



**Workforce Alliance (WA) Youth Employment Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 21, 2025 – 11:30 AM**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Workforce Alliance Youth Employment Committee assembled via ZOOM. Chair Rod Blackburn called the meeting to order and self-introductions were given. New committee members Robert Garner, CEO of Youth Horizons and Derek Foust, Associate Dean for Career and Technical Education replacing Lori Leutner with Butler Community College were introduced as new committee members. Kelly Bielefeld, Wichita Public Schools superintendent, joined the group later in the meeting.

**2. 2025 Youth Employment Project (YEP) Project Final Report**

Amanda Duncan presented the final report for YEP for 2025. The report highlights that 5,200 young adults were served, with 2,196 gaining employment and 575 high school internships were facilitated by 80 employers. Total wages earned are estimated to be over \$3.1 million of economic impact for the community. There was engagement with 244 employers and 11 Camp HYPE career exploration sessions were held over the summer, an increase of three over last year. There was a decrease in total events due to weather and funding issues; however, overall staff are pleased with the outcomes. The final 2025 YEP report will be posted on the WA website.

*Report was received and filed.*

**3. 2026 Youth Employment Project Planning**

Duncan discussed draft plans for 2026, and shared a chart with actual numbers for the past three years as well as projections and goals for 2026. Staff requested input from committee members before goal numbers are finalized. Staff have met with Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) partners at the City of Wichita (Way to Work) and YMCA (Job Prep) programs to discuss expectations for next year and set some goals and plan events that could help to potentially provide 2,580 young adults with employment opportunities. Upcoming activities, events and timelines were shared, including job fairs, counselor meetings, and the expansion of Camp HYPE to include additional locations and industries such as construction. Staff are looking to incorporate the FutureReady centers more heavily into the camps.

Staff desire to expand youth employment opportunities to provide more meaningful hands-on experiences similar to internships involving businesses that could engage and contribute financially. Rod Blackburn emphasized the importance of hands-on training in educational settings, particularly for construction and skilled trades. There was consensus around developing a plan to create more of a hands-on construction industry experience than a traditional Camp HYPE can provide; support and involvement by multiple employers will be needed. Staff will begin working on a plan to incorporate this into 2026 goals. A work group will be formed to explore involving the FutureReady Centers more into YEP programming options and develop a plan within the next few weeks and clarify access and capabilities as well as attain alignment on a construction/trades programming vision.

As a way to partner and expand internship programs as a group experience, Dr. Aycock discussed working with Sumner County on a potential grant application for a 3-week summer internship camp targeting 9th and 10th graders. This project would expand the Camp HYPE model to a longer and more targeted experience. This is a way to expand resources and pilot a new opportunity in partnership with local government and key employers in economic development.

The largest career interest for youth is healthcare and Brittnei Mayagoitia discussed how Ascension is expanding youth employment opportunities in healthcare. They are able to hire 16-year-olds with CNA certifications as patient care techs and have plans to expand on that. They have also been able to provide more student volunteering opportunities and are working with the schools to expand



shadowing programs. It is a challenge to provide meaningful work experiences for youth under 18 due to regulations, but different internship and apprenticeship models are being researched.

Camp HYPE partners have met with Mayor Wu, who expressed strong support for the program and has requested marketing and messaging materials to promote YEP. Staff will continue to conduct specific outreach to key business and industry employers aligned with youth interests.

The 2026 program goals will be finalized based on committee input and staff will begin tracking and reporting progress to the Committee at future meetings; proposed events will be posted on the WA website when finalized.

#### **4. Regional Youth Job Fair**

Laura Barker, USD 259, provided an update on the city-wide job fair themed "Momentum, Explore, Discover, and Hire," that was discussed at the last meeting. The fair is scheduled for April 22, 2026 at Century II. The event will involve employers from various districts and is designed to provide career awareness and exploration for sophomores and job and internship opportunities for seniors. The City of Wichita has provided the venue at no charge and there is potential for expanding the fair's reach. Employers participating in the event will be recruited and organized by industry clusters and it will be indicated if they are there to provide information about their business, are there to hire for jobs or both. A small fee is being considered for employers to register. Employer registration is scheduled to open by November 6<sup>th</sup>. The expectation is for approximately 2,500 high school students and at least 25 employers per cluster to participate. The planning committee is seeking marketing and outreach expertise and assistance to promote the fair. Assistance may be needed to help fill slots in underrepresented industry clusters. More information will be provided and assistance requested at the next meeting.

*Report was received and filed.*

#### **5. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program and Work-Based Learning**

KC Schumacher provided an update on the WIOA youth program. Staff are continuing to work toward bringing on new work experience site employers and offer greater accessibility and additional flexibility in offering services by adding on-site presentations and one-on-one orientation opportunities, which helps those experiencing technical or transportation issues.

Denise Houston presented final numbers on WIOA Youth performance for Program Year 2024. All goals are being met or exceeded for employment and measurable skills gain; however, the sanction level for median earnings and credential attainment is not being met. The state met or exceeded goals except for credential attainment. All measures were met or exceeded according to the Performance Throughout the Program Year report; therefore, the program passed all of its performance measures and no corrective action is required. U.S. DOL significantly increased the goal for median earnings this year and it is very difficult to obtain given the participant population, for which staff and the State did express concern. Performance numbers for the beginning of Program Year 2025 will be provided at the next meeting. Staff will monitor and address credential attainment and median earnings performance issues for the program year 2025 to see if any programmatic changes need to be made.

Dr. Marcy Aycock provided an update on current work-based learning (WBL) data across the State for the program's 1<sup>st</sup> quarter school year 2025-2026. The merger of local workforce areas was noted and the state's local area map is being updated. Totals for each local area for the program year were presented and the data includes schools served, businesses participating, school districts and schools served as well as internships provided, work experiences and referrals to the WIOA Youth program.

*Reports were received and filed.*



6. **Partner Updates**

- No partner updates were provided.
- Concern has been expressed by some committee members regarding their availability to attend the recurring meeting as scheduled on the third Tuesday of every other month beginning in February at 11:30. Committee members will be contacted regarding their preferences and options will be provided for the changing the recurrence of committee meetings.

7. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of the minutes from the August 19, 2025 meeting and Program Year 2025 Youth Program budget update were presented to the Committee for review and/or approval.

*Debbie Kennedy (Cody Griffin) moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion was adopted.*

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:43 PM.

**Attendees:**

**LWDB Youth Employment Committee Members**

Laura Barker, Wichita Public Schools  
Rod Blackburn, Partners in Education, Chair  
Robert Garner, Youth Horizons  
Cody Griffin, WSU Tech  
Stacia Kaylor, Textron Aviation  
Derek Foust, Butler Community College  
Debbie Kennedy, Wichita Children's Home  
Brittini Mayagoitia, Ascension Via Christi  
Alana McNary, Professional Engineering Consultants

**Staff/Guests**

Stephanie Anderson  
Dr. Marcy Aycock  
Chelsea Daniel  
Amanda Duncan  
Denise Houston  
Keith Lawing  
Shirley Lindhorst  
KC Schumacher  
Lori Hladik, Spirit AeroSystems  
Brooke Sorenson, USD 266 (Maize)