



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Workforce Solutions Capital Area Seeks Employer Feedback on Hiring Challenges *Survey is Hosted in Conjunction with the Austin Chamber*

AUSTIN – Workforce Solutions Capital Area (Workforce Solutions), in conjunction with the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce (Austin Chamber), is partnering with The Graduate! Network to encourage Austin/Travis County-area businesses to complete the Bridging the Talent Gap employer survey by December 31. The survey is available at <http://tiny.cc/BridgingTalentGapSurvey> (full address: <https://bridgingthetalentgap.org/austin-employer-survey>).

The goal of the survey is to identify and address skill shortages and opportunities for public-private partnerships across our community. Local employers representing various industries will be asked to share the key challenges they face in attracting, retaining and upskilling the talent needed to grow their businesses.

“Our community is known as an economic powerhouse with low unemployment and a highly skilled workforce,” says Tamara Atkinson, Chief Executive Officer of Workforce Solutions Capital Area. “However, to maintain that positive reputation and momentum, it is becoming increasingly crucial for the voices of local employers to be clearly heard and reflected in new initiatives. Employers need to be both thought partners and the final ‘customers’ in the workforce development system.”

Workforce Solutions and its partners will evaluate the survey results to determine how our workforce and education community can better assist employers by more effectively training new hires and building innovative partnerships to upskill their current workforce.

Atkinson continues, “Workforce Solutions believes this survey will help us dig deeper into one of the lesser known benefits of companies: tuition assistance programs. These programs offer workers the opportunity to enter an entry-level occupation in a career pathway and gradually gain additional education and experience, all while working with the same employer. For workers, these programs lead to increased wages and responsibilities. For employers, tuition assistance programs elevate the skill level of their workforce while potentially reducing turnover – and therefore the cost of recruitment and onboarding. In today’s tight economy where companies compete for qualified workers, tuition assistance programs provide a significant opportunity for employers to attract and upskill their talent.”

Survey responses will also help inform and support the community-wide efforts of the Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan (Master Community Workforce Plan). With rapidly rising costs of living threatening affordability, many Austinites are being pushed out of the community they love. In response to this crisis, Austin-area workforce development community-based organizations, training providers, and employers launched the five-year Master Community Workforce Plan to help individuals living in poverty find a path to financial stability. By aligning education and training providers’ training programs with employers’ needs, this workforce plan will help 10,000 economically

disadvantaged individuals secure middle-skill jobs by 2021. Continued employer buy-in and partnership is vital to overall the success of the Master Community Workforce Plan.

Aggregate survey results will be publicly available in the spring.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact Leslie Puckett at leslie.puckett@wfscapitalarea.com / 512.597.7121.

About Workforce Solutions Capital Area

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board is the publicly-funded workforce board for Travis County. Through strong partnerships and strategic collaborations, Workforce Solutions is leading the region's workforce system in the development of a world-class workforce. For more information, visit www.wfscapitalarea.com.

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