



Engagement Opportunities

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HOW TO USE THIS OVERVIEW

UpSkill Houston is the workforce development division of the Greater Houston Partnership, advancing regional strategies that strengthen Houston’s talent pipeline and expand economic opportunity. Through UpSkill Houston, the Partnership brings together employers, educators and community organizations to shape practical, employer-informed solutions across the education-to-workforce continuum.

UpSkill Houston offers several ways for employers, education and training providers, community-based organizations, workforce partners, and civic leaders to help strengthen Houston’s talent ecosystem. Each opportunity below follows the same structure so readers can quickly understand what it is, how to participate, who is best suited to engage and what to do next.

Engagement Area	Opportunities
Guide the regional strategy	UpSkill Houston Steering Committee
Shape industry and workforce solutions	Energy Expressway
	Healthcare Pathways Working Group
	Work-Based Learning and Skills-First Working Group
Participate in programs and partnerships	Gulf Coast TradeUp Careers
Help build and activate Ready Set Next	Work-based learning submissions
	Talent Management Advisory
	Program Management Advisory
	Spring 2027 pilot participation



GUIDE THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

About

The UpSkill Houston Steering Committee brings together leaders from employers, education, workforce, nonprofit and public-sector organizations to guide the region’s workforce strategy. Members provide strategic insight, identify workforce priorities, help shape UpSkill Houston initiatives and foster cross-sector collaboration that strengthens talent pipelines and advances economic mobility across Greater Houston. The committee serves as the primary forum for sharing progress, identifying opportunities for collaboration and engaging partners in employer-led workforce solutions.

How you can participate

- Attend Steering Committee meetings every other month
- Share workforce challenges, promising practices and partnership opportunities
- Connect colleagues within your organization to relevant UpSkill Houston initiatives and working groups

Timing or commitment

- Meetings are held every other month

Who should participate

- Employers and industry associations
- K-12 and higher education institutions
- Workforce-focused community-based and nonprofit organizations
- Government and civic partners committed to strengthening Houston’s talent ecosystem

Relevant roles

- Employer and industry association leaders, typically vice president level and above in HR or talent
- K-12 CTE and industry partnership directors
- Higher education presidents, vice chancellors and vice presidents
- Nonprofit chief executive officers and executive directors

NEXT STEP

Employers should contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

Education and community partners should contact Alexis Elafros at aelafros@houston.org.

**SHAPE INDUSTRY AND
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**

Energy Expressway

About

Energy Expressway is a workforce development initiative sponsored by Quanta Services and CenterPoint Energy. It is designed to introduce recent high school graduates to rewarding careers in the energy and infrastructure sectors. The initial cohort will welcome 30 to 35 participants at the CenterPoint Training Center.

How you can participate

- Refer recent high school graduates who may be interested in applying to the program
- Sponsor a Lunch and Learn session during the program
- Participate in mock interviews with program participants

Timing or commitment

- Program dates: August 17-28

Who should participate

- Recent high school graduates interested in energy and infrastructure careers
- Employers with hiring needs in the fields listed below
- Organizations interested in supporting participant learning and employer exposure

Relevant experience or perspectives

- Electricians
- Lineworkers
- Gas operations
- Heavy-equipment occupations
- Renewable energy technicians

NEXT STEP

If you are interested in learning more about Energy Expressway and how to engage, contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

Healthcare Pathways Working Group

About

The Healthcare Pathways Working Group convenes hospital systems, community colleges, K-12 institutions, workforce organizations and community partners to strengthen regional talent pipelines for high-demand healthcare careers. The group is currently focused on imaging and radiology occupations and therapy careers, including physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. Current priorities include expanding clinical placement capacity, aligning education with employer needs and creating clear career pathways into healthcare occupations.

How you can participate

- Participate in regular working group meetings
- Contribute data, resources and opportunities that advance the group’s priorities

Timing or commitment

- Monthly meetings

Who should participate

- Healthcare employers
- Education and training providers
- Workforce boards and community-based or nonprofit organizations

Relevant roles

- HR, talent acquisition, workforce development and clinical education leaders.
- Program leaders, faculty and clinical education coordinators.
- Program leads and industry partnership staff.

NEXT STEP

Contact Alexis Elafros at aelafros@houston.org.

Work-Based Learning and Skills- First Working Group

About

The Work-Based Learning and Skills-First Working Group brings together employers, education providers, workforce organizations, nonprofits and public partners to strengthen Houston’s work-based learning ecosystem. The group is developing a regional strategy to expand high-quality career-connected experiences, advance skills-first talent practices, share employer and partner best practices, and identify tools and resources that make it easier for organizations to engage. This work supports stronger talent pipelines, greater economic mobility and a more competitive regional workforce.

How you can participate

- Participate actively in monthly meetings and relevant subgroups
- Share practices, tools and resources that can support regional outcomes
- Help identify and advance opportunities to expand work-based learning and skills-first practices

Timing or commitment

- Monthly meetings

Who should participate

This group is designed for the people doing the work, not only executive leadership.

- Employers
- K-12 and higher education institutions
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits
- Industry associations and public partners

Relevant roles

- Professionals responsible for developing partnerships
- Staff coordinating programs or career-connected learning initiatives
- Professionals engaging employers or education partners
- Staff responsible for implementing workforce initiatives within their organizations

NEXT STEP

Employers may contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

Education and community partners may contact Alexis Elafros at aelafros@houston.org.

**PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS
AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Gulf Coast TradeUp Careers

About

Bloomberg Philanthropies has awarded \$17.5 million to support a regional workforce initiative led by the Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub. In partnership with the Greater Houston Partnership, Houston Community College, K-12 school districts and workforce organizations, the initiative will expand apprenticeships, strengthen industry-driven career pathways and prepare talent for high-demand careers across the Greater Houston region.

How you can participate

- Explore participation as an employer sponsor
- Identify opportunities within your organization to support apprenticeship pathways and employer commitments

Timing or commitment

- First round of employer commitments: Friday, August 14

Who should participate

- Employers offering high-quality careers that do not require a four-year degree in the following fields:
 - Construction
 - Energy and utilities
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Infrastructure
 - Industrial trades

NEXT STEP

Employers interested in participating should contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

**HELP BUILD AND ACTIVATE READY
SET NEXT**



About

Ready Set Next is Houston’s end-to-end, AI-powered career navigation and connection system designed to align individuals with high-growth, family-sustaining careers while helping businesses connect with the workforce they need to prosper.

The platform brings employers, educators and community organizations into a single, coordinated ecosystem that helps individuals:

- Discover careers aligned with their interests and strengths
- Understand required skills, education and wages
- Access training, support services and work-based experiences
- Connect to real job opportunities and long-term career pathways

Unlike fragmented tools that address only one part of the journey, Ready Set Next supports the full lifecycle of career development, from early exploration through employment and advancement. At its core, the platform uses workforce demand and individual potential to provide data-informed recommendations that improve through user interaction and feedback.

Ways to engage

- Submit work-based learning experiences
- Join the Talent Management Advisory
- Join the Program Management Advisory
- Explore participation as a spring 2027 pilot partner

NEXT STEP

Learn more and subscribe to updates at readysetnext.com.

Promote Your Work-Based Learning Experiences

About

Ready Set Next is building a regional library of work-based learning experiences that will connect learners and jobseekers with career-connected opportunities across Houston. The library includes internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, company tours, career fairs, workshops, training programs, networking events, industry projects and other experiences offered by employers, education providers, nonprofits and community partners. Using AI-powered matching, the platform will connect experiences with participants based on factors such as age, career interests, eligibility and career goals, making it easier for organizations to reach the right audiences while expanding access to meaningful career-connected learning.

How you can participate

- Submit planned work-based learning experiences taking place between August 2026 and August 2027
- Continue sharing new experiences as they are created throughout the year
- Promote the submission opportunity within your organization and partner network
- Share any other work-based learning experiences you're aware of across your networks

Timing or commitment

- Submission window: Experiences taking place from August 2026 through August 2027

Who should participate

- Employers
- Education and training providers
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits

Relevant roles

- Professionals who coordinate, develop or manage career-connected experiences within their organizations

NEXT STEP

Employers may contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

Education and community partners may contact Alexis Elafros at aelafros@houston.org.

Talent Management Advisory Committee

About

The Talent Management Advisory Committee will provide structured, real-world input into feature definition, workflow design, data governance considerations and implementation readiness for Ready Set Next Release 2 and beyond. Members will help ground platform decisions in operational reality so employer-facing tools are practical, aligned with incentives, compliant with regulations and valuable to the organizations that will use them.

How you can participate

- Review proposed features, workflows and design mockups
- Share employer and talent-management requirements and operating realities
- Identify adoption barriers, incentive considerations, compliance needs and implementation risks
- Participate in optional small-group prototype testing

Timing or commitment

- Term: Six to nine months during the definition and design phase
- Meeting cadence: Monthly, 60 to 90 minutes
- Additional input: One to two asynchronous reviews of mockups or workflows
- Optional small-group prototype testing sessions

Who should participate

- Employers and industry representatives with direct knowledge of talent acquisition, workforce strategy and skills-first hiring.

Relevant roles

- Talent acquisition leaders
- HR and workforce strategy executives
- Skills-first hiring champions

Relevant experience or perspectives

- Candidate-matching logic and explainability
- Skills tagging and validation against real employer demand
- Resume visibility and employer dashboard design
- Job-posting structure and quality standards
- Industry-specific hiring signals and skills benchmarks
- Mentorship and work-based learning integration
- Data privacy, compliance and trust

NEXT STEP

Contact Anne-Marie Olholm at aolholm@houston.org.

Program Management Advisory Committee

About

The Program Management Advisory Committee will provide structured, real-world input into feature definition, workflow design, data governance considerations and implementation readiness for Ready Set Next Release 2 and beyond. Members will help ground platform decisions in operational reality so education- and partner-facing tools are practical, aligned with incentives, compliant with regulations and valuable to the institutions and organizations that will use them.

How you can participate

- Review proposed features, workflows and design mockups
- Share program-management, advising and participant-support needs
- Identify adoption barriers, accountability considerations, integration needs and implementation risks
- Participate in optional small-group prototype testing

Timing or commitment

- Term: Six to nine months during the definition and design phase
- Meeting cadence: Monthly, 60 to 90 minutes
- Additional input: One to two asynchronous reviews of mockups or workflows
- Optional small-group prototype testing sessions

Who should participate

- Education, workforce and community partners with direct responsibility for managing programs, cohorts, participants or institutional implementation.

Relevant roles

- K-12 counselors and CTE leaders
- Community college workforce administrators
- Nonprofit program managers
- Workforce board representatives
- Postsecondary institutional partners

Relevant experience or perspectives

- Cohort and participant-management tools
- Reporting dashboards and outcome visibility
- Alignment with CTE, endorsement, funding and accountability structures
- Student information system and learning management system integration considerations
- Human-in-the-loop intervention workflows
- Equity monitoring and bias mitigation

NEXT STEP

Contact Alexis Elafros at aelfros@houston.org.





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