



Nebraska Workforce Development Board Meeting
Friday, March 13, 2026, 9:00a – 12:00p
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center
1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503
<https://dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/WIOA/NWDB>

Agenda

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Call to order | Bradley Schroeder |
| 2. Roll call | Kelly Flanagan |
| 3. Notice of publication | Kelly Flanagan |
| 4. Approval of December 5, 2025 meeting minutes ¹ | Bradley Schroeder |
| 5. Old business | |
| a. Career Pathways and Alignment Workgroup Appointments | Bradley Schroeder |
| 6. New business | |
| a. 2024-2027 Combined State Plan Modification | Bradley Schroeder |
| b. Program Year 2024 annual statewide performance report | Bradley Schroeder |
| c. Research and Evaluation Project Goals for 2026 | Bradley Schroeder |
| d. Selection of board representatives to the State Rehabilitation Council and the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council | Bradley Schroeder |
| e. Registered Apprenticeship | Delta Wilson |
| f. Workforce Development Grant Program Committee Recommendations ² | Bradley Schroeder |
| 7. Next meeting of the Board | Bradley Schroeder |
| 8. Public comment | Bradley Schroeder |
| 9. Adjournment ¹ | Bradley Schroeder |

¹ Requires voice vote.

² Requires a motion and roll call vote.

Nebraska Workforce Development Board

Draft Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2025

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center

1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503

<https://dol.nebraska.gov/ReemploymentServices/Training/WIOA/NWDB>

Agenda item 1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Bradley Schroeder (Brad) called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (hereafter referred to as the Board) on December 5, 2025, at approximately 9:00 a.m. at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center, 1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503.

Agenda item 2. Roll Call

Brad asked Kelly Flanagan to call roll for purposes of establishing a quorum of the Board. Kelly called roll and advised Brad that quorum was established (19 of 23 Board Members attending).

Board Members *attending*

1. Senator Kathleen Kauth
2. Jim Bulkley
3. Shannon Grotrian for Steve Corsi
4. Gary Dixon, Jr.
5. Joanna Estrada
6. Lindy Foley
7. Michael Geary
8. Jim Hansen
9. Tate Lauer
10. Don Nordell
11. Terri Ridder
12. Sara Riffel
13. Bradley Schroeder, Acting Chair
14. Jennifer Sedlacek
15. Keisha Thomas
16. Katie Thurber
17. Paul Turman
18. Courtney Wittstruck
19. Mark Wright

Board Members *not attending*

1. Governor Jim Pillen
2. Steve Corsi
3. Sherla Post
4. Kevin Wetuski
5. Lisa Wilson

Also attending were the following members of the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) Board support team.

1. Kathy Cedillo, Program Coordinator, Division of Reemployment Services
2. Kelly Flanagan, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services

3. Stephanie Geery-Zink, Policy and Grants Management Coordinator, Division of Reemployment Services
4. Joel Green, Agency Legal Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
5. Peyton McQuay, Administrative Specialist, Office of the General Counsel
6. Joseph Tisko, Program Analyst, Division of Reemployment Services

Agenda item 3. Notice of Publication

Kelly Flanagan announced that public meeting notices were 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. Kelly announced that public meeting notice was also published on the [State of Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar](#).

Agenda item 4. Approval of September 19, 2025 meeting minutes

Brad called the next order of business, which was the approval of the draft meeting minutes from the September 19, 2025, meeting of the Board. The draft minutes from the September meeting were emailed to Board Members on December 3, 2025. The meeting minutes were included in Board Member packets as Handout 1.

Brad opened the floor to Board Members for comment on the draft minutes. Board Members did not comment on the draft minutes. Brad opened the floor for public comment on the draft minutes. Public comments were not provided.

Paul Turman motioned to approve the September minutes, as provided, and Mark Wright seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by acclamation vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda item 5. Old Business

Brad announced that there was no old business for the board to address.

Agenda item 6. New Business

a. 2024-2027 Combined State Plan Modification

Brad addressed the Board concerning the submission timeline and meeting schedule for the Program Year 2026 modification of the Combined State Plan, which is due in March 2026. State Plan partners and the modification workgroup will meet several times between now and the March deadline to complete the modification. Board members may submit feedback on the submission timeline and meeting schedule to ndol.wioa_policy@nebraska.gov. Board members who would like to attend any of the Modification Workgroup meetings can reach out at the same email address and the Board Support Team will reach out with the time of the meeting and the meeting invite.

b. Workforce Development Grant Program Committee Structure

Brad introduced Commissioner of Labor Katie Thurber (Katie). Katie presented to the Board on the proposed Workforce Development Grant Program Committee structure. She stated that NDOL has created a grant application, grant tracking system, and grant webpage to assist the board with soliciting

grant proposals. To streamline the grant review process and assist the full Board in fulfilling the responsibilities as instructed by the Nebraska Legislature, NDOL recommends the Board establish two separate committees that will be tasked with: 1) conducting the initial review of grant proposals, and 2) determining which of those proposals, up to 18 for each committee, will be submitted to the Board for a vote to submit to the Commissioner. It was recommended to establish a Regional Grant Review Committee and an Industry Grant Review Committee with five Board members appointed to each, alongside other individuals appointed from stakeholder partners that can assist the committees in the review of the grant proposals. Only Board members will have voting rights. Grant applications will be assigned to a specific committee based on whether the application is focused on a specific industry or focused on a specific region or have a statewide focus.

Katie said that according to Board Bylaws, grant applications must be submitted by February 1 if they are to be considered for the 2026 calendar year. The committee will have the month of February to meet, review the applications, and choose up to 18 applications per committee to present to the full Board at the March Board meeting. A maximum of 18 applications will be chosen by the Board to move on to consideration by the Labor Commissioner.

Michael Geary asked if there is a scoring sheet available for committee members to use. Katie responded that there is no scoring sheet yet and the board support team welcomes suggestions.

Sara Riffel asked how the board can coordinate available funds across 18 grants. Katie responded that Rea would be presenting on available funds next.

No comments by the public were made in response to the presentation.

Motion on creating a committee structure to consider applications for the Workforce Development Cash Fund was made by Courtney Wittstruck and seconded by Jennifer Sedlacek. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Committees will be appointed by February 2026.

c. Workforce Development Grant Program Accounting

Brad introduced Chief Financial Officer at the Nebraska Department of Labor Rea Easton (Rea). Rea reported to the Board that \$3.88 million is available for the 2026 Workforce Development Grant Program. She detailed amounts that have been allocated from the fund for current programs and grants, including the Rural Veterinary programs, the 2025 Workforce Development Grant Program, the Manufacturing Modification grant program, and Good Life, Great Careers. There is an anticipated \$2.7 million shortfall for the programs as of December 2025, however \$6.5 million is expected to come in, depending on economic factors, to make up for the shortfall in the future.

After Rea's presentation, Jim Bulkley asked for more information regarding the Elite 11 program. Katie provided a brief description of the program. The Elite 11 is a scholarship program to encourage veterinary students to return to the state and work in production animal veterinary medicine in rural communities for eight years.

Michael Geary asked why funds are being transferred from the workforce development cash fund to the general fund if there is an anticipated shortfall. Rea responded the transfers are legislated in LB246 and LB265.

Joanna Estrada and Brad Schroeder asked clarifying questions on the amount of funds available in the cash fund prior to earmarks and the amount available for awarding workforce development grants.

d. Workforce Development Grant Proposal Presentations

Five organizations presented their Workforce Development Grant proposals to the Board.

Brady Rhodes of the United Way of South Central Nebraska said his organization represents 70 organizations from the area and will work for the next five years on a program to address workforce challenges in South Central Nebraska while generating measurable economic returns for the state. The program will focus on three tiers, workforce readiness, employment outcomes, and sustained economic impact. The program will cost \$1.5 million over three years.

Dr. Julie Murray-Nelson of The Foundry Community is asking for funding for a two-year project to connect high-achieving students at the University of Nebraska at Kearney with needed purpose-driven work in businesses, nonprofits, and public sector organizations. The program will serve 20 participants in Kearney per year. Funding is requested to support a program coordinator, a student coordinator, and program costs to support the 20 participants. She is requesting \$64,872 over the next two years.

Kellee Mikuls of Ignite Nebraska is a nonprofit that focuses on workforce development. The program will equip homegrown, non-traditional talent with the skills, coaching, and support to achieve sustainable careers. It provides soft skills training, technical readiness, and six months of post-hire navigation support to ensure participants not only gain employment but keep it. One of the biggest employers who are hiring these participants is the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The goal is to get participants off of benefit programs within 12 months. She is requesting \$4.1 million over the next four years.

James Krenz and Alan Castorena of the International Council for Refugees and Immigrants said their program helps new Americans, immigrants and refugees navigate the system and help them get off benefits. They help 150 people per year by providing the workforce needs of refugees and immigrants in Eastern Nebraska. They help new Americans find jobs and provide job-specific English classes to help participants thrive in local industries. They are asking for \$350,000.

Tina Murray of Together said their program helps participants receive employment navigation, a food pantry, and a housing program. Through these projects they support more than 44,000 people annually through programs designed to address barriers that impact employment, housing, and economic mobility. The focus of the support request is to fund the Employment Navigation Program. She is asking for \$84,000 for their work.

Brittley Holland of Bee's Reliable Courier LLC was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

Shannon Grotrian asked the Commissioner about whether these funds could be used to help with the Tyson plant closure in Lexington. Katie replied with a summary of the efforts made so far in Lexington with the Rapid Response Team. NDOL has been assisting people with registering in NEworks so that they are ready to apply for unemployment benefits when the plant shuts down. Multiple agencies, community organizations, and members of the community have worked together to respond to the situation. The community response to this event gives you faith, she said. The school district is providing interpreters to help at rapid response events. There may be dislocated worker funds available to help.

NDOL is also looking at transportation, if there are options for transporting workers from the Lexington area to jobs in North Platte and other communities. They are looking to keep as many workers in Lexington as possible. Katie has been working with Adult Education to discuss options for upskilling individuals. During a shut down for remodeling of the Cargill plant in Columbus, NDOL was able to

partner with Adult Education to assist in upskilling workers after which many obtained raises when they returned to work.

Joanna Estrada asked what resources are available to individuals who want to relocate out of Lexington. Katie said depending on the location and individual needs they may be eligible for WIOA which could assist with some of the costs related to relocating.

e. [Adult Education Programming at MCC](#)

Tammy Green presented on Title II Adult Education programming at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha.

Tammy said that 8% of adults in the Greater Omaha area have less than a high school diploma, which means 40,000 individuals are lacking the skills for most entry-level jobs for college-level education and job training. She said 71% of the jobs in Nebraska will require post-secondary education or training. She said the program at MCC helps adult learners improve their skills and helps them receive a credential (at minimum a high school diploma). She said 87% of individuals seeking WIOA funds lack the foundational academic skills for college and credentialing readiness. People who start out in poverty are likely to stay in poverty if they do not earn a high school credential and go on to gain skills for workplace. They are missing key skills, and MCC's programs help prepare these students for associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees. She said Adult Education fuels Nebraska's talent pipeline by reducing employer skill gaps, expanding access to training and credential pathways, and supports economic growth through education-to-employment models. MCC also provides an industry-aligned curriculum designed for real-world success, Integrated Education and Training (IET) pathways, strong employer engagement and collaboration, and connections to pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.

f. [Workforce Pell Grant](#)

Brad presented a short update on the federal Workforce Pell Grant program. He said the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, passed in July 2025, expands federal Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term job training programs that are fewer than 16 weeks in length as Workforce Development Pell Grants. The Governor, in consultation with the Board, must certify that the Workforce Pell Grant programs meet specified quality standards. The Pell Grants will be awarded beginning July 1, 2026. There will be more information in the future regarding how the Governor chooses to involve the Board in certifying Workforce Pell Grant programs.

g. [Proposed dates for 2026 Board meetings](#)

Brad presented the proposed dates for the 2026 Board meetings. The Board meetings were slated for March 13, June 12, September 25, and December 4, at the NET Center, 180 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, if possible.

A motion to approve the proposed 2026 meeting dates was made by Keisha Thomas and seconded by Tate Lauer. The roll call vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

[Agenda item 7. Next meeting of the Board](#)

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Friday, March 13, 2026, from 9 a.m. to noon at the NET Center, 180 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Agenda item 8. Public comment

Brad opened the floor for public comment. Public comments were not provided.

Agenda item 9. Adjournment

Brad asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board. Joanna Estrada motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Mark Wright seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by acclamation vote. The motion carried unanimously. Brad adjourned the meeting at approximately 11 a.m.

DRAFT



TO Nebraska Workforce Development Board
Alignment Workgroup

FROM Bradley Schroeder, Acting Chair, Nebraska Workforce Development Board

DATE October 23, 2025

SUBJECT Alignment Workgroup membership

Brad Schroeder

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Date: 2025.10.23 12:53:34 -05'00'

Sections II.b. and II.c. of the [Combined State Plan for Nebraska’s Workforce System for Program Years 2024 through 2027](#) define Nebraska’s two-part statewide goal and strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers:

1. selection and prioritization of development of career pathways; and
2. alignment of the state’s workforce development system.

In 2021, the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (the Board) established the Alignment Workgroup (the Workgroup) to implement statewide goal number 2.

As permitted under Sections 3.1(b) and 6.2 of the Board’s bylaws, I hereby appoint the Workgroup Chair and appoint other Workgroup members listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Alignment Workgroup membership

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional title and affiliation
Kim	Neesen	Chair	Employment and Training, Business Services and Partner Collaboration	Program Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Labor
Andrew	Baumgardner	Member	WIOA Title I One-Stop Operator, Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area	Program Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Labor
Erin	Brandyberry	Member	WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, State Plan Partner	Deputy Director of Services, NCBVI
Erick	Carrillo	Member	WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser, JVSG, TAA, State Plan Partner	Director, Nebraska Department of Labor
Lindy	Foley	Member	WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, State Plan Partner, Nebraska Workforce Development Board Member	Director, Nebraska VR Program
Angela	Fujan	Member	WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, State Plan Partner	Program Director, Nebraska VR Program

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional title and affiliation
Catrina	Gray	Member	Apprenticeship	Area Wide Apprenticeship Director, Central Community College
Julie	Henningsen	Member	SNAP E&T, State Plan Partner	Program Manager II, Office of Economic Assistance, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Billie	Kitcheyan	Member	WIOA Title ID Native American Program	COVID 19 Grant Coordinator, Winnebago Tribe
Tate	Lauer	Member	WIOA Title II Adult Education, State Plan Partner, Nebraska Workforce Development Board Member	State Director, Adult Education, Nebraska Department of Education
Jennifer	Lewis	Member	WIOA Title ID National Farmworker Jobs Program	Eastern Regional Director, Proteus, Inc.
Janelle	Mahood	Member	Labor	Director, Nebraska Department of Labor
Colleen	Plasek	Member	WIOA Title ID Native American Program	Workforce Development Program Director, Ponca Tribe
Richard	Prince	Member	Unemployment Insurance, State Plan Partner	UI Benefits Administrator, Nebraska Department of Labor
Erica	Sanchez	Member	SNAP E&T, State Plan Partner	Program Specialist, Office of Economic Assistance, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Jody	Stutzman	Member	WIOA Title ID National Farmworker Jobs Program	Western Regional Director, Proteus, Inc.
Becca	Tangeman	Member	SCSEP, State Plan Partner	Program Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Labor
Will	Varicak	Member	TANF, State Plan Partner	Program Manager II, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
DeJuan	Reddick	Member	WIOA Title I Regional One-Stop Operator, Greater Lincoln and Greater Omaha Workforce Development Areas	WIOA Title I Regional One-Stop Operator Manager, Dynamic Workforce Solutions
Dylan	Wren	Member	Employment and training, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area	Workforce Administrator, City of Lincoln, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area
Melissa	Zeiler	Member	SNAP E&T, State Plan Partner	Program Manager I, Office of Economic Assistance, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services



TO Nebraska Workforce Development Board
 Career Pathways Workgroup

FROM Bradley Schroeder, Acting Chair, Nebraska Workforce Development Board

DATE January 12, 2026

SUBJECT Career Pathways Workgroup membership

**Brad
 Schroeder**

Digitally signed by Brad
 Schroeder
 Date: 2026.01.12
 12:04:15 -06'00'

Sections II.b. and II.c. of the [Combined State Plan for Nebraska’s Workforce System for Program Years 2024 through 2027](#) define Nebraska’s two-part statewide goal and strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers:

1. selection and prioritization of development of career pathways; and
2. alignment of the state’s workforce development system.

In 2021, the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (the Board) established the Career Pathways Workgroup (the Workgroup) to implement statewide goal number 1.

As permitted under Sections 3.1(b) and 6.2 of the Board’s bylaws, I hereby appoint the Workgroup Chair and other Workgroup members listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Career Pathways Workgroup membership

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional affiliation
Aaron	Moreno	Chair	State Monitor Advocate, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program	Program Coordinator, Reemployment Services Division, Nebraska Department of Labor
Elliott	Cain	Member	Registered Apprenticeship, Reemployment Services Programs, Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area	Administrator, Reemployment Services Division, Nebraska Department of Labor
Joanna	Estrada	Member	Nebraska Workforce Development Board (business representative)	Talent Acquisition Manager, Valmont Industries
Steve	Fannon	Member	Reentry Services	Assistant Deputy Director – Reentry, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
Katie	Graham	Member	Career and Technical Education	Administrator/State Director, Nebraska Career and Technical Education, Nebraska Department of Education
Sydney	Kobza	Member	Career and Technical Education	Assistant State Director, Nebraska Career and Technical

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional affiliation
				Education, Nebraska Department of Education
Tate	Lauer	Member	Adult Education	Director – Adult Education, Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Adult Education
Erin	Porterfield	Member	Employment and Training, Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area	Executive Director, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area
Keisha	Thomas	Member	Nebraska Workforce Development Board (business representative)	Vice President, Human Resources, North End Teleservices
Paul	Turman	Member	Nebraska Workforce Development Board (workforce representative)	Chancellor, Nebraska State College System
Melissa	Weyer	Member	SNAP, State Plan Partner	Program Manager, Children & Family Services, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Delta	Wilson	Member	Registered Apprenticeship	Program Coordinator, Reemployment Services Division, Nebraska Department of Labor
Lisa	Wilson	Member	Nebraska Workforce Development Board (business representative)	Plant HR Manager, Case New Holland Industrial (CNHI)
Dylan	Wren	Member	Employment and Training, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area	Workforce Administrator, City of Lincoln, Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area

Handout 3

Nebraska WIOA Research and Evaluation Project as required under 20 CFR 682.220			
Research Question: What programmatic factors most strongly predict successful training completion under WIOA?			
Task	Task Description	Staff	Estimated Timeline
Gather Data for Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIRL/NEworks Data • Participants 7/1/23-12/31/25 • Completed training 	Data Analyst	January 1, 2026 - March 31, 2026
Establish Detailed Questions	Find out what questions can and can't be answered with the data	Data Analyst and Admin	January 1, 2026 - March 31, 2026
Share with NWDB Board	Present project outline to board to solicit ideas and feedback	Admin	January 1, 2026 - March 31, 2026
Meet with Local Areas	Discuss established questions with the local areas to get their input	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	April 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026
Incorporate Feedback	Incorporate feedback where possible.	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	April 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026
Generate Tables/Charts	Generate Data Table/Chart for report	Data Analyst	April 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026
Write Report	Begin writing report.	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	July 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026
Finalize Report	Internal review by team before sending to stakeholders and PIO.	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Send to Stakeholders for Review	Send to stakeholders to review and provide feedback.	Admin	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Send to PIO for Review	Send to PIO for review.	Admin	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Publish and Distribute to Stakeholders	Publish and distribute to stakeholders	Admin	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Compile Lessons Learned	Lessons learned for future projects.	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026
Evaluate Outcomes and Plan for Next Year	Evaluate outcomes and plan for next year.	Data Analyst, Admin, Program Coordinator	October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026



Background for the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council

I am following up on the email below to have a replacement for Terri Ridder from the Workforce Development Board. There is a legislative bill ([LB845](#)) that would combine the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council with the Aging Advisory Committee. The bill includes some changes to the member representation but keeps the Workforce Development Board representative. If this bill passes, there may be a new meeting schedule. In the meantime, the Alzheimer's Council continues to meet monthly on the third Friday from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Joni Dulaney, DHHS Program Specialist for the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Advisory Council joni.s.dulaney@nebraska.gov

Background for the State Rehabilitation Council

Due to the retirement of Terri Ridder, we are seeking a replacement for a Nebraska Workforce Development Board representative to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). I was provided your name by Lindy Foley to assist with this process.

The purpose of the SRC is to work in partnership with Nebraska VR to review, analyze, and advise on the performance of the agency. Nebraska VR helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, advance in, and keep jobs and **businesses recruit, train, and retain employees with disabilities.**

The SRC membership is comprised of a majority of individuals with disabilities and representation from employers, advocacy groups, and service providers from across the state to ensure Nebraskan's who experience a disability are served in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The council's work includes a variety of activities to include NVR policy discussions, outreach, and employment awards.

The Council meets quarterly during the months of February, May, August, and October from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Regular attendance is important for the council to have quorum and conduct business. We are required to have two in-person meetings a year and can reimburse for travel expenses, if needed. Members commit to a 3-year term with the option to serve an additional term.

To learn more about the State Rehabilitation Council, please feel free to visit our website:

<http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/src/index.html>

Please contact me if interested in serving on the SRC.

Angela Fujan MSW, Program Director, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation
angela.fujan@nebraska.gov

Registered Apprenticeships

Good Life, Great Careers Initiative



- **Executive Order 25-15**

- Signed October 14, 2025

Goals:

- Create a unified strategic workforce development framework for Nebraska
- Develop a quality, skilled workforce in Nebraska
- Connect Nebraskans to Nebraska Careers

Nebraska Office of Registered Apprenticeship

- Executive Order to establish NDOL as State Apprenticeship Agency
- LB 847 – Registered Apprenticeship Act
 - Introduced by Senator Kauth, aligns with directives from Executive Order 25-15
- NDOL Received SAEF 3 Federal Funding
 - Used to expand apprenticeships by establishing 2 Full-time Workforce Coordinators for Registered Apprenticeship



1 BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT

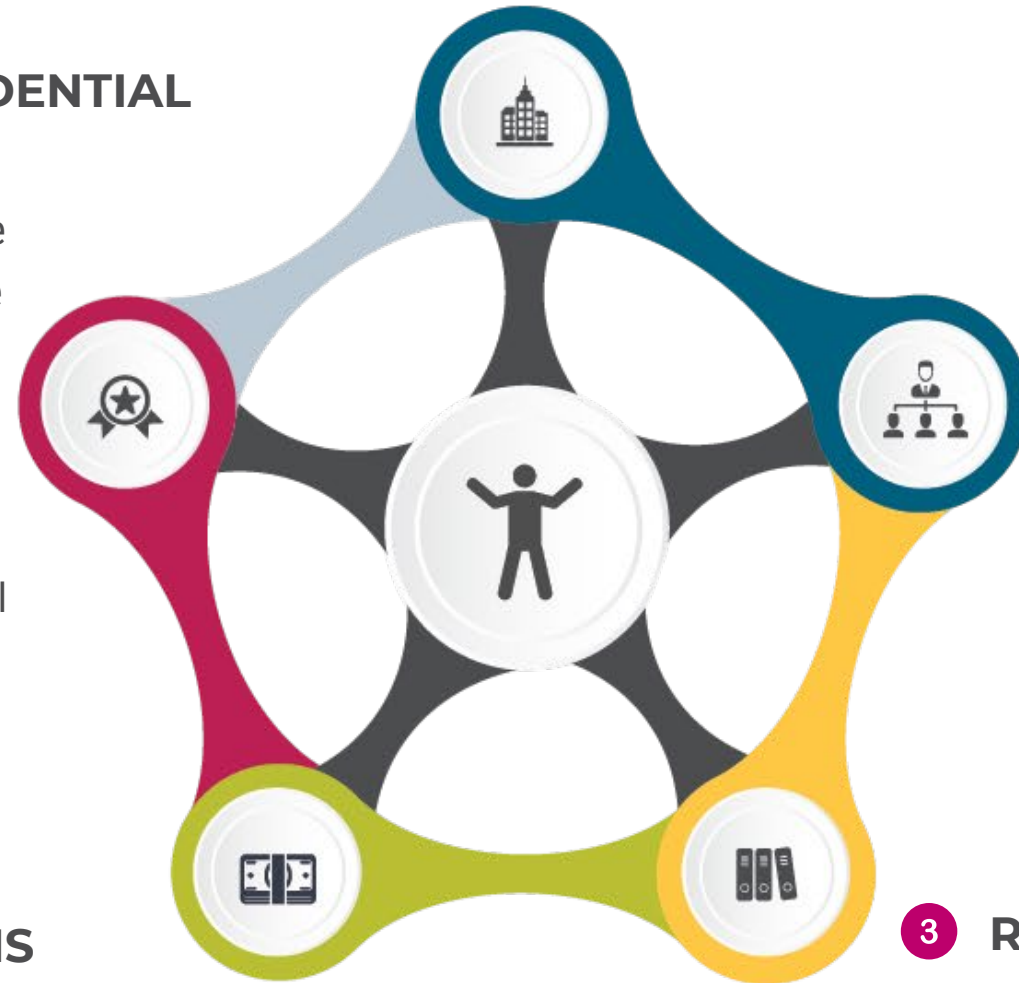
Employers are the foundation of every Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program

- Employer-driven
- Employers may choose to train new employees or upskill current staff

5 NATIONAL OCCUPATION CREDENTIAL

Registered Apprenticeship Programs result in a nationally-recognized credential - a 100% guarantee to employers that the apprentice is qualified for the job.

- Apprentices receive a certificate from the United States Department of Labor at the conclusion of the program.
- The USDOL certification is a national credential and is transferrable between states.



2 STRUCTURED ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Apprentices receive on-the-job training from an experienced mentor for typically not less than one year.

- Includes hands-on learning component.
- Mentors are paired with apprentices to help support and teach the technical and work-readiness skills related to the job.

4 REWARDS FOR SKILL GAINS

Apprentices receive increases in wages as they gain higher skill levels

- Apprenticeship is an “earn and learn” model where apprentices are paid while they learn the skills required to perform the job duties.
- At least one wage increase must be built into an RA program; employers may include more than one wage increase.

3 RELATED INSTRUCTION

Apprentices combine on-the-job learning with technical education from community colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship training schools, online courses, or classes held at the job site.

- Related Instruction serves as a classroom learning component.
- This can be delivered via the Internet, in a classroom, by vendors, or on-site using in-house (employer) experts.

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Connections.

MYTHS:

Apprenticeships are the same as internships

Apprenticeships are only for building & construction trades

Apprenticeships are too expensive for employers

Once an apprentice finishes a program, they will move to find a higher paying job.

FACTS:

Apprenticeship is full-time, gainful employment

Apprenticeships exist across industries including manufacturing, hospitality, IT, education, healthcare and more!

Employers see an ROI of about \$1.50 for every \$1 invested by the second year of employment

About 95% of apprentices who complete training remain with the same employer for 5+ years

NEBRASKA

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Current Registration Process:



- **Lots of Back-and-Forth**
- **Little Follow-Up**
- **High Potential for Programs to sit empty**

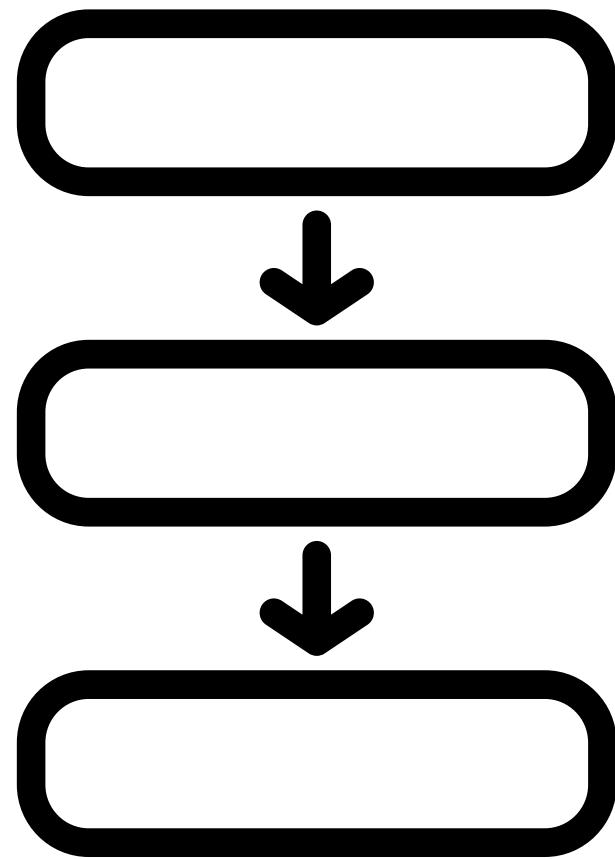
New (Potential) Process as SAA



- **NDOL is hands-on, can provide more support before, during, and after**
- **Provides opportunities for NDOL to connect job seekers to apprenticeships**

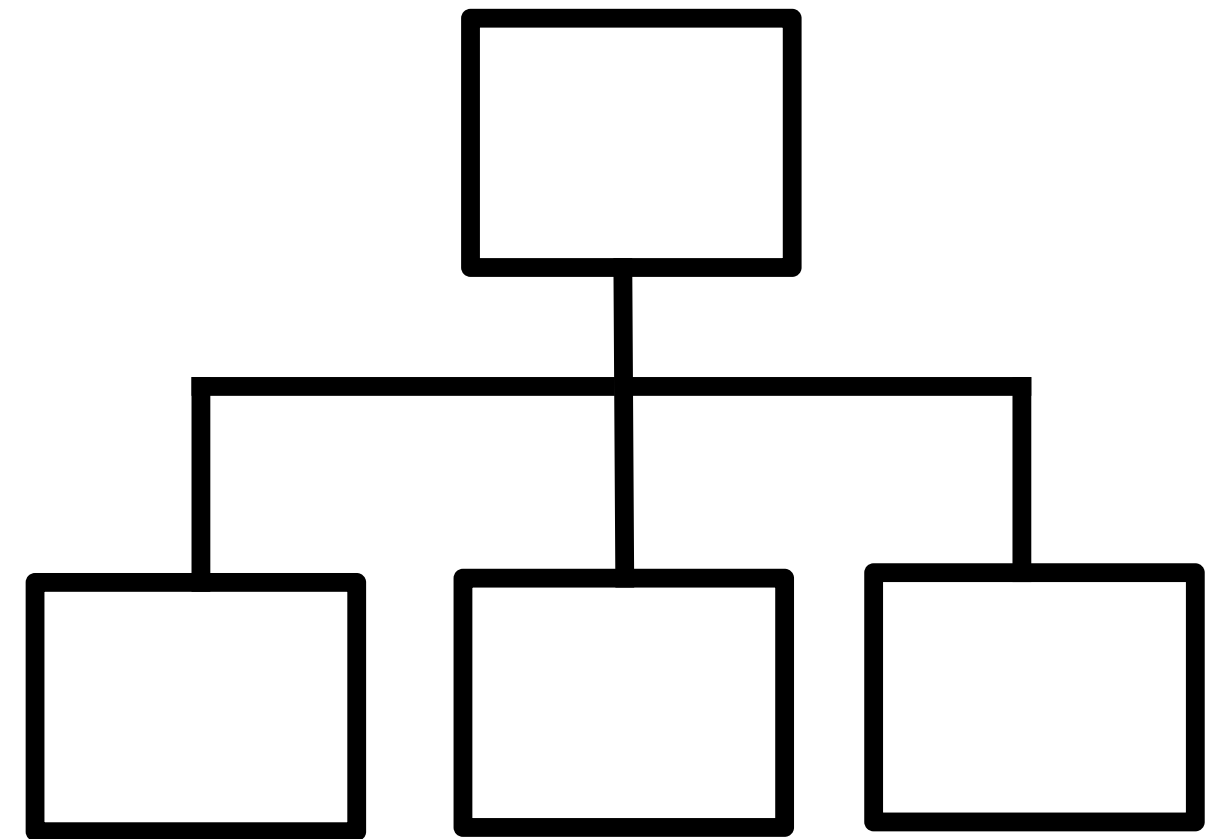
Single Model

- Great for large employers who need a long-term pipeline of skilled workers



Group Model

- Ideal for medium & small employers who need skilled workers but at a slower pace.



Recruitment Strategies - Sponsors/Employers

Educate – Many employers do not know that apprenticeships are an option

- Apprenticeships apply across various industries
- Apprentices are little to no cost programs



Demonstrate Success - When employers realize that apprentices are working for others in their industry, more interest will spark for the program.

How You Can Be Involved:

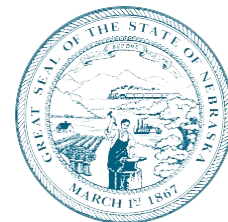
- Connect employers in your community to group sponsors or to register their own program
- Educate your networks about what Registered Apprenticeship is and how it is beneficial
- Advocate for apprenticeships with your local high schools, community colleges, and community organizations
- Advise the Nebraska Department of Labor how we can help you, what works best for your community, and how we can meet your needs!

Nebraska Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship

- Delta Wilson - Program Coordinator, Lincoln Admin Office
 - Delta.wilson@nebraska.gov
 - 531-350-8830
- Ericka Redd -Butler - Workforce Coordinator, Omaha Office
- Michelle Webb - Workforce Coordinator, Grand Island Office
- Elliott Cain - Workforce Administrator, Lincoln Admin Office

• Contact us:





Nebraska Workforce Development Board & Registered Apprenticeship

Introduction to Registered Apprenticeship:

Registered apprenticeship is an often overlooked, but extremely effective workforce development program that taps into resources that already exist in Nebraska. A Registered Apprenticeship allows students to earn while they learn, getting them on the job site quicker, and providing them with valuable skills. All registered apprenticeships are full-time jobs. Apprentices are employees. This means they earn wages, have benefits, and all the other perks of being a full-time employee, while they learn the job. This is not temporary work, not an internship, nor a job shadowing program.

Every registered apprenticeship is registered with the United States Department of Labor, who sets the guidelines for what skills and knowledge a registered apprentice must have to complete the program. While there may be slight variations from one apprenticeship to another, because all competencies are set by USDOL, an apprenticeship certificate is recognized nationwide. There are 5 components of a registered apprenticeship that set it apart from other on-the-job or workforce training programs. They are:

1. Industry-led – Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.
2. Paid job – Registered Apprenticeships are jobs where apprentices earn progressive wages as their skills and productivity increase.
3. Structured on-the-job learning – Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare for a successful career, which includes instruction from an experienced mentor
4. Supplemental Education – Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employers unique training needs to ensure quality and success
5. Credentials – Apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential within their industry

Office of Apprenticeship:

Currently, the Nebraska Department of Labor functions as an “Office of Apprenticeship”. This means that while we have a team dedicated to education and outreach for registered apprenticeship, all our registered apprenticeship programs are processed at USDOL. This means that once information is gathered by your Business Service Representative or the Registered Apprenticeship Program Coordinator, it is passed off to USDOL, and from there, our state director (who is a federal employee) takes on the task of registering the program and onboarding the sponsor.

In January, Senator Kathleen Kauth introduced LB847, otherwise known as the Registered Apprenticeship Act. This bill establishes Nebraska as a State Apprenticeship Agency, effectively moving all responsibility for Registered Apprenticeship Programs to the state level by creating the Nebraska Office of Registered Apprenticeship. This will create a state position as State Director of Apprenticeship within the Nebraska

Katie Thurber, Commissioner

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Department of Labor, giving us power to register programs, ensure compliance in existing programs, create new occupations as needed, and be much more hands-on with every aspect of registered apprenticeship. BSRs, workforce coordinators, and all NDOL staff will be a much stronger resource to guide employers, sponsors, apprentices, and agencies every step of the way. This bill received support from several organizations, including the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Federation of Independent Business, University of Nebraska System, Nebraska Hospital Association, and others. There were no opponents to the bill, and it was named as a Business and Labor Committee Priority Bill and advanced to General File.

Nebraska's Apprenticeship Strategy: The Group Apprenticeship Model

As the Nebraska Department of Labor and our partners work toward Governor Pillen's goal of registering 6,000 new apprentices by 2030, we are being intentional with our efforts to create sustainable growth. This means targeting growing industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, and construction. In the past, we have focused on creating individual programs for individual employers. These programs are often short-lived, as the employer fulfills their workforce need and in a few short years is no longer in need of apprentices. By scaling up to focus on entire industries, we ensure that programs are built to last, and have the capacity to support more than 1 or 2 apprentices at a time. This also creates talent pipelines that have the potential to attract more businesses and industry to Nebraska, strengthening our economic and workforce strength for years to come. To do so, the Nebraska Department of Labor is embracing the group model of registered apprenticeships.

The Nebraska Department of Labor's strategy of creating registered apprenticeship programs using the group model is intended to take the pressure off individual employers to create, recruit, and administer registered apprenticeships. Rather, a group sponsor such as an industry organization, community college, or non-profit organization works with employers to first – identify the high-needs occupation that the employer will need to train. Second, the organization registers as a group sponsor with USDOL using the recommended occupation. Once registered, the sponsor and employer sign an agreement. The employer then hires an apprentice and provides their information to the group sponsor. As the apprentice progresses throughout the program, the sponsor is responsible for tracking their progress, entering data into the RAPIDS system, and ensuring they are completing all necessary requirements for on-the-job training and related instruction. When the apprentice completes the program, the sponsor is responsible for requesting their certification and providing the employer with verification that the program is complete.

Establishing group models in this way eases the administrative burden for individual employers who would like to participate in registered apprenticeships, but it also creates a standard approach to training for occupations in Nebraska. With multiple employers all partnering with one sponsor, every apprentice that goes through that program is given the same (or at least very similar) training. Giving industry leaders in Nebraska the opportunity to provide input into the minimum training requirements for a given occupation raises the bar for all employers, increasing the quality of the workforce rapidly.

Some examples of this method working in Nebraska include the Community Colleges. Nearly all of our Community Colleges are registered as group sponsors, and they partner with multiple employers to provide training and administrative support across many occupations. Northeast Community College, Southeast Community College, and Central Community College in particular have developed the Elevate Consortium thanks to a federal



grant that assisted in establishing the Community Colleges as leaders in the Registered Apprenticeship space. Other examples of group sponsors include High Schools such as Grand Island Sr. High, professional associations like the Nebraska Hospital Association, and of course, the originators of a group model – the many trade unions throughout our state.

Of course, individual employers are always welcome to register their own programs. A prime example in Nebraska is one of the nation's largest and most successful registered apprenticeship programs through Werner Trucking, which boasts over 1,500 apprentices currently. Their programs consist of Cargo and Freight Agents, Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists, and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck drivers and have gained national recognition, not only for the sheer volume of apprentices they have supported, but for their safety and efficiency as a company. Whether an employer needs 1 apprentice or 1,000 apprentices, the most important quality to a successful apprenticeship is that the employee learns from the best and walks away an expert in what they do.

Nebraska's Apprenticeship Strategy: Talent Recruitment

Once these programs are established, employers can recruit from a wide variety of backgrounds, including high school students who are most likely unaware of the opportunities a registered apprenticeship opens for them. Any student, regardless of their economic background, has a chance to earn a living wage while learning a skilled trade or occupation that will last them years. To establish a school-to-apprenticeship pipeline, one option that the department encourages is to pursue Quality Pre-Apprenticeships. This program connects students to an established registered apprenticeship program and introduces them to the industry before graduation, or shortly after. Students engage in technical instruction such as OSHA courses, for example, or in the healthcare industry they may take biology and anatomy courses. They are then invited to the job site to engage in on-the-job training. This may include job shadowing, using driving simulators, practicing with basic robotic equipment, or learning and practicing CPR and first aid. Students who complete a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship may be given hiring preference and may also be given credit for previous experience during a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

To reach adult displaced workers, NDOL will commit to integrating apprenticeship across all workforce programs that currently exist to assist job seekers. This includes job coaching meetings, rapid response events, and adult and youth programs. By making our own staff aware of apprenticeship opportunities in their respective areas, referrals to apprenticeship programs will support hiring and recruitment needs. We will also lean on our partners such as Heartland Workforce Solutions, to promote their programs and work hand-in-hand to match workers with jobs that will lead to strong careers.

As an SAA, we will gain access to a more comprehensive list of employers who utilize registered apprenticeships, and group sponsors. The extent to which this list will be made public is yet to be determined, but it will undoubtedly assist NDOL and our community partners to understand where there are gaps in industry, geographic location, or occupations that can be addressed by growing further apprenticeships.

Nebraska Workforce Development Board – How You Can Be Involved

We encourage the board to identify potential group sponsors in your community that may be interested in registered apprenticeships and encourage them to reach out to the Nebraska Department of Labor. We also urge you to consider if there are employees in your community who need skilled staff but shy away from registered



apprenticeship programs due to a lack of resources. NDOL and Heartland are both excellent resources to connect these employees with group sponsors who will be their support system throughout the entire process.

One of the current challenges we face in Nebraska is that there is a general lack of understanding or awareness of what registered apprenticeships are and where someone can find a program or find an apprentice. As we transition to a State Apprenticeship Agency, we are creating more educational resources to share with the workforce community. We will release instructional handouts, brochures, graphics, and videos as they become available in the coming months. We also hope to attend and host educational events, and we hope that you will assist in sharing as much information with your networks as possible. We welcome any connections to community organizations or groups that may find this information beneficial and are happy to attend to present or simply to provide information. We plan to provide regular updates to all the local workforce boards as well as the state workforce board, especially as we navigate the transition to SAA state.

Finally, we ask that the Workforce Development Board provide guidance, feedback, and suggestions for improvement as we navigate this new territory. We won't always be able to implement every idea overnight, but we trust that you have the knowledge, connections, and vision to grow apprenticeship just as much as we do. We are open to any ideas, discussions, and questions that you may have, and we hope to hear from you often!



TO Nebraska Workforce Development Board Regional Grant Review Committee Members and
Nebraska Workforce Development Board Industry Grant Review Committee Members

FROM Bradley Schroeder, Acting Chair, Nebraska Workforce Development Board
Brad Schroeder

DATE January 20, 2026

SUBJECT Grant Review Committee Membership

Digitally signed by Brad Schroeder
Date: 2026.01.27 08:36:05 -06'00'

At the December 5, 2025 Nebraska Workforce Development Board meeting the Board approved to create a *Regional Grant Review Committee* and an *Industry Grant Review Committee* to perform initial review of workforce development grant applications submitted under Nebraska Revised Statute 81-407.

As permitted under Sections 3.1(b) and 6.2 of the Board’s bylaws, I hereby appoint the Committee Chair and other Committee members for the *Regional Grant Review Committee* in Table 1 and for the *Industry Grant Review Committee* in Table 2.

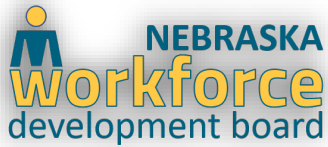
Table 1. Regional Grant Review Committee

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional affiliation
Michael	Geary	Chair	Business Representative	Owner, CMG Holdings
Sara	Riffel	Member	Workforce, Youth	Senior Vice President, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Courtney	Wittstruck	Member	Workforce, Youth	Executive Director, Nebraska Community College Association
Kevin	Wetuski	Member	Workforce, labor organization	Training Director, Omaha Joint Electrical Apprenticeship & Training Committee
Jim	Bulkley	Member	Local Chief Elected Official	Mayor, City of Columbus
Roberta	Pinkerton	Member	6 Regions, One Nebraska Project Leader	Special Project, Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Zane	Francescato	Member	Southeast 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Nebraska Chamber
Mike	Rooks	Member	Metro Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Executive Director, Gateway Development Corporation
Lisa	Scheve	Member	Metro Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Executive Director, Grow Sarpy
Megan	Skiles	Member	Metro Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Executive Director, Greater Fremont Development Council
Alec	Gorynski	Member	Metro Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	SVP of Economic Development, Omaha Chamber

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional affiliation
Dena	Beck	Member	Central Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Nebraska Chamber
Denise	Wilkinson	Member	Northeast Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Nebraska Chamber
Emily	Wurl	Member	Mid-Plains Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Nebraska Chamber
Toshia	Jones	Member	Western Region - 6 Regions, One Nebraska Navigator	Nebraska Chamber

Table 2. Industry Grant Review Committee

First	Last	Workgroup role	Workforce system role	Professional affiliation
Bradley	Schroeder	Chair	Business Representative	CEO, Trivium Life Services
Mark	Wright	Member	Business Representative	Assistant Manager, Parks Livestock
Paul	Turman	Member	Workforce, youth	Chancellor, Nebraska State College System
Lisa	Wilson	Member	Business Representative	Human Resources Manager, Case New Holland Industrial (CNHI)
Kathleen	Kauth	Member	Legislative	Senator, Nebraska State Legislature
Rose	Baker	Member	Economic Development	Talent Team Manager, Nebraska Department of Economic Development



List of application selections from the NWDB grant committees

Regional/Statewide Committee:

Aksarben Foundation
Applied Information Management (AIM)
Avenue Scholars
Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska at UNMC
CareerPathway.com
Heartland Workforce Solutions
Ignite Nebraska
Midland University
Rabble Mill dba The Bay

Industry:

Girls Incorporated of Omaha
Good Life Community Development
IronConnect
Lighthouse
Lincoln Electrical JATC
Nebraska CDL/IWS Trucking
Nebraska Health Care Association
Nebraska Hospital Association
Nebraska Methodist College
OneWorld Community Health Centers
Pioneer Welding Services LLC
Trane U.S.