



## Workforce Alliance (WA) Board of Directors

### Meeting Minutes

July 23, 2025

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Workforce Alliance Board met in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and via Zoom. Vice Chair Scott Stiles called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions.

#### 2. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

#### 3. Changing of the Guard and Workforce Alliance Board Member Updates

The current terms of the Board Chair and Vice Chair ended June 30, 2025, new board members were appointed and several reappointed at the Chief Elected Officials meeting on June 26, 2025. Board members serve three-year terms and terms are staggered so a third are due for reappointment at a time. Leadership changes were discussed as Alana McNary was appointed as the new board chair, while Scott Stiles was named vice chair and chair of the Finance Committee. The board also welcomed new members including Dr. Tamara Daniel, Butler Community College, Chip Schellhorn, CMJ Manufacturing, Jill Keuhny, Kanokla, and Justin Rochelle, Plumbers and Pipefitters. New board members who were present were introduced. Jeff Longwell and Rod Blackburn were acknowledged as outgoing members and were recognized for their long-time service and dedication. Blackburn will continue to serve on the Executive Committee for another year.

*Scott Stiles (Marcus Curran) moved to appoint Alana McNary as Chair of the Workforce Alliance Board, and Scott Stiles as Vice Chair of the Workforce Alliance Board.*

#### 4. Federal Grant and Funding Update

- WIOA - The WA received federal planning allocations for Program Year 2025 and will see a 7% increase in WIOA funds. Overall, although the WA is receiving a 7% increase in federal funding for PY 25, the WA budget will be reduced by 18% from PY 24, due to the loss of certain grants and funding changes. There is significant concern about ongoing WIOA funding. The legislation was not reauthorized last year, and the initial budget proposals being discussed in Congress include eliminating funding for the WIOA Youth program, making major reductions to WIOA Adult program, and also changing funding models to give states block grants for employment and skills training programs. Other One-Stop partners that have been impacted by federal funding are Job Corps, which is being eliminated and the American Indian Council, which is experiencing furloughs. With the possible elimination of the Department of Education, the WIOA Adult Ed programs could see changes in the near future as well. A new requirement for verifying individual eligibility for services through documentation is causing concern, as many clients may not have the necessary documents and could be turned away. Because of these challenges, there is a great need for future planning to identify priority projects and align with business and community needs to continue to promote growth of the regional economy. Staff are closely monitoring the situation and are in regular contact with Kansas congressional offices to provide and receive updates. Lawing and Stiles emphasized the importance of business and industry leaders like WA Board members advocating for these programs to Congress and local officials, particularly in Wichita, where workforce challenges persist.
- Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) - WA administers SCSEP funding through a U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) program that assists unemployed, low skilled, low-income individuals over 55 years of age return to the workforce. The program connects participants to part-time employment with not-for-profit organizations for skill development opportunities.

Currently, the WA partners with 37 different host agencies and have 66 workers placed in “earn and learn” employment at \$7.25 per hour, but despite its success, the WA was recently directed by the State of Kansas to notify SCSEP participants and host agencies that funding was not confirmed beyond June 30, 2025, and the program could be “paused.” Operations were not paused as funding was extended, but SCSEP is one of the employment and skills training programs being recommended for elimination in current federal budget planning.

- One Workforce - This grant will end in January 2026 and staff continue to utilize the education and training funds to assist customers connect to better employment opportunities. It was a four-year, \$9.9 million multi-partner grant initiative funded by the USDOL to support training in high-demand sectors of advanced manufacturing and IT. A sustainability plan is being developed with the Greater Wichita Partnership as part of the grant outcomes.
- EPA Brownfields Job Training Grant - WA staff are awaiting final direction from the EPA to initiate this two-year, \$500,000 grant project and anticipate operations will begin before the end of 2025. The grant provides training for 90 individuals in environmental careers including asbestos abatement, obtaining a commercial driver’s license with hazmat certification and several industry credentials in remediation and clean up technician. Key employer partners in the grant include local employers Dondlinger Construction, iSi Environmental, Remediation Contractors and Terracon.
- Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRP) - The WA received a \$500,000 grant from USDOL to help veterans experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness find meaningful employment and assist them in overcoming barriers to transition successfully into the workforce. Implementation plans are being made and it is hoped services can begin soon. Additional funding is available in 2026 and 2027. Partners in the grant include Continuum of Care, Coalition to End Homelessness in Wichita/Sedgwick County; Second Light, Goodwill Industries of Kansas, and the WA’s large employer network. Additionally, veterans transitioning out of incarceration will be eligible for support, with the Kansas Department of Corrections serving as a referral partner and funding for two full-time case managers and additional staff across the organization.

*Report was received and filed.*

## 5. Community Impact Projects Updates

Amanda Duncan provided a review of current WA projects.

- Youth Employment Project (YEP) - Camp HYPE’s career sessions are being held this summer and have been very successful and well-attended. Staff will have final numbers for the YEP program year to share with the Board right after school begins.
- Child Care Employer Solutions Summit - The WA in partnership with Child Start and the City of Wichita are hosting “The Business of Care: Tackling Child Care Through Workplace Innovation”. Information about the event was shared with Board members. The summit is designed to bring employers, policy leaders, and community partners together to develop actionable solutions that address childcare challenges in the community, with a focus on early childhood education as an economic development tool. Policy will also be discussed to include the Kansas state tax credit for employers supporting childcare and proposed a tri-share model where costs are split between local government/philanthropy, employers, and individuals.
- Home Base Wichita (HBW) - The current A&P mechanic fast track program that is available for active duty airmen who are transitioning out of the military or upskilling is being paid out of the WA’s One Workforce grant funding with the hope of keeping these airmen in the Wichita region. The WA will host a lunch for Lt. General Perry Wiggins, Executive Director of the Governor’s Military Council on August 7<sup>th</sup>; discussion will include sustainable funding for HBW.
- Kaufmann Returning Citizen Consortium (RCC) Planning Grant - The WA is working with its workforce board counterpart in Kansas City, Workforce Partnership, to create and present a project plan to the Kauffman Foundation by the end of November. The plan is to improve

support for justice-involved individuals, focusing on pre-release preparation and employment readiness as well as addressing barriers that this population faces and gaps in the system. If the plan is accepted, funds would be provided for implementation in 2026.

- Level Up Kansas (LUK) Partnership - The partnership between the WA and LUK has been a success. LUK customers that cannot be assisted by the Kansas Promise Scholarship are being referred to the WA and are assisted with services and programs that can meet their needs. The goal is for this to be a pilot project and the partnership could be expanded to the other local workforce board areas of the state.
- Regional Talent Talks - The purpose of these events is to improve the communication between local employers and the Workforce Alliance and community partners on employment and skills training priorities. Events were held in Cowley and Sumner. Another event is being planned for Butler County.

*Report was received and filed.*

#### **6. 2026-2028 WA Board of Directors Strategic Planning**

Lawing reviewed the 2026-2028 strategic planning session topics and schedule. Five sessions will be scheduled between August 13th and October 22nd (Current Labor Market Needs and Trends, Labor Market Data & Community Partnerships, Workforce Development Policy, Economic Mobility and a final recap/summary session). Invitations will be sent soon to board members, community partners, elected officials and employers. Upcoming strategic planning sessions were announced, scheduled from August to October, with the goal of developing a two-year strategic plan addressing employer needs, community partnerships, and economic mobility. The sessions will involve input from employers, community partners, and subject matter experts. A final plan will be presented to the Board for approval. Calendar meeting invitations will be sent to all board members.

*Marcus Curran (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve the 2026-2028 strategic planning sessions.*

#### **7. Consent Agenda**

Approval of meeting minutes from April 23, 2025, review of LWDB Executive Committee actions since the April 23rd board meeting, self-sufficient wage for Program Year 2025, on-the-job training (OJT) contracts for the Eligible Training Provider list for Harlow Aerostructures and High Touch Technologies, Workforce Center operations and one-stop operator update and project reports (Fair Chance, Registered Apprenticeship and Communications) were presented to the Board for review and approval. The board addressed the self-sufficient wage for the new program year, deciding to increase it by 3.5% in line with Consumer Price Index, as staff and Board continue to work towards the recommended wage of over \$19 per hour as indicated by MIT data for the region.

*Kathy Jewett (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve the action items recommended in the Consent agenda. Motion adopted.*

#### **8. Additional Topics/Announcements**

- The 13<sup>th</sup> annual Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament presented by Gilley's will be held at Hidden Lakes Golf Course on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Funds raised from the tournament help support the WA's Youth Employment Project. Additional sponsors, teams and prize donations are needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15.

## Attendees

### Present LWDB Members

- Marcus Curran
- Dr. Tamara Daniel
- Robyn Heinz
- Jessica Istan
- Kathy Jewett
- Pat Jonas via Zoom
- Jill Kuehny via Zoom
- Marilou Mewborn via Zoom
- B.J. Moore via Zoom
- John Rolfe
- Justin Rochelle via Zoom
- Chip Schellhorn
- Dr. Michelle Schoon
- Scott Stiles
- Lisa Whitley via Zoom

### Guests & Staff

- Amanda Duncan
- Denise Houston
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Chad Pettera
- Jeff Longwell
- Jamey Regier
- Janet Sutton
- Tyrone Baker, YMCA via Zoom
- Rod Blackburn, Partners in Education
- Peter Bodyk, KS Dept of Children & Families
- Jeff Longwell, Gilley's
- Lindsay McWilliams, Goodwill / One-Stop Operator
- Carol Noblit, Chief Elected Officials Board via Zoom

*The Workforce Alliance is the Local Workforce Development Board for Local Area IV*