



**Workforce Alliance Program Operations and Performance (POP) Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2026**

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Program Operations and Performance (POP) Committee assembled virtually via Zoom. Co-Chair Tony Naylor welcomed Committee members, asked for introductions and called the meeting to order.

2. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Policies: Self-Sufficient Wage Review

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) tasks the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) with setting an economic self-sufficiency standard for the local area. This policy is reviewed annually. This wage is used as a requirement for on-the-job training and incumbent worker training contracts as well as inclusion on the occupations approved for training list.

- The self-sufficient wage is currently \$16.72/hour
- MIT Living Wage in the Wichita MSA for a single adult is \$20.78/hour; this living wage has increased by \$0.99/hour since last year.
 - Staff recommend increasing the self-sufficient wage by 3.5% to \$17.31/hour, which aligns with the Consumer Price CPI increase of 3.4% in the Midwest and historical incremental approach board and staff have been using the past few years to avoid disruption to employer training contracts.
 - The average OJT wage is \$20.30/hour, indicating minimal program impact of the proposed wage.
 - Median wages for demand occupations already exceed the proposed wage.
 - Exceptions to the wage can be made by staff for justice-involved individuals, persons with disabilities and career pathways with wage progression to a self-sufficient wage within six months.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Committee members expressed concern about the slow progress toward closing gap with living wage and there was debate on whether to increase more aggressively, ie, 4% or the full \$0.99.
 - Consideration of impacts on small employers, nonprofits, child care sector, etc.
 - Recognition of "push-and-pull" - Higher wage increases training eligibility, but may exclude certain lower-paying programs.
 - Living wage increases have slowed compared to prior years.
 - Even a full \$0.99 increase would only bring wage to \$17.71/hour.
- Staff to analyze additional wage scenarios, compile additional supporting data, including O*Net entry-level wages for demand occupations and broader regional entry-level wage indicators.
- Another self-sufficient wage review will be on the agenda for the July meeting to revisit today's decision with the additional data.

Marcus Curran (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve an initial 4% increase in the self-sufficient wage to \$17.39 an hour with a caveat that staff provide the requested additional data for reconsideration at the next meeting. Motion adopted.

3. Demand Occupation List for Program Year 2026

An ongoing function of the WA LWDB is to annually review the Demand Occupations List (Occupations Approved for Training) for Local Area IV. The list enumerates the occupations for which WIOA (and other grant) funds can be expended. Staff has researched current labor market trends, surveyed staff, employers, Board members, and reviewed regional initiatives to determine occupations in demand the WA Local Area.

- Staff proposed maintaining the current list with the following changes:
 - Removal of 11 occupations lacking training providers in the local area.
 - Removal of one duplicative/unused certification program Certified Coding Specialist.
 - Addition of dental assisting as a new occupation.

- Discussion highlights:
 - Concern about removing occupations with clear labor demand (e.g., healthcare roles)
 - Occupations remain eligible only if training is available on ETP list.
 - Out-of-area programs exist but may not be eligible locally.
 - Challenges with local training providers interest in being on the list:
 - Training providers must voluntarily apply to ETP list; awareness may be lacking.
 - Significant data reporting requirements for the provider discourage participation.
 - Concern about “bait-and-switch” - Advertising training opportunities that cannot be funded
 - Proposal for staff to:
 - Identify any high-demand occupations removed and prioritize outreach to providers in order to encourage their ETP participation by clarifying benefits and requirements.
 - Explore solutions for improving ETP compliance, particularly data reporting challenges.
 - Monitor opportunities to re-add occupations when training becomes available.

Marcus Curran (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve the Demand Occupation List for Program Year 2026 as presented. Motion adopted.

4. **State WIOA Monitoring Report**

The Committee reviewed a WIOA Monitoring Report issued in January 2026 that the Kansas Department of Commerce conducted in the fall of 2025.

- Results of the report included one formal finding (training policy reporting) and three areas of concern; all findings and concerns have been addressed and are closed.
- Specific issues addressed:
 - Training expenditure policy documentation clarified.
 - The WA’s one-stop operator five-year contract with Goodwill exceeded the allowed term of four years. The contract will be amended and the contract will be rebid a year earlier than planned.
 - Dislocated Worker eligibility case reviews justified with documentation.
 - KansasWorks data collection concerns resolved with documentation.
- Best practice citation - Local area highlighted for best practice in integrated service delivery.
 - Concern raised about potential state mandates that could conflict with this best practice model.
- Staff to continue internal documentation and compliance tracking.
- Staff to highlight best practice designation in external reporting and advocacy.

Report was received and filed.

5. **Additions to the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) List**

Butler Community College requested that a Behavior Technician Specialist training program be considered for addition to the ETP list. All programs on the ETP List must be approved. The ETP list is state-wide, and the policy governing it does not require programs to meet a wage requirement nor appear on Demand Occupation lists within all or any local areas.

- The program is online and leads to a Registered Behavioral Technician credential.
- The program prepares students to assist social workers, therapists, advocates, etc. with clients experiencing developmental behavior challenges.
- Labor market data for this field shows an 8% projected growth in the next 10 years and the median wage is \$18.84/hour.
- Staff will be tracking enrollments, completions, and employment outcomes as well as evaluating the potential to add the occupation to Demand Occupation List in the future.

Alex Munoz (Marcus Curran) moved to approve the initial program as presented. Motion adopted.

6. **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Update**

The WA and Department for Children and Families (DCF) are partners in a pilot SNAP E&T project in South Central Kansas. An update on that partnership was provided.

- The program serves SNAP (food stamps) participants who are Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents age 18 or older who reside in Sedgwick County and has a focus on justice-involved individuals but is not limited to that population. The current contract extension runs through July 2027
- Operational improvements:
 - WA and DCF leadership meet monthly to review progress.
 - WA staff attend weekly on-site collaborations at DCF to implement a “warm handoff” model, where staff provide information about Workforce Center services and set their first appointment at the Workforce Center.
 - There has been increased engagement and reduced participant drop-off.
- Referrals to the program are steady with a slight increase over the last few months.
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the SNAP E&T program and conducted a virtual Management Evaluation with WA and DCF staff on April 22, 2026. No reports from that visit have been received as yet.
- Staff will continue to monitor referral growth trends and document best practices for potential replication.

Report was received and filed.

7. Workforce Center Operations / One-Stop Operator Report

A report on March Workforce Center operations and One-Stop Operator activities was reviewed.

- 2,456 participants were served with traffic at the Wichita center down slightly but stable.
- New programs added: EPA Brownfields (21 enrollments), Homeless Veterans (11 enrollments), knectY (6 enrollments).
- Workshops have had high participation in digital literacy sessions.
- Job postings have increased to 911 postings (up from 649).
- Workkeys testing was expanded to daily availability.
- Customer experience surveys - Follow-up outreach was implemented for negative survey responses - many negative responses have been attributed to incorrect survey selection by customer.
- Workforce 101 program relaunched successfully – Outreach to partners regarding workforce services.
- A clothing voucher program has been implemented through Goodwill for eligible customers.

Report was received and filed.

8. Performance Update

- Ongoing internal corrective action plan in place.
- Performance improving relative to state averages.
- Continued challenges with credential attainment rates and employment outcomes (due to lagging data).
- Staff will continue working on credential recovery efforts, identifying additional strategies to improve employment outcomes and monitor performance progress through program year end (August).

9. Consent Agenda

Meeting minutes from January 8, 2026 were presented for review and approval.

Marcus Curran (Tony Naylor) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

10. Announcements

- Workkeys funding is ending June 30, 2026 – The State of Kansas is no longer supporting the platform. Staff are working to identify alternative assessment tools to replace Workkeys and conducting outreach to employers that use the assessments that it is ending.
- The Butler Workforce Center will close at the end of the month; staff will relocate and establish operations at an El Dorado partner site.

11. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Present Committee Members

Tony Naylor, Co-Chair

Robyn Heinz, Co-Chair

Justin Albert

Marcus Curran

Alex Munoz

Staff/Guests

Denise Houston

Keith Lawing

Shirley Lindhorst

Chad Pettera

Janet Sutton

Angela Slattery, Goodwill