



**Workforce Alliance**  
**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
December 11, 2024 – 11:30 AM

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Executive Committee met on December 11, 2024 in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and virtually via Zoom. Chair Jeff Longwell welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.

**2. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization**

Congress has reached an agreement on legislation to reauthorize WIOA for the next five years. An update on the legislation was provided. There was discussion about the act and its potential impact of a 50% training mandate on local workforce boards. There is concern about the mandate's definition and its potential to alter the current model of leveraging other funds for training. There are other services that customers need besides just training. The Senate is looking to pass the bill before the end of the year as there is concern that the program might not be reauthorized at all under the next administration. So there really is not time to make the changes to the mandate that is needed. There is also a possibility of a carve-out for individualized career services in the training mandate and there is an effort to involve Congressman Estes on a potential compromise. The options are possibly having a bad bill pass to ensure reauthorization or not having the bill pass and trying to work with Congress on creating updating and improving the primary federally funded employment and skills training program.

*Report was received and filed.*

**3. Local Workforce Board Merger**

The State of Kansas has been divided into five local workforce board areas to oversee federal job training and funding for over 40 years. Local Area I (Workforce One) and II (Heartland Works) are merging, so there will now be four. The merger of workforce boards is allowable under WIOA and there has been mergers of local boards in other states. The KansasWorks State Board has released the merger plan for public comment. Comments are due by December 22, 2024, <https://ksworksstateboard.org/public-comment/>. The current Local Area map was reviewed and proposed changes, highlighting the imbalance in population and employment distribution. Concerns were expressed about the new boundaries and the impact on Workforce Alliance funding, operations and not consistent with the labor markets in Kansas. ‘

The merger provides an opportunity to conduct a full review of the boundaries with a comprehensive analysis to determine the most effective service areas. Staff recommends supporting the merger and use the public comment period to raise these and other issues. There was a consensus amongst the present committee members to submit comments to the state workforce board that include the issue and concerns discussed above. Staff will also contact local State Workforce Board members to provide draft comments. *Staff will send draft comments to the Executive Committee members prior to submission.*

**4. 2024 Community Impact Projects**

The current status of the Home Base Wichita (HBW) project was provided. HBW was initiated with Federal funding from the City of Wichita to help retain and recruit military connected individuals to employment opportunities in the region. Currently seeking funding support from Sedgwick County. There is interest from the Commission for employment strategies such as HBW, however, that must be balanced with available funding. Other potential funding sources are being looked at if the County does not step in.



Staff have been collecting data to demonstrate the impact of the economic development aspect of program to partners, employers and commissioners.

Youth Employment Project (YEP) planning for 2025 was discussed, focusing on high school internships and career exploration. There is a need for more employers to commit to internships. A list of employers that staff are working with or have been identified as potential partners based on student career interest and those industry sectors was presented for review. An Interview Prep Day is scheduled for February to prepare student for the large Interview Day event scheduled for April. The goal is to have as many employers as possible attend the event and provide a one stop hiring location for students.

Committee members were asked to review the list and contact any they have a relationship with to encourage commitments to providing a youth work experience. A toolkit for employers was developed and available on the WA website to assist employers in navigating the hiring process of a young person. Concern was expressed about the potential loss of interns at a large employer partner due to an industry transition, so there is a need to find alternative placements. Staff are also working with government governments to add some placements in that sector.

One Workforce Grant update was provided; it is a \$9.9 million dollar grant that will end in January 2026. Staff are developing a sustainability plan for the grant, which aims to change the demand-driven system and take the outcomes of the grant to move forward. The program has had some recent large scale enrollments for incumbent worker training and apprenticeships.

The WA has provided administrative staffing for the Regional Economic Area Partnerships (REAP) for many years. REAP members are currently reviewing the organization's objectives and structure. They are meeting in December to review a proposed work plan for 2025 that may result in a new model and funding mechanisms. The proposed work plan was provided to Committee members for review. This may impact if the WA will continue to staff REAP. Local government membership fees will be significantly reduced for the planning year of 2025.

*Reports were received and filed.*

## 5. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes for November 13, 2024, Program Year 2024 budget update, Operations & One-Stop Operator report, WA program reports for Fair Chance, Registered Apprenticeship and Communications, and an on-the-job training (OJT) contracts for Aerospace Turbine Rotables, Inc. were presented to the Committee for review and approval. Traffic at the workforce center dipped in November due to holidays but program enrollment increased. The annual job fair was successful and more job fairs are planned, including one for construction employers in February.

*Gabe Schlickau (Scott Stiles) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.*

## 6. **Announcements**

- The WA has received a two-year, \$500,000 EPA Brownfields grant to serve 90 people to provide training for environment related jobs in remediation, commercial drivers license with hazardous material endorsement, environmental technicians, land clearing, construction, etc. to be formally announced on December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Wichita Workforce Center.
- Staff are working on a proposal to the state legislature for next year to fund a Fair Chance initiative that is an employment strategy for justice involved individuals.



- The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum will be in Washington, DC in March and the WA will be sending a few staff and board members.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 PM.

**Attendees:**

*LWDB Executive Committee Members*

Commissioner Jim Howell via Zoom  
Kathy Jewett  
Jeff Longwell  
Alana McNary  
Tony Naylor via Zoom  
Gabe Schlickau  
Scott Stiles

*Staff/Guests*

Amanda Duncan  
Denise Houston  
Keith Lawing  
Shirley Lindhorst  
Mary Mann  
Chad Pettera  
Erica Ramos, KS Dept. of Commerce  
Lindsay McWilliams, One-Stop Operator, Goodwill  
Jennifer Baysinger, Senator Roger Marshall's Office