



# Wyoming Workforce Development Council

## Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Wyoming Workforce Development Council  
@ On-Site and Zoom | Cheyenne, Wy | November 6-7, 2024

### Attendance

#### Present:

**Members:** Chair Eric Trowbridge, Vice Chair Michael Kercher, Ron Wild, Tony Cross, Larry Fodor, Bria Hammock, Debra Zolnoski, Wendy Fisketjon, Tina Conley, Travis Lawrence, Phillip Cornella, Brenda Morgan, Daniel Burau, Charlie Wilson, Dan Meyer, Matthew Davis, Director Elizabeth Gagen, Nicky Harper, Korin Schmidt, Katie Hogarty, Travis Lawrence, Designee Dr. Michelle Aldrich for Superintendent Degenfelder, Designee Lauren Schoenfeld for Governor Gordon, Designee Ron Gullberg for Josh Dorrell, Designee Laurel Ballard for Ben Moritz

**Staff:** Yvonne Adekale, Daniel Anderson, Noemi Arellano, Peggy Banks, Savannah Bascus, Lisa Benge, Jennifer Cassidy, Ivy Castleberry, Erin Cates, Naomi Childers, Catrina Coler, Carola Cowan, Deanna Crofts, Wynette Culp, DeeDee Dudley, Christina Eaton, Robert Fife, Nikki Flowers, Keegan Fox, Shannon Gage, Nathan Galloway, Tony Glover, Kiley Ingersoll, Kavan Johnston, Ivie Kourajian, Misty Langwell, Lacey LaVake, Melissa Lovet, Trevor Mansfield, Tricia Mansfield, Jeff Martin, Jennifer Martinez, Della McJunkin, Steve Miller, Shaye Moon, Michael Moore, Ashley Moore, Mary Orr, Stephen Paladino, Amy Peterson, Lanette Pinkerton, Darlena Potter, Brent Potts, Maggie Randall, Colet Richardson, Pam Riendeau, Scott Rigg, Bryce Roberts, Denise Rodriguez, Casey Rooney, Sal Sanchez, Robin Sanders, Brynn Schildmeier, Gilbert Servantez, Holly Simoni, Doug Slack, Amy Souza, Denise Steele, Erin Stevens, Katie Stinchcomb, Tyler Stockton, Heather Tupper, Erin Turbitt, Missey Turney, Kristy Tyrney, Joe Underwood, Mark Waltrup, Selau Weekes, Christina West, Chris Wiederspahn, Jennifer Wilch, Timothy Wolf, Jason Wolfe

**Others:** Ryan Bledsoe, Kristin Fong, Dana Miller, Jerri Prejean

#### Absent

**Members:** Senator Fred Baldwin, Representative Ryan Berger, Dick Smith, Mayor Matt Hall

**November 6, 2024**

**I. Call to Order**

Presenter: Eric Trowbridge

Meeting called to order at 1 p.m.

**A. Roll Call/Introductions**

Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch took roll call and noted we have a quorum.

**Motion:**

**B. Approval of Agenda**

Motion moved by Ron Wild and motion seconded by Brenda Morgan. All in favor of the agenda as written, the motion carries.

**Motion:**

**C. Approval of September Minutes**

Motion moved by Brenda Morgan and motion seconded by Tony Cross. All in favor of the September minutes as written, the motion carries.

**II. Message from the Chairman**

Presenters: Eric Trowbridge

Chairman Eric Trowbridge provided updates and reminders to council members and announced the decided-upon locations for the upcoming 2025 quarterly meetings. Changes are slowly being implemented in how the council is ran and strategic planning will provide each council member with an opportunity to host a quarterly meeting in their community. Eric provided an update about the recent National Governor's Association meeting in Connecticut and continued collaboration in sharing best practices. The WWDC is the largest governor-appointed council in Wyoming when all seats are currently filled. Eric welcomed and congratulated Michael Kercher as the new vice chair of the council. Michael provided a message of his goals and inspirations in his new role.

**III. Department of Workforce Services Update**

Presenters: Elizabeth Gagen

Director Elizabeth Gagen welcomed the council to Cheyenne and provided updates. Currently, no legislative initiatives are planned going into the 2025 legislative session. Department of Workforce Services (DWS) did not submit a supplemental budget request or requests for any additional funding at this time. However, legislators may likely file their own workforce-related bills with the legislative services office (LSO) and a fiscal note is sent to DWS for review and back to LSO. During the legislative session someone will testify on behalf of any bills filed. The WIOA is in the preliminary stages of a reauthorization. There is also some momentum to change the

funding formula for small states. If successful, Wyoming's Wagner Peyser would remain the same.

Rate changes occurred in the three bills passed in the 2024 legislative session. In workman's compensation, a potential reduction allows the agency's actuary to consider investment earnings and recommended rate changes for the upcoming year resulting in a 12% decrease and employer rates generally going down.

Last legislative session two bills passed that involve unemployment insurance and will provide additional funds for businesses to provide training and internships. The director provided additional updates to council members regarding the framework of funding for workforce and employment related programs. January 1, 2025, a bill will go into effect that provides more training for employers and employees, pre-hire grants, pre-obligation grants to help support economic development, internship grants, and the Wyoming Innovation Partnership specific to students. As a new grant management system is being launched, new steps are underway. There has also been an expansion of apprenticeship grants for teachers, HVAC & plumbing, healthcare, and cyber security. Director Gagen provided updates about new efforts, services, and insights being provided by vocational rehabilitation for children and youth. Following the last legislative session the budget provided the capability to add four new positions and eliminate contracts previously utilized to provide for those services. This has provided for better oversight for students on IEP's and 504 plans. Students with disabilities will be provided support in workforce readiness, instruction, improving employment skills, mental health outcomes, and additional mental health services in rural areas. DWS is also preparing to provide rapid response supports in response a layoffs occurring in Southwest Wyoming, that will include assisting people who need to apply for unemployment insurance, hosting job fairs, and providing other available resources.

#### **IV. Spending Plan and Expenditures**

Presenters: Colette Richardson, Jennifer Cassidy, Catrina Cooler

Colette Richardson is the new grant manager who oversees WIOA and has taken over the spending plan and expenditures. As of the end of September 2024, council expenditures total \$119,941. \$308,756.30 is currently set aside for projects, with \$132,816.65 of the project funds remaining. 100% of grant funds from 2022 have been spent, 74.87% of 2023 grant funds have been spent with \$119,728 remaining, and none of the 2024 grant funds have been spent with \$521,614 remaining. Local budget expenditures total \$1,221,397 as of the end of September 2024. 98.45% of 2022 grant funds have been spent, with \$77,256 remaining, 83% of 2023 grant funds have been spent, with \$843,894 remaining, 41.39% of 2024 grant funds have been spent with \$2,505,968 remaining.

**Motion:**

#### **Approval of Spending Plan & Expenditures**

Motion moved by Travis Lawrence and motion seconded by Nicky Harper. All in favor of the spending plan & expenditures, the motion carries.

**V. Contracts for 2025**

Presenters: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch presented details of an existing contract with John Melville of Collaborative Economics. Continuing the contract with Collaborative Economics would not result in a cost increase and is currently on track for expenditures. This contract would provide the framework and technical assistance needed to meet our requirements for WIOA regulations. Jennifer brings a continuation of the contract to the council as a voting item. Jennifer also presented the existing contract with OnBoard software which includes an annual 6% increase in the contracted amount. This contract has previously been approved and recommended by the Strategic Performance and Finance Committee and is also presented as a voting item.

**Motion:**

**Approval of Contracts for 2025**

Motion moved by Ron Wild and motion seconded by Travis Lawrence. All in favor of contracts for 2025, the motion carries.

**VI. One-Stop Operations Procurement - RFP or Bid Exception Request**

Presenters: Ivy Castleberry

Ivy Castleberry presented options to the council regarding the procurement process as a single-area state. Single-area states face unique challenges to be mindful of. As a result, the Department of Labor has approved using a bid exception process for single-area states. The council has the option to obtain an RFP for one or all services, obtain a sole source/bid waiver for one or all services, or any combination of the two options. Procurement options include developing an RFP or sole sourcing one or all of the following: Adult Services, Dislocated Worker Services, Youth Services, and the role of the One-Stop Operator.

**Motion:**

**Approval of One-Stop Operations Procurement - Request for Information (RFI)**

Motion moved by Brenda Morgan and motion seconded by Tina Conley. Approval of one-stop operations procurement - request for information (RFI) is moved by roll call vote, the motion carries.

**Roll Call Vote - One-Stop Operations Procurement - RFI**

**Ayes:** L. Schoenfeld - Designee for Gov. Gordon, T. Cross, L. Fodor, B. Hammock, D. Zolnoski, W. Fisketjon, T. Conley. P. Cornella, B. Morgan, D. Burau, C. Wilson, D. Meyer, K. Hogarty, L. Ballard Designee for B. Mortiz

**Nays:** R. Wild, E. Trowbridge, M. Kercher, E. Gagen, N. Harper, T. Lawrence

**Abstain:** M. Davis

**Absent:** Senator F. Baldwin, Rep. R. Berger, D. Smith, N. Williams, M. Hall

**VII. WIOA MOU Discussion**

Presenters: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch presented the details to the council regarding the review of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the action needed to review and approve an MOU after the procurement process. The WIOU MOU is an MOU between collaborative partnerships with the Governor, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Community College Commission, and others. The MOU contains roles and responsibilities of different organizations' administration of the titles under WIOA and includes some data sharing. Jennifer references the MOU attached to the agenda for review, which does not currently contain an expiration date; however, it must be reviewed every three years. Included is the infrastructure agreement that outlines what programs pay for in the one-stop category.

**VIII. Break**

**IX. Wyoming Business Council - Childcare Work Group**

Presenters: Kristen Fong, Roxanne O'Connor

Kristen Fong and Roxanne O'Connor presented information about the importance of having access to quality and reliable childcare to prevent barriers to employment and business. The Business Council has been collaborating with several partners to lessen the childcare desert in Wyoming. There are currently not enough resources to meet childcare needs. According to the Harvard Kennedy Growth Lab, there is approximately a 20% gap, and 10,000 individuals who desire to work are out of the workforce due to a lack of childcare. The program is undergoing a rule and review process to help provide support and grants to home based programs and alleviate any potential barriers to childcare.

**X. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned for recess at 4:09 pm and will reconvene on November 7, 2024, at 8:30 am.

**November 7, 2024**

**Attendance**

**Present:**

**Members:** Chair Eric Trowbridge, Vice Chair Michael Kercher, Ron Wild, Tony Cross, Larry Fodor, Bria Hammock, Debra Zolnoski, Wendy Fisketjon, Tina Conley, Travis Lawrence, Phillip Cornella,

Brenda Morgan, Daniel Burau, Dan Meyer, Matthew Davis, Director Elizabeth Gagen, Nicky Harper, Designee Corrine Livers for Korin Schmidt, Katie Hogarty, Travis Lawrence, Ben Moritz, Designee Dr. Michelle Aldrich for Superintendent Degenfelder, Designee Lauren Schoenfeld for Governor Gordon,

**Staff:** Daniel Anderson, Matt Andrews, Savannah Bascus, Nikki Baures, Lisa Benge, Ivy Castleberry, Erin Cates, Naomi Childers, Carola Cowan, Deanna Crofts, Wynette Culp, Christina Eaton, Robert Fife, Keegan Fox, Shannon Gage, Nathan Galloway, Tony Glover, Kathy Hamre, Brittany Huffman, Ivie Kourajian, Misty Langwell, Lacey LaVake, Melissa Lovett, Trevor Mansfield, Jeff Martin, Jennifer Martinez, Carol McClure, Clifton McCrady, Sunshine McCurdy, Dawn McGeowan, Della McJunkin, Steve Miller, Shaye Moon, Michael Moore, Mary Orr, Amy Peterson, Melissa Phillips, Colet Richardson, Scott Rigg, Bryce Roberts, Denise Rodriguez, Casey Rooney, Sal Sanchez, Robin Sanders, Tom Saprony, Brynn Schildmeier, Connie Schroefel, Gilbert Servantez, Holly Simoni, Amy Souza, Erin Stevens, Kristy Tyrney, Mark Waltrup, Selau Weekes, Christina West, Jennifer Wilch, Jason Wolfe

**Absent:**

Members: Senator Fred Baldwin, Representative Ryan Berger, Dick Smith, Nathan Williams

I. **Welcome**

Presenter: Eric Trowbridge

Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m.

**A. Roll Call**

Presenter: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch took roll call and noted we have a quorum.

II. **Talent Transition - Forge Your Future Preview**

Presenters: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch presented a video to the council highlighting the production and current footage captured with the Talent Transition Project and updates on future footage being gathered to produce content for the project.

### **III. Cheyenne Economic Panel**

Presenters: Rachelle Zimmerman - Cheyenne LEADS, Domenic Bravo - Visit Cheyenne, Bria Hammock – Arts Cheyenne Board Member

Panelists introduced themselves to the council and provided their background in support of the Cheyenne community. Chairman Eric Trowbridge moderated the panel and provided them with questions about the local economy. Local businesses having access to local government was a highlight of the discussion. Tourism being a doorway to economic development was also emphasized in the panel discussion.

### **IV. One-Stop Operations & Performance Report**

Presenters: Christina West, Trevor Mansfield

Trevor and Christina provided data to council members about workforce centers across the state. Virtual services are being offered in addition to in-person services. The consensus has been people prefer in-person services. One-stop centers currently offer 18 different programs. Trevor provided updates on the MIS system and the current focus has shifted into efficient operations. Data was provided from the 2022 program year annual reports and Trevor provided details regarding the average amount of funding spent on each WIOA-eligible participant.

### **V. One-Stop Center Success Story**

Presenters: Mary Orr

Mary Orr shared with the council that currently there are 100 Department of Workforce Services (DWS) employees in our 18 workforce centers across the state. After four years of building partnerships in Albany County, 13 teachers and counselors were provided an opportunity to tour four different manufacturers in Laramie, for Career Development Day. Career Development Day is meant to help educate youth about the opportunities available to them. Mary highlighted a success story of an individual in Rawlins who moved to the United States years ago from the Philippines. Mary also highlighted employer workshops that take place on Fridays, every month.

### **VI. Laramie County Community College - Workforce & Outreach**

Presenters: Tonya Hacker - Dean of Outreach & Workforce

Tonya Hacker shared the details about efforts dedicated to outreach and workforce development taking place at Laramie County Community College. She provided an overview of the programs she oversees including Life Enrichment, Business Training and Professional Development, Industry Training, Concept Forge, IT Software Skills Training, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and the SE Wyoming Innovation Center. A formal launch of the Southeast Wyoming Innovation Center will take place in January 2025. The SE

Wyoming Innovation Center helps to support building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in this region of Wyoming. Outreach efforts include developing strategies to kickstart businesses to become successful and have access to resources needed and fill in any gaps, as well as providing community-based services and case management. The SW Innovation Center is also poised to support the prototyping needs of entrepreneurs and start-ups. Tonya took questions and provided metrics and feedback that LCCC utilizes to measure the success of workforce programs and strategic planning for future offerings.

## **VII. Labor Market Information - In-Demand Occupations**

Presenters: Michael Moore

Michael Moore provided information regarding in-demand occupations to the council. According to MIT, the average livable wage is considered \$21.07 per hour. Michael shared the methodology he utilized for the data he presented; and found that 36 occupations met the criteria as in-demand occupations, 14 being high-skill, 3 requiring post-secondary certificates, 8 requiring bachelor's degrees, and 3 requiring a high school diploma or an apprenticeship. The list is not finalized as of yet. Michael will run a few more simulations based on council member feedback.

## **VIII. Strategic Plan Progress Update**

Presenters: Jennifer Wilch

Jennifer Wilch shared with the council and update on the strategic planning process and progress on some of the strategies. The plan is to provide a report to the council on these in January 2025. Some strategies have been re-organized and updated and identifying gaps and relationships that need to be strengthened.

## **IX. Committee Breakouts**

### **A. Communication & Community Relations - Chair Eric Trowbridge**

Earlier this year it was voted and decided to not continue the contract with Warehouse 21, the vendor that was contracted to build and maintain the WWDC website. Upon receiving feedback from council members work is being done to provide an opportunity to do a re-brand and look into new vendors to contract. Additional goals include making it easy for council members to be able to understand the program and services we offer. The Largest project underway is the "Forge Your Future" Talent Transition project. The contracted vendor is going across the state to obtain and produce footage from employers.

### **B. Sector Partnerships & Career Pathways - Tony Cross**

Planning and preparation are underway to decide on the academy location, planning, and budget.

### **C. Strategic Performance & Finance - Travis Lawrence**

Travis expressed great progress in evolving as a committee this past year and the education provided to committee members. An emphasis was placed on what can be done to better deliver financial information to the council. Next month a brainstorming session will take place to develop strategies on how to present the financial aspects of the WWDC beyond numbers on a page providing more explanation. He ended with a request to the council to feel free to provide any feedback for the committee to take into consideration.

**X. Public Comment**

No public comment was brought forward. Brenda Morgan provided information regarding National Apprenticeship Week to take place November 17 through November 23 and Larry Fodor provided updates regarding the prison apprenticeship in Torrington. Chair Eric Trowbridge provided closing comments and encouraged council members to fill out the meeting survey.

**XI. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.