

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

STAR AWARDS

CALL FOR STAR AWARDS NOMINATIONS

2025

The Texas Higher Education Board (THECB) invites applications for the **2025 Star Awards**, celebrating institutions that are advancing the state's postsecondary goals under *Building a Talent Strong Texas*. Aligned with the theme of the agency's upcoming **2025 Higher EDge conference**, "**From Classroom to Career: A Future-Ready Texas**," this year's awards spotlight institutions demonstrating transformative work across three strategic categories:

STUDENT SUCCESS

Celebrating institutions that demonstrate measurable improvements in student progress and credential completion.

Criteria:

- Demonstrated increases in credential attainment and program completion
- High-impact advising, coaching, or early alert systems supporting student persistence
- Scalable models that support transfer, adult, or returning students navigating postsecondary pathways
- Use of data-informed strategies to monitor student outcomes that led to institutional change—particularly those focused on affordability and demonstrated student success
- Innovative student success programs that embed career connection

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Recognizing institutions enhancing workforce-aligned programs and pathways that lead to credentials of value.

Criteria:

- Creation or enhancement of workforce education programs aligned with high-demand occupations and regional labor market needs
- Partnerships with employers, workforce boards, or industry associations that informed academic program design and student placement
- Growth in delivery of short-term, stackable, or other credentials that increase workforce participation
- Integration of work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training)
- Innovative course or program design that streamlines academic and career pathways
- Innovative course or program design that increases student affordability

CAREER DEVELOPMENT & TRANSITIONS

Celebrating institutions preparing students for a 21st-century workforce through innovative career development, employer partnerships, and the integration of emerging technologies such as AI.

Criteria:

- Creation or expansion of short-term workforce education and training programs in high-demand occupations
- Strategic use of AI tools or platforms to enhance students' career exploration, advising, job matching, or skills development
- Productive partnerships with local/regional employers, economic development corporations, workforce boards, or trade associations that led to institutional change in how students are supported on campuses
- Promotion of a culture of continuous learning and upskilling to help learners adapt to evolving technologies and remain competitive in a rapidly changing labor market
- Innovative course or program design that increases student affordability

Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged. This year, the THECB is excited to present awards to both a university and a community, state, or technical college in each category. Star Awards recipients will be recognized at the annual Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference, Higher EDge, on December 9, 2025 and invited to present at the THECB Board meetings in 2026.

To submit a nomination, please complete the [nomination form](#) by **August 29, 2025**. Send inquiries to **staraward@highered.texas.gov**.