

Texas Workforce Press Release

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TWC Awards \$2 million for High-Tech Career Initiatives

Nine universities share funds to promote computer science, engineering to youth

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has awarded nine grants totaling nearly \$2 million for the Texas Youth in Technology Strategic Workforce Development initiative. Supported with Workforce Investment Act Statewide Activities funds, the program is one of several workforce development strategies to support Gov. Rick Perry’s statewide industry cluster initiative.

“To increase Texas’ global competitiveness, we must have an educated workforce that is ready to meet the growing demand of the industries of the future dependent on science and engineering,” Gov. Perry said. “Initiatives such as Texas Youth in Technology help Texas graduate more students in these emerging fields, positioning Texas to compete nationally and internationally for jobs in the 21st century.”

“The Texas Youth in Technology initiative and grants will help prepare our teens and young adults for future high-tech career opportunities,” said TWC Chair Diane Rath. “In support of Gov. Perry’s statewide industry cluster initiative, the nine grants will help keep Texas in the forefront of the global economy.”

The Texas Youth in Technology initiative and resulting projects will establish programs to increase post-secondary enrollments, retention and graduates in engineering and computer science. Working with the Texas Engineering and Technical Consortium (TETC), the grant program also will increase collaboration between Texas employers, institutions of higher education, and engineering and science departments.

“A diverse workforce, skilled in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, is critical to the future economic success and competitiveness of Texas,” said Arturo Sanchez III, TETC Chair and Texas Instruments Manager of Workforce Development.

The nine grant recipients include:

- **Southern Methodist University** – to implement a seven-week engineering and computer science summer camp for 14- to 18-year-old students; provide scholarships for participants, assist work/study students enrolled in the School of Engineering; and develop mentoring and tutoring programs to increase engineering student retention.
- **Tarrant County College District** – to implement five computer science and engineering summer camps in partnership with Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, area businesses, local school districts, The University of Texas at Arlington School of Engineering and local community colleges to increase career opportunities in both industries.
- **Texas A&M University** – to implement a program that will increase post-secondary enrollments, retention and the number of graduates in computer science and engineering technology, with a focus on under-represented students. The program will provide scholarships to female high school juniors to attend summer camp. A peer-led learning program for college students will encourage students participating in an introductory computer science course.

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Youth Tech Grants

- **Texas Tech University** – to increase engineering student recruitment and retention through a series of one-week summer sessions with stipends in math, science and computer science for high-school students; paid summer engineering internships in surrounding rural communities; stipends for peer mentors in math and science to disadvantaged area high schools; and assistance for community college students transitioning to the engineering program at Texas Tech.
- **The University of Texas at Austin** – to expand GeoFORCE, which works primarily with high-achieving Hispanic students from Southwest Texas to increase participation, diversity and graduation rates of Texas youth in science and engineering. The program will expand to Houston and include students with diverse backgrounds through summer academies, camps and field trips focused on math and sciences.
- **The University of Texas at Austin** – for computer science outreach to middle and high school students, teachers and counselors; the development of in-house mentoring for computer science students to improve graduation rates; to expand current recruitment of top high school students; reaching out to female students and minorities through positive role models and summer camp; and high school teacher and counselor workshops focusing on the computer science job market and importance of high school math and science courses.
- **University of Houston** – to implement summer programs for under-represented high-school students that will integrate science, math and engineering principles to support increasing the number of engineering graduates entering the Texas workforce; and a summer camp for college students to prepare them for their second-year engineering curriculum.
- **University of North Texas** – to expand mobile summer computer robotics camps for middle and high school female students and special student programs to include all students. The program also will create camps for high school counselors and teachers to receive hands-on computer science and engineering experience, as well as instruction on careers and education in those fields.
- **University of Texas at San Antonio** – to recruit minority females ages 17 through 19 to attend summer engineering survival skills workshop and math preparation program for engineers. Freshman participants will receive a stipend to work in a research laboratory.

The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.

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