

# Workforce Development I: Overview and the PetroChem Works Tool

Slides posted at [www.pasadenacac.org](http://www.pasadenacac.org)

**Patti Bell**, Program Manager at Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, spoke to the PCAC about the Workforce Development initiative “Dream It. Do It.” Bell coordinates a team of industry volunteers that connects students, parents, and community members with career opportunities in manufacturing, petrochemical, logistics, and related industries along the Houston Ship Channel. During Bell’s presentation, she showed why Houston has the busiest ship channel in the United States (Slide 7), high-demand and high-wage jobs (Slide 9) in the Petrochem industry, and skills that are necessary to work in the industry (Slide 11). Bell pointed out that most Petrochem jobs require workers to have a TWIC card, and Bell said that students who already have the card when they apply for a job tend to be hired before applicants who do not have TWIC. Bell’s focus during the PCAC meeting was to demonstrate how to maneuver in the online [PetroChem Works Tool](#), which matches users to a suitable job through the “Match-Me” feature. Here are steps to use the tool:

- Visit <https://petrochemworks.com/>
- Scroll to a pulsing, gold button on the right that says “Match Me to the Perfect Career.”
- The next page asks users to click on boxes of activities/skills at which they excel, and then click on My Interests.
- The next page lists 13 activities, and users are asked to adjust a slide scale next to each to indicate whether those activities are of low, medium, or high interest. Education level is next.
- On the next page, users choose their highest level of education.
- When users click next on the education page, they are taken to a list of appropriate jobs for the user’s skill level, interests, and education.

Once users discover their appropriate jobs, they can click through a variety of links to find out the various pathways to specific jobs. Bell noted that the tool may match an entry-level user with an advanced job and said the tool is showing the user potential careers with the skills and interests they already possess. By looking at the pathways provided, the user can determine an appropriate job that will lead them to advanced positions.

During the Q&A portion, Bell said there is increasing demand for IT and cybersecurity professionals and mentioned a program at Texas A&M. Bell also said there is a growing use of drones in various industries, pointing out that some high schools offer drone certification through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. However, access to such programs varies by school.

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**Danny Forest**, Director of Data Analytics for Responsible Care at the American Chemistry Council (ACC), shared information about ACC’s workforce development initiatives, which include early education outreach and industry-specific programs.

## 1. Early Education & Higher Education

- ACC supports the Chemical Education Foundation, which promotes chemistry education at the high school level and younger.
- The FOSSI (Future of STEM Scholars Initiative) program, in partnership with the American Institute for Chemical Engineers (AIChE), provides over \$1 million annually in STEM scholarships.

## 2. Industry Workforce Development Programs

- **Future Leaders Program:** A yearlong initiative for early-career, high-potential professionals, offering leadership training and exposure to lawmakers and industry leaders.
- **Advancing Diversity in Emerging Leaders (ADEL) Program:** Aimed at mid-to-late-career professionals preparing for senior executive roles, provides advocacy training and leadership development.

- **Advocacy Academy:** Designed for plant managers and industry representatives, this program trains participants in effective communication with lawmakers, regulators, and the public.

### 3. **New Workforce Development Initiatives**

- In response to industry challenges, ACC has formed a workforce development committee focusing on:
  - Retirement and loss of expertise
  - Leadership experience and skill development
  - High turnover at entry-level positions
- The committee is working on toolkits, workshops, and resources to address these challenges and enhance workforce retention and growth. Forest said this program could be up and running within a year.