers than our current systems produce. Rural communities are stretched thin by drought and a shrinking workforce. Hospitals need support. Ranchers feel the pressure of changing markets. Technology is advancing faster than many classrooms can keep up with. Through it all, Texans have stayed resilient, and our state has kept moving forward because that is who we are.

What Texas needs now is a plan that matches that resilience. A plan that respects our values and builds on our strengths. A plan that gives people real skills, real opportunities, and real purpose. The Texas Future Ready Workforce Initiative is built for that mission. It connects students to the careers that already exist in their own towns. It supports teachers instead of adding more weight to their shoulders. It strengthens rural communities that carry the heart of our state. It gives employers a workforce they can count on and gives families the confidence that their children will have a path forward.

A future ready workforce supports every major priority in Texas. When Texans are trained and equipped for the real world, hospitals stay staffed. Water systems stay protected. Ranching and agriculture remain strong. Homes get built faster. Technology grows. Small businesses thrive. Local economies stay stable. The strength of the Texas workforce is directly tied to the strength of the Texas way of life. When Texans have skills, Texas succeeds.

My commitment is simple. Texas will build an education and workforce system that prepares every student and every adult for real life. We will teach thinking, not memorizing. We will support rural communities that have been overlooked for too long. We will strengthen nursing and medical pathways so hospitals have the workers they need. We will rebuild the trades pipeline so homes, bridges, and infrastructure can be built by Texans for Texans. We will create opportunities for veterans to continue serving our state with pride. We will build local pathways in ranching, agriculture, technology, energy, and every field that supports the future of this state.

This initiative is not about politics. It is about people. It is about families who want their kids to have a better shot than they did. It is about communities that deserve real support. It is about giving every Texan the chance to stand on solid ground, learn a skill, earn a living, and build a future they can be proud of.

Texas has always led the way. We do not wait for others to show us how to solve a problem. We step forward and get it done. With the Texas Future Ready Workforce Initiative, we strengthen every corner of our state for the next fifty years. The future belongs to the people who prepare for it. Texas will be ready. Our people will be ready.

And together, we will build a Texas where every child has a path, every family has opportunity, every community has strength, and every worker has a place in the future of this state.

**Under existing executive authority, the Governor can:**

- Direct executive agencies to coordinate workforce planning and implementation efforts.
- Establish advisory councils, task forces, and interagency working groups.
- Instruct agencies to review and adjust administrative rules where current law allows.
- Propose budget priorities and performance goals for legislative consideration.
- Promote voluntary partnerships with employers, educators, and local governments.

**The following elements require legislative authorization:**

- Changes to statewide assessment or accountability systems.
- Creation of new statewide data platforms or credentialing systems.
- Modifications to professional licensing structures or scope-of-practice rules.
- Long-term funding mechanisms, appropriations, or statutory mandates.

This initiative advances immediate executive action where authorized and clearly identifies areas where legislative partnership is required to achieve long-term success.