



**Workforce Alliance (WA) Youth Employment Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 17, 2024 – 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. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program and Work-Based Learning**

Denise Houston provided an update on the WIOA Youth Program, activity is slightly slow on the service and provider side this time of year. Youth staff are out working on recruiting employers for work experiences; however, many are waiting until after the first of the year to make decisions. Enrollment of program participants has been fairly steady and staff are having good success with re-engaging clients and return for additional appointments and assistance. Rod Blackburn asked about the terms 'customer' and 'client' used in the report, suggesting a need for clearer definitions. Denise clarified that these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same group of people and staff will try to do a better job of making this terminology more consistent. It is possible that the term 'customer' could refer to someone inquiring about the program, while 'client' refers to someone who has enrolled.

The Youth Program will be working closely with partner NexStep Alliance of Goodwill on a collaboration for additional referrals from their GED program another way to engage customers and enroll in the program. Blackburn asked if the use of financial incentives in the youth program are still be used and if they contribute to the success of the program. Incentives are being used; services where immediate incentives are provided are helpful in keeping customers engaged in the program, while longer-term incentives for services such as training can be less effective.

Performance reporting for program year 2024 began on July 1, 2024. It is still very early in the program year and numbers are not comparable to those seen at the end of last program year as occurs every year, so improvements are anticipated as the year progresses. Some of the measures have new performance goals set by the federal office for this year and next program year, which are significantly higher than the previous year's goals. Staff have some concern about these new goals and will be closely monitoring program performance throughout the year. Blackburn asked if last year's performance would have met goals if the new standards were applied. Houston reviewed last year's final report and confirmed that some of the measures would not meet the new goals.

Dr. Marcy Aycock presented the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report of data points collected for Work-Based Learning and internships. This data is collected for all of the Local Areas and then reported quarterly to the state and then to the state legislature, which includes number of schools and school districts served, businesses participating, internships provided etc. Lawing highlighted this region's high number of internships and the importance and need to continue using work-based learning intermediaries to connect youth to internship opportunities through employers.

Chelsea Daniel shared that staff have been working with youth in the schools most recently on mock interviews to prepare students for actual interviews with employers. Next semester there will be an emphasis on resume creation. Staff have been using the very popular Virtual Reality (VR) headsets for career exploration, particularly in healthcare, energy, trades, and hospitality. The committee discussed the potential impact of these tools on student interest in healthcare and other careers. Staff were encouraged to share stories about how the headsets engage students and help them discover a career field that interests them to obtain funding for additional headsets. Next step after using an exploration VR is if you enjoy continue to engage and participate in other activities such as tours and career camps.

*Report was received and filed.*



**3. 2024 Youth Employment Project (YEP) Planning**

A list of employers was presented to Committee members that have been contacted or will be contacted to seek commitments for paid internships and interview days in February for next year. A webinar for municipal members is scheduled in January as call to action for those members to commit to some paid internships. Meetings with counties outside of Sedgwick County have and will be scheduled to discuss activities in other regions. Committee members were asked to review the list and contact staff to add any that are missing from the list and any that they have a relationship with that they can reach out to about committing to providing work experiences.

Blackburn asked about the potential effects of WIOA reauthorization on the Youth Program. The Senate is trying to reauthorize the legislation before the end of the year, and if it passes, it would mainly impact how adult program money is spent and the allocation of funds to local areas; there would be minimal impact to the Youth Program.

**4. Partner Updates**

- YMCA has begun their application process for their Job Prep program, which begins in February.
- The City of Wichita’s Way to Work program usually starts at the beginning of the calendar year.
- Laura Barker, USD259 has been working with WA youth staff to get them into classrooms. The annual job fair is scheduled for February.
- WSU Tech will have a new Future Ready Center in partnership with USD 259 for Information Technology, which will be operational in fall 2025 and moving into the old Marriott space WSU South location. A new position has been posted at WSU Tech for grades K-8 to help with bridging the gap between elementary and middle school into STEM education.
- Textron Aviation's applications for summer internships will go live on January 1st and open through January; interviews would be held on February 19th and 20th.

**5. Consent Agenda**

Approval of the minutes from the October 15, 2024 meeting and Program Year 2024 Youth Program budget were presented to the Committee for review and/or approval.

*Alana McNary (Debbie Kennedy) moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion was adopted.*

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:21 PM.

**Attendees:**

LWDB Youth Employment Committee Members

Laura Barker, Wichita Public Schools  
Rod Blackburn, Partners in Education, Chair  
Cody Griffin, WSU Tech  
Stacia Kaylor, Textron Aviation  
Debbie Kennedy, Wichita Children’s Home  
Alana McNary, Professional Engineering  
Consultants  
Allan Thomas, Ascension Via Christi  
Amy Williams

Staff/Guests

Stephanie Anderson  
Marcy Aycok  
Auston Cooley  
Chelsea Daniel  
Amanda Duncan  
Denise Houston  
Keith Lawing  
Shirley Lindhorst  
KC Schumacher  
Dr. Rachel Bates, Cowley College  
Jennifer Baysinger, Sen. Roger Marshall’s Office  
Lindsay McWilliams, Goodwill