

Good afternoon Chairman Williams and thank you so much for inviting me to tell our story. I am truly honored to be here today and to share our story of the Training Center of Central Texas (formerly Training Center of Healthcare Careers). We are both a minority and veteran owned small business since 2017. The Training Center was honored to have had Chairman Williams address our summer graduating class of 2021. He was called away to Washington for a vote on the Infrastructure bill, but recorded an address to our students, which was a memorable moment for our 49 graduates (mostly military veterans) of the electrical, solar and medical technician programs.

I am Reginald Hodges, CEO and President of the Training Center of Central Texas. I was approached by congressional staff to share our story of growth and challenges of training our students for not only careers but starting their own businesses.

I enlisted in the Navy in 1994 at the Navy Recruit Training Command Great Lakes. Building 1405, located onboard Recruit Training Command, had a mural of the first African-American naval officers in U.S. history that were commissioned at Great Lakes. These Twelve ensigns and one warrant officer, went on to serve with distinction in World War II. They called themselves the Golden Thirteen. As I looked up to those 13 men on this mural I knew I wanted to be a Naval officer and dedicated my life to that goal. The first day I arrived at my duty station in Jacksonville, FL I enrolled in classes for my associates of arts at the local community college, where I attended school full time at night. After leaving the navy in 1998, I was accepted into an officer program at the University of North Florida. Upon graduation with a B.S. in electrical engineering I attended the Navy's Officer Candidates School. The day I was commissioned in 2001 is still the greatest Honor that I had. I proudly served our great Nation for 11 years.

I am a person of integrity and a believer in service to our community and building our next generation with critical skills. I am often reminded that our students who are between the ages of 18 to 30 comprise 20% of our population and 100% of our future. We have a strong need to equip our students with the most enduring critical skills in Healthcare, Construction Electrician, and Solar Electrician Technician fields. These skills often get to be used while our students are in school at Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Homes, Blood Drives, Habitat for Humanity in building homes and many more community opportunities.

At our recent graduation, we were recently reminded to "Dream Big and Inspire Others" and the beautiful stories of our students both current and past are truly amazing! In every case, student careers are jumpstarted many thanks to the skills learned at the Training Center. It is an employment placement percentage (100%) that we always strive to achieve for all of our graduating classes from all of our programs all of the time. In every case, student careers are truly started at the Training Center with great success! From students starting their own businesses and returning to hire our graduating students to instructors who have excelled in being the very best examples for our students.

Over the past three years (2020 to 2022), our school has been voted

- The Best College / University in Central Texas
- The Best Trade School in Central Texas
- The Best Training Center in Central Texas
- And one of the Best Places to Work in Central Texas, by the Killeen Daily Herald's readers' poll

With excellent student satisfaction, exemplary certification test results, great employment outcomes, caring instructors, labs that are second to none, and a clean audit from the Texas Workforce Commission. At the Training Center, we stand behind who we are and who we serve - and the overwhelmingly positive student perceptions and outcomes speak for themselves. The Training Center is a truly caring institution, we pride ourselves on being passionate about bringing the keys of opportunity to our students' front door for them to unlock whenever we can.

Thank you so very much for this opportunity!