



Workforce Alliance (WA) Youth Employment Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2026 – 3:00 PM

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance Youth Employment Committee assembled virtually via ZOOM. Chair Rod Blackburn called the meeting to order and self-introductions were given.

2. 2026 Youth Employment Project (YEP) Update

- The project is at approximately 72% of the total youth served goal.
- Youth participation in job fairs has exceeded expectations.
- Approximately 20 hiring events held, with higher-than-anticipated student attendance.
- The number of schools served is over 20% above target.
- Classroom engagement will continue for another month and a half.
- Summer Camp HYPE career awareness events are scheduled and progressing as planned.

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

- Event scheduled for April 22nd; less than two weeks away.
- 80 employer booths confirmed (initial goal was 100).
- Over 1,200 students registered from multiple districts, including Wichita Public Schools, Andover, Derby, Mulvane, and others.
- Target audience: Sophomores and seniors (juniors also permitted due to class structure).
- Each school scheduled to attend for approximately one to one and a half hours.
- Adjustments made to booth layout to avoid underrepresentation of certain career clusters.
- Logistics confirmed: electricity, Wi-Fi, lunch, parking, student schedules, and staff identification.
- Student Job Fair Guide
 - A draft of the student job fair guide that has tips for participation in the fair was presented.
 - The guide includes suggested employer questions, career cluster information, and note-taking space. It was suggested students bring a resume for employers to critique.
 - Members discussed distributing the guide to both students and employers in advance.

4. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Updates / Work-Based Learning (WBL)

- **WIOA Youth Program**
 - **knectY** (Kansas Network for Employment and Career Transition for Youth)
 - New federally funded Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) demonstration project.
 - Serves youth and young adults with disabilities ages 14–24.
 - Participants will be co-enrolled in WIOA Youth program.
 - Focus on connecting participants with as many community resources as possible for employment.
- **Performance Report**
 - Third quarter data reviewed; program year ends June 30.
 - Youth credential attainment at 73%, which is above the state level.
 - Median earnings are strong.
 - Measurable Skills Gain is pending final data entry.



- Youth program overall performance trending positively compared to state averages.
- Work-Based Learning & Grant Updates
 - Q3 work-based learning data pending final submission. – The state is leveraging funding for the WBL program; a program overview will be provided at the next meeting including some best practices. Report will then be shared with state and elected officials.
 - City of Caldwell Summer Youth Program
 - The State has delayed accepting applications for the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) that would have funded this project such that it will be too late for summer implementation.
 - Partners are exploring alternative fall programming options and plan to submit next year.

5. Partner Updates

- City of Wichita – Way to Work:
 - 325 youth applied for summer internships (record number).
 - Seeking additional placements, particularly in animal care and sports-related fields.
- Textron Aviation – Summer Internships
 - Nearly 700 applicants, over 170 youth were hired.
 - Internship extended from six to eight weeks based on feedback.
- Job Prep - YMCA
 - 181 job placements secured; over 200 youth enrolled.
 - Youth onboarding to begin in early May.
- WSU Tech
 - Hosted signing day events: 254 students attended.
 - Over \$250,000 in scholarships awarded.
 - Expanded events to Crawford County.
- Future Ready Centers
 - Outreach event held for employers in February highlighted HYPE partner (YMCA, WA, City of Wichita) programs.
 - Strong employer turnout and student success stories shared.
 - Generated additional employer interest for internships and Camp HYPE.
 - Recommendation made for a future committee meeting to be held on-site at Future Ready Centers in the fall.

6. Consent Agenda

The minutes of the December 16, 2026 meeting were presented for review and approval.
Debbie Kennedy (Alana McNary) moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion was adopted.

7. Additional Updates

- Youth Employment Project awarded United Way of the Plains funding for 2026–27.
- Wichita Children's Home received funding for:
 - Police Protective Custody Admissions
 - Kids Cope grief counseling
 - Anti-homelessness initiative (ages 18–24)
- Roadtrip Nation (RTN) Wichita content (career awareness tools and resources) was replicated to the WA website. A link to the RTN content will be sent to all committee members. Staff will report on some metrics from the RTN collaboration at a future meeting.
- Potential collaboration with Kansas Health Foundation on economic mobility initiative with foster care youth being a priority.



8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

Attendees:

LWDB Youth Employment Committee Members

Rod Blackburn, Partners in Education, Chair
Tyrone Baker, YMCA
Laura Barker, Wichita Public Schools
Jakobe Davidson, Boeing
Derek Foust, Butler Community College
Cody Griffin, WSU Tech
Stacia Kaylor, Textron Aviation
Debbie Kennedy, Wichita Children's Home
Brittini Mayagoitia, Ascension Via Christi
Alana McNary, Professional Engineering
Consultants
Sally Stang, City of Wichita
Amy Williams, Kansas Leadership Center

Staff/Guests

Stephanie Anderson
Dr. Marcy Aycock
Chelsea Daniel
Amanda Duncan
Denise Houston
Keith Lawing
Shirley Lindhorst
Chad Pettera
KC Schumacher
Deb Weve
Tracy Elkinton, International Rescue Committee