



**Workforce Alliance (WA) Youth Employment Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 16, 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.

**2. 2026 Youth Employment Project Update and Planning**

Amanda Duncan provided an update on the Youth Employment Project (YEP), highlighting that 3,200 students have been served since September, with classroom presentations, career virtual reality headsets, mock interviews, and large events like the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas Career Expos and Build Your Future. Upcoming events and activities include an internship interview day in February at a Future Ready Center, a career fair at Century II, and career camp planning for next summer is ongoing. More information on the summer camps will be provided at the next meeting.

Dr. Marcy Aycock discussed a Community Development Block Grant application through the City of Caldwell that has been submitted for a youth job training program. The program would provide a 3-week group summer internship for 25 freshman and sophomore students in Caldwell and Sumner County. It also pays students a \$600 stipend and aims to develop soft skills while working on community projects with mentors from businesses like Kanokla and Caldwell Regional Medical. It is possible that this innovative use of CDBG funds for youth employment could be replicated by other communities. A decision is anticipated before the holiday break and other funding will continue to be sought if not selected. If funded, staff will immediately begin recruiting and promoting the summer internship opportunity, including sharing promotional materials with community and education partners.

*Report was received and filed.*

**3. “Momentum, Explore, Discover and Hire” Career Fair Update**

Dr. Lindsay King, Maize Career Academy provided an update on planning for the regional Youth Career Fair planned for April 22, 2025 at Century II, themed "Momentum, Explore, Discover, and Hire". 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. Employers participating in the event will be recruited and organized by industry clusters. It is anticipated that at least 1,500 students will attend. Registration is open to businesses at a cost of \$250 per booth. The planning team are working on flyers and registration materials for both students and businesses, with the goal of having everything ready by early January. Blackburn suggested inviting counselors and career staff from other districts to learn about and potentially participate in the event. Duncan clarified that regional school districts are welcome to attend; however, transportation funding if not available to bus those students to the event as opposed to the local students.

*Report was received and filed.*

**4. 2026 YEP Partner Updates**

Community partners were invited to provide information and updates on their youth employment activities:

- Na’Shell Williams, City of Wichita - Applications for the City of Wichita's summer Way to Work youth program will open on December 20th, with a roundup meeting scheduled for March.



- Cody Griffin, WSU Tech – WSU Tech’s Kansas Promise Scholarship funds have been depleted, so those funds are not available for the spring or summer semesters. Staff await an allotment of new scholarship dollars or the opening of the 2026 scholarship. Blackburn inquired about the availability of Kansas Promise funds at other institutions. Griffin explained that each school receives a specific allotment, with WSU Tech using its full allocation, though there is hope for reallocation later in the spring.
- Derek Foust, Butler Community College (BCC) – BCC is utilizing Apprenticeship Act funds for projects like new toolboxes for the Auto Tech program and a greenhouse for the Agriculture program; staff are planning for expenditure of the remaining funds. The WA recently partnered with BCC on a community talent talk and had 50 attendees. A meeting is scheduled with BCC President, Dr. Daniel and her team after the new year to follow up on that event as well as discuss lunch and learn opportunities and internships.

5. **2026 – 2028 Workforce Alliance Strategic Planning**

Lawing presented a draft of the WA’s new 2026-2028 strategic framework. Youth and career pathways remain a key strategic priority for the organization, with a focus on supporting foster care youth, particularly those at risk for sex trafficking. As a result, staff will be increasing partnerships with organizations like the Wichita Children’s Home, Youth Horizons and DCF in 2026. The framework also has a focus on economic mobility initiatives related to the Kansas Health Foundation's goal to improve the state's health ranking. There is an emphasis on partnering with related community organizations to leverage resources and align services to avoid any kind of duplication of services. Committee members were invited to provide feedback on the draft framework and were encouraged to participate in a virtual planning discussion scheduled for January 12th before the draft is presented to the board for adoption on January 28th.

*Information about the virtual January 12<sup>th</sup> session will be sent to all board and committee members.*

6. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of the minutes from the October 21, 2025 meeting, Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program updates & performance, Work-Based Learning (WBL) program report for Quarter 1 2025, WIOA Youth Program Year 2025 budget and 2026 Committee meeting schedule were presented for review and/or approval. Some Committee members are unable attend the recurring meetings as currently scheduled. Committee members were polled to determine a new time and the Committee will now meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every other month beginning in February at 3:00 PM.

Staff are having ongoing conversations with Wichita Public Schools about better engaging the FutureReady centers in the youth career camps to provide more meaningful hands-on experiences. Blackburn suggested scheduling a meeting or time to visit one of the FutureReady centers. Staff will work to coordinate this meeting.

A Child Care Summit focusing on employer-led solutions to address childcare costs and increase labor force participation is scheduled for Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 at the Workforce Center. Committee members are invited to attend; information will be sent to all board and committee members.

*Alana McNary (Cody Griffin) moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion was adopted.*



7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 PM.

**Attendees:**

*LWDB Youth Employment Committee Members*

Rod Blackburn, Partners in Education, Chair

Cody Griffin, WSU Tech

Derek Foust, Butler Community College

Debbie Kennedy, Wichita Children's Home

Brittini Mayagoitia, Ascension Via Christi

Alana McNary, Professional Engineering

Consultants

Amy Williams, Kansas Leadership Center

*Staff/Guests*

Dr. Marcy Aycock

Amanda Duncan

Denise Houston

Keith Lawing

Shirley Lindhorst

KC Schumacher

Tracy Elkinton, International Rescue Committee

Dr. Lindsay King, Maize Career Academy

Na'Shell Williams, City of Wichita