



Workforce Alliance
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wichita Workforce Center and ZOOM
January 10, 2024 – 11:30 AM

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Executive Committee met on January 10, 2023 in person and via ZOOM. Chair Jeff Longwell welcomed Committee members, asked for self-introductions and called the meeting to order.

2. Level Up Kansas

The Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce is leading the Level Up Kansas project, a targeted outreach and marketing campaign, to get more Kansans connected to the Kansas Promise scholarship, which provides service scholarships for students to attend Kansas community colleges and technical colleges in specific fields of study. In 2023, the Kansas legislature allocated \$2.5 million to promote Level Up. Leadership from the Wichita Chamber and Level Up have met with the WA and the other local workforce boards in Kansas about partnerships for developing strategies that will leverage and align Level Up with the services and resources from the KansasWorks workforce centers. John Rolfe, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce president and WA board member, is planning to attend the January 24th Workforce Alliance Board meeting to discuss the Level Up project and describe what this working relationship looks like.

Report was received and filed.

3. Workforce Alliance Priority Project Updates

Updates on some priority projects for the WA (Youth Employment Project (YEP), Home Base Wichita, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training (SNAP E&T)) was provided.

Amanda Duncan reviewed the 2024 WA YEP Goals Discussion Draft Plan that includes specific milestones and tactics. Staff have worked with the Board's Youth Employment Committee on these goals, which include increasing capacity of resources and employer engagement in WBL programs and creating more summer internship opportunities by identifying champions to raise community awareness and provide messaging and outreach. Key employers and community partners are identified in the plan including the City of Wichita, Cox Machine, Wichita Business Journal and WA board members are asked to include their organizations as employers that can provide outreach and work experience opportunities. Staff are developing an "easy button" for employers to show them how they can provide internships or engage in other ways that contribute to youth employment that can be tailored to their type of business and needs; this information will be introduced at the Chamber Chair Lunch on February 6th. Coordinated social media efforts and a web tool kit that can be added to community partner websites that links back to the YEP website are being created. A robust list of employers is a goal in order to expand Camp HYPE and increase the number of sessions offered.

Amanda Duncan and Tamara Ray discussed efforts for Home Base Wichita for 2024. The goal is to sustain the program after the City of Wichita's initial investment of ARPA funds ends June 30, 2024 by developing an identifiable strategy to direct military connected individuals to employment opportunities. Staff have met with program partners Greater Wichita Partnership (GWP), Wichita Regional Chamber and the Veteran Advocacy Board to discuss progress to date and goals moving forward, which include working with new partners and groups, engaging with McConnell Air Force Base differently, creating targeted messaging to a broader number of military partners, holding a relaunch event with key businesses and engaging with the City of Wichita and REAP. There have



been 56 job placements through program with goal of 100. The labor market has changed since the program was initiated and there is less interest in training. Staff plan to work with the City to adjust the current model to use less funds for training and increase funding for other employment activities. The program needs more employer participation and staff are working with the Chamber and the GWP to have the program more prominently promoted in their materials. The WA has committed to doing a military spouse job fair. Military spouses are a focus as a retiring military member would be more likely to stay in a community if their spouse is gainfully employed. There is a need to increase and diversify employers that are involved in the program in order to expand the job options to other employment sectors and industries beyond aerospace and advanced manufacturing. The program seeks to help employers understand military culture as part of their hiring processes and transition skill sets in order to help recruit and retain employees.

Denise Houston provided an update on the SNAP E&T project. The WA is working with the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) to identify eligible recipients of SNAP benefits that qualify for employment and training who are then brought into workforce system where training dollars are invested in them and where they are also assisted with finding jobs. Staff have received a larger number of referrals from DCF than the first few months of the project, so implementation of group activities such as labs and workshops for participants is beginning. U.S. Department of Agriculture will be visiting DCF in March and then will also visit with WA staff about the project. This program has the potential to generate revenue whereby the WA can receive a 50/50 match of a percentage of those funds with local non-federal funds to do focused employment and training.

Report was received and file

4. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes for December 13, 2023, Program Year 2023 budget update, operations/one-stop operator report, communications report, registered apprenticeship report and an on-the-job training (OJT) contract for Star Lumber and Supply Co. were presented to the Committee for review and approval.

Kathy Jewett (Rod Blackburn) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

5. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Executive Committee Members

Rod Blackburn
Michele Gifford via ZOOM
Commissioner Jim Howell via ZOOM
Kathy Jewett
Pat Jonas via ZOOM
Jeff Longwell
Alana McNary via ZOOM
Amy Williams via ZOOM

Staff/Guests

Chelsea Daniel
Amanda Duncan
Denise Houston
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
George Marko
Chad Pettera via ZOOM
Tamara Ray
Will Dorr, Eckerd Connects
Erica Ramos, LWDB via ZOOM