

Nebraska Workforce Development Board

Draft Meeting Minutes

September 19, 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 Schoeder (Brad) called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (hereafter referred to as the Board) on September 19, 2025 at approximately 9 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 role for purposes of establishing a quorum of the Board. Kelly called roll and advised Brad that quorum was established (16 of 23 Board Members attending).

Board Members *attending*

1. Jim Bulkley
2. Steve Corsi
3. Joanna Estrada
4. Jim Hansen
5. Tate Lauer
6. Don Nordell
7. Sherla Post
8. Terri Ridder
9. Sara Riffel
10. Bradley Schroeder, Acting Chair
11. Jennifer Sedlacek
12. Katie Thurber
13. Paul Turman
14. Kevin Wetuski
15. Lisa Wilson
16. Mark Wright

Board Members *not attending*

1. Governor Jim Pillen
2. Senator Kathleen Kauth
3. Gary Dixon, Jr.
4. Lindy Foley
5. Michael Geary
6. Keisha Thomas
7. Courtney Wittstruck

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

1. Erick Carrillo, Director, Division of Reemployment Services
2. Kelly Flanagan, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
3. Joel Green, Agency Legal Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
4. Peyton McQuay, Administrative Specialist, Office of the General Counsel
5. 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 June 13, 2025 meeting minutes

Brad called the next order of business, which was the approval of the draft meeting minutes from the June 13, 2025 meeting of the Board. The draft minutes from the June meeting were emailed to Board Members on September 17, 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.

Jim Bulkley motioned to approve the June minutes, as provided, and Joanna Estrada seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda item 5. Old Business

a. Board effectiveness update: Board Member interests survey

Brad addressed the Board concerning the Board Member Interest survey distributed to Board Members in June 2025. Responses were received from 16 Board Members. Responses were included in Board Member packets as Handout 2. Brad focused on the results of the initial question in the survey, *feedback from Board members recommending Board meeting topics*. Brad asked Board Members which topics they would like to have included in 2026 Board meeting agendas.

1. Jim Bulkley recommended focusing on the top 5 topics:
 - a. legislative updates impacting workforce;
 - b. driving workforce innovation through collaboration;
 - c. board roles and responsibilities;
 - d. labor market information; and
 - e. expanding apprenticeships and career pathways in key industry sectors.
2. Paul Turman expressed interest in hearing about apprenticeships, stating that great work is happening in this arena, which is receiving positive attention in Washington, D.C.
3. Paul also expressed interest in topic 6, promoting public and private collaborations, including promotion of industry sector partnerships and asked that the Board receive follow-up on what was previously shared with the Board on the public and private collaborations topic: What are the outcomes of these partnerships? Are they successful?
4. Steve Corsi stated that the Board should hear about topic 9, incorporating technology into workforce development, stating that the Board would be remiss if it didn't address technology/AI in its workforce development discussions.

5. Sara Riffel commented on the Board's responsibilities under WIOA concerning the [Combined State Plan for Nebraska's Workforce System](#), saying that the Board should be mindful of its obligation to assist the Governor in the development of the State Plan.

Brad advised the Board that the Board support team will take appropriate action on these recommendations. In addition, Brad indicated that Board will review the results of the remainder of the survey during a future meeting of the Board.

[Agenda item 6. New Business](#)

Brad introduced Commissioner of Labor Katie Thurber (Katie). Katie presented to the Board on:

- the rescission of the U.S. Department of Labor (*USDOL*) *Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-23*; and
- Nebraska's new *Manufacturing Modernization and Workforce Development Pilot Investment Act*.

Katie provided Handouts 3 and 4, which were included in the Board Member packet.

[a. Commissioner of Labor](#)

[i. Rescission of USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-23](#)

Katie advised the Board that a Federal court issued a preliminary injunction on September 10, 2025 that partially halts enforcement of changes, in 21 plaintiff states, related to Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-23. NDOL is awaiting further guidance from USDOL.

[ii. Manufacturing Modernization and Workforce Development Pilot Investment Act](#)

Katie presented to the Board on the Manufacturing Modernization and Workforce Development Pilot Investment Act (the Act). As stated in Handout 3, the Act was established by Nebraska LB265 to provide one-time grants to eligible manufacturing operations for new or existing capital investments that increase productivity and integrate smart technologies into Nebraska-based facilities. The Department of Labor may award up to \$250,000 in total grant funding. Each approved applicant may receive a grant equal to their private matching financial support, up to a maximum of \$50,000. To receive a grant, an applicant must:

- be a manufacturer of goods located in Nebraska;
- have a NAICS code between 31 and 33;
- be in operation for at least 3 years prior to the application date;
- derive at least 51 percent of gross revenues from the sale of manufactured goods;
- employ a minimum of 3 full-time employees;
- provide private matching financial support equal to the amount of the grant requested; and
- apply between October 1, 2025, and November 1, 2026 via Monday.com.

Katie asked for Board members to spread the word about this upcoming opportunity for manufacturers. Katie also mentioned that priority will be given to manufacturers who are able to show they will use the funds in a way that will increase or maintain their current workforce.

Katie further advised the Board that LB265 created the *Workforce Development Program Cash Fund* which can be used for workforce development grants. LB265 states, "The Nebraska Workforce

Development Board shall submit grant proposals to the Commissioner of Labor for the Commissioner's approval. They may submit up to 18 per year and must include a description of the grant, desired outcomes, and method for measuring success. The Commissioner may approve, reject, or modify the proposals."

- Grant applications will be submitted via Monday.com.
- At the March NWDB meeting, the Board will vote on which grant applications to submit to the Commissioner for consideration.
- Updates will be provided to the Board at each Board meeting and via email as needed between board meetings.
- The Commissioner of Labor can also approve up to 3 grant proposals without prior approval of the Board.

Katie advised the Board that grant applications had already been received from Heart Ministries and Lincoln Literacy.

1. Heart Ministry Center

Amy Holmes, Chief Operations Officer, Heart Ministry Center advised the Board that the Center is seeking \$30,000 in grant funding to support its Fresh Start Program. The Fresh Start Program is a holistic, intensive human resource training program that moves participants through a highly personalized experience for nine months, addressing both the person and the worker. From mental and physical health to money and household management, workplace communication, job skills and more, participants transition through personal development, job preparation and placement, and even beyond the first six months of employment and independent living. Fresh Start does exactly what it says, allowing participants to achieve a fresh start in achieving and sustaining self-sufficiency. In 2024, the program had an overall 73 percent success rate across all performance measures, and the success rate for just the employment performance measure was 90 percent.

- Steve Corsi asked Amy if the program lasts 9 months for each participant. Amy said that some participants do not need the full 9 months but the Program budgets for a full 9 months. Approximately 30 percent of participants graduate early. Steve complimented Heart Ministry Center's work and said he was impressed.
- Sara Riffel asked Katie how much funding is available through the *Workforce Development Program Cash Fund*. Katie indicated that the fund started with \$40 million and is currently at \$41 million, some of which is already obligated.

2. Lincoln Literacy

Bryan Seck, Executive Director, Lincoln Literacy presented to the Board. Bryan advised the Board that Lincoln Literacy is seeking \$503,000 in grant funding to support Lincoln Literacy's Adult Skills Program. Lincoln Literacy serves thousands of refugees and immigrants, first by helping those who need structure and support to learn English, and second by helping transfer their skills for placement into the local job market. Through the efforts of trained volunteers and staff, Lincoln Literacy has become Lincoln's leader in helping refugees and immigrants gain English language skills and cross-cultural competencies; while also helping Nebraskans acquire the skills they need to attain living-wage jobs. Refugees and immigrants receive basic English language and literacy skills training through Lincoln Literacy's Adult Skills Program, including adult skills classes and tutoring leading to accredited programs at partner institutions and living wages and career-ladder jobs.

- Steve Corsi asked about Lincoln Literacy's current funding. Bryan indicated that Lincoln Literacy's current funding is \$2.2 million.
- Joanna Estrada asked about Lincoln Literacy's service delivery area. Bryan stated that Lincoln Literacy serves Lancaster County and has a partnership with Valmont Industries in Valley, Nebraska to provide literacy services for Valmont employees.
- Sara Riffel asked about the impact of Federal legislative changes on Lincoln Literacy funding. Bryan said that Lincoln Literacy receives approximately \$800,000 annually in private funding, which supports individuals who aren't eligible for services provided under Lincoln Literacy grant funded programs.
- Jim Hansen asked about the number of other agencies in Lincoln and Lancaster County that provide similar literacy services. Bryan said that community colleges do similar work, with the difference being that community colleges have enrollment periods while Lincoln Literacy offers continuous enrollment.

Following presentations from Heart Ministry Center and Lincoln Literacy, Board Members asked Katie for additional information.

- Sara Riffel asked if grant applicants are able to apply for multiple grants.
 - Katie advised that grant applicants may apply for more than one grant during a grant period. Katie said that the Board should consider if the applicants were successful under the first round of grant funding and whether grant applicants should continue to be publicly funded.
- Paul Turman reminded the Board that the State of Nebraska has a comprehensive framework and ability to track students through Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS). Paul asked the Board to consider how grant applicant performance would be evaluated.
 - Katie commented that Nebraska employers will be asked to provide expanded wage file data for performance reporting purposes and that data would be provided to NSWERS which may help track grant outcomes.
- Jim Bulkley asked about the Board's role in approving grant proposals in relation to the Commissioner's authority to approve, reject, or modify proposals.
 - Katie stated that the State Legislature chose to run grant proposals through the Board which has purpose and meaning. The Board should evaluate grant proposals and recommend only the top grant applications to the Commissioner of Labor's office.
- Don Nordell asked what the Board should consider when reviewing grant applications.
 - Katie indicated that application review criteria/structure has not yet been developed but will be in the near future in relation to grant application budgets and performance. Katie also said that identification of sustainable models described in grant applications is key.

Brad asked the Board for recommendations on the proposals.

- Steve Corsi motioned to recommend the Heart Ministry Center proposal to the Commissioner of Labor for consideration. Paul Turman seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously, with one abstention by Board Member Katie Thurber.
- Sara Riffel motioned to recommend the Lincoln Literacy proposal to the Commissioner of Labor for consideration. Sherla Post seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously, with one abstention by Board Member Katie Thurber.

b. SCC Sandhills Global Technology Center

Caleb Herwick, Dean of Construction, Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology at Southeast Community College (SCC) presented to the Board on SCC's January 2025 launch of the Sandhills Global Technology Center in Lincoln and how SCC is assisting with workforce development. Caleb's presentation was included in the Board Member packet as Handout 5. During his presentation, Caleb focused on SCC's:

- mission to transform and empower diverse learners and communities;
- commitment to serve 15 Nebraska counties on three campuses;
- recent \$5 million donation (largest to date); and
- increasing enrollment rate, this year over last year by at least 600.

Caleb also advised the Board that SCC wants to develop career pathways for non-traditional learners, in support of Nebraska's workforce system.

Agenda item 7. Additional old business

a. Modification of Board bylaws

Brad addressed the Board on proposed amendments of the Board's bylaws relating to the Board's decision during its March 14, 2025 meeting to disband its subcommittees. In addition, revisions had been proposed by NDOL Legal relating to the Board's upcoming role concerning the *Workforce Development Program Cash Fund*, which has been established pursuant to Nebraska's Manufacturing Modernization and Workforce Development Pilot Investment Act (also known as LB265). Clean and tracked versions of proposed amendments to the Board's bylaws were sent to Board Members on September 5, 2025 for consideration and were included in Board Member packets as Handouts 6 and 7. Brad asked the Board for discussion on proposed amendments to the Board's bylaws.

Prior to the Board's vote on proposed amendments to the Board's bylaws, Steve Corsi asked about the annual-only period for grant proposal submissions from the Board to the Commissioner. Katie replied that rolling submissions were considered, but due to the annual due date in State law (April 30), it was decided grant proposals will be easier to track if submitted annually.

Following discussion of proposed modifications to the Board's bylaws, following the Board's discussion period, Brad opened the floor for public comment on the proposed amendments to the Board's bylaws. Public comments were not provided.

Brad asked the Board for a motion on proposed amendments to the Board's bylaws. Steve Corsi motioned to approved proposed amendments. Mark Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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. Lisa Wilson seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously. Brad adjourned the meeting at approximately 11am.