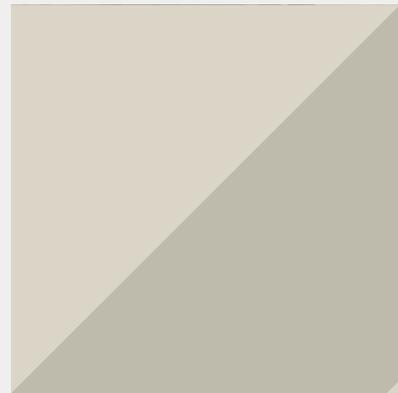


2025

# WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

of South Central Kansas

## Annual Report



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## Mission

Building a skilled workforce that strengthens employers and expands economic growth in South Central Kansas

## Vision

A thriving regional economy where every employer has the talent they need, and every Kansan has access to meaningful, living-wage work

# Letter from the Board Chair

On behalf of the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas (WA) Board of Directors, I am pleased to share the 2025 Annual Report and to reflect on a year defined by strong governance, strategic progress, and meaningful impact.

In 2025, the Board completed one of its most important responsibilities: the development and adoption of the 2026–2028 WA Strategic Plan. This work was guided by data, informed by employer and community input, and grounded in our shared commitment to building a skilled, inclusive workforce for South Central Kansas. I am deeply grateful to my fellow Board members for their time, leadership, and thoughtful engagement throughout this process.

I also want to recognize the outstanding WA staff for their continued excellence and results-driven approach. In particular, staff secured critical funding to expand and strengthen the Youth Employment Project, creating paid work experiences that connect young people to careers and employers to emerging talent. The successful implementation of the One Workforce Grant further demonstrated the organization's ability to align partners, manage complex initiatives, and deliver outcomes that matter to both jobseekers and employers.

As Board Chair, I am encouraged by the momentum reflected in this report. The WA enters 2026 with a clear strategy, strong partnerships, and a talented team positioned to respond to evolving workforce needs. The optimism we share is grounded in performance, collaboration, and a proven ability to innovate.

Thank you to the Board, staff, and partners who make this work possible. It is an honor to serve alongside you as we continue advancing opportunity and economic vitality across our region.

Sincerely,

*Alana McNary*

Chair, Board of Directors  
Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas



# 2025 Board of Directors

## **Business & Industry**

### **Cheryl Childers**

Human Resources Manager  
Cox Machine

### **Ebony Clemons**

Community Relations Manager  
Evergy

### **Michele Gifford**

Director, Workforce & Employee Dev.  
Textron Aviation

### **Robyn Heinz**

Director of Human Resources  
Vornado Air

### **Jessica Istas**

Director US Strategy & Community  
Relations  
Bombardier

### **Kathy Jewett**

Human Resources Consultant

### **Patrick Jonas**

President & CEO  
Cerebral Palsy Research

### **Jill Kuehny**

Chief Executive Officer  
Kanokla

### **Alana McNary (Chair)**

Chief People Officer  
Professional Engineering Consultants

### **Marilou Mewborn**

Chief Human Resource Officer  
Ascension Via Christi Health

### **Brian Miles**

Sr. VP / Sr. Trust Officer  
Bank of America

### **Alex Munoz**

Human Resources Manager  
Creekstone Farms

### **Johanna Pfaff**

Sponsorship and Events Manager  
Gilley's

### **Luis Rodriguez**

President  
TEC Systems Group

### **John Rolfe**

President & CEO  
Wichita Regional Chamber of  
Commerce

### **Chip Schellhorn**

President  
CMJ Manufacturing

### **Gabe Schlickau**

Sr. Relationship Manager, Regional  
Agribusiness Banking Group  
CoBank

### **Scott Stiles (Vice Chair)**

Director of Business Development  
Schaefer Architecture

## **Adult Basic Education**

### **Dr. Michelle Schoon**

President  
Cowley College

## **Community Services Block Grant**

### **Sally Stang**

Director, Housing & Community  
Svcs.  
City of Wichita

## **Higher Education**

### **Dr. Tamara Daniel**

President  
Butler Community College

### **Dr. Sheree Utash**

President  
WSU Tech

## **Labor**

### **Andrew Chance**

Apprenticeship Coordinator  
Ironworkers - LU #24

### **Marcus Curran**

Organizer / Executive Board  
Sheet Metal Workers #29

### **B.J. Moore**

Midwest Director  
SPEEA, IFPTE Local 2001

### **Tony Naylor**

Training Director  
Wichita Elec. Training-IBEW #271

### **Justin Rochelle**

Training Director  
Plumbers & Pipefitters #441

### **Jeimeson Saudino**

Business Manager  
IBEW, #271

### **Lisa Whitley**

Directing Business Representative  
Machinists Union Lodge#70

## **Vocational Rehabilitation**

### **Eric Hunt**

Director of Employment Services  
KS Dept. of Children & Families

## **Wagner-Peyser**

### **Erica Ramos**

Regional Operations Manager  
Kansas Dept. of Commerce

# Programs

The goal of the WA Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is to leverage resources and align services to increase the community impact of the annual Federal allocation from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and operate the Workforce Centers in South Central Kansas.

At the direction of the LWDB, staff and Workforce Center partners seek opportunities to secure grants and collaborate on training projects to bring more funding to the region. The result allows job seekers and employers in South Central Kansas access to a number of different employment and training programs beyond WIOA.

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- Digital Opportunities for Connecting Kansans (DOCK)
- EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant
- Evergy Connect Partnership
- Home Base Wichita
- Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program
- Lead for America, American Connections Corps
- Meadowlark Registered Apprenticeship Program
- National Fund for Workforce Solutions, Centering Workers in Job Redesign
- One Workforce Grant
- Pathway Home
- Project Hope
- Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP)
- Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- SNAP E&T
- State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation Grant
- Work-Based Learning
- Youth Employment Project



# Partners

WIOA requires LWDBs to create One Stop Centers providing services to businesses and job seekers; Goodwill Industries of Kansas, Inc has been the contracted One-Stop Operator in South Central Kansas since 2024.

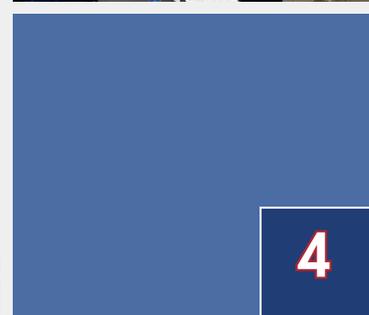
It is the role of the WA to implement policies, design programs, and monitor the quality of services to ensure they meet the unique needs of the local labor market from the KansasWorks Workforce Centers in South Central Kansas. Through the One-Stop System, multiple partners and agencies provide a full range of services pertaining to employment, training and education, employer assistance, and guidance for obtaining available employment services.

## Collocated Partners & Programs

- Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
  - Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
  - EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant
  - Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program
  - Special Grants
  - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
  - Youth Employment Project
- American Indian Council, Native American Program
- Butler Community College, including Wichita Indochinese Center, Adult Education
- Cowley College
- Evergy Connect
- Flint Hills Job Corps
- Goodwill Industries of Kansas
- Home Base Wichita
- Kansas Department of Commerce
  - International Trade
  - My Re-Employment Plan
  - Office of Apprenticeship
  - Older Kansans Employment Program
  - Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)
  - RetainWORKS
  - Veteran's Services
  - Wagner Peyser
  - Kansas Tourism
  - PROWD
  - Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Services
- Lead for America, American Connection Corps
- Orion Education and Training
- Sumner County Economic Development Coalition
- U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Commercial Services (International Trade)

## Affiliated Partners

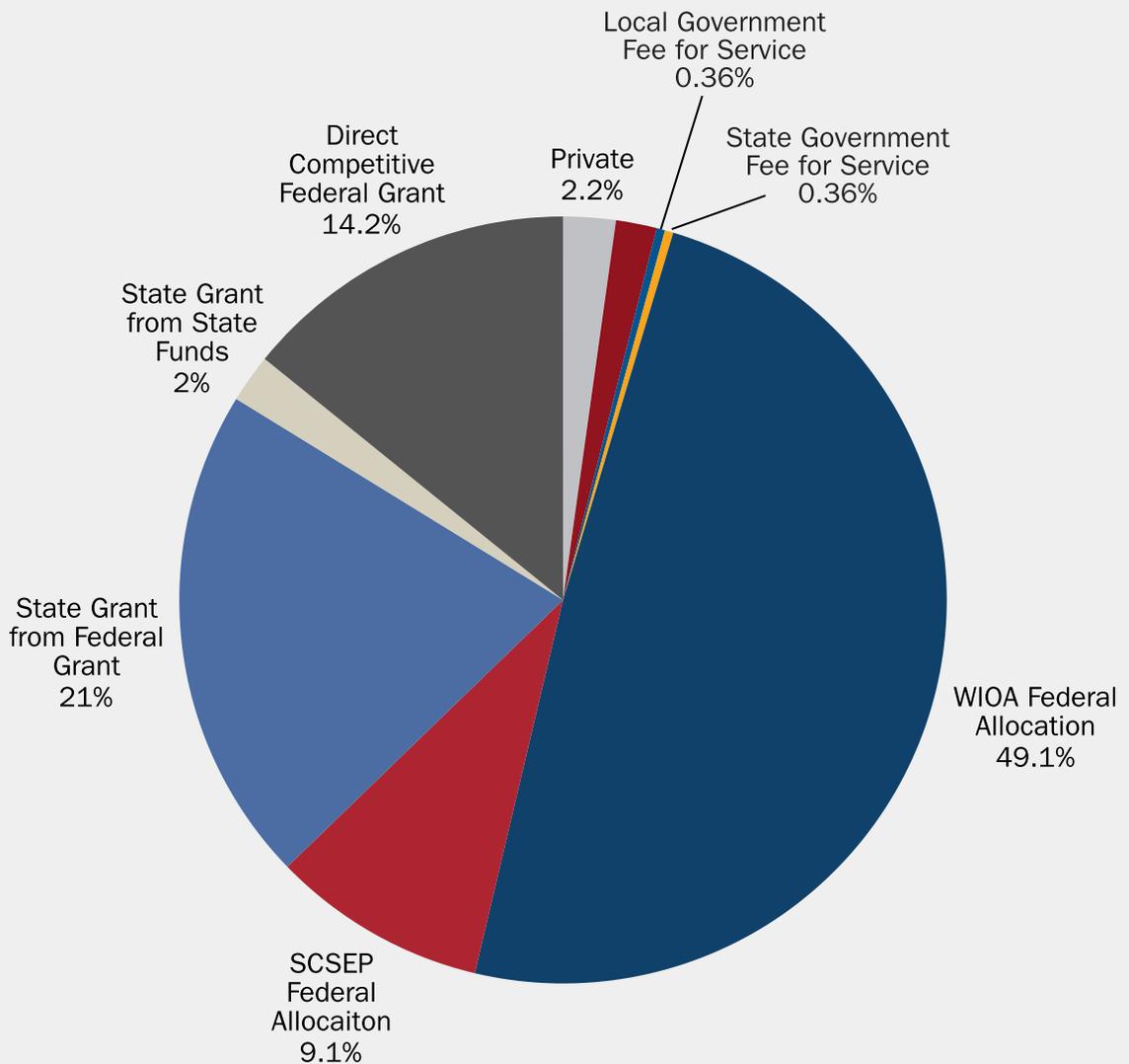
- Catholic Charities
- Child Start
- City of Wichita
  - Wichita Public Library
  - Evergreen Neighborhood Center
- Kansas Department for Children & Families, Vocational Rehabilitation, SNAP E&T, TANF
- Kansas Department of Corrections
- Kansas Department of Labor, Unemployment Insurance, OSHA, Wage & Hour
- NexStep Alliance
- Sedgwick County Corrections
- SER Corporation - National Farm Workers Program
- Wichita State University
- WSU Tech



# 2025 Funding

WA Funders and Amounts	
Private	\$195,000
Philanthropy	\$152,000
Local Government Fee for Service	\$31,374
State Government Fee for Service	\$31,374
WIOA Federal Allocation	\$4,332,108
SCSEP Federal Allocation	\$800,395
State Grant from Federal Grant	\$1,857,085
State Grant from State Funds	\$180,000
Direct Competitive Federal Grant	\$1,252,000

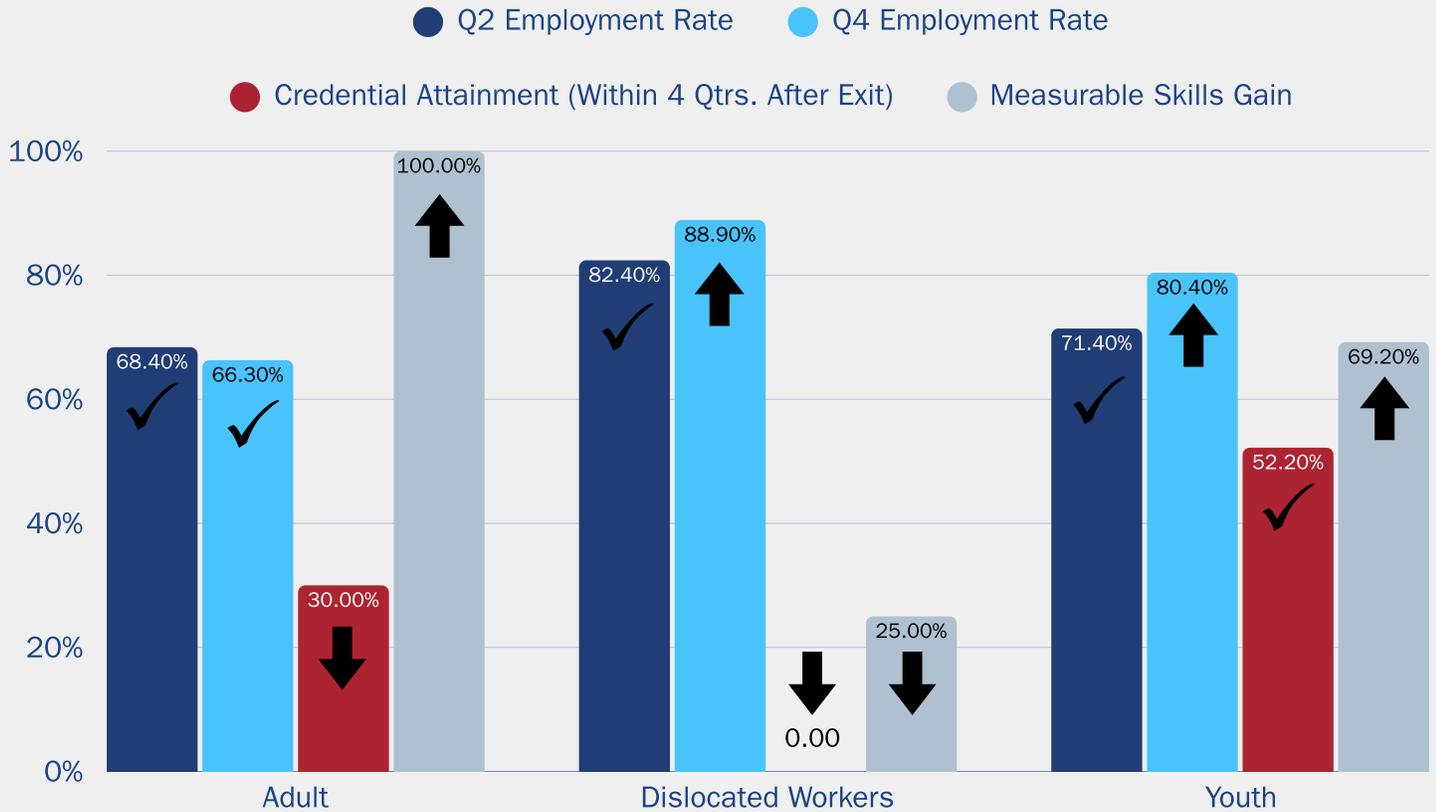
**\$8,831,336**  
Total Funding



# WIOA Overview

## Outcomes for Program Year 2024

(July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)



- ↑ Met Goal
- ✓ Met Sanction
- ↓ Did Not Meet Sanction

6

# WIOA Youth

The WIOA Youth Program assists eligible young adults in overcoming barriers standing between them and their educational and career goals, providing job search resources and supportive services to assist them in entering the workforce, higher education or advanced training.

Summary of Services	
Adult Mentoring	4
Alternative Secondary School Offerings	7
Career Guidance/Labor Market Information	56
Financial Literacy	59
Leadership Development	57
Occupational Skills Training	39
Guidance & Counseling	20
Work Experience	98
Supportive Services	82
Follow-Up Services	29
Case Management	98

Supportive Services	
Transportation	27
Housing Assistance	17
Utilities Assistance	12
Employment-Related Assistance	22
Medical	2

**98** Youth Served

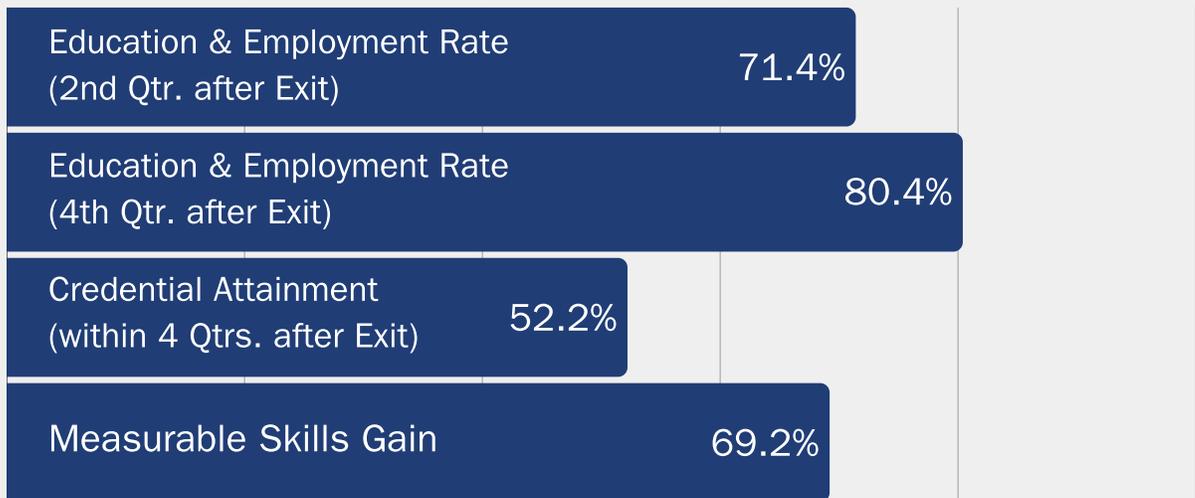
**39**  
Received Training

**12**  
Earned Credentials

**\$3,310**  
Median Earnings (Qtr. 2)

# WIOA Youth

WIOA Youth Program performance met expectations for the year, meeting sanction in Education & Employment Rate (2nd Qtr. after Exit) and Credential Attainment, and meeting goal performance in Education & Employment Rate (4th Qtr. after Exit) and Measurable Skills Gain.



## Success Story

“This journey turned my dream of helping others into a **real, meaningful career.**”

– Chakiah J.

After being referred by the Wichita Workforce Center, Chakiah joined the WIOA Youth Program at a time when she was struggling with low income and an inconsistent work history. To help her build a real career at a self-sufficient wage, the program and staff supported her through Medical Assistant training at Wichita Technical Institute while providing some essential supportive services, including assistance with rent, fuel reimbursement, utilities payments, and scrubs to ensure she stayed on track.

Since completing the program, Chakiah has successfully maintained steady employment and is now working full-time as a Medical Assistant making \$18/hour at 40 hours per week. Her success proves that with the right training and a bit of extra support, it is possible to overcome significant barriers and achieve long-term professional stability.

# Youth Employment Project



The Youth Employment Project (YEP) assists young adults in finding a first job or work experience opportunity. YEP activities include resume creation, job search, interview preparation, and job fairs. Educational opportunities for participants include soft skills, customer service, and financial literacy. The goals of YEP focus on leveraging resources and aligning services to create significant community impact.

Badges Awarded	2,292
Essential Skills Certificates Earned	764
Total Employment Placements	2,196
Workshop Participation	764
Young Adults Served	5,274

**2,196**  
Youth Gained Employment

Job Fairs	20
Job Fair Attendance by Young Adults	2,423
Job Fair Attendance by Employers	196
Counties Engaged	6
Employers Engaged	244
Schools Engaged	40

**\$3,155,040**  
Total Estimated Wages Earned

In 2025, YEP continued its collaboration with Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE). This powerful partnership with the City of Wichita, the Greater Wichita YMCA, and Wichita Public Schools allows the organizations to leverage resources and align services for more significant community impact. By combining efforts, the HYPE partners create a wide range of opportunities and measure shared outcomes to report on the total impact for the youth in the community.

# Camp HYPE

Camp HYPE is a week-long camp of career exploration that combines YEP workshops with tours to local employers by industry. In 2025, the WA added 3 additional camps: Public Safety for Wichita Children’s Home, Financial Services, and McConnell Air Force Base.

- 163 student participants
- 470 miles traveled throughout the summer provided by Wichita Public Transit
- 11 camps were held from June 2 – August 7
- Wichita Public Schools provided 8 externs to assist with structured “employment opportunities”
- Students who successfully completed a camp earned a \$200 stipend
- Students ranged between the ages of 14-18
- Students had access to laptops and every student was able to create a resume
- 50 students explored over 70 Transfr VR career simulations



**11**  
Camps Held



**163**  
Student Participants



## Camp HYPE Ignites Teen’s Spark for Success

Travis, a junior at Northeast High School, faced the challenges of a typical teen – lacking motivation, struggling to stay engaged, and seemed uninterested in planning for life after high school. His parents recognized his potential, but he needed the right environment and encouragement to see it for himself.

Camp HYPE Trade Skills provided an opportunity to learn about trades, life skills, and financial literacy hands-on – plus, he could earn cash for participating. Despite already having a summer job, Travis committed to attending Camp HYPE from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., then working from 5 to 11 p.m.

Camp HYPE sparked a drive in Travis that his family hadn’t seen before. He came home talking enthusiastically about careers in trades, managing money, and setting personal goals. He became more confident, more curious, and he started discussing his future in a serious and positive way. Attending Camp HYPE helped lay a foundation that will benefit him for years to come.



# Thank You to our Camp HYPE Employer Sponsors!



Ascension  
Via Christi



forv/s  
mazars

Bombardier



BY TEXTRON AVIATION



WICHITA METRO  
CRIME COMMISSION  
INC.  
EST. 1952  
WORKING WITH YOU TO PREVENT CRIME

# Special Projects

## Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP)

In 2025, REAP strengthened its role as South Central Kansas' regional convener — aligning cities, counties, education, and industry around shared priorities including water, transportation, workforce, and economic competitiveness. Through strategic facilitation, legislative engagement, and targeted convenings, REAP advanced coordinated regional solutions while increasing member participation and visibility.

### 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted the Regional Water Summit, advancing long-term regional water strategy
- Facilitated Community Impact Meetings and legislative engagement events
- Coordinated collaborative events with the South Central Kansas Legislative Delegation and provided consistent legislative updates throughout the session
- Elevated regional transportation assets, including Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport and expanded rail service
- Continued facilitation of the Western Sedgwick County Coalition to align growth and infrastructure priorities
- Increased meeting attendance and cross-sector engagement across member communities
- Began providing facilitation to the Western Sedgwick County Coalition



50+

Members

100+

Local Officials & Partners Engaged

6

Regional Convenings



32

Member Communities & Partners

40+

Participants Attended

8

Meetings & Strategy Sessions

## K-254 Corridor Development Association

In 2025, the K-254 Corridor Development Association strengthened its role as the unified regional voice for safety, strategic corridor investment, and coordinated economic growth along K-254. The year marked a clear progression from planning and alignment to active project advancement, Local Consult engagement, and corridor-wide coordination.

### 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Advanced three core priorities: Safety, Advocacy, and Education/Outreach.
- In cooperation with KDOT, distributed the K-254 Corridor Management Plan to members to align corridor strategy
- Coordinated project priorities and prepared members for impactful participation in the KDOT Local Consult process, engaging over 50 participants
- Collaborated with KDOT to advance planning and public engagement for the Rock/Webb/Greenwich Road segment of K-254
- Elevated corridor safety through crash data review and Drive to Zero engagement
- Strengthened collaboration with local governments, school districts, KDOT, and regional partners
- Welcomed 8 new members and introduced updated membership recruitment tools

# Special Projects

## Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The Senior Community Service Employment program (SCSEP) serves individuals 55 and older needing assistance with updating work skills to become more qualified for employment in the current job market.

SCSEP partners with local non-profit and government agencies across a 7-county region to provide participants part time work training opportunities.

Due to funding delays, SCSEP enrollment was paused from July - September 2025. New participant enrollment resumed in October 2025.

**84**

Participants Served

**52**

Employer Partners

**26,786**

Community Service Hours

## KWCH Building You

In September 2020, KWCH launched “Building You,” an ongoing series that highlights an open position each day on the 4 p.m. newscast. Featured jobs are permanent positions providing benefits, and paying a sustainable wage. The job postings are featured the on the KWCH website and KANSASWORKS.com.

Additionally, KWCH featured the WA throughout the year on 12 monthly live Newstalk segments covering various events and resources.

**261**

Featured Jobs

**132**

Employers Featured

**\$23.28**

Average Hourly Wage



# Highlights

## Heroes MAKE America Launches Wichita A&P Training Program

The WA hosted industry leaders, local officials, and military representatives for the announcement of a new Airframe & Powerplant training program through Heroes MAKE America, an initiative by The Manufacturing Institute and supported by Textron Aviation and WSU Tech, aiming to help transitioning service members enter the aviation industry.

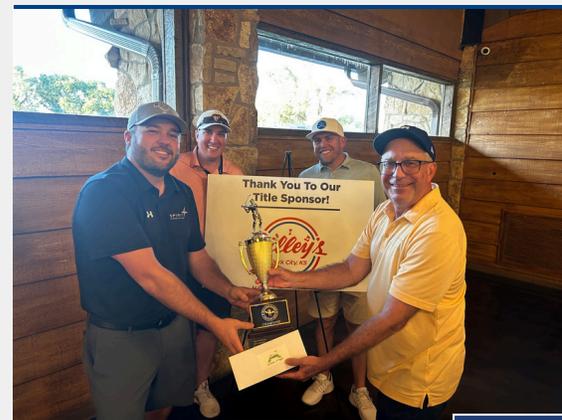


## Child Start Collaboration

The WA was proud to continue a collaborative partnership with Child Start, receiving the Workforce Champion Award at the inaugural Legacy Gala on June 24 and co-hosting The Business of Care Childcare Summit on August 15 and Coalition of the Willing Employer Action Session on December 18.

## Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament

The WA hosted the annual Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament on September 25 at Hidden Lakes Golf Course presented by Gilley's. The event raised money for the Youth Employment Project, a program helping area youth gain career skills, experience, and internships. The team from Spirit AeroSystems took home the traveling trophy for 2025.



# Highlights

## Bank of America Names WA as a 2025 Neighborhood Builder

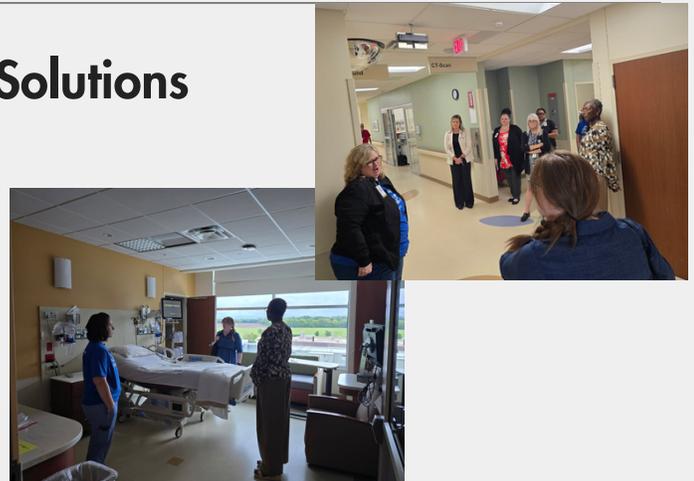
The WA was honored to be named Wichita's Neighborhood Builder for 2025 by Bank of America.

As a Neighborhood Builder, the WA receives a \$50,000 grant and leadership training to strengthen its workforce development efforts in Wichita.



## National Fund for Workforce Solutions Site Visit

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions toured Ascension Via Christi St. Teresa Hospital in Wichita as part of grant on career navigation for frontline healthcare workers



## RETAINWorks First Light Award

The WA received the RETAINWorks First Light award from Kansas Department of Commerce at the 2025 RETAINWorks Summit.



## Manufacturing Talent Talk Panel

The WA facilitated a panel at the Greater Wichita Partnership's Fall 2025 Talent Talk held at Wichita State University's NIAR ATLAS Facility



# Business Services

The Workforce Center Business Services department provides no-cost solutions to employers for workforce development needs, including services for recruitment and hiring, training, credits and bonding, and rapid response services for business closings and layoffs.

Business Services	
Employers Engaged	675
In-Person Visits	477
Job Postings	10,084
Services to Employers	3,193

Pre-Employment Skills Assessments	
Employers	7
Positions	142
Assessment Participants	1,045
Assessments Administered	3,118

Rapid Response	
Employers Served	14
Employer Hosted Meeting	1
Packets Provided	471
Virtual Packets Provided	13
Individuals Served	472

Job Fairs	
Job Fairs	46
Employers Attended	309
Job Seekers Attended	4,621

## Get Hired Job Fair

The annual Get Hired Job Fair was held on November 20 at the Advanced Learning Library in Downtown Wichita.

The event engaged a total of 271 job seekers to meet with 22 employers hiring across various industries.

**815**  
Employers Served

**4,621**  
Job Seekers Attended Job Fairs



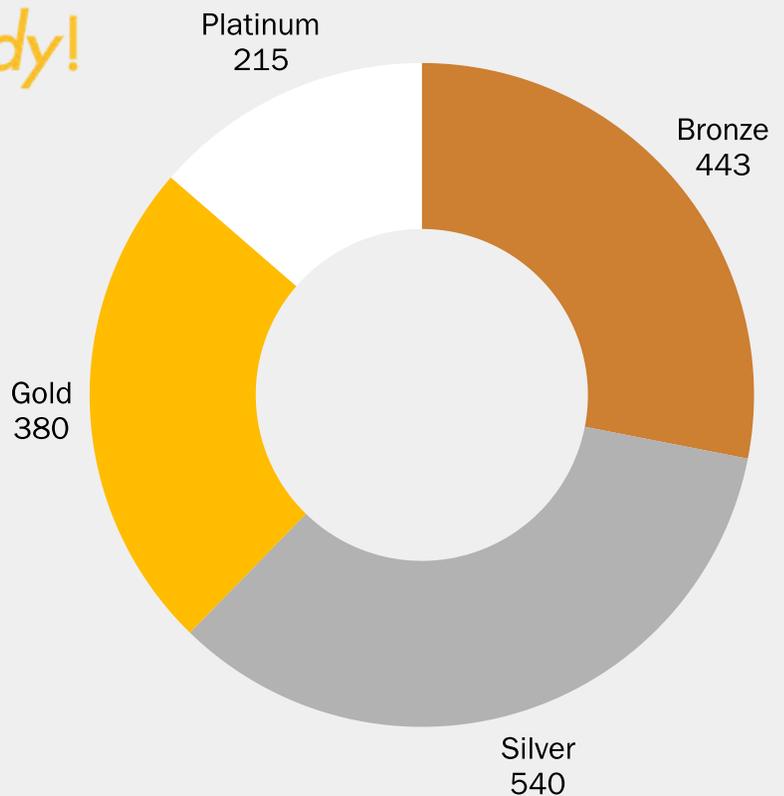
# Pre-Employment Screening WorkReady Certificate

The Kansas WORKREADY! Certificate utilizes ACT’s WorkKeys Assessments to validate critically important workplace skills in math, locating information, and reading. The Kansas WORKReady! Certificate has gained wide acceptance in the business and economic development communities statewide. The Kansas WORKReady! Certificate allows companies to understand and predict job candidates’ potential, ensuring the right person for the right job.

In addition to boosting customers’ resumes, the WA facilitated testing for the following companies and organizations: Spirit/Boeing, Textron/Cessna, GE Aerospace, CHS, HF Sinclair, IEC, Iron Workers, Plumbers and Pipefitters, Sheet Metal, USD 259, and KDC.

## Kansas WORKReady!

2025 WorkReady Data	
Test Sessions Offered	139
Customers Tested	1,809
Certificates Awarded	1,578

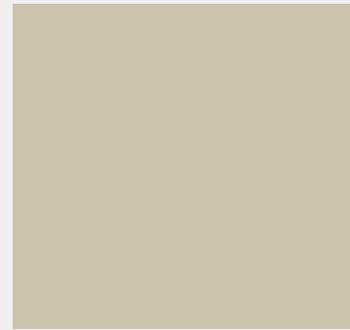


# Registered Apprenticeship

The WA prioritizes expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, both in traditional fields and for new and emerging occupations. The ‘earn and learn’ model is beneficial for both employers and job seekers.

The WA is an approved intermediary under the Meadowlark Grant, with 17 approved programs and 13 employers. Below are program enrollments for 2025.

Employer	Occupation	Active Apprentices
Bailey’s Learning Academy	Early Childhood Educator	6
CDH	Construction Craft Laborer	5
	Welder	1
Child Start	Early Childhood Educator	Pending
CMJ Manufacturing, Inc.	Machine Operator	Pending
Cox Machine	Router Operator	Pending
	Machine Operator	Pending
Design One	Upholsterer Technician	1
Don Hattan	Automotive Mechanic	Pending
	Tune Up Mechanic	3
F&H Insulation Sales and Services, Inc.	Coatings	1
	Insulation Worker	2
ISG Tech	Service Technician 1	2
Little Kings and Queens Daycare	Early Childhood Worker	Pending
Rainbows United	Childcare Development Specialist	Pending
UV&S	Computer Support Specialist	1
Yingling Aviation	Avionics Technician	27



**925**

Active Apprentices  
in South Central KS

The WA accepted applications for 5 Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

**86**

Applications &  
Prescreens

**49**

Completed  
Referrals



**18**

# Digital Skills & Workshops

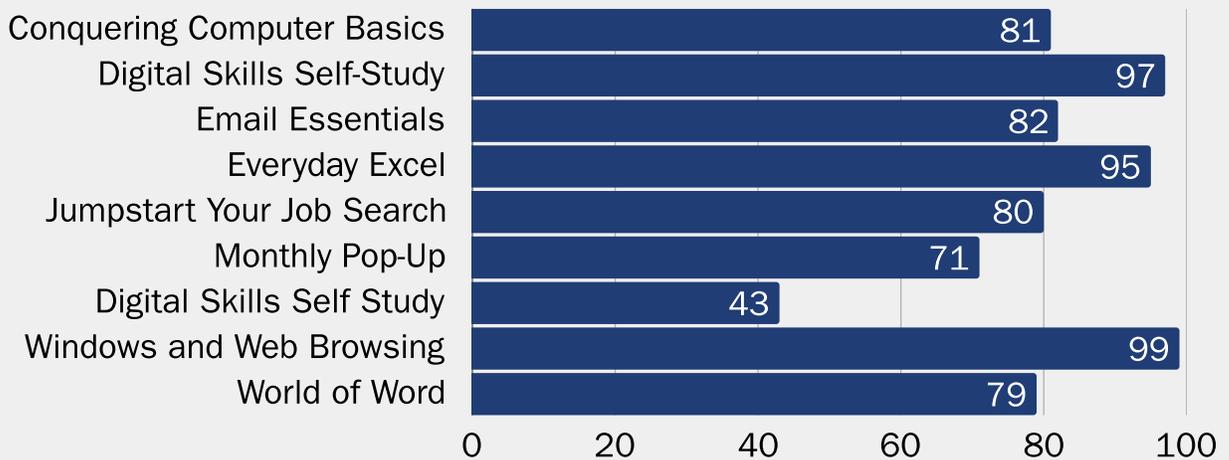
In May 2024, Gov. Laura Kelly announced the investment in Digital Opportunities to connect Kansans (DOCK) grants to improve the digital skills of Kansans who have not yet been able to fully capitalize on the power of the internet. These investments provide Kansans the digital literacy skills necessary to live, learn, work, and compete equitably in a technology-driven society.

The WA was awarded \$250,000 from DOCK, which will run through 2026.

The WA used its allotted funds for the Digital Skills Access Project, providing expanded free digital literacy and digital skills training and certifications for underserved and rural populations in South Central Kansas.

Digital Skills Initiative	
Workshops & Training Sessions	128
Workshop & Training Attendance	764
Digital Skills Assessments Completed	818
Participants Enrolled in Online Training	485
Credentials Earned	447
Customers Served Through Training & Outreach	1,778

Through 2025, the program hosted 6 recurring monthly workshops, monthly pop-up workshops on various topics, and weekly self-study sessions.



# 764

Customers Attended Workshops & Training Sessions



# Corrections Workforce Partnership

Since 2016, the WA, the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) and Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) have formally partnered to in the Kansas Offender Risk Reduction and Reentry Plan (KOR3P), which includes various strategies to provide risk reduction and reentry programs, services and interventions.

The WA has been contracted to provide an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) to assist with job readiness for individuals referred by KDOC and SCDOC and desires to continue and build on this partnership.

Services Provided	SCDOC	Wichita Parole Office	Total
Direct Referrals	121	98	219
Employment Lab Attendees	252	N/A	252
Individual Employment Services Provided	950	888	1,838
Individuals Entering Employment*	295	76	371

\*Includes referrals from 2024 who gained employment in 2025

Employment Rates	SCDOC	Wichita Parole Office	Total
Entered Employment Rate	86.25%	98%	92%
Employment Retention After 6 months	75%	77%	76%
Employment Retention After 12 months	76%	87.5%	81.75%

Wages Earned	SCDOC	Wichita Parole Office	Total
Average Wage After 6 months	\$15.16	\$15.66	\$15.41
Average Wage After 12 months	\$14.80	\$15.07	\$14.94

**371**  
Individuals Entered Employment

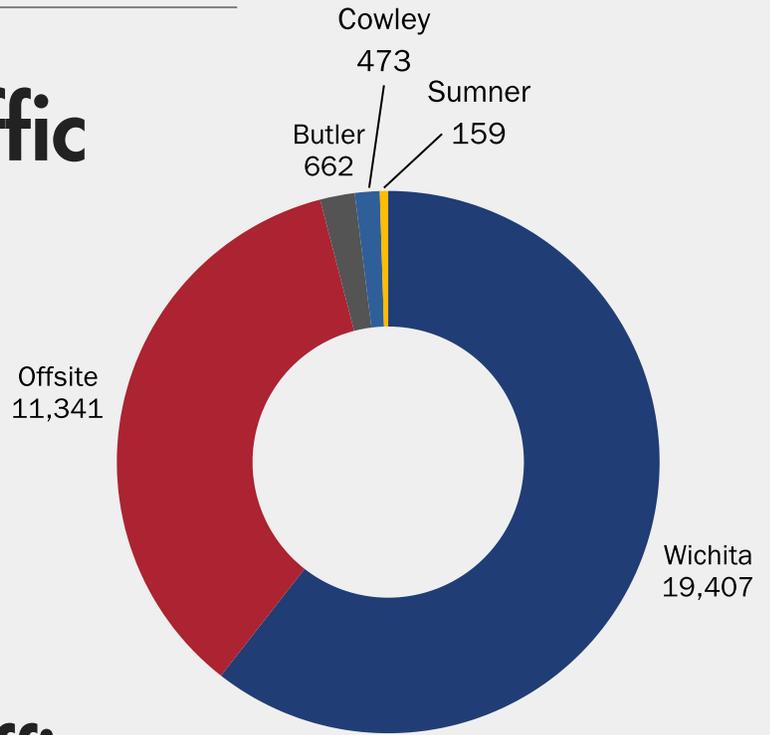
**81.75%**  
Employment Rate After 12 months

**\$14.94**  
Average Wage After 12 months

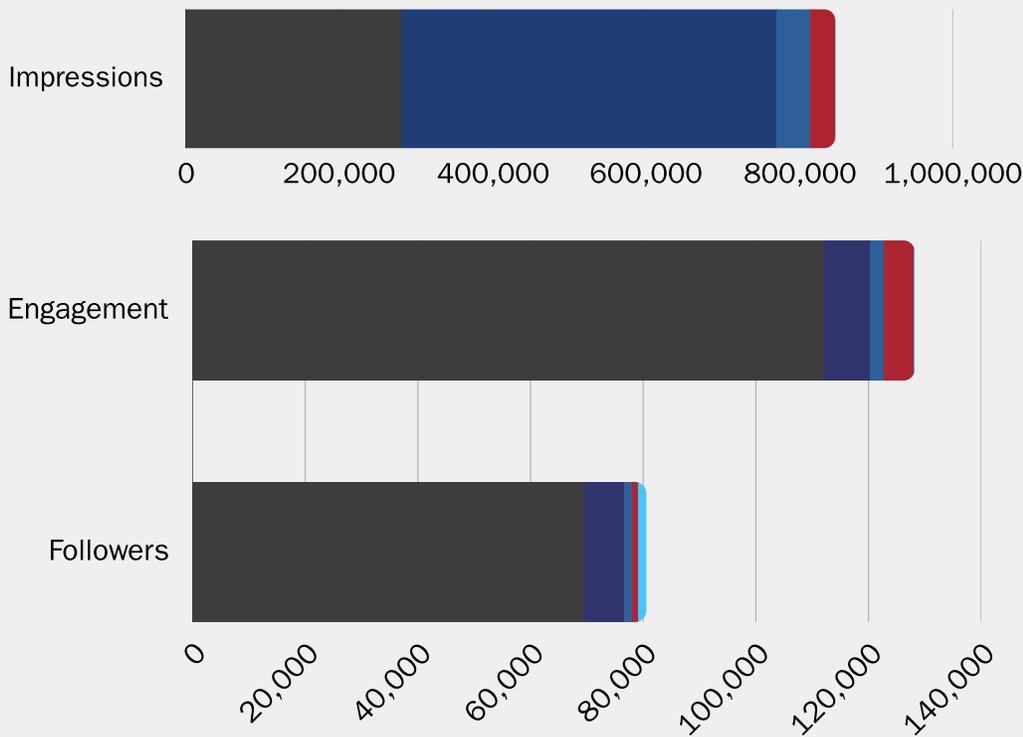
# Job Seeker Traffic

**32,042**

Total Traffic



# Digital Media Traffic



**858,445**

Total Impressions

**128,184**

Total Engagements

**80,548**

Total Followers  
Across Digital Platforms

Digital Following  
+  
Customer Traffic =

**112,590**

Unique Audience  
Reach

# Success Stories



## Worker Doubles Hourly Wage with Occupational Training Assistance

Timothy came to the Workforce Center seeking help completing his associate's degree in Aviation Maintenance Technician through the One Workforce Grant. Previously working part-time in retail for \$16.25/hour, he hoped to earn technical certificates and start a career in the aircraft industry.

With funding assistance, Timothy quickly excelled in his training and secured full-time employment at a prominent local aircraft manufacturer as a Sheet Metal Mechanic, starting at \$20.50/hour. While working and training, he earned multiple raises, earning up to \$25.56/hour.

Timothy completed his program with a 3.84 GPA, earning several aviation maintenance certifications and his associate's degree. He was later promoted to Inspector-Fabrication/Assembly, now earning \$27/hour with full benefits. His hard work and dedication helped him successfully launch his career in aviation.

## New Numbers: Turning a Layoff into Better Opportunity and Bigger Salary

Jessica was laid off from her Senior Accounting Assistant role after four years, earning \$26/hour. Despite holding two bachelor's degrees, she struggled to find a job that matched her skills and salary expectations, often being seen as overqualified.

Through the RESEA program, Jessica worked with a Reemployment Navigator who encouraged her to expand her job search beyond her previous industry and helped her refine her resume. With tailored job search support and persistence, Jessica landed a full-time General Accountant position in the aviation industry earning \$40/hour — well above her previous wage. The role offers excellent benefits and opportunities for growth in a new industry.



## From Setback to Stability: RETAINing Hope, Rebuilding a Future

Rachel came to the Workforce Center after losing her job. She faced multiple illnesses and was living in a sober-living facility, overcoming a decade-long addiction. Eager to rejoin the workforce, she entered the RETAIN program. She needed second-chance friendly employment, as she was on parole at the time, and had limited workplace and digital skills. She initially took a part-time fast food job to cover her living expenses.

With help from her RETAIN Coordinator, Rachel received job search and resume assistance, individualized job leads, access to online interview and digital skills training, and attended workshops through the Workforce Center. She was also referred to community resources for expungement assistance, restricted license assistance, addiction support, and interview clothing.

She secured a full-time position as a Cleaner at a local aviation company, earning \$20.50/hour. Thanks to the support of the RETAIN program, she has stable employment, is maintaining her sobriety, and is working toward long-term self-sufficiency.

# Success Stories

## Online Certification Helps Job Seeker Boost Resume and Salary

Courtney came to the Workforce Center aiming to secure a project management position, but faced challenges due to limited formal education and lack of certifications in the field. While she had relevant experience through previous jobs, her lack of industry credentials made it difficult to stand out in the job market.

Courtney received personalized one-on-one support to help her improve her resume and job search approach. She was also encouraged to enroll in the Google Careers Project Management course to boost her qualifications.

Equipped with a new resume along with her dedication, work ethic, and commitment to networking, Courtney secured a Project Manager/Office Manager role with a local landscaping business earning \$75,000 annually — an increase of \$23,000 over her previous role. She now enjoys fulfilling work aligned with her career goals and is optimistic about her future in the field.



## From Sales to Service: Job Seeker Finds Fulfillment in New Field

After 5 years, Kenda was laid off from her job in RV sales. Although she had gained a broad range of transferrable skills, she struggled to confidently present them on her resume and in interviews.

Workforce Center staff helped Kenda target her skills and experience into a resume format she could confidently present to employers. She was also encouraged to expand her job search outside the sales industry, recognizing her ability to connect with people and her calming presence as valuable assets for roles in a nonprofit community living facility. Kenda was excited by the potential for a more rewarding career.

She soon accepted a position as a Behavioral Support Specialist earning \$18.25/hour. The new schedule provides a better work-life balance and she is excited to make a positive difference every day in a career she might not have considered if not for Workforce Center support.



## Gaining Career Elevation: Accountant Takes Her Career to New Heights

After 17 years as an Accounts Payable Coordinator with a restoration company earning \$25/hour, Jodie was terminated from her position.

As an older worker transitioning careers, she needed support reentering the workforce. Jodie worked with a case manager who helped her refine and tailor her resume and practice interview skills using AI-based training programs. Her goal was to land a position earning at least \$20/hour.

Jodie secured a position as a Senior Staff Accountant at a local aerospace company, where she will enjoy expanded responsibilities and earn \$65,000 annually (\$31.25 per hour) representing a \$6.25/hour increase from her previous role.



# 2026-2028 Strategic Plan

CORE VALUES

ACCESS

ACCOUNTABILITY

COLLABORATION

INNOVATION

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

### PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Exceed federal and state performance benchmarks by delivering high-quality, data-driven programs that improve employment outcomes

- WIOA Title I and SCSEP performance
- Continuous improvement in one-stop operations
- Enhanced customer service and satisfaction

### YOUTH AND CAREER PATHWAYS



Equip young people with the skills, experiences, and networks to launch successful careers

- Expand Youth Employment Project (YEP) and Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) initiatives
- Integrate Work-Based Learning (WBL) and career awareness for youth (ages 16-19) in education and community programs
- Prioritize engagement with foster care youth and disconnected young adults (ages 16-24)

### SYSTEM ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY IMPACT



Strengthen coordination among workforce, education, and community partners to avoid duplication of services and maximize local impact

- Leverage One-Stop Operations into a multi-agency Community Economic Mobility Collaborative
- Strategic coordination on employment services for Veterans, Military Spouses, and Justice-Involved Individuals
- Develop shared data and accountability measures

### REVENUE GENERATION AND INNOVATION



Diversify and expand funding to sustain programs, pilot new approaches, and drive long-term organizational stability

- Generate non-WIOA revenue streams through grants, contracts, and fee-for-service models to attract public, private and philanthropic investments
- Position priority populations, including Military-Connected Individuals, At-Risk Youth, and Justice-Involved Individuals, as catalysts for innovation and funding opportunities
- Strengthen communications and brand visibility to attract new partners and investment

# Letter from the President & CEO

There is no question that 2025 was a year of disruption and uncertainty; but also one of opportunity and accomplishment. It has been an honor and a privilege to lead the WA, and I have never been more proud of our outstanding team of professionals who step up every day to change lives and create meaningful community impact.

The 2025 WA Annual Report highlights this work through data, stories, and images that celebrate success and recognize the partners who make our work possible. I am deeply grateful to the many individuals, organizations, and employers who contribute their time, expertise, and resources to strengthen our region's workforce.

At its core, the WA exists to drive economic impact by connecting people to the skills, credentials, and employment opportunities our regional economy demands. Each year, we work alongside employers, educators, community organizations, and public partners to ensure businesses have access to a skilled workforce and individuals have clear pathways to meaningful, family-sustaining careers.

The outcomes reflected in this report are a direct result of the dedication and professionalism of the WA staff. Their ability to adapt to a changing labor market while aligning funding, programs, and partnerships allows us to move beyond compliance and deliver real, measurable results for workers and employers alike.

I am grateful to the WA Board of Directors for their leadership, oversight, and strategic guidance; and to our community partners, education and training providers, employers, and nonprofit organizations, whose collaboration makes our collective impact possible.

Together, we are strengthening the region's workforce system, supporting economic growth, and expanding opportunity for Kansans. I am proud of what we accomplished in 2025 and energized by the work ahead.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust.

Sincerely,

*Keith Lawing*

President & CEO

Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas

