

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY

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LEAD YP: Class of 2020

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Introduction

Even before the onset of a global pandemic, there has been a common theme amongst the DFW metroplex of North Texas. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer in Dallas County at an alarming rate, even as the population booms. And while the unemployment rate is low, not all jobs in Dallas County come with an average paycheck that covers cost-of-living expenses.

Equal and sufficient job opportunities are not always available in lower income areas which causes many individuals in these areas to look for jobs elsewhere, however, due to the large circumference of the DFW metroplex many individuals find it hard to reach these opportunities due to a lack of transportation infrastructure coverage. "Job sprawl to the suburbs has created a commuting challenge that hits low-income residents the hardest," the Census Bureau says. "Many may not be able to afford a car and if access to public transportation is limited, those living in cities cannot take advantage of job opportunities in suburbs miles away." "As new job opportunities are moving to the suburbs, it's important and critical that workplaces are accessible for employees, especially low-income workers who don't own a car," Reza Sardari, said during an April 2019 webinar hosted by the Census Bureau.

Economists call the gap between where the jobs are and where people live "spatial mismatch," which can cause high unemployment and longer spells of joblessness for low-income populations. Though the insufficient coverage of public transportation is a hurdle for many, several local organizations work to provide transportation resources and job readiness support in the DFP area for those who depend on the services most.

The agenda for Group 2 is to provide local community resources that can help with individual transportation needs and workforce preparation for members of the DFW community that are impacted by these disparities the hardest.



Bios

Kevin Beck

Native of Dallas who attended Bishop Lynch High School and Texas Tech University. 10+ years commercial lender with experience in real estate, private banking, not for profit, and corporate lending.

Clayton James Guillory

Clayton James Guillory is building his career as a Virtual Design and Construction Engineer for The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company. From his roots as a proud Louisiana native and fighting Tiger, every day he sets forth to obtain willpower, courage, and personal strength. These formidable attributes have laid the groundwork for where he is today. He works each day to meet the mission of Whiting-Turner in achieving integrity, excellence, experience, and leadership by improving the quality of his work and the service he provides to clients, maintaining dedication to the highest moral principles, and engaging in a challenging and safe environment where he is able to achieve his career goals. Clayton aims sky-high for excellence in his Virtual Design work. As a function of the team, he develops solutions for a variety of technical issues of all scope and complexity, as well as establishing Quality Assurance and Quality Control coordination in the field utilizing technology. Clayton brings in his passion for excellence, strategy, and innovation to the city's ever-thriving corporate world. In the next five years, he anticipates flourishing in his role and growing the breadth of his responsibilities by continuously involving himself in service, leadership, networking, and policy throughout the city.

Amanda Kolle

Amanda Kolle has a passion for helping others and started her career in the nonprofit sector out of college. Over the last three years, Amanda has had the opportunity to support, connect, and learn from nonprofit leaders and young professionals across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Currently, in her role at Communities Foundation of Texas, she works to provide nonprofit peers with trainings and resources to support their fundraising efforts. In addition, she helps lead a cohort of young professionals each year with the vision to raise awareness on the importance of philanthropy and the impact individuals can make on the nonprofit sector and in their community.

Casey Sharp

As a national account executive for BlueCross BlueShield of Texas (BCBSTX), Casey is responsible for the overall health care experience of more than 50,000 members nationwide. Casey is an award-winning leader who inspires those around her with her passion and charisma. Casey is a native Texan and former world champion equestrian, who received a degree in Bioenvironmental Sciences from Texas A&M University. In her free time Casey can be found riding one of her five bicycles, taking her dogs “Jenna and Penny” to the park, or traveling somewhere new.

Goals

Equal and sufficient job opportunities are not always available in lower income areas. This causes many individuals in these areas to look for jobs elsewhere, however, due to the large circumference of the DFW metroplex many individuals find it hard to reach these opportunities due to a lack of transportation infrastructure. Organizations and community resources such as Southern Dallas Link, CitySquare, and Lyft offer programs designed to help employees get to and from areas not supported by public transportation. These organizations also offer transportation to workforce training, and job interviews to help mitigate the spatial mismatch that many communities face.

Local Resources

The next few pages of this paper will highlight several local nonprofit and for-profit organizations that are providing support in the space of workforce development and transportation. In order of appearance:

1. City Square (p. 5)
2. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas (p. 7)
3. Catholic Charities Dallas (p. 9)
4. Prison Entrepreneurship (p. 10)
5. Per Scholas (p. 12)
6. Southern Dallas Link (p.13)
7. Lyft (p. 15)




CitySquare was started in 1988 by businessman Jim Sowell due to his concerns for the problems associated with poverty in the DFW metroplex. CitySquare began operating under the name Central Dallas Food Pantry in a strip center at Henderson and Central Expressway. In 1990, the organization became a 501C3 non-profit organization and had to relocate due to its growth and became Central Dallas Ministries. In October 2010, Central Dallas Ministries changed its name to CitySquare to better reflect the commitment to equality, inclusiveness, and recognition that fighting poverty involves bringing the entire community together in the heart of the city. In November 2014, CitySquare relocated most of its direct service programs, including the food pantry and workforce training department, to its now opportunity center – a 53,000 sq ft campus located at the corner of Malcolm X Boulevard and I-30. Through City Square’s 30+ year history they have grown into a broad organization offering a comprehensive array of social services that address four key areas related to the persistence of poverty: hunger, health, housing, and hope. All these programs provide more than 50,000 human touches in Dallas and Paris, TX.

One of the important services provided by CitySquare is their WorkPaths program which offers unemployed/underemployed adults intensive pre-employment training programs designed to increase functional skill levels – enhancing employability and/or enabling participants to continue with additional training or education to help progress and success.

City Square employs staff who serve as advocates to assist program graduates with job placement and address barriers to employment, then stay in contact with the workers and employers to monitor progress and success.

The WorkPaths program offers the following components:

- Path2Success(P2S): This is a soft skills portion of their training program where their students learn the ins-and-outs of applying for a job, being a good employee, and keeping the job they have secured

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- Financial Empowerment: This program teaches financial strategies for saving, budgeting, and becoming more informed and educated about how to spend wisely to attain financial freedom and break the cycle of poverty
 - Hospitality Program: This is a six-week program that provides hospitality training, along with job creation. WorkPaths incorporates classroom instruction, industry certifications, hands-on learning, and on-the-job training. A participant in the program gains access to careers in a thriving hospitality market which offers many opportunities for work such as the hotel industry, convention services, restaurants, and entertainment venues. A participant will also receive certifications that include ServSafe and TABC.
 - Build4Success: This is a 6-7 week construction worker training program for men and women that covers various topics such as electrical and welding, how to get and keep a job, and graduates receive industry-standard certifications.




WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS **GREATER DALLAS**

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas' (WFSDallas) sole mission is to “provide competitive solutions for employers through quality people and for people through quality jobs”. WFSDallas is a quasi-governmental and non-profit organization which is funded by federal grants and private money. Funding sources include Texas Workforce Commissions, and the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Education.

WFSDallas oversees more than \$120MM annually and invests in all things workforce. Funding from the federal government is typically directed for workforce training, talent development, skills training, adult education, and English training skills. They leverage a variety of public and private resources in different ways ranging from transitioning highly skilled individuals into new careers to help unemployed and underemployed people find work and this usually included providing working families with transportation assistance and childcare subsidies. The availability of quality childcare as a key component of building a stronger Dallas area workforce.

- Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas sponsors customized training for tens of thousands of Dallas-area candidates each year. They work with community colleges and local certified training providers to train on in-demand occupations.
- WFSDallas provides cheaper ways for employers to find candidates through the WorkInTexas job matching system and sponsors multiple hiring events and specialized recruiting services.
- A major incentive for Companies to work with WFSDallas is they help employers receive tax credits for hiring workers from targeted groups. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit for employers for giving those who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. These targeted groups include the following: long and short term welfare recipients, veterans, food stamp recipients, people with disabilities, ex-felons, and social security disability recipients.

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- RAPID RESPONSE is an outplacement service provided when Dallas employers are facing downsizing. The services provided ease the transition between jobs to facilitate laid off workers quick return to productive employment.
 - 70% of laid off workers have found work within 90 days of attending RAPID RESPONSE seminars at WFSDallas.



Catholic Charities Dallas (CCD) is a faith based social service agency determined to improve the quality of life for people in need. CCD was established in 1941 and incorporated from the Catholic Diocese of Dallas in 1997. Each year, CCD helps over 30,000 individuals achieve stability and self-sufficiency through financial literacy, employment services, education, food programs, immigration legal services, refugee resettlement, disaster relief services and permanent supportive housing. CCD provides 17 individual programs serving 9 counties in North Texas and each program has a particular strength and service area that represents diversity of the populations they serve.

CCD helps address job disparity in DFW through their Employment Services team which helps with Job Placement, Career Enhancement and Employment Partnership.

- Job Placement – The program collaborates and leverages relationships with employers and the general business community to help provide unemployed or underemployed individual’s access to rewarding jobs. The on-site CCD counselors assist in the following ways: completing job application and resume building, interview prep and understanding employer/job expectations, pre-employment orientation, and job placement with follow-up support.
- Career Enhancement – CCD believes that the pathway to a higher-paying job comes through the acquisition of job skills and needed certifications. Their program assesses clients for training programs that fit their schedule, income needs and personal goals, and help guide them through the application and financial aid process. They provide various training programs for a variety of industries and partner with Dallas County Community College District to identify programs that are free or low cost.
- Employment Partnership – CCD partners with many businesses in the area and helps connect them with candidates primarily through job fairs.



prison
entrepreneurship
program


The United States has the largest incarcerated population with 25% of the world's convicts. After being released, formerly incarcerated men are labeled "ex-cons" for the rest of their lives which dramatically reduces their prospects for legitimate work that pays livable wages. This increases unemployment rates to be as high as 70% among ex-offenders.

A prior felony makes it nearly impossible for them to find a place to live. After serving your sentence and paying your debt to society, you are free but face these daunting realities. Without support and skills, unemployment, homelessness, and incarceration become an inescapable cycle. Being left with few real options, many men return to a life of crime.

Unfortunately, this tragic cycle is why most ex-offenders will commit new crimes within three years of their release from prison. In fact, reports state that ex-offenders commit nearly 70% of all crimes. These statistics demonstrate the vast need for rehabilitative programs that are specifically focused on career development, including entrepreneurship training, beginning in the prison system—prior to release—and that continue to offer support post-release.

In 2004 Catherine Hoke, after touring many Texas prisons and discovering that many incarcerated men obtained business skills and entrepreneurial qualities, decided to form the nonprofit Prison Entrepreneurship Program. PEP is dedicated to delivering the nation's best outcomes in the prison re-entry field. They provide unparalleled resources and real-world business skills to inmates so that once they are back in society; they have the tools, skills, and support structure to pursue healthy, fulfilling, and productive lives.

- Powering Innovation—The organization's clients are immersed in a proven program comprising one-on-one training with executive volunteers, business



plan mentoring with seasoned professionals, and a highly competitive business plan competition.

- Releasing Potential—The nonprofit’s work begins on the inside with character and leadership development and mentoring along with its classroom curriculum. It has been described by many as a mini-MBA for the depth of business information it delivers and the rigorous pace the students experience. PEP is not an easy program and it is not for everyone. To be successful, students must be willing to learn new skills, think hard, work hard, and be open to transformation.
- Transforming Communities—Upon release, PEP supports its alumni with a comprehensive slate of re-entry services including case management, transition housing, assistance in finding employment and connecting to social services. We work to ensure every returning citizen can maximize his or her potential and avoid any of the pitfalls that might send them back to prison.

PEP is more than building business skills and acumen. It is designed to bring positive, transformative changes to the students, their families and communities. We begin to engage family members as soon as their loved one is involved with PEP and try to get as many as possible to attend the class graduation. We love to see families reunited and our men and women returning to be the husbands, wives, fathers and mothers that God always intended them to be.

The program relies on the generosity of individual and corporate donors to help deliver our program to inmates. In 2017 PEP expanded into two new prisons and launched its program for women. Your support is needed, as they continue to grow toward the goal of serving 10% of the men and women that come home each year from Texas prisons.



Efforts to stamp out poverty in Dallas got a boost when the city was picked as the nation's fifth to house a free information technology training program to help lift the low-income, unemployed and underemployed out of hardship

The Dallas location of the nonprofit Per Scholas IT training program opened in March at CitySquare's Opportunity Center. The program graduated its second class of students in August and will be starting a new class in the weeks to follow

Per Scholas encourages people who want to better their circumstances, but lack money for training, to explore the free IT program.

Where the program was founded as a computer recycling service in the South Bronx in 1995 and evolved into a training program in 1998, Dallas Per Scholas now has experts to teach IT skills that employers say are needed in the industry and their companies to help their ever-advancing computer and telecommunication systems store, retrieve, organize and transmit information.

Applicants should be committed to the program, which meets from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday for eight weeks and discourages tardiness. But promoters say work and discipline pay off. The Per Scholas IT-Ready Initiative provides technology job training, certification, placement and career development services in a rapid 8-week program. Participants can earn the Comp TIA A+ certification and are prepared for a variety of entry level positions in IT, such as data center technicians, desktop support specialists, IT support analysts and network field technicians.

Graduates get help landing entry-level help desk and technical support jobs and receive continued counseling. Annual salaries rise from a pre-training average of \$7,000 to a post-training average of \$30,000 and up.




For many individuals across North Texas getting to work means hopping in a vehicle, spending 30-45 minutes in traffic, and then pulling up to a place of business but for lower-income individuals, getting to work can be difficult. Last year, the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area added over 100,000 jobs. Currently, the Dallas public transit system makes it difficult to reach northern and southern suburbs where these new jobs and services have clustered. For an individual in South Dallas, it can seem nearly impossible to get to these jobs, especially when owning a vehicle is out of reach.

Southern Dallas Link was founded in August 2015 by Curtis Corbins when he realized there was a lack of livable wage opportunities for South Dallas residents. Corbins assembled a team of individuals and organizations to identify ways to address this issue. It was through this work that they were able to identify employment opportunities where individuals could earn up to \$15 per hour.

Southern Dallas Link works with area partners to provide pick-up locations for employees needing transportation to their jobs. Employees schedule their ride 24-hours in advance to and are picked up from one of the pickup locations, all of which revolve around access to a DART station. By picking employees up at DART stations, they can shuttle them to over 38 North Texas Cities including Frisco, Rockwall, Grapevine, Denton all of which have more resources and job opportunities available. Shuttle vans depart from each of the stations listed above 6 times per day so that individuals can get to and from their jobs. It costs each rider around \$5 round trip.

Southern Dallas Link pick up locations include:

- Ledbetter Station

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- TRE/Irving Station
 - North Texas University Station
 - Westmoreland Garland Station
 - Downtown Garland Station
 - North Carrollton Station
 - Parker Road Station


Individuals in lower-income areas rely on the city and nonprofits like Southern Dallas Link to help fill the gap in transportation.



As popularity for rideshare programs like LYFT continues to rise, many organizations have put forth conscious efforts to help those in need of transportation. In late 2019 Lyft partnered with several national partners, such as Goodwill, United Way, and the USO) to launch a formal Job Access Program in over 35 major cities across the country. This robust list of cities included Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Dallas/Fort Worth. The sentiment behind the program is that it is hard enough finding a job on its own without having to rely on reliable or affordable transportation to get you onsite and to the interview process multiple times before you even accept an offer or see your first paycheck.

Lyft cites a study completed on the impact of neighborhoods on integration mobility by Raj Chetty, as linking the time of a person's commute as being the most indicative factor of whether a person will overcome the odds to rise out of poverty. A recent Lyft impact study is even credited with stating that statistically 44% of their current riders either start or end their rides in low income areas, and their ride share programs have saved passengers 178 million hours compared to other transportation methods. Lyft is so committed to expanding transportation access to populations in need, they have even made plans to donate roughly \$50M annually to various communities to help improve transportation infrastructure, free transportation, and sustainability initiatives.

Through this ongoing commitment to the transportation needs of the public, the Jobs Access Program was launched in 2019. The program was launched with the intent to help provide resources to members of the community to solve for short term transportation requirements related to workforce training and employment access. Lyft clearly understands that when members of the community are seeking new employment, reliable and affordable transportation to a job interview or to the first month of a new job can be the delta between long-lasting, successful employment and missed opportunities. With this initiative, Lyft leverages partnerships with several national and local organizations that are dedicated to



workforce development to offer discounted or free rides to those community members working through the employment pipeline.

The entire Jobs Access Program is focused on three pivotal areas that attribute most to the success of a job seeking individual and how transportation can help:

- Rides to/from workforce training programs
- Rides to/from job interviews
- Rides to/from the first three weeks of employment, or until the time in which an individual receives their first paycheck and can contribute to transportation costs

This program builds on the longer term strategies and partnerships that Lyft's has built with cities and transit agencies to provide longer term solutions. For example in 2019 Lyft partnered with a local Dallas organization, Per Scholas, to offer 130 local DFW individuals with transportation to family-sustaining careers in 2019.

Conclusion

Workforce development, livable wages, and transportation are vital to a thriving community and continue to be a top issue area that needs attention and resources. Many lower-income individuals and families rely on the city and nonprofit organizations to provide support and fill in gaps. As the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex continues to boom with new opportunities, the gap for individuals who live at or below the poverty line continue to increase, too.

Here is how you can help:

1. By donating to programs and organizations that support workforce development.
2. Volunteering to lead or provide support in areas where you have expertise. For example, providing pro-bono time to lead a workshop in indesign so employees can learn skills to land an entry marketing job.
3. Encouraging your employer to look at a stipend for transportation or partner with local organizations to pay for transportation for employees.
4. Join Lyft in supporting this important work by donating to partners like the USO through the [Round Up and Donate](#) program.

It is imperative that organizations that support this issue area continue to receive the resources, volunteers and funding needed to complete this work.