



Employment First in Texas



It is the policy of the state that earning a living wage through competitive employment in the general workforce is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who receive public benefits.



EXPERIENCE

14+ years in Supported Employment as a Program Architect, Contracted Corporate Consultant, Manager, and Direct Support Professional. Currently, a National consultant and trainer in Competitive Integrated Employment with UMass Boston's - The Institute for Community Intigration (ICI)

CONTRIBUTIONS

Assisted in agency transformation to CIE, State- Wide Program Redesign, Founding TX APSE President

MCKINNEY, TEXAS



**Britni
Miles**



**Institute for Community
Inclusion**

Lucy Gafford



Current Position

Director – UNT WISE

Adjunct Professor – University of North Texas

Education

Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling

Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Studies

Certifications

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC)

Past Work History

Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Area Manager – DARS/TWC-VR



- 1 Texas APSE
- 2 TX Employment First
- 3 Outcomes & Considerations
- 4 Where do we go from here?



"TX APSE ADVANCES EMPLOYMENT AND SELF - SUFFICIENCY FOR ALL PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES"

TEXAS APSE COMMITTEES

Any member in the state can join one of our committees



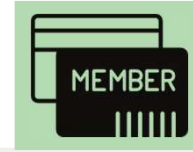
PUBLIC POLICY

Advocates for
Employment First in
government agencies
and the legislature.



COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter & Social
Media



MEMBERSHIP

Membership events and
campaigns. Improves
value of membership.
Gives away 4 annual
memberships



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Helps to educate the
community on the best
practices and values of
Employment First
(conferences, webinars)



Who are we?

TX APSE is a network of self-advocates, family members, and professionals across the state who work together to advance competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities in Texas.

Why join?

Your TX APSE membership includes:

- **Adding your voice** to the growing effort to fully embrace Employment First in Texas
- **Networking** with the organization's leaders, experienced practitioners, and like-minded advocates at the state and national level
- Timely **updates on important federal and Texas policy** and guidance on advocacy
- **Priority and discounts for professional development opportunities**, including national APSE's annual conference
- **Access to world-class research** and best practices through the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation

enter introductory
membership code
"TXAPSE"
for 25% off

apse.org/membership



TXASPE@APSE.ORG

Email for more information

APSE.TX.PPC@GMAIL.COM

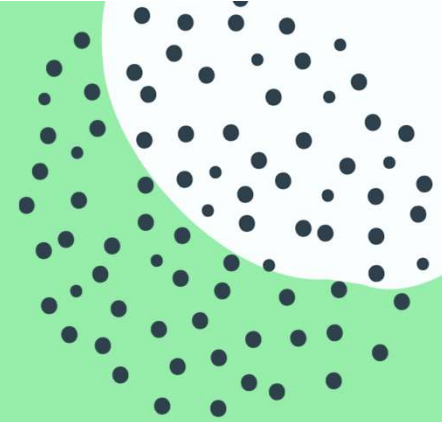
Public Policy Committee

“Work is one of the highest forms of self-expression. It is the way in which we offer our gifts to others and ultimately, in that contribution, know our self.”

- Wendy Orlow-Strgar

“

What is CIE?



People with disabilities, regardless the impact of their disability, should have the opportunity to work in a community setting, with co-workers without disabilities, for pay at or above minimum wage.

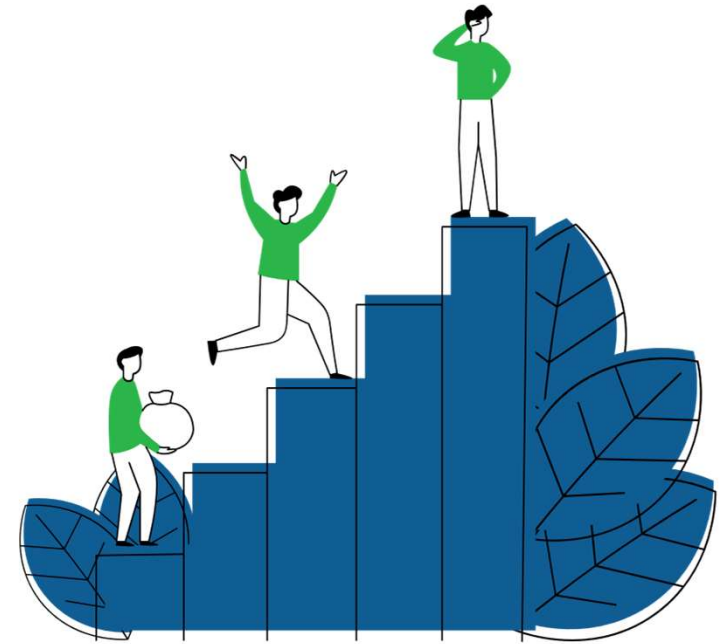
Evolution to CIE (Competitive Integrated Employment)



Who benefits from EF?

Simple answer: **EVERYONE!**

Today we will specifically be addressing EF outcomes and considerations for people with the most significant disabilities.



Texas Employment First Policy

It is the policy of the state that earning a living wage through **competitive** employment in the **general** workforce is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who **receive** **public** **benefits**.

What about people with the most significant disabilities and support needs?



Texas Employment First Policy

It is the policy of the state that earning a living wage through **competitive employment** in the **general workforce** is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who **receive public benefits**.

What about people with the most significant disabilities and support needs?



Texas still issues c-14 subminimum wage certificates and less than 2% of people with long term support through a Medicaid Waiver receive any employment service.

Texas APSE

Current Landscape



EMPLOYMENT FIRST IN TEXAS



49/51
state funding

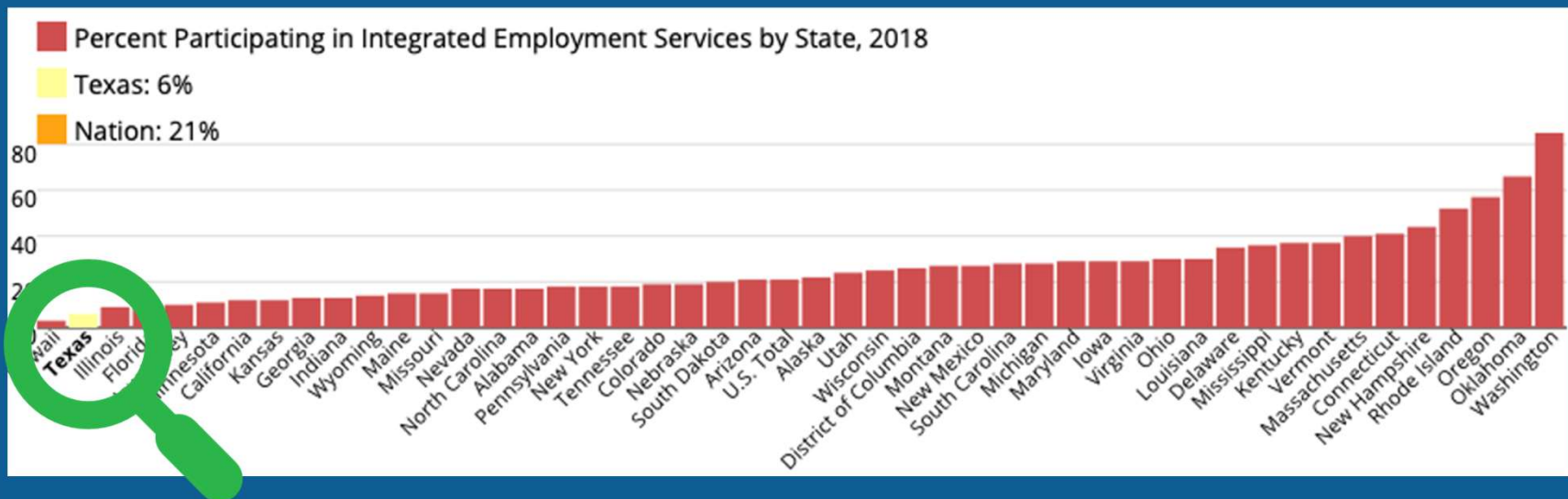


94%
unemployed



17+ year
waiting list

How do we compare to other states?





What
settings are
being
prioritized?

Source: The National Survey of State Intellectual and Developmental Disability Agencies' Day and Employment Services

Table 6: IDD Agency Day and Employment Spending by Setting (in Thousands of Dollars)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total funding for all IDD agency services	116,913	.	380,029	284,867	271,204	119,333	122,468	119,910
Integrated employment funding	4,621	.	7,929	7,616	4,236	6,474	5,842	6,715
Facility-based work funding	0	.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facility-based non-work funding	0	.	0	0	0	112,859	116,626	113,195
Community-based non-work funding	36,265	.	137,518	163,531	142,770	0	0	0

State Employment Snapshot: Texas

How many individuals participate in integrated employment services provided by the state intellectual and developmental disability agency?

Source: National Survey of State IDD Agency Day and Employment Services

Who: Individuals who receive a day or employment service funded or monitored by the state IDD agency.

What: Participation in integrated employment, including both individual job supports and group supported employment. Individuals may be working or be on a pathway to employment.

	Texas 2018		Nation 2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total in day and employment services	25,964		641,608	
Total in integrated employment services	1,614	6%	135,228	21%
Total funding for day and employment services	\$153,499,003.00		\$9,376,286,593	
Total funding for integrated employment services	\$5,644,378.00	3.7%	\$891,362,403	11.6%

Where is the data on CIE for people with the most significant disabilities?

How many people are working for pay in an integrated job?

Source: [National Core Indicators Project Adult Consumer Survey](#)

Who: Individuals who receive any service other than/in addition to case management from the state IDD agency. Inclusion criteria varies by state.

What: Individuals who are reported as working for pay in an integrated job.

	Texas 2017/2018			Nation 2017/2018		
	Percent	Mean hourly wages earned in 2 weeks	Mean hours worked in 2 weeks	Percent	Mean hourly wages earned in 2 weeks	Mean hours worked in 2 weeks
In an integrated job						
<i>individual supported job + group supported employment + competitive job</i>	*	*	*	19%	*	*
In an individual job						
<i>individual job without or with publicly funded supports</i>	*	*	*	14%	\$8.94	27.6
In an individual job without publicly funded supports	*	*	*	5%	\$9.32	30.0
In an individual job with publicly funded supports	*	*	*	7%	\$9.51	26.5
In a group supported job	*	*	*	5%	\$8.18	24.5
Employment support unknown	*	*	*	5%	*	*

* = Data not available

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT GETTING OR MAINTAINING A JOB...



HHSC- MEDICAID WAIVER PROGRAM

Designed for people who qualify (Disability++) to receive employment assistance working toward a job goal and is the only mechanism for Long Term job coaching support to maintain a job.

TWC- VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Designed for people who apply and meet eligibility (Disability+) to receive short term rehabilitative services to assess employability, gain employment, and stabilize in employment.

Access

Increasing access to employment services for people with significant disabilities before/after Texas Workforce Commission takes deliberate coordination.

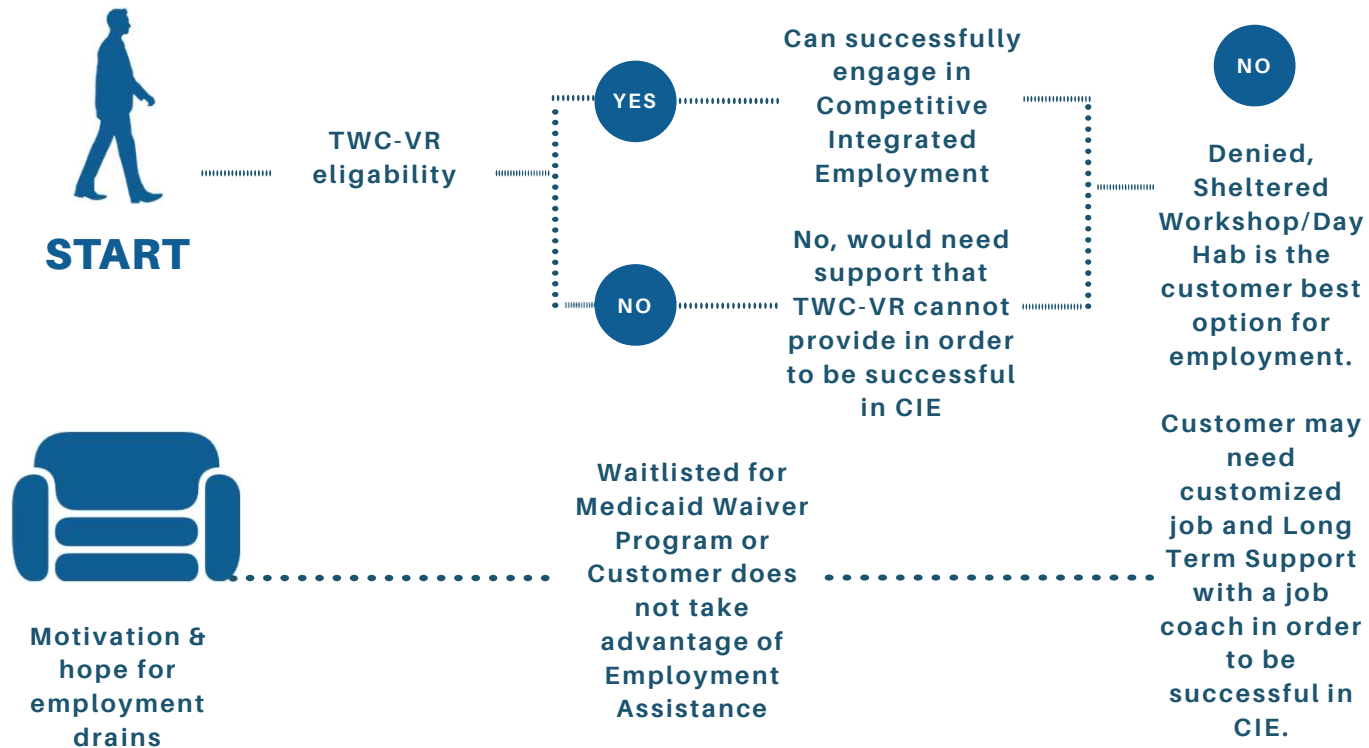
- Employment Assistance helps people make an informed choice to work through experiential training and discovery.
- Supported Employment provides critical job coaching support to help an individual maintain employment.



Only ~2% of people
with Medicaid waiver
services access
Employment
Assistance or
Supported
Employment
Programs

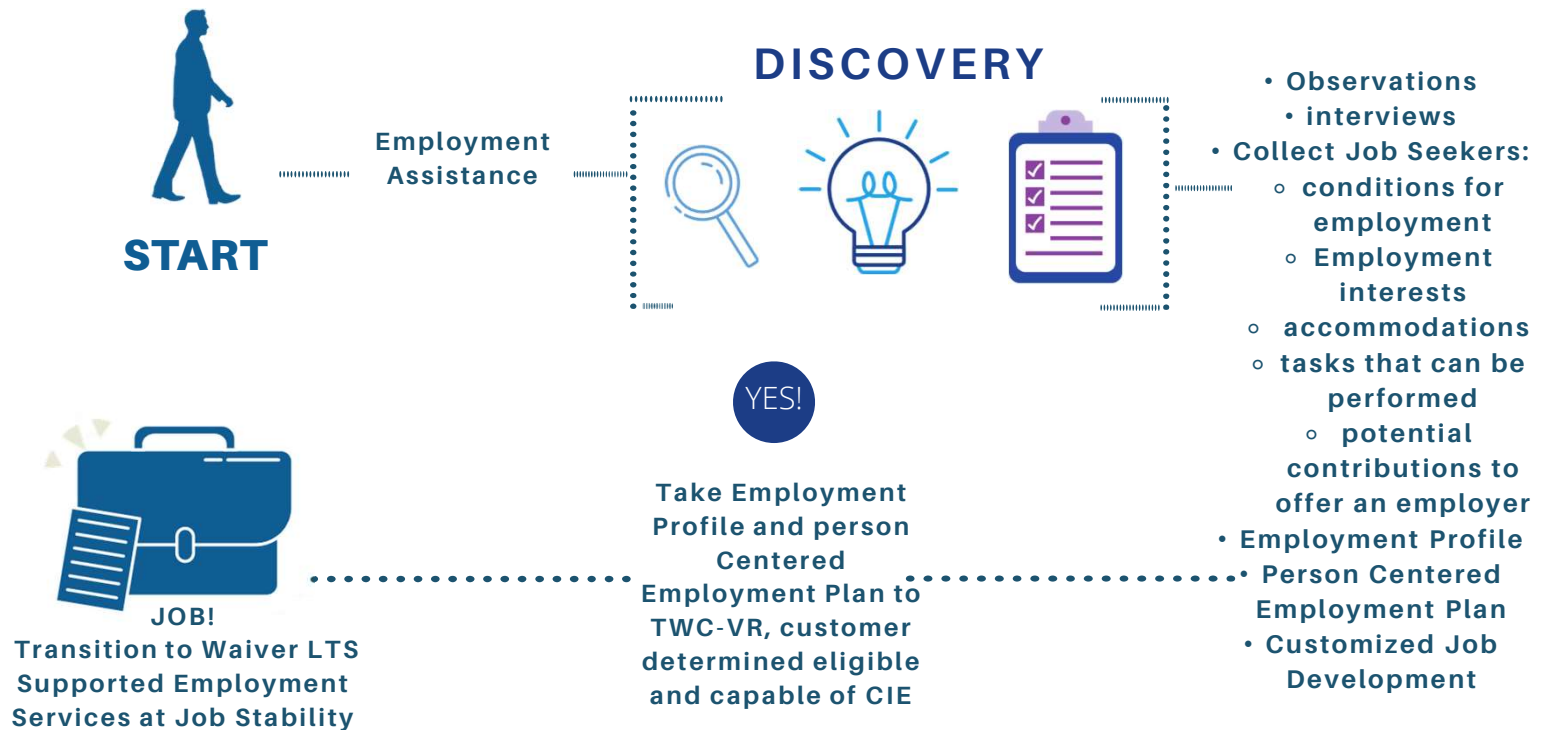
Scenario 1

A person with IDD is interested in the possibility of employment



Scenario 2

A person with IDD is interested in the possibility of employment



Access

Why are people not accessing already existing channels for employment support?

- Belief
- Promoted
- Quality service providers
- Truly informed choice
- Confusing service structure
- \$
- Time sensitive
- Trust amongst agencies and providers



Other barriers?

Why do you think people are not accessing employment services?

Interagency Collaboration

TWC
HHSC
TEA

Is there cross-agency accountability in EF best practices and outcomes at state and local level?

What are the goals/timeline?

Leading by example by hiring people with IDD in state government?

Strong Agency Leadership

Strong EF advocacy at multiple levels of leadership across agencies

By the 2023 legislative session, how will you ensure strong enough policy and funding to implement EF?

Do you have the talent in your mid and frontline management to implement EF?

Funding

Provider Capacity and Incentivizing EF

Where is the money going?

Is there a great enough incentive for provider transformation?

HCBS Final Settings Rule implications:
As people leave facility based settings is there a plan for them to access competitive, integrated, employment?

Policies

EF Policy on the books

What is coming nationally?
Transformation to Competitive Employment Act. Just released grant money to phase out subminimum wage.

In Texas: SB50 - no \$ attached
Enforces compliance with the Employment First law and federal Home Community-Based Services Final Settings Rules through increasing access to EA/SE.

Interagency Collaboration

TWC
HHSC
TEA

Is there cross-agency accountability in EF best practices and outcomes at state and local level?

What are the goals/timeline?

Leading by example by hiring people with IDD in state government?

Strong Agency Leadership

Strong EF advocacy at multiple levels of leadership across agencies

By the 2023 legislative session, how will you ensure strong enough policy and funding to implement EF?

Do you have the talent in your mid and frontline management to implement EF?

Funding

Provider Capacity and Incentivizing EF

Where is the money going?

Is there a great enough incentive for provider transformation?

HCBS Final Settings Rule implications:
As people leave facility based settings is there a plan for them to access competitive, integrated, employment?

Policies

EF Policy on the books
Institute for Community Integration's High Performing State's Framework

What is coming nationally?
Transformation to Competitive Employment Act.

In Texas: SE
Enforces co
Employment
Home Com
Final Setting
increasing c



EASY WINS TODAY

Promote EA

At every annual planning meeting, working age waiver recipients should be offered and encouraged to add Employment Assistance services to their plan.

Promote SE

VR customers and working waiver recipients should be offered Supported Employment services to help maintain their job and progress their employment goals. This also provides an avenue for TWC/HHSC to document and track EF implementation.

ACTION

Every agency has committed a task force or sent out a survey to better understand a path forward, but no actions have come.

CHANGE

HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION
Less people with IDD are employed and the waitlist for services is longer

WIOA

Use the tools in place that are mandated by WIOA.
Pre-ETS
CIE
People need to be given the opportunity to try individualized employment support before facility based services.

Medicaid Settings Rule

Final Rule Implementation.
Stop admission into congregate settings until people with IDD until people use Employment Assistance and Supported Employment Services.

Promote EF Policy

EF should be written into RCT's mission and values.

TRACK PROGRESS

Build on success, one placement at a time. Build it and they will come.
WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

WALK THE WALK

Use the right tools

Obtain good data to make good decisions.

Benchmarks?

There is not any data that Benchmarks work to pay providers. Benchmark are burdened by process and intensive paperwork. There are other models out there that work better for people with the most significant disabilities.

EF policy is the **PREFERRED** outcome, but the policy is not translating in the community.

How can you promote Employment First in your work?

Incentivize Providers

More money needs to be dedicated to building a strong network of employment providers.

Expect all service providers to include employment as apart of their service array.

Forms

Jobs are challenging enough. Best practice is to spend time in the community doing the work. Less paperwork

Test Process

Challenge: Use your own process with an individual with IDD and conduct time studies on each form and any new or revised forms going forward.

What can you as an individual engaging in this session do to advance EF in Texas?

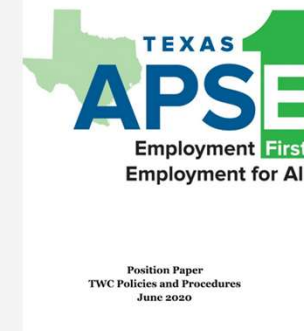
RESOURCES

TEXAS APSE has published 2 position papers directed toward HHSC and TWC proposing changes to services that will promote EF outcomes across the state.

TX APSE is committed to partnering alongside TX agencies to provide guidance and labor together toward an EF vision and future.

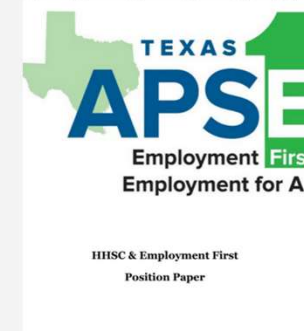
TWC Postion Paper




7 challenges and suggested solutions to improve VR for people with significant disabilities.






HHSC Position Paper

Position paper on challenges with a call to action for change.





"We should all do
something to right the
wrongs that we see
and not just complain
about them."



*Jacqueline
Kennedy
Onassis*

*Thank
you!*





CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP



\$1k

ADVOCATE

- 1 Conference Registration
- Exhibit Table
- Logo/Name on Conference Materials and Website

\$3k

CHAMPION

- 2 Conference Registrations
- **VIP** Exhibit table
- Logo/Name on Conference Materials and website

\$5k

HERO

- 4 Conference Registrations
- **VIP** Exhibit Table
- Logo/Name on Conference Materials and Website
- Speaking Engagement at Conference

QUESTIONS? EMAIL US @
texasapsepd@gmail.com

www.txapse.org

Q & A

SAVE THE DATE!

[Texas APSE](#)

3rd Annual

Conference

Galveston, Texas

September 22-

24, 2025

