

Nebraska Workforce Development Board

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2025

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center

1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68503

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

Prior to calling the meeting to order, Chair Mark Moravec introduced Katie Thurber as the newest Member of the Board, based on her Gubernatorial appointment as the Commissioner of Labor. Chair Moravec also stated that he is retiring from the Board in May 2025.

Agenda item 1. Call to Order

Chair Mark Moravec (hereafter referred to as Mark) called to order the meeting of the Nebraska Workforce Development Board (hereafter referred to as the Board) on March 14, 2025 at approximately 9am at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center, 1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503.

Agenda item 2. Roll Call

Mark asked Kelly Flanagan to call role for purposes of establishing a quorum of the Board. Kelly called roll and advised Mark that quorum was established (12 of 22 Governor-appointed members attending, in accordance with Section 4.7 of the Board's bylaws).

Governor-appointed members *attending*

1. Jim Bulkley
2. Gary Dixon, Jr.
3. Joanna Estrada
4. Michael Geary
5. Jim Hansen
6. Susan Martin
7. Mark Moravec, Chair
8. Don Nordell
9. Sara Riffel
10. Keisha Thomas
11. Paul Turman
12. Kevin Wetuski

Non-Governor-appointed members *attending*

1. KC Belitz
2. Steve Corsi
3. Lindy Foley
4. Katie Thurber

Non-Governor-appointed members *absent*

1. Governor Jim Pillen
2. Senator Merv Riepe
3. Tate Lauer

Governor-appointed members *absent*

1. Elizabeth Babcock
2. Kyle Nixon
3. Sherla Post
4. Terri Ridder
5. Bradley Schroeder, Vice Chair
6. Jennifer Sedlacek
7. Bryan Slone
8. Lisa Wilson
9. Courtney Wittstruck
10. Mark Wright

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

1. Erick Carrillo, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
2. Kathy Cedillo, NWorks Program Coordinator, Division of Reemployment Services
3. Kelly Flanagan, Administrator, Division of Reemployment Services
4. Joel Green, Acting General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
5. John O'Keefe, Director, Division of Reemployment Services
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 notice was posted also published on the [State of Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar](#).

Agenda item 4. Approval of Minutes

Mark called the next order of business, which was the approval of the draft meeting minutes from the September 13, 2024 meeting of the Board. The draft minutes from the September meeting were emailed to Board Members on March 11, 2025. The meeting minutes were included in Board Member packets as Handout 1.

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

KC Belitz motioned to approve the September minutes, as provided; and Jim Bulkley seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously, with the exception of one abstention. Katie Thurber abstained as she wasn't a Member of the Board during the September meeting.

Agenda item 5. Old Business

a. State plan workgroups: Career Pathways Workgroup and Alignment Workgroup

Mark addressed the first item of old business, state plan workgroup membership. Mark reminded the Board that 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 continuing two-part statewide goal and supporting strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of Nebraska employers:

- selection and prioritization of development of career pathways; and
- alignment of the Nebraska's workforce development system.

Mark reminded the Board that the Board established two workgroups in 2021 to implement the goals in accordance with the supporting strategies defined in Section II.c. of the plan:

- The Career Pathways Workgroup implements statewide goal number 1, and
- The Alignment Workgroup implements statewide goal number 2.

Mark informed the Board that he had appointed and reappointed Board Members and other workforce system partners to serve on the Workgroups, as permitted under Sections 3.1(b) and 5.3(c) of the [Board's bylaws](#). The letters of appointment were included in Board Member packets as Handouts 2a and 2b.

b. Board effectiveness

The second item of old business was follow up on September's discussion of proposed methods to enhance the effectiveness of the Board. Mark reminded the Board that the proposed methods discussed in September were outlined on page 2 of Handout 1 (the draft of the September meeting minutes). During the September meeting, four methods for enhancing the effectiveness of this Board were proposed by Michael Geary. Mark provided follow-up information to the Board on the proposed methods.

1. The first proposed method was establishment of training for current and future Board members, including training on this Board's responsibilities and the roles and responsibilities of local workforce development boards within Nebraska's workforce development system. Update:
 - a. The US Department of Labor (USDOL) recently conducted multisession training on rules and regulations concerning state and local board membership composition, collaboration requirements for state and local boards, and methods for measuring board impact.
 - b. The information provided during the USDOL training sessions will be used to develop training for current and future Members of the Board.
2. The second proposed method was to survey Board members to determine (1) topics of interest to the Board; (2) how to take advantage of Board membership diversity to help Nebraska businesses, including forward thinking concerning disruptive technology; and (3) how to take advantage of information shared by Board members during "Member Updates" portions of Board meetings. Update:
 - a. NDOL is working to identify a digital tool that can be used to survey Board members on these topics.
3. The third proposed method was creation of a portal for Board Members only, where they may obtain information about Board roles and responsibilities and other relevant and current information relating to the purposes of the Board including workforce system performance. Update:
 - a. NDOL is investigating platforms that could be used to establish the Board Member portal.
4. The fourth proposed method was setting up tours of Nebraska's four American Job Centers for interested Board members, which would subject to limitations relating to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and the possibility of establishing Board quorum during tours based on Board Member participation in tours. Update:
 - a. Board Members were asked to indicate their interest in participating in tours of one or more of Nebraska's four American Job Centers (located in Beatrice, Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha).
 - b. Approximately 10 Board Members expressed interest in participating in tours.
 - c. The Board's support team will:
 - i. survey Board Members on the tours they would like to attend; and
 - ii. organize the tours.

c. Board subcommittee structure

The last item of old business was follow up on the Board's subcommittee structure. Mark reminded the Board that Michael Geary addressed the Board on this topic during the September 13, 2024 meeting, asking the Board if its current subcommittee structure works for the purposes of the Board.

Mark advised the Board that if the subcommittees are disbanded, the responsibilities of the subcommittees would become the responsibilities of the full Board, which would result in greater involvement of the full Board in its required roles and responsibilities as a state workforce development board, as mandated under [WIOA Sec. 101\(d\)](#) and [29 USC 3111](#). Mark further advised the Board that when considering disbanding of its subcommittees, it was important to remember that the Board's support team has and will continue to assist the Board with meeting its legislative and regulatory responsibilities.

Mark asked for discussion among Members of the Board concerning the proposal to disband the Board's subcommittees, the (1) Policy and Oversight Subcommittee and (2) Strategy and Innovation Subcommittee. Handout 3, an excerpt from the current bylaws of the Board, was provided to Members of the Board. Sections 5.9 and 5.10 in Handout 3 generally describe the current responsibilities of the subcommittees.

- Paul Turman indicated support of this change as long as it does not prevent the Board from forming future special committees, taskforces, and workgroups as needed to meet legislative requirements and shifts in workforce needs. Paul went on to say that committees, taskforces, and workgroups need to have specific goals and not be directionless.

- Steve Corsi also voiced support for the change. Steve stated that the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) serves at least 350,000 recipients of SNAP benefits, as well as benefits from other entitlement programs. He also stated that entitlement programs are income-based programs. Steve recommended that the Board focus on increasing income thresholds for Nebraska's workers, as well as job creation. He went on to say that NDHHS strives to place its benefit recipients in employment that provides dignity and independence based on family-sustaining employment. Steve concluded by saying that there is a need for more jobs opportunities across Nebraska, acknowledging that there are many job opportunities across the state with which NDHHS benefit recipients need to be connected.

Mark opened the floor for comment from members of the public on this agenda item. No comments were offered by the public.

Michael Geary motioned to disband the Board's subcommittee structure. Keisha Thomas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda item 6. New Business

a. Commissioner of Labor update

For the first item of new business, Mark introduced Katie Thurber, Commissioner of Labor. Katie spoke about her vision for workforce development as the new Commissioner of Labor. She emphasized that the state is currently in a position of opportunity, because of Nebraska's continuing low unemployment rate and Nebraskan's love of living in Nebraska. Katie stressed that the Board needs to take advantage of this position of opportunity. Katie went on to say that Nebraska must do a better job of investing in its youth to ensure they stay in Nebraska and that she wants the Board to be a part of that investment. Katie also addressed the need for alignment of State agencies towards one goal, stating that NDOL is already working closely with Nebraska Departments of Corrections, Economic Development, and Health and Human Services, as well as other State agencies having the same mission – supporting and enhancing Nebraska's workforce and economic development efforts and eliminating duplication of services.

Katie issued a call to action to the Board.

- Make this Board more beneficial and effective in its efforts.
- Make WIOA¹ mean something in Nebraska, rather than just an acronym.
- Start driving action not just thoughts.

Following her remarks, Katie introduced Kenny Zoeller, Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Research.

b. Governor update

The second item of new business was a presentation from Kenny Zoeller, Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Research. Kenny spoke on behalf of the Governor saying the Governor sees tremendous opportunity in the Board, as leaders in industry, state government, and labor all in one room together to talk about how to improve Nebraska, which is unique in Nebraska.

Kenny spoke about six items on which the Governor is focused concerning Nebraska's workforce system.

1. Driving workforce innovation through collaboration
 - a. [6 REGIONS, One Nebraska](#), for example, is a new approach to economic development that is:
 - i. community-directed, guided by the ideas and insights of area leaders;
 - ii. action-oriented, committed to rapid execution and concrete results; and
 - iii. partnership-driven, powered by strong relationships among Nebraskans in neighboring communities.

¹ WIOA refers to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

2. Expanding apprenticeships and career pathways in key industry sectors, especially through state funding of community colleges
3. Building future-focused education and training opportunities
4. Promoting public and private collaborations, including promotion of industry sector partnerships
5. Supporting Nebraska entrepreneurship and small business development in areas that will make a difference, such as the [Nebraska Elite 11 Veterinarian Program](#), a uniquely designed program aimed at increasing the number of production animal veterinarians in Nebraska
6. Incorporating technology into workforce development, while finding a balance between technology and jobs and elasticity in the labor market, including investments in AI (artificial intelligence)

Kenny posed two questions to the Board for consideration when proposing ideas to further these goals.

1. Is it the government's job to be funding these efforts?
2. Are these efforts going to help kids in Nebraska?
 - a. The Governor is very focused on supporting kids, providing for kids so they can meet their goals and dreams and help grow Nebraska.
 - b. Kids, values, taxes, agriculture are the Governor's focus.

c. [Program performance, Federal monitoring, and research and evaluation project goals](#)

The next items of new business were five topics on program performance, Federal Monitoring, and research and evaluation project goals. Mark introduced Dr. John O'Keefe, Director of the Nebraska Department of Labor Reemployment Services Division. John presented on those topics:

1. State and local area performance assessments for Program Year 2023
2. Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for Program Year 2023
3. State and local area performance negotiations for Program Years 2024 – 2025
4. Federal review: NDOL and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area, August 2024
5. Research and Evaluation Project Goals for 2025

(1) [State and local area performance assessments, Program Year 2023](#)

John advised the Board of state and local performance assessments for Program Year 2023.

- In August 2024, USDOL issued Training and Employment Notice 04-24 to announce performance indicators that would be formally assessed for Program Year 2023.
- In Board Member packets:
 - o Handout 4 was provided, describing state level performance outcomes for Program Year 2023 for:
 - WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs;
 - WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; and
 - WIOA Title IV vocational rehabilitation programs.
 - o Handout 5 was provided, which describes local area performance outcomes for WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.
- Performance was assessed at state and local levels based on four performance indicators:
 1. employment rate 2nd quarter after exit
 2. median earnings 2nd quarter after exit
 3. employment rate 4th quarter after exit
 4. credential attainment rate
- Nebraska met all WIOA Title I and Title III performance measures assessed for Program Year 2023.
- All three local areas met all WIOA Title I performance measures assessed for Program Year 2023.

(2) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative, Program Year 2023

John advised the Board on the annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for Program Year 2023.

- NDOL submitted Nebraska's annual statewide performance report narrative to USDOL and the Nebraska Legislature on November 25, 2024.
- A link to the annual report was sent to the Board by email on November 27, 2024, which is also accessible at <https://dol.nebraska.gov/AnnualReports> under "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act". (The report was not included in the Board packet due to its length.)

John pointed out three notable sections in the report.

1. Section II(a) on page 4 discusses local customer satisfaction outreach and includes summaries of customer satisfaction outreach efforts conducted by each local area during Program Year 2023. NDOL is currently developing technical assistance for all local areas concerning customer satisfaction outreach methods and tools.
2. Section II(b) discusses NDOL's efforts during Program Year 2023 concerning research and evaluation. NDOL is building on the efforts described in the report. (Refer to [subsection c\(5\)](#) below for additional information.)
3. Section II(g)(B)-(C) describes local area promising practices and success stories relating to Federal waivers that were approved for and implemented during Program Year 2023.

(3) State and local area performance negotiations, Program Years 2024 – 2025

John advised the Board on Nebraska Department of Labor and local area performance negotiations for Program Years 2024 and 2025.

- Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, state-level WIOA Title I, II, III, and IV programs are required to negotiate levels of performance for their respective programs with their Federal partners.
- Handout 6 was provided in Board Member packets, describing Nebraska's negotiated levels of performance for state-level WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs and WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service for Program Years 2024 and 2025.
- In addition to negotiating levels of performance with USDOL every 2 years, NDOL must also negotiate performance levels with Nebraska's local workforce development areas every 2 years for their respective local WIOA Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs.
- NDOL completed negotiations with Nebraska's local workforce development areas in September 2024. The negotiated levels of performance for each of Nebraska's local areas are described in Handout 7, which was included in the Board Member packets.

Board Members asked how performance levels are negotiated at state and local levels and asked what performance results mean on the individual level. John provided an explanation of the negotiation processes; and Kelly Flanagan provided an explanation of each program performance indicator.

(4) Federal monitoring: NDOL and Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area, August 2024

John advised the Board on a Federal monitoring event, during which NDOL and the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area were reviewed for compliance with the requirements of WIOA Title IB.

- In August of 2024, USDOL monitored NDOL and the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area, after which USDOL issued a monitoring report to NDOL.
- NDOL's response to the Federal monitoring report was included in Board Member packets as Handout 8.
- The monitoring event resulted in no material findings; however, one area of concern was identified.
 - o The area of concern related to NDOL's decrease in staffing levels due to budgetary constraints, which has effected the Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area.
 - o USDOL mentioned that reduced staffing levels have the potential for increased caseloads, lack of staffing to perform required grant activities, and knowledge gaps through loss of institutional knowledge and experience.

- o USDOL suggested cross-training existing staff and coordinating with the USDOL Regional Office for technical assistance.

(5) Research and Evaluation Project Goals for 2025

John advised the Board on 2025 goals for NDOL's research and evaluation project.

- Pursuant to [20 CFR 682.220](#), states are required to use WIOA funds to conduct research and evaluation activities.
- The activities must be coordinated with and designed in conjunction with state and local workforce development boards and state agencies responsible for administration of WIOA Title I, II, III, and IV programs (commonly referred to as "core programs" or "core partners").
- An outline of NDOL's research and evaluation project for 2025 was included in Board Member packets as Handout 9.

John requested feedback on project goals from the Board, as well as local boards and Nebraska's core partners, stating questions, ideas, concerns, or feedback should be submitted to the policy mailbox at ndol.wioa_policy@nebraska.gov for inclusion in NDOL's report on the project which will be published on the NDOL website by January 2026.

Agenda item 7. Member Updates

Mark 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 8. Next meeting date, time, and location

Mark reminded the Members of the Board that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 13, 2025 from 9a to 12p and will be held at the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center, 1800 North 33rd Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503. If the date, time or location of the meeting changes, Mark advised Board Members that they will be notified by email.

Agenda item 9. Public comment

Mark opened the floor for public comment.

- Erin Portfield provided an update on activities in the Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area including:
 - o system alignment;
 - o closing gaps between workforce talent and good paying careers;
 - o engaging workforce talent in Nebraska, while focusing on workforce retention and workforce success;
 - o seeing some effects of local area layoffs;
 - o working with 73 legal refugees
- Jessica Lindhurst updated the Board on activities in the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area including:
 - o new initiative in partnership with City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation, focusing on financial wellbeing;
 - o hosting internships; and
 - o additional information on Greater Lincoln programs are accessible at <https://ajc.lincoln.ne.gov/our-programs/>.

No other public comments were made.

Agenda item 10. Adjournment

Mark asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board. Jim Bulkley motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Jim Hansen seconded the motion. Members of the Board voted on the motion by roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00am.