

BUILD FREEDOM SUMMIT

AGENDA | OCTOBER 19–22, 2026 | GALVESTON, TEXAS

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Monday, October 19	12:00–7:00 PM	Early Check-In & Registration
Tuesday, October 20	7:30–8:30 AM	Registration & Breakfast
	8:30–9:00 AM	Welcome Remarks & Summit Opening
	9:00–10:00 AM	Keynote Address
	10:00–10:50 AM	Coffee Break
	11:00–11:50 AM	Breakout Session 1
	12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch
	1:00–1:50 PM	Breakout Session 2
	2:00–2:50 PM	Breakout Session 3
	3:00–3:50 PM	Networking Break
	4:00–4:50 PM	Breakout Session 4
	5:00–7:00 PM	Networking Reception
Wednesday, October 21	7:30–8:30 AM	Registration & Breakfast
	8:30–9:00 AM	Welcome Remarks & Summit Opening
	9:00–10:00 AM	Keynote Address
	10:00–10:50 AM	Coffee Break
	11:00–11:50 AM	Breakout Session 5
	12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch
	1:00–1:50 PM	Breakout Session 6
	2:00–2:50 PM	Breakout Session 7
	3:00–3:50 PM	Networking Break
	4:00–4:50 PM	Breakout Session 8
Thursday, October 22	8:00 AM–12:00 PM	Career Expo — Invite Only
	12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch — Exhibitors Only
	1:00–5:00 PM	Job Fair

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20 | BREAKOUT SESSIONS

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
11:00–11:50 AM	Scaling AI-Ready Talent: Building the Workforce for America's Smart Manufacturing Future	<i>Chris Ing, NextFlex</i>
	New Markets Tax Credits: A Capital Tool for Building American Manufacturing	<i>Five Point Strategies</i>
	Building the Ecosystem: Aligning Industry, Education, and Workforce	<i>Paul Lynch, Penn State Behrend; Rebecca Knight, SRME</i>
	Talent by Design: Building Workforce Pipelines That Drive Opportunity, Prosperity, and Regional Growth	<i>Amanda Hylton, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research</i>
	Hawaii Working for Readiness	<i>Pono Chong, Hawaii Military Affairs Council–Ku'i Hao</i>
1:00–1:50 PM	America's Talent Pipeline Program Overview	<i>Joey Pettit, TMG</i>
	You Can't Recruit Talent That Never Saw the Opportunity	<i>Stephanie Hajducek, This One's for the Gals</i>
	SBA Made in America Manufacturing Initiative	<i>Valerie Maher, U.S. Small Business Administration</i>
	Manufacturing Smarter: Strategies to Improve Performance and Reliability	<i>Daniel Robles, Haas Factory Outlet; Scott Lucas, WSU Tech; Joe Barto, TMG</i>
	BuildFreedom.US Panel	<i>WIRE; IACMI; Project MFG; TECHnista; Cast in Steel; stem+M</i>
	Have your CAKE and Eat it Too!	<i>Sheila Siman, San Jacinto College</i>
	You Can't Build Freedom Without a Workforce	<i>Kevin Beamish, BG Workforce</i>
2:00–2:50 PM	The Cycle of Doom: Why Most Manufacturing Transformations Fail Before They Begin	<i>Trent McJunkin, McJunkin Consulting Group</i>
	Built to Scale: Creating the Workforce Manufacturing Growth Demands	<i>Brittany Burton, Hill & Smith PLC</i>
	Built to Lead: Preparing America's Workforce for AI-Driven Manufacturing	<i>Lisa Masciantonio, ARM Institute</i>
	ApprenticeshipWorks! No-Cost Initiative	<i>Heather Cooper, Marshall Advanced Manufacturing Center</i>
	Building the Workforce You Need: A Local Solution to a National Challenge	<i>Bill Padnos; Stephen DeWitt; Toni Neary; Scott Dietz; Sara Timm</i>
	Workforce Recruitment	<i>Oplign</i>
	You're Recruiting Too Late: How Iron Warrior is reaching future makers before they ever fill out an application	<i>Ali and Kory Anderson, Made by Anderson Brands</i>
4:00–4:50 PM	Keeping the Torch Alive Through Multi-Generational Shop Owners	<i>Russell Winter; Tyler; John; Nubia Perez</i>
	Job Corps, a National Talent Pipeline	<i>Erin McGee, U.S. Department of Labor</i>
	The Missing Semester: What Manufacturers Should be Demanding from Engineering Programs	<i>Daren Davis, Davis Consulting</i>
	Manufacturing in Houston: Real Estate, Talent & Infrastructure	<i>Craig Rhodes; GHP; Galveston EDP; BAHEP</i>
	The Second Welder Costs What the First One Did: Why “Scale” Is the Wrong Promise for the Skilled Trades	<i>Michael Gilroy, CREC</i>

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
11:00–11:50 AM	From Workforce Crisis to Workforce Ecosystem: Building the Talent Pipeline that Sustains America's Fleet	<i>Shawn Avery, The Workforce Council</i>
	Making Skills Visible: Turning Military Experience into Manufacturing Talent	<i>Sytease Geib, Manufacturing Institute</i>
	Apprenticeship as Infrastructure: Building Durable Workforce Pipelines for Advanced Manufacturing and Defense	<i>John Colborn; Michael Gilroy</i>
	Five Years of Workforce Lessons: Breaking Talent Acquisition and Retention Myths	<i>Kevin Barto, TMG</i>
	K-12 Manufacturing Pathways Lightning Talks	<i>Cathy Chen-Arriaga; Kyle Jordan; Samantha Trzinski; Greg Hayworth</i>
	The Workforce Shortage Isn't Just a People Problem, it's a Stratgy Problem	<i>Cammas Freeman, Stackrock Talent</i>
	The Working Classroom: Building an Apprenticeship Model That Works	<i>Dr. Timothy Cyders, Ohio University</i>
	You Cannot Hire What You Refuse to Build: Lessons from rebuilding the 150 Case and a blueprint for rebuilding America's skilled trades	<i>Kory Anderson, Anderson Foundries</i>
1:00–1:50 PM	Alternative Capital for Texas Small Businesses	<i>Five Point Strategies</i>
	How the FAME Apprenticeship Model Creates Global Best Technicians	<i>Gardner Carrick, Manufacturing Institute</i>
	Telling the Story of Domestic Production in the U.S.	<i>Donnie Rosie; Crystal Bentley; Robert Weiss</i>
	Manufacturing Can't Grow What It Can't Staff	<i>Sara Timm, Timmco</i>
	Closing the Experience Gap: Internships, Externships, and Industry Readiness	<i>Victor Okhuysen, Cal Poly Pomona</i>
	Pilot to Pipeline: How JA Maritime Scaled an Industry-Driven Workforce Model	<i>Nicole Diorio, Junior Achievement</i>
	IACMI Workforce Panel	<i>Andrew Pokelwaldt; Mike Kubacki; Greg Harrel; Greg Hayward; Elliot Keas</i>
2:00–2:50 PM	When a Community Foundation Becomes the Developer: The DEPOT Defense Workforce Campus	<i>Gil Gonzales, Barberton Community Foundation</i>
	Project MFG Overview	<i>Ray Dick, Project MFG</i>
	Re-visioning and Implementing a Precision Machining Manufacturing Workforce Development Program	<i>Scott Lucas, WSU Tech</i>
	Gulf Copper Apprenticeship Program	<i>Gulf Copper</i>
	Investing Early, Hiring Strong: Electric Boat's K-12 to Workforce Ecosystem Across CT, RI & MA	<i>Willie Barber, General Dynamics Electric Boat</i>
	A Century of Career & Technical Education and Why It Matters for Defense Manufacturing Now	<i>Ben Abbott, Allison Heider, Ray Lanham, Bobby Johnson</i>
4:00–4:50 PM	Don't Look at the Collar. Look at the Sleeves.	<i>Andrew Wooley, Fictiv</i>
	Finding and Growing the Next Generation of Skilled-Trades Talent	<i>Dan Stiles, Aerotek</i>
	Advancing Manufacturing and Digital Readiness	<i>Amy Thompson, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology</i>
	Learn About Maritime Manufacturing and Supply Chain: A Hands-On Lesson for Grades 6 and Up	<i>Katherine Sutton, General Dynamics Electric Boat</i>
	Apprenticeships Unpacked: What Works and Why	<i>Michael Gilroy; Robert Flores; John Colborn; Gardner Carrick; Heather Cooper</i>
	Built Not Born	<i>Andrew “Drew” Crowe, New American Manufacturing Renaissance</i>
	Building the Future Workforce: A K-to-Career Competency Framework for Manufacturing Education	<i>Tim Robertson, TEChnista</i>