

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2021

1. Welcome and Introductions

The LWDB assembled at the Workforce Center and via Zoom. Immediate Past Chair Gabe Schlickau, called the meeting to order in Chair Melissa Musgrave's absence and asked for self-introductions. New staff member Briley Stuchlik was introduced; she is the new Communications Specialist.

2. Public Comment

Schlickau asked staff if any requests for public comment were received; no public comment requests were received.

3. Regional and State Labor Market Update

Staff provided a presentation on the current economic conditions and employment projections for the upcoming year, which included a review and analysis to identify and address reasons for the lack of workers searching for jobs. The presentation will be forwarded to board members after the meeting as well as a link to the WSU's Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR) Employment Forecast. There are many open jobs and not enough job seekers in the pipeline. WA has been tracking employment data and the current rate is just below 5%. The unemployment rate is almost back to where it was pre-pandemic; the labor market is the issue as more people are needed to move to Kansas to work. Russ Kennedy asked what kind of customers Staff responded that the traffic count at Wichita Workforce Center is not at pre-pandemic levels; currently many of the customers are already employed and looking for better employment opportunities.

Funds invested in training in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) funds have increased dramatically and outreach efforts have been made to increase awareness of the program. Rod Blackburn asked if the outlook for funding for the TAA is favorable. Staff have not heard much about funding for individual programs at this time; however, the program has historically been viewed favorably by Congress. Katie Sawyer with Sen. Marshall's office who was present at the meeting may be able to provide some follow up.

In an effort to reach out to job seekers, the WA has scheduled several Virtual Job Fairs through the new virtual platform that the Kansas Department of Commerce procured. Staff feel that this form of job fair will not replace but complement in-person job fairs in the future. Attendance at these job fairs has been disappointing overall and in line with the current situation of low job seeker traffic. 60,000 jobs are currently posted on KANSASWORKS and there are less than 15,000 active resumes posted.

Staff are involved in a number of outreach and promotion efforts to get more people motivated to be employed. Also, staff continues to work with KWCH on a Job of the Day and weekly news stories and ties into WA social media. Board members are encouraged to submit a job or idea for a news story to staff.

Report was received and filed.

4. Special Projects and Grant Report

The Workforce Alliance is administering several grant projects and exploring a number of initiatives to address the employment and skills training challenges facing the regional economy such as One Workforce Grant, Fair Chance and Pathways Home, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education and Training E&T, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Good Jobs Challenge, Registered Apprenticeship Expansion and Roadtrip Nation.

The WA received a \$9.9 million One Workforce Grant last year, which is H1B Visa funded to target training in the advanced manufacturing and technology sectors. There are currently three employers involved in the project: Cox Machine, keycentrix and Novacoast with more pending. The WA is partnering with the Kansas Department of Commerce, Sedgwick County, City of Wichita and the Greater Wichita

Partnership to help fund a study by Deloitte from their SmartFactory facility at Wichita State University to demonstrate the impact that automation technologies will have on manufacturing in the future. The twelve-week study will include contacting local businesses and stakeholders to understand what those impacts will be and the data obtained will help target grant funds to train individuals in these technology fields. An update will be shared with the LWDB in the first quarter of 2022.

In order to continue the Fair Chance work that the WA does with incarcerated individuals, the WA received a Pathway Home grant to work with these individuals before they are released in order to help them succeed upon their release and that work is going well.

The WA is part of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) SNAP E&T (aka: food stamps) learning cohort. There are multiple models for LWDBs to be directly engaged in providing employment and training services to individuals receiving SNAP benefits. The WA is receiving technical assistance from a site coach from the Seattle Jobs Initiative and staff have met with Department of Children and Families leadership and local partners about SNAP E&T and the response has been very positive. WA staff plan to roll out a plan to implement this program in 2022.

The State of Kansas and a number of local governments have received federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help support the economic recovery from the job losses in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID crisis. The WA has been working with the United Way and NexStep Alliance/Goodwill to develop an employment and skills training model to identify investments from local and state ARPA funds that can have a meaningful impact, which would target gaps that exist in current employment and skills training programs. A discussion draft was provided to Committee members that has been shared with partners and is being used as the starting point for developing a formal proposal to submit to Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita for funding support.

The Federal Government has released grant opportunities, Build Back Better and Good Jobs Challenge. The WA is part of a coalition of organizations including the Greater Wichita Partnership, WSU, City of Wichita and others applying for these grants to help support infrastructure projects and create skills training programs to meet anticipated employment needs.

Roadtrip Nation (RTN) is an award-winning PBS series career exploration tool and empowers individuals to connect to their interests and have successful careers. RTN is interested in doing a project in the Wichita area, and WA staff along with officials from USD 259, the Kansas Department of Commerce and Wichita State University are in conversations about a project proposal and determine how to fund the project for the Kansas / Wichita region. It is estimated that the project would cost approximately \$660,000 in two phases.

The RETAIN project (piloted in South Central Kansas) is now in Phase II, which is a \$20 million statewide grant that assists individuals that have been injured on the job or have a disability to get back into the workforce.

The WA was one of three communities to be awarded dislocated worker grant funds in the amount of 800,000 through Midwest Urban Strategies.

Report was received and filed.

5. **2020-2022 Strategic Plan Report**

In 2020, the Workforce Alliance Local Workforce Development Board embarked upon a strategic planning process that resulted in the creation of a new two-year strategic plan. During the planning process six strategic goals were identified. An update on the progress of those goals was reviewed with the board.

To “Meet or exceed the negotiated performance of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs to maximize community impact”, the WA exceeded or met the fifteen WIOA performance goals of Program Year (2020) and exceeded the average program score for all three WIOA Title I funding streams.

In regard to “*Enhance youth employment opportunities by expanding partnerships with businesses, schools and other community organizations*”, youth programs were in recovery mode for 2020 with the goal of working back up to 2019 levels. Planning for 2022 is underway. Highlights for the 2021 program include; engaging 1,918 young adults, working with 73 employer partners and conducting five career camps supported by employer partners.

To address the goal of “*Increase the awareness of workforce programs and services throughout South Central Kansas*”, the board adopted the Workforce Alliance 2021-2022 Communication Plan in July, the partnership with KWCH “Building You” series continues to be successful (a report on outcomes was provided for review) and great deal of engagement for outreach to the public has occurred; data from the results of digital media efforts was provided for review.

To “*Expand the community impact of the Workforce Alliance through higher levels of board member participation*”, the WA continues to have a high level of board engagement whether it be participating in supporting the LWDB committees, utilizing WA services, participating in WA events like the Jobs FORE Youth golf tournament or reaching out to WA staff to partner on their business projects. Some data continues to be collected and staff will follow up with more information regarding this goal.

For the goal of “*Continue to increase non-WIOA funding*”, currently the WA budget is 42% of WIOA allocation with the majority of funding being generated from other sources. Staff continue to pursue additional funding sources as appropriate such as the 2021 Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament, 2022 YEP Workplan and the special projects that were discussed earlier in the meeting.

In regard, to “*Proactively approach the employment and skills training challenges and opportunities of the future with energy and planning today*”, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, staff are involved in the Deloitte Future of Work Study (element of One Workforce Grant) and will be meeting with employers to discuss future employment needs as well as pursue ongoing conversations with employers outside of the study.

Report was received and filed.

6. **Consent Agenda**

Approval of minutes from the July 28, 2021 meeting; an update on the 2021-2022 budget; the Workforce Centers/LWDB Meeting Calendar for 2022; On-the-Job Training Contracts for Center Industries, City of Augusta, Etezazi Industries, Creekstone Farms and Cox Machine; Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament report and the Workforce Alliance Operations / One-Stop Operator report were provided to board members for review and/or approval. The board and committee meetings scheduled for next year follow the same recurring time frames as they did in 2021. Staff will be discussing whether to hold in-person, virtual or hybrid meetings with Committee members. The 2021 Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament was a success and raised over \$15,000 that will be applied to the WA’s Youth Employment Project for 2022.

Kathy Jewett (Robyn Heinz) moved to approve the recommendations as presented for Item #D, On-the-Job Training Contracts, in the consent agenda. LWDB member Alex Munoz, Creekstone Farms abstained from the vote. LWDB member Pat Jonas, Center Industries was not present. Motion adopted.

Russell Kennedy (Matt Peterson) moved to approve the recommendations as presented in the consent agenda with the exception of Item #D, On-the-Job Training Contracts. Motion adopted.

7. **Additional Topics/Announcements**

- Workforce Alliance leadership consulted with legal counsel regarding the guidance from the Federal Government on mandated COVID-19 vaccinations to determine if the Workforce Alliance (WA) qualifies as a federal contractor. The WA currently has a lease with the US Dept. of Commerce for office space at Garvey, and also receives direct funding through awards and notice of awards from the federal government. Despite a lack of clarity in some elements of the guidance, according to legal counsel and some guidance from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), it is highly

likely the WA does qualify and there will probably be court cases and more guidance emerging over the next few weeks and months. As a result, the WA will now require staff to be vaccinated in order to continue employment unless an exemption and accommodation can be granted under the guidelines.

- The WA will be hosting representatives from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) for a site visit in December. The WA has been part of NFWS since 2008 as part of a 35 member funding collaborative and has received over \$4 million in grant funding as a member.
- Gabe Schlickau was recognized for his outstanding service to the Local Workforce Development Board for Local Area IV at the Workforce Innovation Conference held in Wichita on October 5th.

Adjourn (11:18)

Present LWDB Members

- Rod Blackburn
- John Clark, via Zoom
- Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade via Zoom
- Kerri Falletti, via Zoom
- Michelle Gifford, via Zoom
- Laura Hands, via Zoom
- Robyn Heinz, via Zoom
- Kathy Jewett, via Zoom
- Russell Kennedy
- Jeff Longwell, via Zoom
- Kami Moore, via Zoom
- Alex Munoz via Zoom
- Tony Naylor, via Zoom
- Matt Peterson via Zoom
- Ashley Scheideman via Zoom
- Gabe Schlickau via Zoom
- Sally Stang, via Zoom
- Jeff Townsend
- Dr. Sheree Utash, via Zoom

Guests & Staff

- Amanda Duncan
- Keith Lawing
- Shirley Lindhorst
- Mary Mann
- George Marko
- Chad Pettera
- Briley Stuchlik
- Tisha Cannizzo, Eckerd Connects
- Marcus Curran, Sheet Metal Workers
- Jennie Heersche, Cowley College, via Zoom
- Katie Sawyer, Sen. Roger Marshall's Office
- Commissioner Greg Thompson, City of Winfield, CEOB, via Zoom
- Amy Williams, LWDB Executive Committee / LWDB Youth Employment Committee