



Workforce Alliance
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wichita Workforce Center and ZOOM
February 14, 2024 – 11:30 AM

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Executive Committee met on February 14, 2024 in person and via ZOOM. Chair Jeff Longwell welcomed Committee members, asked for self-introductions and called the meeting to order.

2. WIOA Reauthorization

Congress is considering legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WA board member Kathy Jewett, National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Vice Chair, reviewed a list of issues of concern for local workforce boards that NAWB recently released. Of major concern is a new mandate requiring that 50% of WIOA funds be spent on training, which will be primarily just tuition cost and does not cover the costs for supportive services. This would make it more difficult to support businesses needing to connect to job seekers. The legislation would also increase states' set aside funds, which would decrease funds to workforce centers. There is also a possibility of realignment of local areas in states. Sufficient feedback to legislators over the next eight to twelve weeks is needed so that the legislation will not be brought to a vote. It is important for workforce boards and especially employers to contact legislators and let them know the disadvantages of this legislation. Community colleges initially were looking at legislation favorably, but are realizing that if funds are not used on basic services first, funds may never be spent on training; therefore, their support appears to be waning. It is difficult for a customer to participate in training without supportive services. In the past, funds were designed to eliminate barriers such as child care, transportation and provide services such as resume assistance, job fairs and workshops. Congressman Ron Estes will be visiting with staff and board members on February 26th and board members are invited to attend. Senators Marshall's and Moran's offices have been very engaged on workforce matters and outreach will be made to them as well. Employers need to be the ones to reach out, not just staff in order to make more impact. The amount spent on training is cyclical and is low currently due to the good economy as many workers do not need to participate in training programs. It was asked if there might be a conflict with any of the educational institutions that provide training with the workforce view of the legislation. Outreach is being made to all education partners and this information will be shared with them to obtain feedback.

Report was received and filed.

3. One-Stop Operator Procurement Update

The WA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for one-stop operations. One proposal was received and it was from Goodwill. The one-stop operator RFP task force will meet to review the proposal on February 21st and hear a presentation from Goodwill. The WA would need to request a sole source procurement from the Kansas Department of Commerce and negotiate scope of services terms with Goodwill. Laura Ritterbush, Goodwill's President and CEO, is on the WA board and staff are mindful of possible conflict of interest issues and are being transparent. It is thought that no national bidders to the RFP is due to the WA only offering to contract out some services and there are other workforce boards across the nation that have much larger allocations than the WA and they can make more money in those other areas.

Report was received and filed.



4. **Leveraged Funds Strategy Task Force**

A task force was formed to identify opportunities for the WA to generate additional revenue from other sources to continue to create community impact beyond WIOA funding. The task force has met twice and chair of the task force, Alana McNary, provided an initial review and recommendations for discussion. A report will be presented to the full board at its next meeting. There are three core issues being discussed by the task force: demonstrating to businesses and community that the WA and WIOA have value; the WA is a relevant and credible organization; and that WA board of directors need to be as visible as possible and as appropriate representing the WA. The WA cannot have a marketing budget and needs leaders to help raise awareness and provide outreach. Board members can increase their level of engagement by utilizing their individual and employer's and social media networks to share information and partner with current employers to help push out. Staff and board need to be more deliberate about expanding and building on state and local funding opportunities.

Report was received and filed.

5. **Workforce Alliance Community Impact Project Updates**

Updates on the Youth Employment Project (YEP) and Home Base Wichita were provided.

Lawing reviewed the 2024 YEP goals and year to date measures, which are in line. Messaging and outreach about the program continue to be made within the community at events such as the Chamber of Commerce's Chair Lunch and Wichita Independent Business Association monthly lunch with the hope of creating more summer internship opportunities for young people. An "Easy as Pie" campaign has been rolled out to assist employers in developing internships or providing other opportunities that contribute to youth employment that can be tailored to their type of business and needs. A webinar and an in-person meeting have been scheduled for employers to attend to learn about best practices for engaging young adults. A survey has been developed for interested employers to complete so that staff can follow up and offer services making it as easy for the employer as possible to participate. Committee members are encouraged to share and distribute this information to their colleagues, partners and network to promote work experience activities in the community. Michele Gifford announced that Textron will be sending an email to their supply base and discuss the successes they have had with high school internships and connect them with the WA if appropriate and then work with the WA to find alternate opportunities if they do not obtain an internship with Textron. The WA have held community impact meetings in Butler, Cowley and Sumner counties to expand the internship model. Camp HYPE's are being scheduled; outreach is being made to employers to sponsor as in previous years and virtual reality training equipment are included in the camps this year. The cost of camps will increase to \$6,000 this from \$5,000. Scott Stiles offered that getting sponsorship information to businesses in November would be more effective in obtaining funds as many businesses have finalized their budget for the next year around that time. Committee members were at consensus that there was no concern regarding the increase.

Tamara Ray, Director of Home Base Wichita, provided an update on the program, which assists military connected individuals toward employment based on the needs of local employers. Staff are in talks with the City of Wichita to adjust the current program model to use less funds for training and increase funding for other employment activities. The labor market has changed since the program was initiated and there is less interest in training and the type of training needed has changed as well from less on-the-job training to licensures and certifications. The city will also be asked to extend the timeframe for the program past June 30, 2024. No additional funds are being requested just additional time to meet the program goals and provide staff more time to determine some sustainable funding strategies. Staff are meeting with program partners Greater Wichita Partnership (GWP), Wichita Regional Chamber and the Veteran Advocacy Board to discuss progress to date,



goals moving forward, and the partnership between them. Social media presence is increasing and bringing in new participants to the program.

Report was received and file

6. Consent Agenda:

Approval of meeting minutes for January 10, 2024, Program Year 2023 budget update, operations report, communications report, registered apprenticeship report and on-the-job training (OJT) contracts for Harper Industries, Learjet, Midwest Hemp Technology, Netability and Novacoast were presented to the Committee for review and approval.

Amy Williams (Michele Gifford) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Executive Committee Members

Michele Gifford via ZOOM
Kathy Jewett
Jeff Longwell
Alana McNary via ZOOM
Tony Naylor via ZOOM
Gabe Schlickau
Scott Stiles
Amy Williams

Staff/Guests

Marcy Aycock
Denise Houston
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
Mary Mann
George Marko
Chad Pettera
Tamara Ray
Kim Uttinger