

Community Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes



Federal Reserve
Bank of Dallas

April 14, 2026

Council Attendees:

Carine M. Feyten, Texas Woman's University (Chair)
Garrett Groves, Austin Community College
Dawn Hommer, Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico
Melanie Johnson, Collaborative for Children
Gustavo Lasala, PeopleFund
Marissa Castro Mikoy, Jubilee Park & Community Center
Kathy Flanagan Payton, Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corp.
Amelia Reeves, Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas
Roxanne Saldaña Jones, United Ways of Texas
Kara Waddell, Child Care Associates

Federal Reserve Bank Staff in Attendance:

Lorie K. Logan, Kseniya Benderskaya, Donald Bowers, Roberto Coronado, Marycruz De Leon, Alejandro Dieguez, Julieta Ezeiza, Lorenzo Garza, Molly Hubbert Doyle, Robert Leigh, Judy O'Malley, Pia Orrenius, Jane Santa Cruz, Michael Schetzel, Christopher Schreck, Elizabeth Souder

Administrative:

Carine Feyten called the meeting of the Community Advisory Council ("Council") to order at 1:00 PM. Dr. Feyten and President Logan made introductory remarks. Alejandro Dieguez provided an annual reminder to council members about the Bank's [antitrust guidelines](#).

Economic Outlook Presentation

Pia Orrenius, Vice President, delivered an economic outlook presentation to the council. Members had questions about the labor market and job growth, especially considering population declines due to lower immigration rates, and the impact of data centers in Texas.



Community Conditions and Organizational Operating Environments

Council members representing community colleges (large and mid-sized metros) shared that their institutions are reporting record enrollment. Rather than wait for economic changes to affect enrollment numbers, colleges are actively focused on growth and working to increase student numbers year over year. One member highlighted a community college effort, providing free tuition for graduating high school seniors. The institution identified that a significant number of local high school seniors were not participating in any postsecondary learning or training after graduation. A free tuition program was created to provide accessible learning options for high school graduates, increase college enrollment, and ultimately support long-term economic opportunity within their region.

In the childcare space, a council member explained that there are reform attempts to build a coherent childcare system; however, there is not much relief in sight. A few recent developments include Texas establishing an early childhood task force and families with pre-K children in Texas being eligible to apply for school voucher support. The member noted that the largest percentage of applications for school vouchers in this first year was for preschool students. Families still face challenges, especially a lack of available data like local preschool options, availability, and costs to inform their decision-making. Another member representing early childhood learning reported that nonprofits and childcare entities are having to do more with fewer resources. That member observed that foundations and funders expect nonprofit organizations to collaborate and align efforts more closely but there is little evidence that funders are strategically aligning amongst themselves to make the greatest impact in their communities.

A member representing a workforce development organization serving a multi-county region shared that recent data center development has brought many challenges. The local population has increased significantly due to data centers bringing new, highly skilled workers to their region. Because of this increase in new residents, housing costs have skyrocketed, especially residential rents and short-term rentals. In contrast, small and mid-sized businesses are struggling to find workers. This region has not yet experienced big changes in water and electricity prices, although they are bracing for potential price increases soon.

Financial Well-Being of Low- and Moderate-Income Households

A member representing a community college cited recent data from a student wellness report, revealing that: 49% of their students worry about expenses, 31% ran out of money 8 or more times in the past year, and 41% face food insecurity, among other aspects. Despite these challenges, the



report described that most of their students view college as a good investment and believe that a college degree will provide better quality of life—in contrast to declining national confidence in higher education. Another member representing the nonprofit sector shared that a forthcoming report identifies that the biggest ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) populations are below 25 and above 65 years of age. Multigenerational households are increasing as families try to make ends meet.

Impact of Immigration Policy Changes

One council member representing a community-based organization that serves primarily Latino families discussed the challenges of recent immigration policy changes. In their community, documented and undocumented residents are apprehensive and concerned about potential legal consequences and the threat of deportation. The fear of going out in public has affected their ability to bring home a paycheck. The impact on the labor market has been noticeable. For example, the organization leads a small home repairs effort and contractors for that initiative have reported challenges with workers showing up for projects, which delays completion times.

Promising Local Initiative and New Developments

A member representing a community-based organization reported multiple developments in New Mexico. In 2025, New Mexico became the first state to offer free, universal childcare to residents. To fund this initiative, the state has created an early education trust fund and is dedicating a portion of land grant funds to early childhood needs. Additionally, college attendance is free for New Mexico residents, and the state has stepped up to address recent cuts to SNAP benefits, ensuring access to those who need nutrition assistance. New Mexico has also created the Health Care Affordability Fund to cover the expiring enhanced tax credits for households earning up to 400% of the federal poverty level.

Another member representing a community development organization highlighted Houston's Buffalo Bayou, a mixed-use development with office, retail, and housing space, that is benefiting community members. Developers included a program for 20% affordable housing in new housing developments and investors are committing funds to be set aside for community organizations in the area to use, among other opportunities. A member representing a finance institution shared expanded partnerships with community development finance institutions (CDFIs) with streamlined applications and tandem loan opportunities.