



Workforce Alliance Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2025 – 11:30 AM

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Executive Committee met on December 10, 2025 at the Wichita Workforce Center and virtually via Zoom. Board Chair Alana McNary welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order.

2. 2026 – 2028 Strategic Planning

Keith Lawing reviewed a draft WA strategic framework, which includes proposed WA mission and vision statements. The existing strategic plan with the current mission and vision statements were available for comparison. The draft reflects the discussion from the planning sessions and identifies goals for the organization, recognizes resource constraints that need to be addressed, and working with partners to decrease duplication of services, leverage and align services where possible and improve awareness of what the WA and other organizations do.

Staff suggested scheduling a virtual meeting before the January 28th board meeting and invite all of the attendees from the five strategic planning sessions to review the draft framework and provide feedback. Committee members were in agreement about scheduling this meeting. The final draft of the framework will be presented to the board in January for adoption.

Luis Rodriguez suggested that for the board meeting that the framework be accompanied with a high-level organizational chart to show how the plan would be implemented and who is responsible for different aspects in order to provide perspective for board members.

Report was received and filed.

3. Workforce Center Lease Request For Proposal (RFP) Update

Chad Pettera provided an update on the RFP for the Wichita Workforce Center leased space. The task force has scored proposals and staff were directed to work with the current landlord on a revised proposal based on changes needed to the facility. Staff are waiting on the revised proposal, which include adding security upgrades and accommodating the move of staff from administrative offices downtown to the Workforce Center. Contractors have been consulted and staff are waiting to see if the proposed changes are doable and if they will affect lease costs. There is a second location under consideration and depending on what the current landlord proposes, that option may be looked at further. Staff hope to have a decision in the coming weeks.

Report was received and filed.

4. LevelUp Kansas

Denise Houston provided an update on the WA partnership with LevelUp Kansas (LUK) that began in 2024. LUK automated their referral process and received 392 referrals in 2025, though numbers have decreased since August. Staff then follow up with those customers about WA services. LUK has had leadership changes. At their annual meeting, the Chamber reported that LUK has served 15,000 people. Through the LUK partnership, customers who have immediate employment needs are referred to the Workforce Center. The Committee would like to have more data regarding LUK and the Kansas Promise Scholarship.

Staff will reach out to education partners and the Kansas Board of Regents to obtain their perspective on LUK's impact on Kansas Promise Scholarship enrollments and contact the Chamber to obtain more detailed LUK data.



5. **Youth Employment Project (YEP) 2026 Planning**

Amanda Duncan provide an update on YEP progress to date. 2026 goals and a comparison data to the last couple of years was presented. The goals were reviewed by the Youth Employment Committee at their meeting in October.

A joint regional career exploration and job fair is scheduled for April 22, 2026 at Century II. 40 area high schools are invited to bring seniors to the event to talk to employers about jobs and sophomores to meet with employers to explore career options. Employers will be from different industry sectors that align with the State of Kansas' 16 career pathway areas. Registration is open for this event as well as the summer internship interview day, which is scheduled for February 7, 2026. More employers are needed to participate in both events.

The WA in partnership with the City of Caldwell, have submitted a grant application for a three-week summer program for youth in Sumner County, funded with State Community Development Block Grant dollars. This is the first application for a youth employment program with these funds and there is a potential for similar projects in the future in other communities and for the WA to generate revenue by becoming a certified grant administrator.

It has been a challenge to get more employers to offer structured high school internships. Staff discussed expanding the current YEP model by pilot testing a new model in 2026, focusing on soft skills development along with some hands-on experience. Staff are working with Wichita Public Schools on the possibility of using Future Ready Centers to provide students with both technical training and real-world business scenarios, with input from industry professionals. The pilot program would begin with one employment sector. Staff have a goal to develop a plan by February 1st, while being careful not to disrupt the success of the current YEP model. Cheryl Childers and Luis Rodriguez spoke to the need to better engage today's youth with hands-on experiences and explored the idea of incorporating gamification, financial incentives and opportunities for entry to employment upon completion of the program. Staff plan to contact Mayor Wu to provide outreach to the community to increase employer participation in YEP.

6. **2025 Community Impact Projects**

- Kaufmann Returning Citizen Consortium (RCC) Planning Grant – The grant proposal has been submitted and if awarded, result in \$20 million dollars over five years beginning in July 2026 to assist justice-involved individuals in the Wichita and Kansas City area gain employment and provide services to address barriers to employment such as transportation. The WA would receive \$2.6 million from the grant for staff and operational expenses. A curriculum will be created for an employer certification for businesses to be certified to hire from this population. There is an emphasis on pre-release work in order to decrease recidivism. A one-page summary of the RCC grant is being created and will be provided to the Committee when completed.
- Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) – Referrals are being received for the program. has been accepting applicants since September 2nd and received two referrals so far and staff are increasing outreach to agencies that serve veterans to increase awareness of the program.
- EPA Brownfields Grant – This training program for careers in environmental related careers got a slow start due to the Federal Government shutdown, but staff are now working to contract training providers. Currently, 53 referrals have been received for the program and individuals are being prepared to enter into training. A Request for Proposals is out for outreach services to increase awareness of the program.
- One Workforce Grant – This grant to provide training in manufacturing and technology careers is nearing completion in January and has been highly successful; staff are working on a sustainability plan. Staff will host a luncheon on January 21st and invite grant partners and employers to share outcomes and gather feedback. A final report will be provided early next year.



- Community Talent Talks – These events are designed to improve communication and engagement between the WA, regional employers and community partners on employment and skills training priorities. Events have been held in Cowley and Sumner counties and one was held in Butler County on November 18th in partnership with Butler Community College and El Dorado, Inc. Staff will be meeting with Butler Community College staff in early January for follow-up on this event. There is potential collaboration with Butler for an AI-focused initiative.
- Child Care - In partnership with Child Start, the WA will host a childcare coalition meeting next week to discuss solutions to child care issues including a tri-share model, tax credit revisions, and promoting businesses that offer childcare benefits. Registration for the event and an employer survey that will be discussed at the event were sent to board members and stakeholders.

Report was received and filed.

7. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes for November 12, 2025, Workforce Center operations and One-Stop operator update, Program Year 2025 budget update, WA Communications and Registered Apprenticeship program updates and a new WA human resources policy for providing staff to sell back paid time-off under certain circumstances were presented to the Committee for review and/or approval.

Staff are currently working with Goodwill to interview for the vacant one-stop operator position and have an individual they plan to make an offer to and possibly start after the first of the year.

Kathy Jewett (Cheryl Childers) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Executive Committee Members

Rod Blackburn
Cheryl Childers
Kathy Jewett
Pat Jonas via Zoom
Alana McNary, Chair
Tony Naylor
Luis Rodriguez

Staff/Guests

Marcy Aycock
Amanda Duncan
Denise Houston
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
Mary Mann
Chad Pettera
Erica Ramos, KS Dept. of Commerce