

Nebraska Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2022, 9a – 12p
Administrative Services Building
1526 K Street, Lower Level
Lincoln, NE 68508

Agenda item 1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Bradley Schroeder called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (the Board) on June 10, 2022 at approximately 9a at the Administrative Services Building, 1526 K Street, Lower Level, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Before taking up the business of the Board, Vice Chair Schroeder welcomed members of the public and encouraged the public to sign in at the registration table; indicating, however, that it is not required.

Vice Chair Schroeder stated that members of the public would have an opportunity to comment on agenda items requiring formal action by the Board. Vice Chair Schroeder also stated that members of the public would also have an opportunity to comment at the end of this meeting. In both cases, individuals are permitted 5 minutes to speak during the public comment period to allow all who wish to comment time to do so. Vice Chair Schroeder also stated that members of the public may also submit written comments, which would be made part of the permanent record for this meeting. Vice Chair Schroeder made several additional announcements.

1. Ashley Pick joined the State WIOA Team as the Quality Control Administrator. Ashley oversees the State Monitoring Unit, the State Policy Unit, and Federal performance reporting.
2. Greg Adams retired from his role as Executive Director of the Nebraska Community College Association and resigned from the Board. Taking Greg's place on the Board is Courtney Wittstruck, the new Executive Director of the Nebraska Community College Association.
3. Jason Feldhaus resigned from the Board. Jason took a new position with another organization and is no longer eligible to serve as a youth workforce representative.
4. Allan Hale is retiring on July 1, 2022 and has resigned from the Board effective June 11, 2022. Vice Chair Schroeder thanked Allan for his valuable contributions to the Board during the last 7 years.
5. Brad Pierce's team is coordinating with the Governor's office to refill the vacancies created by Jason's and Allan's resignations.

Agenda item 2. Roll Call

Vice Chair Schroeder asked Nicole Schaefer to call the roll for purposes of establishing quorum (minimum of 13 out of 24 Governor-appointed Board Members). Nicole called roll and advised Vice Chair Schroeder that quorum was established.

Members in Attendance

1. John Albin
2. Lindy Foley
3. Michael Geary
4. Allan Hale
5. James Hansen
6. James Hanson, Jr.
7. Kyle Nixon
8. Don Nordell
9. Terri Ridder
10. Bradley Schroeder
11. Becky Stitt
12. Paul Turman
13. Lisa Wilson
14. Jim Smith

Members Absent

1. Governor Pete Ricketts
2. Senator Ben Hansen
3. Kyle Arganbright
4. Elizabeth Babcock
5. Brain Deakin
6. Gary Dixon
7. Anthony Goins
8. Tate Lauer
9. Susan Martin
10. Mark Moravec
11. Jennifer Sedlacek
12. Danette Smith

Nebraska Department of Labor Board Administrative Staff

1. Derek Ahrens, State Monitor, Division of Reemployment Services
2. Deb Andersen, Program Coordinator, Division of Reemployment Services
3. Erick Carrillo, Program Analyst, Division of Reemployment Services
4. Jana Dye, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
5. Bobbi Jo Howard, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
6. Lisa Laws, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
7. Ashley Pick, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
8. Bradley Pierce, Director, Division of Reemployment Services
9. Nicole Schaefer, Administrative Programs Officer, Division of Reemployment Services
10. Katie Thurber, General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel

Agenda item 3. Notice of Publication

Nicole Schaefer announced that the Notice of Public Meeting was duly published, in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, in the Beatrice Daily Sun, Columbus Telegram, Grand Island Independent, Hastings Tribune, Kearney Hub, Lincoln Journal Star, Norfolk Daily News, North Platte Telegraph, Omaha World-Herald, and Scottsbluff Star-Herald. Nicole also announced that notice of the meeting was posted on the State of Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar.

Agenda item 4. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Schroeder called the next order of business, which was the approval of the draft meeting minutes from the March 11, 2022 meeting of the Board. The draft minutes from the March meeting were emailed to Board Members on June 8, 2022. The meeting minutes were included in Board Member meeting packets as Handout 1.

Vice Chair Schroeder opened the floor to Board Members for discussion on the draft minutes. Kyle Nixon pointed out that his name appeared in the draft minutes as in attendance and absent. Kyle advised that he was absent. No other discussion was heard. Vice Chair Schroeder opened the floor for public comment on the draft minutes. No public comments were made.

Becky Stitt motioned to approve the minutes as corrected, and Michael Geary seconded the motion. Members of the Board in attendance voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda item 5. Old Business

a. Combined State Plan for Nebraska's Workforce System – Status Update

Vice Chair Schroeder provided a brief update on the status of the 2022 modification of the Combined State Plan, indicating that the State received comments from Federal reviewers. Vice Chair Schroeder stated that a majority of the comments had been addressed as of June 10, 2022. Vice Chair Schroeder advised the Board that James Hanson, Jr., Chair of the Policy and Oversight Subcommittee would provide additional information on the State Plan during his Subcommittee report.

Agenda item 6. New Business

a. 2022 Workforce Development Excellence Award

Board Member Lisa Wilson presented Pamela Lancaster with the 2022 Workforce Development Excellence Award for her steadfast dedication and unwavering leadership and service to Nebraska's workforce development system, including serving as Chair of the Greater Nebraska Chief Elected Officials Board for the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area for more than 20 years.

b. Ignite Nebraska

Joni Wheeler, Executive Vice President for Talent and Enterprise Solutions at BlueCross BlueShield presented to the Board on Ignite Nebraska. Ignite Nebraska is a new workforce development model designed to spark meaningful career opportunities for individuals who are active in the workforce but underrepresented in higher-paying, high-impact industries. In collaboration with Bellevue University and community partners, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) is providing accelerated higher learning and paid on-the-job training in the field of information technology (IT). Upon program completion, participants will earn a full-time, rewarding job at BCBSNE or get help finding another local position to put their new skills to work. The Ignite model is designed to scale to other companies, career paths, and communities over time. Joni provided additional information on Ignite Nebraska as Handout 2.

c. Greater Nebraska Career Pathways Planning Project

Josh Hanson, Greater Nebraska One-stop Operator presented to Board Members on the Greater Nebraska Career Pathways Planning Project, which resulted in design and implementation of a career pathways system that covers multiple career pathway programs spanning educational institutions and workforce partners providing supportive services. The system is comprehensive and the first career pathways system in Nebraska. The system model is based on a five-part cycle:

1. gap analysis;
2. career pathways planning;
3. implementation;
4. continuous improvement; and
5. expansion.

Industry sectors were chosen based on labor market data relevant to the various regions in Greater Nebraska. Industry leaders and employers were consulted, in collaboration with Greater Nebraska's business-outreach services team, to ensure applicability of the various career pathway programs to industry sector and employer needs. The system creates avenues of advancement for current workers and job seekers, as well as future labor market entrants, and increases the supply of qualified workers for local employers in the target industries. The individual career

pathway programs offer clear sequences or pathways that combine education and/or work-based training leading to stackable credits and credentials, which measure and document skills and credential attainment and are tracked in NEworks. Josh provided additional information on the Project as Handouts 3 and 4.

d. Subcommittee Reports

- Policy and Oversight Subcommittee

James Hanson, Jr. provided additional information to Board Members on the status of the 2022 modification of the Combined State Plan. James stated that the State received feedback from Federal reviewers, as Vice Chair Schroeder indicated.

1. The reviewers suggested revision of a handful of the common elements sections, including comments relating to the career pathways goal and strategies. James indicated that Board Member Paul Turman would provide more detailed information relating to the reviewers' comments on the career pathways goal and strategies.
2. Reviewers also provided feedback on program-specific sections for Vocational Rehabilitation programs, which have been addressed.
3. Reviewers also provided feedback on program-specific sections for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs, Wagner-Peyser, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant program. The State was addressing those comments as of June 10, 2022.
4. James indicated that State Plan partners would hear from Federal reviewers by the end of June 2022 on approval of the majority of the modification.¹

James also updated the Board on the activities of the Policy and Oversight Subcommittee. The Subcommittee met on March 16, 2022. During the meeting, Josh Hanson presented to the Subcommittee on the Greater Nebraska Career Pathways Planning Project, which supports the activities of the Subcommittee and its Alignment and Career Pathways Workgroups.

James advised the Board that Jody Easter (Alignment Workgroup Chair) and Board Member Paul Turman (Career Pathways Workgroup Chair) would provide updates to the Board on workgroup activities.

- Workgroup Updates

- Alignment

Jody Easter advised the Board that the Alignment Workgroup continues its work to identify an alternative to the existing/unused common-intake system. The Workgroup has evaluated digital platforms that provide secure methods for collecting and sharing participant intake data among one-stop partner programs. The Workgroup had previously evaluated a low-tech approach, use of paper forms, including review of examples of forms used by other states.

Jody also advised the Board that progress on roll-out of the cross-training program for Nebraska's one-stop delivery system partner programs. The first monthly session scheduled for July 2022 will focus on Nebraska's WIOA workforce system, with presentations from Nebraska's three One-stop Operators. Starting in August, each monthly session will feature a specific one-stop delivery system partner program. The featured partner program will address topics such as program eligibility requirements and program services. Each training session will be recorded and posted on YouTube and possibly on a SharePoint site that could be accessed by all partner programs.

¹ The US Department of Education, which oversees TANF and SNAP programs, has an additional 30 days to approve those program-specific sections pursuant to 20 CFR 676.143(e).

- [Career Pathways](#)

Paul Turman advised the Board that one comment from Federal reviewers involved the career pathways goal and strategies in the state plan modification. The comment was that the workgroup should take into consideration the importance of Registered Apprenticeship as a career pathway. While the original submission of the state plan modification did not explicitly voice the Workgroup's consideration of Registered Apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship is definitely a focus of the Workgroup.

- The NDOL Registered Apprenticeship Unit Program Coordinator is an active member of the Workgroup.
- In addition, the NDOL State Policy Unit Program Coordinator responsible for Nebraska's Eligible Training Provider List is also an active member of the Workgroup. Nebraska's Eligible Training Provider List currently includes 57 Registered Apprenticeship programs, representing more than 50 percent of Nebraska's active Registered Apprenticeship programs. The top five priority in-demand industry sectors identified by the Workgroup include:
 - healthcare and medical;
 - manufacturing;
 - construction;
 - heavy and tractor-trailer and transportation and warehouse; and
 - accommodation and food services.

NDOL's Registered Apprenticeship Unit was heavily involved in development of Nebraska's first Registered Apprenticeship program in the healthcare and medical industry sector during NDOL's implementation of its 2016 ApprenticeshipUSA grant. In addition, Nebraska has numerous active Registered Apprenticeship programs within the manufacturing and construction industry sectors. Further, NDOL's Registered Apprenticeship Unit also supports Nebraska's Federal Office of Apprenticeship in its development of Registered Apprenticeship programs in the heavy and tractor-trailer and transportation and warehouse industry sector and promotes National Registered Apprenticeship programs in that industry sector.

- While the top five priority list does not include the education industry sector, Paul remarked that teacher education is essentially an apprenticeship in that it includes both academics and work-based training.
- All of this information was conveyed to Federal reviewers in the State's response to the reviewers' comments.

Paul stated that the Workgroup will continue to rely upon the expertise of NDOL's Registered Apprenticeship Unit Program Coordinator to ensure that Registered Apprenticeship programs are considered as the Workgroup continues its efforts.

- [Strategy and Innovation Subcommittee](#)

Michael Geary, Chair of the Strategy and Innovation Subcommittee, updated the Board on the activities of the Subcommittee. Michael advised the Board that the Subcommittee met on March 18, 2022.

- There was discussion on whether to recommend to the Board that the establishment of the requested MOU with Nebraska's 3 Homeless Continuums of Care be tabled until the Subcommittee or the Board hears from the Continuums.
 - The Subcommittee voted to recommend that the Board discontinue efforts to finalize the MOU.
 - During the upcoming September meeting of the Board, the Board will take action on the Subcommittee's recommendation.

- During the meeting, as part of its consideration of next steps for alignment of statewide workforce initiatives, Josh Hanson presented to the Subcommittee on Greater Nebraska's Career Pathways Project.
 - The Project complements the activities of the Subcommittee, as well as the Career Pathways Workgroup.
 - The Subcommittee will begin coordination with the Career Pathways Workgroup in the near future to support its progress on development of career pathways.
 - The Subcommittee will also coordinate with Jody Easter to begin discussions with the Alignment Workgroup to learn more about the Workgroup's activities and capacity to support and implement the Subcommittee's plans to develop a database of statewide workforce initiatives that the Board has discussed during past meetings.

e. Member Updates

Vice Chair Schroeder asked Members of the Board for updates on their respective industries or organizations and local workforce development area activities for the Members who also serve on local workforce development boards. Members of the Board provided updates as requested.

Agenda item 7. Next Meeting – Date and Time

Vice Chair Schroeder reminded the Members of the Board that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for September 16, 2022 from 9a to 12p, at the Administrative Services Building, 1526 K Street, Lincoln, NE. If the date or time of the meeting changes, Vice Chair Schroeder stated that Board Members would be notified by email.

Agenda item 8. Public Comment

Vice Chair Schroeder opened the floor for public comment.

- Dylan Wren, Workforce Administrator for the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area, provided public comment regarding progress on the new Greater Lincoln American Job Center.
- Carlo Serván, Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, provided public comment regarding wages in Nebraska, requesting that the Board advocate with the Nebraska Legislature to increase wage rates among State agencies to improve recruitment efforts.
- No other in-person public comments were made.

Vice Chair Schroeder advised the Board one written public comment had been received by email from RespectAbility, which was provided in the Board's packet as Handout 5 and will be published on the Board's webpage as part of this meeting's materials. Vice Chair Schroeder provided an overview of the remarks in RespectAbility's written public comment.

- RespectAbility is a diverse, disability-led non-profit that:
 - works to create systemic change in how society views and values people with disabilities; and
 - advances policies and practices that empower people with disabilities to have a better future.
- In its written public comment to the Board, RespectAbility provided the Board with statistics on employment and unemployment rates for individuals with disabilities in Nebraska.
- RespectAbility also indicated its willingness to collaborate with the Board on regarding its ideas, policy proposals, and key data to inform the Board's decision-making processes.

- RespectAbility provided recommendations to the Board regarding solutions relating to workforce development in Nebraska and individuals with disabilities. RespectAbility's recommendations included:
 - focusing on closing the gap in labor force participation rates between Nebraskans with and without disabilities;
 - looking at strategies to close the gap in high school graduation rates in relation to students with disabilities;
 - expanding the use of online, cohort-based apprenticeships for workers in the knowledge economy and the nonprofit sector, providing examples of successful cohort-based models, such as Project RISE in Virginia and Project SEARCH and the Caring Economy;
 - focusing on encouraging disability owned businesses by utilizing best practices from other states; and
 - leveraging Federal Contractors and Section 503 to drive employment opportunities for workers with disabilities.

Agenda item 9. Adjournment

Vice Chair Schroeder asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board. Becky Stitt motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Michael Geary seconded the motion. Members of the Board in attendance voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12p.