



UPSKILL UPDATE

MARCH 2020

A NOTE FROM PETER BEARD AND UPSKILL HOUSTON

Friends,

I know that COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and our organizations. I truly wish you well and hope for your continued wellness and safety. We understand that our partners have shifted their priorities to deal with immediate issues. Community organizations are working with their clients whose lives are being upended with economic uncertainty. School leaders are supporting students and teachers who are trying to navigate remote and virtual learning. Employers are continuing to run their businesses while trying to ensure their workers are safe and healthy.

I wanted to give you a sense of how the Partnership and UpSkill Houston are working during this time. As with many of you, we have closed our offices and moved to virtual meetings. The staff are teleworking from home (and are available by phone and email). We are curating and sharing the best resources on addressing COVID-19 with the region. See: <https://www.houston.org/coronavirus>

In terms of UpSkill Houston specifically, we focused our attention in 2019 on developing a bold five-year strategy to accelerate and scale our work. We will be sharing the details of that strategy soon. However, we've already started working on elements of the strategy, and, in the coming weeks, the UpSkill Houston team will focus on advancing two key pillars of that work:

1. Communicating the skills and credentials that are needed in some of the priority occupations—including technical and cognitive/soft skills; and
2. Strengthening career guidance and coaching with a focus on tools and information to support career counselors in schools and colleges and career coaches in community organizations.

Our strategy work has been informed by updated labor market information, which we will be releasing in the coming weeks. This information will focus our work on middle-skill occupations that are projected to be in high demand with high volume need, as well as pay above the median wage. So, we will continue to work with our industry partners to identify the skills needed in these high-priority occupations. In addition, we will be convening working groups of our executive committee to build out our work to strengthen career guidance and coaching.

We believe that these efforts will position our collective work for success as we emerge from the impacts of COVID-19 on Houston and our residents. I wish you good health and strength in the days and weeks ahead.

Peter Beard

Senior Vice President, Regional Workforce Development, Greater Houston Partnership



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 26:** Greater Houston Partnership: COVID-19 Houston Business Forum: Employment & Workforce Considerations During A Crisis, featuring representatives of the Texas Workforce Commission, Workforce Solutions and Insperity ([More information](#))
- **March 27:** Parker Dewey: Launching a Micro-Internship Program, providing information on how organizations are engaging college students on short-term, remote projects to address needs ([More information](#))

The Greater Houston Partnership COVID-19 Houston Business Forum is a digital series providing the latest information and analysis on the crisis and its economic impact through teleconferences with local experts. See upcoming events in this series as they are scheduled [here](#).

RESOURCES

- COVID-19 Resources for Employers ([Texas Workforce Commission](#))
- COVID-19 Resources for Job Seekers ([Texas Workforce Commission](#))
- Coronavirus Response & Resources ([U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#))

Led by and for employers, UpSkill Houston builds the pipeline of skilled workers to grow the regional economy and provide opportunity for all Houstonians.

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