



Workforce Alliance (WA) Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2024

1. Welcome and Introductions

The LWDB assembled in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and via Zoom; Chair Jeff Longwell called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions.

2. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

3. Workforce Center Operations and One-Stop Operator Update

Lindsay McWilliams and Lauren Soliday, One-Stop Operator/Goodwill, reported on operations. McWilliams is continuing to introduce herself to collocated partners and mandated partners and begin conversations arounds engagement and collaboration for opportunities to work together to assist customers. A second Goodwill position is being evaluated to help support operational improvement plans. Soliday discussed the opening of two opportunity centers in Wichita and another in Emporia that are primarily workforce development driven but offer other programs such as to persons with disabilities. The opportunity to collaborate and leverage resources between the WA and Goodwill was emphasized; there is potential for more positive developments and outcomes from this partnership. The monthly operations report was provided to board members; the tracking of partner's program performance is included in the report, which can help WA partners meet their goals.

Report was received and filed.

4. Youth Employment Project (YEP) - 2024 Report and 2025 Planning

The final report for YEP activities was presented; planning for 2025 is underway and plans were discussed with Board members. The YEP final report is a compilation of activities from September 2023 through August 2024 includes highlights the program's success in reaching 5,800 young adults and securing 2,800 jobs, which exceeded the numbers from last year. The report also included a report on new features such as the career exploration virtual reality Transfr headsets and the WA's partnership with Roadtrip Nation. The VR headsets are very popular and there is a need to find funding to expand the number of headsets for YEP programming. The number of and participation in the career camps (Camp HYPE) continues to grow. A meeting of community partners was held to discuss planning and goal setting for next year. Another planning session is scheduled for November 12th. There is a need for more private sector employers to provide employment opportunities that align with students' interests and skills. There are more students interested in participating in the program than available job placement opportunities. Staff are being very intentional in the process of actively recruiting employers where students have a career interest; the importance of early recruitment is important to increase the number of job placements. Staff have developed a toolkit for employers to use to make the process the of hiring a young person easier. The number of employer funded positions has grown over the years, but more are needed. Tyrone Baker, YMCA discussed the progress and future plans of their Job Prep Program Progress, and reported the goal of enrolling 360 kids and having 320 participate in the summer program. He also mentioned a potential pilot program in Newton. Sally Stang, City of Wichita discussed the City's Way to Work program, which is also challenged to find job placements and continues to collaborate with WA and others to make sure as many students as possible have opportunities.

Report was received and filed.

5. Community Impact Projects / Strategic Plan Updates

Keith Lawing reviewed some of the community impact project staff are working on the align with the organization's strategic goals.

November is Registered Apprenticeship (RA) month and many activities are planned. The WA is part of the state's Meadowlark Grant, which provides an incentive for employers to develop apprenticeships. There are 800 active RA's in this area primarily in the trades; however, new apprenticeships are being created in new career fields as well.

The Home Base Wichita (HBW) strategy in partnership with the Wichita Chamber and Greater Wichita Partnership was created to recruit transitioning military affiliated individuals to seek employment in the Wichita region. The program met the goals from the City of Wichita's initial funding. That funding has ended, but the program is still active. The program has increased the number of eligible Skillbridge employers in the area to create internships for transitioning military individuals; staff will continue to promote this program to employers. Staff are looking at grants and a possible expanded partnership with the state and Sedgwick County to obtain funding to sustain the program.

The \$9 million One Workforce Grant is in its fourth year and provides training to individuals interested in advanced manufacturing and IT related fields in a ten county region. The project is going well and some outcomes were reported to board members.

The WA's strategic plan was discussed with an emphasis on the importance of leveraging resources and partnerships. Lawing added that the Board would need to review strategic goals in 2025 and it would be critical to develop employer led partnerships to help secure state and local funding opportunities. There is a need for creative partnerships and strategic communications, particularly in securing funding for operations. Staff plan to focus on securing increased dedicated funding from state and local resources for 2025 strategic planning.

Vice Chair Alana McNary led a discussion on Board member engagement to help the WA achieve its strategic goals, especially to generate funding to better leverage annual WIOA resources to create community impact. She challenged Board members to:

- Use the employment and skills training resources and job seeker services of the WA.
- Actively engage with the organization's social media platforms to increase visibility and credibility Consistently review information on Workforce Center social media outlets and share with others in their networks. Links to those platforms will be emailed with the meeting summary to all board members.
- Follow and share WA social media content on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.
- Sponsor or provide financial support for WA programs.
- Educate employers they work with about available WA programs and opportunities.

Report was received and filed.

Consent Agenda

Approval of meeting minutes from April 24, 2024 and meeting notes from July 24, 2024, WA budget update, Trade Adjustment Act Assistance (TAA) update, WA board and committee membership, 2025 WA board and committees' calendar, Fair Chance and Communications reports, WA Executive Committee actions taken since the last board meeting on July 24th and 2024 Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament final report were presented for review and/or approval.

The TAA program, which for many years provided funding for training and support for people whose employment was impacted by trade, was not reauthorized by the federal government. This will be a challenge if there should be another large scale layoff in the region. It is necessary to have alternatives so that if such layoffs did occur, affected employees can still be adequately assisted and stay in the region rather than relocate.

The Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament in September was a great success; over \$31,000 was raised to fund youth employment programs and activities.

The board and committees meeting calendar was reviewed and Chair Longwell asked that the April 2025 board meeting be scheduled as an 11:30 lunch meeting rather than at the usual time of 10:00; the

draft meeting calendar will be revised to reflect that change. Meeting invitations will be sent to board and committee members for their calendars.

Tony Naylor (Kathy Jewett) moved to approve the action items recommended in the Consent agenda. Motion adopted.

6. **Additional Topics/Announcements**

- The Workforce Alliance is hosting an Open House at the Wichita Workforce Center on Tuesday, October 29th from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. A presentation, tour and refreshments will be provided. The open house is to celebrate the workforce center being located at the Amidon location for 10 years and the new one-stop operator partnership with Goodwill. Board members, stakeholders and other community partners are invited to attend.
- WA staff produced a song about the Workforce Center using AI. (Link to song: <https://suno.com/song/2cd002df-3c8d-4275-a251-b65f9ad4757a>) Staff have a task force dedicated to finding ways to integrate AI tools into improving Workforce Center programs and services.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10.

Present LWDB Members

- Rod Blackburn via Zoom
- Marcus Curran
- Michele Gifford
- Kathy Jewett
- Pat Jonas
- Dr. Kim Krull
- Jeff Longwell
- Alana McNary
- Tony Naylor
- Erica Ramos
- Luis Rodriguez via Zoom
- John Rolfe
- Gabe Schlickau via Zoom
- Sally Stang via Zoom
- Scott Stiles
- Lisa Whitley via Zoom
- Bruce Witt

Guests & Staff

- Marcy Aycock
- Amanda Duncan
- Melody Head
- Denise Houston
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Chad Pettera
- Jamey Regier
- Tyrone Baker, YMCA via Zoom
- Peter Bodyk, KS Dept. of Children & Families
- Joel Leiva, SER Corporation via Zoom
- Lindsay McWilliams, Goodwill / One-Stop Operator
- Lauren Soliday, Goodwill