



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

MARCH 8, 2022

1 Tuesday, March 8, 2022

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.

3 This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone signed
4 up for public comment?

5 MR. TROBMAN: Commissioners, good morning,
6 Les Trobman, general counsel. We have one individual who would
7 like to address the commission when we get to Item 12 of the
8 [inaudible]. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Good morning,
10 Ms. Gonzales.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Motion passes with the
12 exceptions noted. Let's take a short break.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, we're back with
14 Agenda Item 8. This is Chapter 840, proposed amendments for
15 public comment. This is on WIOA eligible training providers.

16 JOEL MULLINS: Good morning, Chairman
17 Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna.
18 For the record, I'm Joel Mullins with the Workforce Development
19 Division. On December 7, 2021, the commission approved a policy
20 concept on potential amendments to TWC rule Chapter 840, WIOA
21 Eligible Training Providers. The policy concept was posted
22 online for a three-week board comment period and no comments
23 were received. This morning for your consideration is the
24 proposed rules for Chapter 840 which will clarify requirements
25 for participants, local Workforce Development Boards, and

1 eligible training providers. These amendments include two
2 amendments to Subchapter F, Section 840.53. One, the
3 acknowledgement of TWC's authority under the Family Educational
4 Rights and Privacy Act, and, number two, immediate removal from
5 the ETPL of previously approved programs that lose licensure,
6 and as well two amendments to Subchapter G, Section 840.621 to
7 clarify that, one, ETPs may not impose additional costs on
8 students funded through individual training accounts without
9 prior consent of the board, and, number two, that boards must
10 ensure that ETPs and participants are informed that training
11 funds are not available unless and until the board has approved
12 and issued an ITA. This morning staff seeks direction on the
13 proposed amendments to 40 TAC Chapter 840 for publication in the
14 Texas Register for a 30-day public comment period, and I'm happy
15 to answer any questions.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we
21 approve the proposed rule amendments to 40 Texas Administrative
22 Code Chapter 840, WIOA Eligible Training Providers for
23 publication in the Texas Register and public comment as
24 recommended by staff.

25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
2 seconded. We're unanimous. Agenda Item 9 has been postponed to a
3 future meeting. Staff does not have anything to report under
4 Agenda Item 10. Staff does not have anything to report under
5 Agenda Item 11. This is Agenda Item 12, Child Care Development
6 Block Grant COVID-19 federal funding.

7 ALLISON WILSON: Good morning, chairman,
8 commissioners, Mr. Serna. For the record, Allison Wilson with
9 the Child Care and Early Learning Division. Today for your
10 consideration we are bringing forward the sixth tranche of child
11 care stimulus funded initiatives. We have three issues for you
12 today. The first is dedicating 10.7 million dollars for
13 improvements to child care regulations—to child care regulation
14 for system improvements. CCR proposes improvements to the public
15 search Texas Child Care website as well as to their provider
16 portal, and their underlying data system CLASP. The improvements
17 will include supporting mobile-friendly access, adding data
18 fields for providers' Texas Rising Star status, and pre-K
19 partnership participation, updating and improving the data
20 exchange between TWC and CCR, and providing document upload
21 capabilities for providers to support compliance requirements.
22 The second issue would dedicate 15 million to continue child
23 care business coaching through May of 2023. On May 4, 2021, the
24 commission approved funding to support child care business
25 coaches through summer 2022. These coaches assist with all

1 regulated child care providers on how to document and track
2 funding received through the Child Care Relief Funds and to
3 provide assistance with budgeting, marketing, improving payment
4 collection, reducing costs, and staffing strategies. The
5 continuation of these services will allow coaches to provide
6 services through the duration of the funding period for the 2022
7 Child Care Relief Funds. The third issue we have outlined is to
8 dedicate an additional \$500,000 to extend the impact of the
9 provider cost of quality calculator which was previously
10 approved. On November 2nd the commission approved 300,000 for the
11 development of PCQC to help conduct a federally required narrow
12 cost analysis that examines the cost of child care at varying
13 levels of quality across the state. A PCQC can also be
14 beneficial to child care providers and other stakeholders to
15 inform the design of local quality improvement efforts and to
16 help providers better understand the factors that influence
17 their costs. Staff recommends that the additional funding for
18 the development and maintenance of a public-facing online and
19 easy-to-use PCQC. This recommended additional 500,000 will bring
20 the total approved for the PCQC initiative to 800,000. Finally,
21 I would like to note that the attachment at the end of the
22 discussion paper provides an overview of all the child care
23 stimulus funding previously approved as well as the funding we
24 are recommending for approval in this sixth tranche. That
25 concludes my remarks. I'm happy to answer any questions.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

2 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Allison, just this
4 quick question here. How is the child care business coaching
5 going? How has that been?

6 ALLISON WILSON: It is going very well. It's
7 been heavily utilized, and they've actually saved providers in
8 total millions of dollars by helping them take advantage of
9 various tax credits, and we anticipate that it's going to
10 continue to provide really critical support as we roll out the
11 additional relief funds.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Good, thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. We have at
14 least one public commenter, I think. Let's do that and then
15 we'll ask any follow-up questions and take a vote.

16 MR. TROBMAN: Commissioners, we do have one
17 commenter. It's Brooks Jones. Mr. Jones, if you could go ahead
18 and unmute yourself, introduce yourself for the record, and go
19 ahead.

20 BROOKS JONES: Hi, my name is Brooks Jones.
21 I'm with Christian Preschool Centers in South Plains and
22 Panhandle. Decision point one, we're very excited about that
23 integration. I actually think that will be very beneficial for
24 all providers and families. Decision point two, the only thing I
25 ask on this is it's actually hard for somebody at my level to

1 get this information because it's just sent to the school so if
2 there's a way for us to sign up through a subscription or an
3 email or whatnot, and where it can be directly into our inbox
4 and not have to rely on somebody forwarding an email, that would
5 be beneficial. Decision point three, we have no comments. The
6 only other question I had or comment I want to make was on
7 attachment two, the [inaudible] child care relief. I'm just
8 curious like that money doesn't get spent, does it go back into
9 the hopper? And that's all I've got, thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any further comments or
11 questions? Do we have a motion?

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
13 we approve the plan and methodology for the distribution of the
14 sixth tranche of CCDF COVID-19 Federal Funding Initiatives as
15 recommended by staff and described in the discussion paper.

16 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
18 seconded. We're unanimous. Nothing under Agenda Item 13. Is
19 there a legislative report today?

20 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

21 MICHAEL BRITT: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
22 and commissioners, Mr. Serna. For the record, Michael Britt,
23 Governmental Relations. As you're all aware current federal
24 government funding expires this Friday, March 11, 2022. Congress
25 is currently working on a measure to fund the federal government

1 for the remainder of the fiscal year. It's being reported that
2 the bill would include an omnibus appropriation to fund the
3 federal government for the remainder of FY2022, and include
4 appropriations for aid to Ukraine and additional COVID-19
5 research-related funding. As of this morning language for the
6 proposed measure has not been released but U.S. House leaders
7 have said that the language is expected to be released today,
8 and the House could vote as soon as tomorrow on the measure.
9 We'll certainly keep your offices updated as things progress.
10 This concludes my remarks and I'd be happy to answer any
11 questions.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have an executive
16 director's report today?

17 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. I've got one thing and
18 it has to do with all the people that are here. We are
19 recognizing our training and development—what was described to
20 me as our remote training king. Ironic that the remote training
21 king is here but that's OK, for their outstanding work that's
22 shifting very quickly from training our employees in person to
23 online training back in 2020 and through 2021. They did an
24 outstanding job, and I think Jerry White come up and talk a
25 little bit about the nomination itself.

1 JERRY WHITE: Chairman, commissioners, good
2 morning. For the record, I'm Jerry White, the HR director here
3 at the Workforce Commission. One of the best signs of a well-
4 functioning and managed team is the ability to adapt to sudden
5 change, and we've seen a lot of that through our organization
6 over the last two years. Next week, I guess this is the second
7 year, the 17th I think is when many of us began telecommuting or
8 moved out because of COVID, and so this comes at that point. In
9 March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many TWC employees
10 to convert to teleworking, and for the department whose jobs
11 require heavy face-to-face contact with other employees, the new
12 reality turned their work product upside down. Their processes
13 had to change immediately. Training and development faced such a
14 daunting task. Their goal was to figure out how to rapidly and
15 effectively move their in-person courses to online-only
16 presentations. Led by Rhonda Skillern, the T&D team went to
17 work. Between March 20th and August 31st of last year, they
18 converted 73 of their 92 in-person courses into online training.
19 The first part of that process involved them learning Teams and
20 Zoom at expert levels, and then they had to put their class
21 attendees at ease using those tools as well. So they made desk
22 aids to help people use those better, and they, in that 16-month
23 period, their participant count for those classes that they put
24 on totaled 9,684 people, 868 of those were the other state
25 employees who came in to help TWC with the unemployment

1 insurance spike, and they were central to helping train them up.
2 One of the less obvious challenges may have been helping
3 employees and their team deal with Zoom fatigue. I know none of
4 us know what that's like but the idea of constantly being online
5 and juggling life that went on at the same time. Rhonda Skillern
6 described it as saying it was like running with the ground
7 crumbling beneath them as they canceled and rescheduled classes,
8 learned two virtual platforms that were themselves morphing, and
9 converted their courses to fit limitations of those platforms.
10 Had to figure out a whole new way of doing business. Rhonda and
11 her team did an exhaustive and masterful job at showing the
12 entire agency how to react to such disruption, and not only
13 continue but to improve and excel. With that, I'm delighted to
14 nominate these T&D members for a Star Award. When I call your
15 name, please stand up. Don't stand up and sit down or be like
16 training and development bop-a-moles so just stand up and I'll
17 go through the list. Daniel Castronovo, Luke Stollings, Pamela
18 Brochhausen, Elisa Spry, Dana Flynn, Alicia McDonald, Jacki
19 Everhart-Thompson, Tynna Dixon, Gordon Robison, Diane Saenz,
20 Lynnell Welden, Tracey Barrientes, Diana Garza-Louis, Daniella
21 Bocanegra, Jill VanHowe, Deb Aker, Monique Robertson, Matt
22 Williams, Tracey Shaw, Rhonda Skillern. Here you have it.

23 MR. SERNA: Chairman, I believe that all the
24 TWC staff did an outstanding job at shifting to remote work but
25 without the hard work of these individuals, then a lot of the

1 skills that they have would begin to stale especially our new
2 employees wouldn't get the training that they needed because
3 training is very important to us. So I do want to recognize them
4 for all their hard work so thank you all very much. I have
5 nothing else to report.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there anything else?
7 Any other order of business to come before the commission?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I'd just
9 like to add that what an impressive group of folks that we just
10 acknowledged so thank you for your dedication and ingenuity
11 during one of the toughest times that this agency has ever
12 experienced. So thank you for that.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I echo Commissioner
14 Alvarez's sentiments. I commend the team for staying ahead,
15 adjusting quickly, and taking action. That's what you guys did
16 and we appreciate that big time.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Absolutely. Is there a
18 motion to adjourn?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
20 we adjourn.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Chairman, before we
22 adjourn, I have one quick issue if possible. I'm working on an
23 initiative that's called Texas Interns Unite, and would like to
24 work with the team maybe to work on discussion papers if
25 necessary [inaudible] events that may be upcoming. So the Texas

1 Interns Unite initiative, we're looking at having a virtual
2 roundtable, a summit, then doing something around National
3 Internship Day with a Texas twist, and then another event in
4 September so I want to work with the team on those initiatives.

5 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. We'd be glad to.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: OK, then I'll second
7 that motion.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: OK.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
10 seconded to adjourn. We're adjourned.

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