



# UPSKILL UPDATE

**JANUARY 2020**

## **PUTTING TALENT FIRST: HELPING TO MAKE HOUSTON A GREAT GLOBAL CITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

More than 200 critical stakeholders—led by employers—came together over the past five years, as part of UpSkill Houston, to create the foundation for a stronger, more effective regional talent pipeline. We are seeing great examples of employers working with education and community partners to create pathways to good jobs for Houston residents while building a higher quality talent pool for industry. These partners are putting talent first to strengthen the region's businesses and its economy and ensure our residents share in the region's economic prosperity.

Despite our strong foundation, there are challenges ahead that UpSkill Houston must tackle to ensure the Houston region has the talent and workforce it needs for the future. Our economy and industries are being reshaped by technology and other global forces at a more rapid pace than before, impacting talent needs. As technology affects all jobs—creating new ones, augmenting others, and automating some—digital skills will be an increasing requirement in all occupations. Industry is also placing a premium on soft and non-cognitive skills.

We have work to do to ensure that the Houston region has the finest workforce in the world and provides opportunity for future generations of Houstonians. This will require putting our region's talent first by empowering and enabling all of Houston's residents to follow pathways to prosperity and opportunity.

Given our challenges, we need to accelerate and scale our efforts. We need to communicate the competencies and skills industry needs to the partners that support and develop the talent in our region. We need to continuously improve the educational curricula and programs that help individuals develop the necessary skills for the good jobs that our region's employers offer.

We need to provide information, tools, and support to the people who guide and coach individuals along the career pathways that lead to rewarding occupations. We need to help individuals try out career pathways and guide them to the education and skills that lead to a good life for them and their families. This includes ensuring that everyone understands that a four-year college degree is not required for success and a good-paying career.

Our investment in upskilling and reskilling of our existing workforce; our investment in the education and skills of our future workforce; and our investment in bringing untapped populations into our economy are all necessary to maintain our quality of life and ensure the next generation of Houstonians inherit a prosperous and growing region.

We need all of you who have been leaders in UpSkill Houston this far to increase your commitment and enroll your peers in this important work. Together, we can realize our vision of being a great global city in the 21st century by putting talent first and mobilizing around our ambitious plan—Vision 2025.

*- Peter Beard, Senior Vice President, Regional Workforce Development, Greater Houston Partnership*



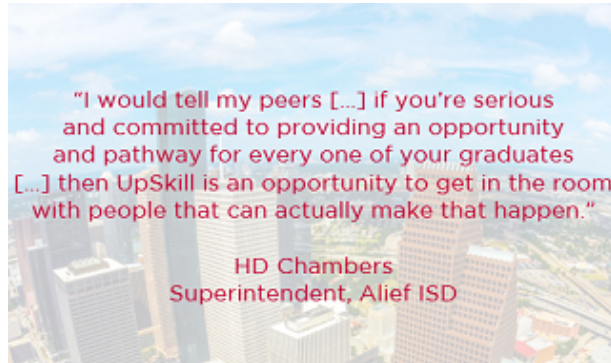
## EXPAND OUR CHAMPIONS BY ENGAGING YOUR PEERS

UpSkill Houston is preparing to embark on a new five-year strategy, Vision 2025 (referenced above), which will require us to broaden deepen our engagement with our partners.

In the final segment of our 2019 round table discussion, UpSkill Houston executive committee members Linda Aldred, Texas Children's Hospital senior vice president and chief human resources officer, HD Chambers, superintendent of Alief Independent School District, Dr. Brenda Hellyer, chancellor of San Jacinto College, Rene Solis, BakerRipley chief program officer, and our executive committee chair, Gilbane Building Company's Senior Vice President, Director of Strategic Services, Dan Gilbane share how they talk about UpSkill Houston within their professional communities.

We encourage you to share this and other UpSkill Houston videos as you engage with your peers to expand our champions.

[This and more videos highlighting UpSkill Houston's approach on are available on YouTube here.](#)



*Click above to view "Engaging Our Peers and Expanding Our Champions" on YouTube*

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NEXT OP & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEPH DRAKE

UpSkill Houston partner [NextOp](#) was founded to help enlisted servicemen and servicewomen find meaningful careers following their military service.

In August 2019, Stephanie Drake was named NextOp's executive director, succeeding John W. Boerstler. She joined UpSkill Houston's executive committee in December 2019.

Drake shared with UpSkill Houston how NextOp staff work with job candidates to "civilianize" their experience while showing employers how to attract talented veterans. In 2020, NextOp will expand opportunities for mentors and focus on placing veterans in energy careers.



*New UpSkill Houston executive committee member Steph Drake, NextOp executive director, sees value in collaborating with initiative partners*

[Read the full story - "Different Mission, Different Resources, Transferable Abilities" - here.](#)

## CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS CONSIDER GROWTH, MESSAGING

Participants in the first Construction Sector Council meeting of 2020 discussed how to focus council work this year to grow the Council's employer base and target parents with positive industry messaging.

[See details from these discussions here.](#)

## UPSKILL IN THE COMMUNITY

### BRIDGEYEAR ALLIANCE BOOSTS HANDS-ON CAREER EXPLORATION

This month, UpSkill Houston partner [BridgeYear](#) launched a pioneering alliance with the [National Kitchen and Bath Association \(NKBA\)](#). Using BridgeYear's unique twist on job fairs - mobile, hands-on labs that allow students to 'try on' different careers - the BridgeYear/NKBA Career Tour will engage students through hands-on career simulations tailored to the kitchen and bath industry.

BridgeYear expects this national tour to reach 24,000 students over three years.

This alliance exemplifies the type of hands-on career exploration we believe will help prepare students to make smart decisions about what education and careers they want to pursue after high school. Partnerships between workforce development and industry organizations can strengthen and clarify pathways into good careers.

By partnering directly with businesses, BridgeYear customizes their Career Test Drive® programming to fit industry needs all while exposing youth to high-growth, high-demand career opportunities providing economic stability and independence.

Fox Business caught up with NKBA CEO Bill Darcy (pictured at far right above) at the Las Vegas event. [Watch his interview here.](#)



*New alliance marks a new future for workforce development and UpSkill Houston partner BridgeYear*

*(Photo credit: B&R Mixed Media)*

### ADVOCATE FOR YOUR INDUSTRY & CONNECT WITH JOB-SEEKERS

Research demonstrates that enhanced career exploration possibilities and more effective career guidance can help expand the pipeline of qualified workers for hundreds of thousands of middle-skill occupations in our area.

Many UpSkill Houston partners seek opportunities to improve awareness of careers within their industries and to promote accurate perceptions of these careers. Other partners seek employers

to meet with students, parents, and job-seekers at their career expos and job fairs.

We have compiled some of these opportunities for partners to offer or send individuals to receive in-person career exploration and guidance coming up in Greater Houston. We encourage you to add opportunities to this list as you learn about them.

[View this introductory list here.](#)



*Employers can use job fairs and expos to improve awareness and perceptions of industry careers*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February 5:** Talent Resources Group - ReelWorkplace ([See event information](#))
- **February 11:** Education & Workforce Council ([See event information](#))
- **March 3:** State of Houston's Petrochemical Industry ([See event information](#))
- **March 6:** 9th Annual Rise to the Top ([See event information](#))

## WHAT WE'RE READING

- Houston's Role in Global Energy Transition a Major Focus of Greater Houston Partnership Annual Meeting ([Greater Houston Partnership](#))
- 2020 State of the American Business Speech: A Year of Meaningful Action ([U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#))
- 'Degree inflation' — like grade inflation — hurts workers as it does employers ([The Hill](#))
- The Overlooked Value of Certificates and Associate's Degrees ([Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#))

UpSkill Houston, powered by the Greater Houston Partnership, is an engine for change in developing a skilled workforce that creates opportunity for all.

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