

Workforce Alliance Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2022

1. Welcome and Introductions

The LWDB assembled in person and via Zoom; Chair Melissa Musgrave called the meeting to order.

2. Public Comment

Musgrave asked staff if any requests for public comment were received; none were received.

3. Workforce Alliance Board Member Updates

New board members were appointed to the Workforce Alliance (WA) Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) by the Chief Elected Officials Board on June 16th. John Rolfe, President and CEO of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, Cornell Beard, President of the Machinists Union and Laura Ritterbush, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Kansas were present at the meeting and introduced to Board members. Alana McNary, BG Products was unable to attend. It was noted that long-time Board member Jennifer Jackson's term expired on June 30th and she was thanked for her service and commitment. Musgrave and staff will be reviewing committee memberships and updating assignments. Board members interested in serving on a committee were asked to contact them.

4. 2020-2022 Strategic Plan and Project Update

An update was provided to Board members on current WA projects and their alignment with the goals of the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. Projects discussed included WA and ChildStart Inc. outreach and awareness strategy, Evergy Customer Connect partnership, Vets ICT project, Youth Employment (Youth Employment Project-YEP/Helping Youth Prepare for Employment HYPE and Work Based Learning, Roadtrip Nation (RTN) – Project Wichita Update and the One Workforce Grant / Deloitte Future of Work Project.

Lack of quality, affordable child care is an issue for many in the workforce. The WA and ChildStart are part of a work group of community leaders that have been meeting and working together to address this issue. The WA received a grant from ChildStart to develop a targeted outreach strategy on resources available and best practices to support workers and attract employees. Tanya Bulluck with ChildStart was introduced to discuss the issue and the partnership with the WA. Board members were shown a video that was produced regarding child care and employment to help raise awareness and provide outreach on the issue. Employers and job seekers need to know what resources are available to them such as available tax credits. Creative thinking and willingness on the part of the community and businesses to make the investment will be needed to meet the child care needs of the community.

Evergy has approached the WA with a proposal to assist them with their new Customer Connect Center (CCC). Don Sherman with Evergy was present to provide an overview of the CC and the proposed partnership with WA. Evergy is establishing a CCC in Wichita to create a face-to-face customer experience and educate customers; a similar center currently exists in Kansas City. Under the agreement, the WA will hire 2-3 staff to assist in the operations of the Evergy CCC. This partnership will allow the WA to create work experiences for youth and adult job seekers, and will also increase visibility to employment and career opportunities with Evergy. The WA will use the Evergy CCC as an access point for employment and training services and leverage the operations of the Wichita Workforce Center.

The WA is receiving \$705,000 in America Rescue Plan Act funds from the City of Wichita for Vets ICT, a project designed as a strategy to help attract and connect transitioning military personnel and families to employment and career opportunities in South Central Kansas. The WA has been working with the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, Greater Wichita Partnership, Greater Wichita Veterans Advocacy Board and regional employers to work on this strategy. The funds will primarily be used to expand on and implement these strategies by hiring dedicated staff, naming and branding of the project,

performing labor market analysis, developing a website and providing funds to small businesses to offer on-the-job training for veterans.

The Youth Employment Project (YEP) / Helping Youth Prepare for Employment (HYPE) program was very successful this year and provided an opportunity for manufacturing internships over the summer and a series of six different career camps (health care, technology, Spirit AeroSystems, trade skills, Textron Aviation and general careers) to young people. The State of Kansas is providing funding to the each of the five Local Workforce Boards to support two full-time Work-Based Learning Intermediary positions to work directly in regional high schools to provide work-based learning opportunities such as classroom visits, internships, job shadowing and mentoring. The goal is to increase career awareness for students and engage employers to support this initiative by providing more education and work experience opportunities.

An update was provided on the Roadtrip Nation (RTN) South Central Kansas Roadtrip. The kick-off for this project is August 1st at the Wichita Workforce Center. RTN is a career exploration tool for young people. Phase I, the Community Hub, Build Your Future, contains career awareness resources that will be utilized by regional schools and possibly outside of Kansas. Phase II, a documentary that will air on PBS, will begin filming in early November and applications are now being accepted for Road Trippers that will travel the region and engage with employers and community leaders to learn more about the careers that are available.

The WA is a partner in the Talent Roadmap Project led by the Greater Wichita Partnership and facilitated by Deloitte. The WA's role is to support a business and education feedback loop with the goal of preparing the workforce to meet the evolving needs of the business sector by ensuring strategic alignment between the business sector and the education/workforce planning sector. An update on the One Workforce Grant will be provided at the next meeting.

Strategic planning for 2023 through 2025 will begin in October with the goal of being complete by January.

The Board recognized the \$705,000 grant from the City of Wichita from the American Rescue Plan Act to implement the Vets ICT project. Alex Munoz (Robyn Heinz) moved to authorize the CEO to enter into a partnership agreement with Evergy to provide staff and services for the new Customer Connect Center pending final legal review. Motion Adopted.

5. **WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Program Policies: Self-Sufficient Wage Increase**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) tasks the LWDB with setting an economic self-sufficiency standard for the local area; the current self-sufficient wage for Local Area IV (LAIV) of \$12.02 an hour for the Adult and Youth programs and \$15.38 per hour for the Dislocated Worker (DW) program has not been updated since 2010. The current standards were developed from the Average Wage performance measure under the Workforce Investment Act; this performance measure no longer exists under WIOA. A change to the current policy has been discussed with both the Executive Committee and the Program Operations and Performance Committee and no action has yet been taken. Staff proposes using the MIT Living Wage Calculator to set the standard, the calculator estimates the cost of living in a community or region based on typical expenses. The self-sufficient wage impacts customers' ability to access training services. In order to be eligible for training services, the customer must need training to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency. Customers who are employed at wages that are higher than the self-sufficient wage are not eligible for training services. Additionally, when customers are reviewing training options, one of the factors considered is if the employment opportunity at the completion of the training will lead to a self-sufficient wage. Training services include post-secondary training, occupational skills training, registered apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. The self-sufficient wage also impacts performance; in particular, the Median Wage measure, which evaluates the median wage of customers in the second quarter after exit. If the self-sufficient wage is set too low, the Local Area will not meet the Median Earnings measure. Kansas just received performance goals for the next two program years and the Median Earnings goal increased for both Adults and Dislocated Workers.

The Program Operations and Performance Committee discussed the wage increase issue and supported increasing the self-sufficient wage to the MIT Living Wage level for WIOA DW and potentially phasing in an increase to the WIOA Adult and Youth programs. After reviewing the data, staff proposes setting the self-sufficient wage at the Wichita MSA living wage for a single adult with no children, which is currently \$15.60 per hour or \$32,448.00 per year. Staff proposes making this change for Program Year 2022 for the Dislocated Worker program. Realizing this is a significant increase from the current standard for the Adult and Youth programs, staff proposes updating the self-sufficient wage to this standard incrementally over the next couple of program years for those programs. Additionally, as part of the policy, the LWDB could authorize exceptions to the self-sufficient wage standard. An example could be training programs or OJTs that are part of career pathways that will result in the self-sufficient wage when completed. Staff also proposes reviewing the wage standard on a more frequent basis, possibly annually when the LWDB reviews the Occupations Approved for Training/Demand Occupations List.

Heinz from the POP Committee stated that at their last meeting, the group discussed the need to make an immediate change, recognized issues for both employers and job seekers, the importance of serving customers and making sure the wage is where it needs to be. Beard expressed concern that the proposed incremental increases may still be insufficient in future years and that there is a need for Wichita to update in order to remain competitive and retain and attract talent. Employers are realizing that wages are way too low and that some people are leaving for better opportunities. Staff is comfortable with an incremental increase due to the provision for reviewing the standard annually and other increases could be made at that time. Staff also feel that phasing in the increase might help with attaining performance measures. Peterson pointed out that if data in 2022 shows the rate should be \$15.60 an hour, that the stair step approach may not be appropriate and may never catch up to where it needs to be. He also wondered if the increase may disproportionately affect women and minorities receiving services, which is counter to the Board's strategic goal of approaching actions with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind. Jonas stated that many in the disability community are difficult to place in jobs to begin with and that raising this wage may make this even more difficult. Blackburn was concerned that many employers offer entry level positions and the WA could be in danger of alienating some customers from program and services. Blackburn was also interested in how many current OJT contracts fall below the \$15.60 standard. Staff responded that most are over \$15.00 an hour; staff can research and provide more information. Lawing also reiterated that there will be a provision for administrative exception to the wage in the policy.

Lawing proposed three options to Board members - approve the recommended action of increasing the self-sufficient wage to \$15.60 an hour for the DW program and incrementally increasing the wage for the Adult and Youth programs over the next couple of program years, defer the issue until the next Executive Committee meeting on August 10th or the next Board meeting in October or approve the increase of \$15.60 an hour for all programs. Chair Musgrave suggested that the issue be deferred since there were several questions raised during the course of the meeting and more time would be needed to deliberate on the complications of issue; board members concurred.

Board members agreed to defer taking action on the issue and will discuss at a future meeting. Staff will collect additional data regarding current participants and employers in training programs.

6. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of the meeting minutes from April 27, 2022, Workforce Alliance Program Year 2022 Budget, WA Operations / One-Stop Operator report, Career Pathways update for 2nd Quarter of 2022 and an update of the 2022 Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament were presented to the Board for review and approval. The CEOB and Finance Committee have reviewed and approved the budget for Program Year 2022; a copy was provided in the meeting packet. Board members were encouraged to become a sponsor or register a team for the golf tournament on September 29th.

Matt Peterson (Robyn Heinz) moved to approved the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion adopted.

7. **Additional Topics/Announcements**

- The Roadtrip Nation – South Central Kansas Roadtrip Kick-Off Announcement is scheduled for Monday, August 1st at 1:00 at the Wichita Workforce Center. All Board Members are invited to attend.
- The Workforce Innovation Conference hosted by the Kansas Board of Regents and KansasWorks is scheduled for October 3rd and 4th in Lawrence, Kansas. Information will be sent out to board members and are invited to attend; registration and hotel will be paid by the Workforce Alliance.
- The next Workforce Alliance Local Workforce Development Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2022. The meeting will be held in person at the Wichita Workforce Center and a virtual option will be available.

Adjourn (11:39)

Present LWDB Members

- Cornell Beard via Zoom
- Rod Blackburn via Zoom
- Bill Cantwell via Zoom
- John Clark via Zoom
- Marcus Curran via Zoom
- Robyn Heinz via Zoom
- Pat Jonas via Zoom
- Russell Kennedy
- Kristin Langrehr via Zoom
- Alex Munoz via Zoom
- Melissa Musgrave via Zoom
- Matt Peterson via Zoom
- Erica Ramos
- Laura Ritterbush via Zoom
- John Rolfe
- Ashley Scheideman via Zoom
- Gabe Schlickau via Zoom
- Sally Stang via Zoom

Guests & Staff

- Denise Houston via Zoom
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- George Marko via Zoom
- Laura Rainwater
- Kennisha Rolfe
- Tanya Bulluck, ChildStart
- Tisha Cannizzo, Eckerd Connects
- Jennie Heersche, Cowley College via Zoom
- Tina Luper, Goodwill via Zoom
- Don Sherman, Evergy
- Commissioner Greg Thompson, City of Winfield, CEOB via Zoom