

## TEDC 2016 WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

### Introduction

The 2016 TEDC Workforce Excellence Awards will be presented at the TEDC's 2016 Mid-Year Conference in Irving, Texas, on June 9, 2016. Awards in each of the five categories will be presented to the community or region that has demonstrated the most significant contribution to workforce development in their community/region and in the State of Texas.

### Applicant

Name of Community/Region/Workforce Board: Workforce Solutions Alamo

Community Contact Name: Lydia Elder Title: PR/Business Communications Specialist

Address: 115 E. Travis Ste. 220 City: San Antonio State: TX Zip: 78205

Phone: 210-510-4686 Fax: 210-272-3290

Email: lelder@wsalamo.org

Website: workforcesolutionsalamo.org

Community Population: over 500k

### Summary Review

Please attach a brief description of the workforce development initiative. Within this description, address the awards criteria of innovativeness, transferability, community commitment, measured objectives and secondary benefits. Please provide the start date of the project and completion date, if applicable. Please provide measurable results from the project in the past 12 months. The workforce development initiative can be a long-term project, but must show measurable results in the award year. The nomination can be no longer than five conventionally formatted 8.5" x 11" pages. Please submit support materials to [amy@texasedc.org](mailto:amy@texasedc.org).

### Nomination Submitted by:

*(section below to be completed by TEDC Member)*

Member Name: Tom Long

Address: 602 E. Commerce St.

City: San Antonio State: TX Zip: 78205

Phone: 210-226-1394 ext 104 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: tlong@sanantonioedf.com

**TEDC WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION**  
**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ALAMO AND ALAMO STEM WORKFORCE COALITION**  
**APRIL 2016**

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The Alamo STEM Workforce Coalition (ASWC) was formed in 2015 as a partnership between Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA), the Alliance for Technology Education in Advanced Manufacturing (ATEAM), San Antonio Math and Sciences Education Coalition (SAMSEC), Alamo Colleges, Education Service Center (ESC) - Region 20, Pi6 Council of Bexar County and the University of Texas at San Antonio Academy for Teacher Excellence (UTSA ATE).

The partnership originally began with the purpose of connecting teachers with employers in learning how math and science is applied in the real world. Since its inception, the partnership has grown into an opportunity for professional development by offering an externship for teachers, school counselors and other educators.

During these professional development days, program participants are provided with the tools they need to go back and educate their students and peers. Participating employers from the Alamo area include H-E-B, CPS Energy, Holt-CAT, Toyota and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS). In the summer of 2016, 150 teachers have enrolled in the externship program and will be travelling to 28 employer sites to learn how math and science are applied in real world workforce settings.

The goal of the Alamo STEM Workforce Coalition is to provide teachers with professional development opportunities designed to increase student awareness of in-demand jobs in the Alamo region to be better prepared for such occupations. In turn, employers will gain a competitive edge due to the rising number of students entering STEM degree pathways, thereby contributing to the future workforce and economic growth of the San Antonio region.

**INNOVATIVENESS**

The Teachers Externship Program provides highly innovative teaching methods designed to enhance the learning experience for students. Project-Based Learning (PBL) Sessions are provided for teachers in each session, offering a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges. This type of active and engaged learning inspires students to retain a deeper knowledge of subjects they are studying. Research has shown that PBL students retain learned information for longer periods of time, feel better equipped in their problem solving capabilities, and perform better in tasks that emphasize understanding and application of knowledge.

Innovativeness is further demonstrated by offering a NEPRIS license to teachers upon successful completion of the externship. NEPRIS is a web-based tool that connects teachers with industry experts to make curriculum topics relevant for students in everyday life. It is designed to help educators expose students to different career and education paths, find real world applications to what students are learning, and inspire them to choose a STEM pathway.

NEPRIS is designed to facilitate tasks for both companies and educators in setting up a meeting between the two, breaking down geographic barriers by providing a virtual connection. Doing so enables businesses to scale their outreach efforts beyond face-to-face meetings and allows educators to impact all students at the curriculum level where they need it most.

## **TRANSFERABILITY**

Programming for the externship is directly transferable to adult-based education (ABE) systems that can utilize this model to help adults overcome barriers to education in order to make more informed career choices or upgrade their skillset. Additionally, school district administrators could change their curriculum to implement the externship program as a continuing education requirement. In doing so, the program would not be grant-funded; rather, funds for the externship would be covered by school board budgets.

The externship program for teachers is transferable to school districts nationwide and to be implemented as early as elementary school as a means for shaping a successful career path for our youth and leverage their skills and abilities in the workforce.

## **COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AND LEVERAGE**

The teacher externship program exemplifies a strong commitment to the community through professional development opportunities that offer a tangible connection between the needs of employers and an emerging workforce.

The ASWC works closely with educators from the Alamo region, job training programs supported by Workforce Solutions Alamo and the Texas Workforce Commission. By leveraging their partnership with ATEAMS and SA Works, WSA was able to attain matching funds for the externship. Training and education programs offered by Alamo Colleges and UTSA are also leveraged.

Programming for the ASWC teacher's externship leverages funding from multiple sources including state, county and local workforce funds alongside corporate contributions. Workforce Solutions Alamo has successfully leveraged business partnerships with area employers to include Holt-Cat, HEB and Toyota Manufacturing of Texas to become participants and externship host site locations.

## **MEASURED OBJECTIVES**

The success of 2015 resulted in additional matching funds by ATEAMS for 2016 and the additional partnership of SA Works. Since 2015, ASWC has seen a 50 percent increase in the number of participating educators for the externship project.

According to findings from the ASWC Externships for Teachers 2015: Fall Semester Evaluation Report, the externship project managed by WSA achieved its intended objectives. First, math and science teachers learned about the practical applications of math and science in the real world. Second, the teachers learned about specific companies in the San Antonio region and the desired knowledge, skills and characteristics the employers seek in potential candidates.

Educators who are enrolled in this summer's classes will create project-based learning lesson plan to incorporate real world workforce challenges based on their experiences from the externship. In turn, those lessons will be taught to at least **120 students per day** in their classes. This means

approximately 18,000 students throughout Region 20 will be taught with the relevant lesson plans developed by teachers based on how employers actually apply math and science in the workplace.

## **SECONDARY BENEFITS**

Secondary benefits of the teacher externship project include students who will be better informed about STEM-related career pathways and a highly qualified talent pool of job candidates with the knowledge, skills and abilities to match employer's needs. In the long term, implications would include the emergence of stronger partnerships and more strategic relationships between businesses and the communities they serve. Lastly, teachers have shown increased interest in participation and are much more passionate about engaging students in interesting and technologically advanced lessons that can be applied to real world situations.