Texas Beacons of Excellence

Jul, Aug, & Sep 2026

Upcoming Conferences

2026 College Autism Summit
November 8-11, 2026
Baltimore, MD
Register Here

2027 DADD Annual Conference
January 6-9, 2027
Phoenix, AZ
Register Here

Texas Transition Conference
February 10-12, 2027
San Marcos, TX
Register Here

Resources

Job Accommodation Network
askjan.org

disabilityinnovation.unt.edu

Partnership Led by: Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services; UNT WISE

Texas Beacons of Excellence In The Community

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

Here's a glimpse at what we've been working on—and an exciting look at what's next!

As we wrap up another quarter, the Texas Beacons of Excellence (TBE) Project continues to grow through connection, collaboration, and a shared commitment to creating meaningful employment opportunities. Each new partnership, participant success, and step forward reminds us of what is possible when we work together. We're grateful for everyone who continues to bring this work to life.

New Placements From Dallas ISD

Aug/Sept 2026 | Dallas ISD

These past couple of months, Kandise Britt- our Dallas ISD employment specialist, has been able to secure two competitive integrated employment placements for students.



Bernice Quiroz, a Dallas ISD student, was hired on at her local Cafe Brazil as a Barista this past August. Bernice will be supporting her co-workers with seating tables, preparing specialty drinks, and fulfilling to-go orders. This placement directly aligned with Bernice's interests in pursuing employment within a food service environment and culinary skills she developed within Career Institute-North's Culinary track program.



Jordan Lozano has been hired at Golden Chick on September 19th, 2026. Jordan's position as a Team Member will be integral within his team; he will be responsible for packaging food, fulfilling to-go orders, and cleaning all dining and workstation areas. This will be Jordan's first competitive integrated employment position.

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New CRP Partner: Strategic Employment Solutions

Fort Worth ISD



Marla serves as the Director of SESUSA LLC, where she leads with a passion for empowering individuals with disabilities.

With over 14 years of experience in Special Education and Transition Services, Marla has dedicated her career to helping individuals identify and achieve their career goals. She has a talent for understanding customers' unique strengths and challenges, creating pathways to success that build independence and confidence. Her professional accomplishments include building a respected transition program within a public school district and fostering collaboration across school districts and organizations to benefit students with disabilities.

Outside of work, Marla enjoys music, traveling, and exploring the great outdoors. Guided by her faith and favorite Bible verse John 15:12, "Love one another as I have loved you," Marla finds joy in serving others with compassion. A proud Texas native, she is committed to helping clients transform their lives through meaningful employment.

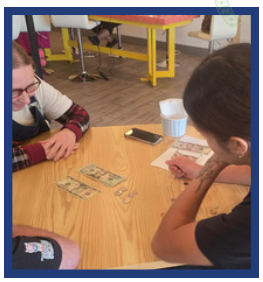
To connect with Marla, please contact her at (817) 988-8295 or at marla@sesusa.net. For more information regarding Strategic Employment Solutions, visit www.sesusa.net.

Making Strides in Hope Village

Amarillo, TX

Hope Village is continuing their work with their Second Cohort of Internships and have reported great success. Participants have been learning money skills and learning more about the POS system, taking some positive steps towards greater independence and responsibility. We're seeing some great things in their future!





WISE at Disability:IN!

July 28-30, 2026 | Dallas, TX

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the UNT WISE booth at the 2026 Disability:IN Global Conference & Expo to connect with our team, learn more about our work, and share ideas. It was a pleasure meeting so many passionate leaders who are driving meaningful change across their organizations and communities.





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Spreading the Wealth of Knowledge in Klein, TX

On July 10, Mounting Horizons completed TBE training and officially began working with Klein ISD students through the project. On July 21–22, Texas A&M University provided Person-Centered Thinking training to Klein ISD educators, reinforcing individualized approaches to supporting students. This was followed by in-person training on Supported Employment Best Practices on July 23–24 in Houston with both CRPs, UNT WISE and VCU.

In August, TBE continued its collaboration with Klein ISD through several important activities. On August 6, the TBE team participated in Klein ISD's Bridge Parent Orientation, supporting family engagement and awareness of transition-related services and opportunities. On August 10, TBE completed a Job Skills Training Workshop with Klein ISD educators to strengthen their knowledge and skills in preparing students for employment.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

NELSON MANDELA

On September 10, the TBE team presented "Navigating Disability Systems" at Klein ISD's Family Learning Night, providing families with information to help them better understand disability services and available support systems. On September 16–17, Mathematica, the TBE Project's national evaluator, conducted an on-site visit to Klein ISD's Bridge Center, including interviews to learn more about project implementation and progress.



Throughout August and September, TAMU also provided extensive technical assistance to Klein ISD teachers, offering ongoing guidance and support to strengthen project implementation and build educator capacity.

These accomplishments highlight Klein ISD's continued commitment to collaboration, professional development, and student success.

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On The Horizon

Amarillo, TX

ADVO is excited to be moving forward in a new partnership with BSA Hospital in Amarillo, TX. We anticipate many great opportunities for participants and are grateful for all the work that has gone into making this partnership possible!

BSA

Every new partnership, community event, and employment milestone brings us one step closer to our shared vision of expanding competitive integrated employment opportunities for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thank you to our participants, families, SSLC staff, CRPs, employers, and community partners for your continued collaboration and dedication. We look forward to sharing even more success stories in the months ahead!

Sincerely,

The Texas Beacons of Excellence Team

Moving Forward Together

September 9-10 | Amarillo, TX

VCU Consultants recently facilitated in-person Technical Assistance with ADVO Companies and Alliance Employment Solutions in Amarillo, Texas, and Amarillo College graciously hosted the sessions, providing a welcoming space for both CRPs to come together, share ideas, and strengthen their collaborative relationship.

As a strong supporter of Alliance Employment Solutions, Amarillo College has carved several internship opportunities across various departments, helping create valuable pathways for individuals to gain hands-on experience and explore employment opportunities. The college's willingness to host these sessions further highlights the importance of community partnerships in advancing supported employment.

The TA sessions focused on encouraging collaboration between ADVO Companies and Alliance Employment Solutions, strengthening communication, and identifying opportunities to work more cooperatively in support of the individuals they serve. Building a strong working relationship between the two CRPs is an important step toward sharing resources, expanding employer connections, and creating more opportunities for successful employment outcomes.

Alliance Employment Solutions continues to build momentum by developing employer relationships and expanding connections within the business community. The organization has also participated in TBE testimonials, helping highlight the impact of supported employment and the value of partnerships that promote meaningful employment opportunities.



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