



**Workforce Alliance (WA) Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
April 23, 2025

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Workforce Alliance Board met in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and via Zoom; Chair Jeff Longwell called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions. Wichita Mayor Lily Wu attended the Board meeting and was recognized to share some remarks. The Mayor just had her first State of the City address last month, which touched on the City's major priorities - crime, streets, economic development and homelessness.

**2. Public Comment**

No requests for public comment were received.

**3. National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum 2025**

Board members Alana McNary and Scott Stiles and staff Keith Lawing and Amanda Duncan attended the NAWB Forum in Washington DC and shared some key takeaways from the event. Of note was keynote speaker, Mark Perna's, CEO of TFS Results, presentation regarding his book "Answering Why: Unleashing Passion, Purpose, and Performance in Younger Generations"; there may be interest in inviting him to Wichita to speak on connecting with youth in ways that are different than traditional approaches. Other sessions attended included next generation sector partnerships, priorities for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, board member engagement and involvement (utilizing skills and contacts to benefit the organization) and how workforce boards are using artificial intelligence (AI) as well as exploring how AI can be used internally for administrative tasks and externally to assist job seekers. WA has formed an internal AI task force evaluating potential uses and risks and have provided some training to staff. A session on child care issues included a presentation of a tool for employers to use to determine return on child care related investment. As part of a grant that Child Start is receiving, a child care focused summit is being planned to bring employers together to discuss tools and best practices to address child care issues and such a tool could be presented as part of that summit. Also of interest, was information regarding a federal bonding program that can assist employers that hire people with criminal backgrounds with additional insurance. The WA is part of Kauffman planning grant for programs supporting justice-involved individuals where this information may be beneficial. Lawing and Duncan both presented at the event, which showcased WA programs and accomplishments. Mayor Wu expressed her appreciation and explained how it is always good to have local organizations highlighted on the national stage to gain exposure to the excellent work that is being done in this region.

*Report was received and filed.*

**4. Partnership Agreement with Level Up Kansas**

Board member John Rolfe, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and Kaylie Bergkamp-Lagasse, Level Up Kansas (LUK) were present to discuss the WA's partnership with LUK. The Chamber leads the LUK project to get more Kansans connected to the Kansas Promise scholarship, which provides education and skills training scholarships for students to attend Kansas community colleges and technical colleges in specific fields of study. LUK has created a targeted outreach and marketing campaign funded by the Kansas Legislature. LUK receives a number of inquiries that are more focused on immediate employment opportunities, or seeking a combination of job leads with information on scholarships for education and skills training.

Leadership from the Chamber and LUK have met with WA staff and the other local workforce boards in Kansas about partnerships for developing strategies that will leverage and align LUK with the services and resources from the KansasWorks workforce centers. To help strengthen the relationship

between LUK and the Local Workforce Boards a draft agreement is being piloted with the WA. The draft agreement was presented, which establishes expectations and a defined customer referral and follow up process along with outreach, awareness and promotion of both programs. The LUK Board is also reviewing the draft agreement for approval. The language in the agreement is still in draft form and staff are still working with LUK staff to fine tune toward a final formal agreement. It is proposed the agreement be used as a model for the other local areas statewide to develop a “no wrong door” for Kansans seeking access to employment or skills training opportunities.

Rolfe added that the agreement would further the collaboration and partnership with WA as there is a need to assist LUK customers that have immediate employment needs that would benefit from WA services and programs. Chair Longwell expressed that the partnership could elevate both organizations and make this more of a priority with the state and possibly lead to further funding.

It was asked what kind of data reporting could be expected from LUK ie, type of inquiries and success rates. Bergkamp-Lagasse responded that LUK is very data driven and can provide aggregate information after following up with customers. LUK ensures customers have been taken care of from start to end result.

*Kathy Jewett (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve intent the agreement as presented and authorize staff to move forward with the partnership and make modifications after consultation with Level Up Kansas.*

## **5. Kansas Local Workforce Boundaries**

The State of Kansas had been divided into five local workforce board areas to oversee federal job training and funding for over 40 years. Governor Kelly recently approved the merger of Local Areas I (Workforce One) and II (Heartland Works) changing the local area boundaries. The boundaries are used to allocate annual federal funding and the geographic framework for implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The previous map and the new map of local areas was provided to board members. The new merged Local Area includes 79 counties with 1.1 million people. No analysis was done prior to the merger regarding any changes to current local area boundaries.

While board members and staff agree that two local areas can merge, there is concern in regard to maintaining current boundaries if they do not reflect current labor markets. The merger further exacerbated the imbalance of the local areas. The WA provided comment to the State in support of the ability for the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to merge, but requested a comprehensive and inclusive (economic development, workforce center partners, employers, community organizations and workforce boards) analysis be conducted to determine the most effective service areas and make the local area boundaries consistent with Kansas labor markets. The state response indicated that a process to review Local Area boundaries would be done in the future with possible changes being recommended to the Governor. To expedite the timeline of a State-led review of the local areas, and to check the status of any plans being developed, staff suggest the WA Board chair reach out to the Secretary of Commerce and Chairman of the State Workforce Board. A draft letter was presented to board members for review.

*Jessica Istas (Dr. Jacqueline Vietti) moved to authorize the WA Board Chair to request a comprehensive analysis of the local area service delivery boundaries for WIOA implementation.*

## **6. Community Impact Projects Updates**

Amanda Duncan provided a review of current WA projects the WA.

Youth Employment Project (YEP) – The school year is winding down and youth employment and activities are ramping up for the the summer. An interview day was held on April 5<sup>th</sup> with a good turnout and new mix of employers. NIAR hired some youth for the first time. Spirit was not able participate due to the pending merger. Textron hired 170 interns this summer, some from out of state. Maize senior interview day was held on April 16. Wichita Public Schools had to cancel their interview day due to weather, so Maize school district opened up their interview to any high school senior who was graduating. The Camp HYPE, week long career camps for 14 to 15 year olds have been scheduled and open for registration. The WA has a regular segment on KWCH’s Newstalk program to discuss WA

programs and services and on April 17<sup>th</sup>, Amanda Duncan talked about the YEP's career camps and summer jobs for teens; the clip was shown to board members

EPA Brownfields grant implementation has been delayed. Staff are working with the grant officer with a goal of July 1st implementation.

Through Home Base Wichita in partnership with Heroes Make America, Manufacturing Institute, Textron Aviation and WSU Tech, an opportunity is being provided for active duty airmen who are transitioning out of the military or upskilling to attend an accelerated A&P mechanic program. Participants can earn a license in six weeks rather than 18 months for \$5,500 rather than \$35,000. The program is being paid out of the WA's One Workforce grant funding with the hope of keeping these airmen in the Wichita region.

Staff have applied for homeless veteran grant to US DOL and are waiting to hear the outcome. An announcement is expected in a couple of months.

*Report was received and filed.*

#### **7. 2026-2028 WA Board of Directors Strategic Planning**

The WA Board of Directors adopts a strategic plan every two years and will engage in the strategic planning process in 2025. The strategic plan is used to guide the operations and set goals for the organization. Lawing discussed the organization's focus on economic mobility and the need for alignment with other community-based organizations. He emphasized the importance of leveraging non-federal resources and building on the organization's existing structure. The Workforce Center will host a series of planning sessions that focus on key topics and review progress and outcomes related to goals and community impact. A different topic will be discussed at each session and board members, community partners, employers and elected officials will be invited. The suggested five planning sessions topics include current and anticipated local employment and skills training priorities, economic mobility, legislative workforce policy roundtable, technology tools for workforce development, education and skills training and a summary session. Board members are encouraged to attend and invite others they feel would benefit or can offer contributions to the discussions. The goal is for the WA Board to adopt the new strategic plan for 2026 through 2028 at its meeting in January of 2026.

*Dr. Jacqueline Vietti (Rod Blackburn) moved to approve the planning process for the 2026-2028 strategic plan.*

#### **8. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Plan**

WIOA requires each Local Area to have an approved Local Plan. These plans must be reviewed and updated every four years. The template for the new plan follows the exact same template as the current plan. Staff updated the plan to accurately reflect current operations and update according to the current labor market. The draft plan includes goals, strategies, service delivery plans, policies and management of the One Stop Workforce System in Local Area IV. The plan was released for public comment on April 7, 2025 and has been or will be shared with staff, board members and stakeholders. A link to the plan was shared with board members. Comments will be accepted through May 7, 2025. Staff will review comments as they are filed and then respond to the comments and make appropriate changes as necessary. All comments provided will be attachments to the plan. The plan will be reviewed by WIOA mandated partners at their meeting on April 24, 2025, by the Executive Committee at its May 14, 2025 meeting and by the CEOB at its meeting on May 8, 2025. The Local Plan is due to the Kansas Department of Commerce on June 2, 2025.

*Jessica Istas (Kathy Jewett) moved to approve the draft Local Plan as presented pending public comments.*

#### **9. Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes for January 22, 2025, Program Year 2024 (PY24) budget update, Operations & One-Stop Operator report, and fair chance and communications reports, WA Executive Committee actions taken since the last board meeting and on-the-job training (OJT) contracts for the

Eligible Training Provider List for Anchor Fabrication and Keycentrix were presented to the Board for review and approval.

*Dr. Jacqueline Vietti (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve the action items recommended in the Consent agenda. Motion adopted.*

#### 10. **Additional Topics/Announcements**

- The annual Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament will be held at Hidden Lakes Golf Course on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. A Save the Date will be sent out soon. Sponsors, teams and prize donations are needed.
- The WA is part of a Kauffman planning grant with the Workforce Partnership in Kansas City to better align pre and post release education and job training services for justice involved individuals/returning citizens and address barriers to employment that exist. If the plan is accepted funds will be provided for implementation and more community and regional partners will be needed and invited to participate.
- Jeff Longwell's term as board chair will end on June 30th. Vice Chair Alana McNary is in line to become the new board chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40.

#### Present LWDB Members

- Dr. Rachel Bates via Zoom
- Rod Blackburn
- Cheryl Childers via Zoom
- Marcus Curran via Zoom
- Robyn Heinz
- Jessica Ista
- Kathy Jewett
- Jeff Longwell
- Alana McNary
- B.J. Moore via Zoom
- Alex Munoz via Zoom
- Erica Ramos
- John Rolfe
- Gabe Schlickau via Zoom
- Sally Stang via Zoom
- Scott Stiles via Zoom
- Dr. Jacqueline Vietti
- Bruce Witt

#### Guests & Staff

- Amanda Duncan
- Denise Houston
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Mary Mann
- Chad Pettera
- Justin Albert, Spirit AeroSystems
- Kaylie Bergkamp-Lagasse, LevelUp Kansas
- Lindsay McWilliams, Goodwill / One-Stop Operator
- Mayor Lily Wu, City of Wichita