



ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

AGENDA

**AUGUST 18, 2023
10 A.M.**

**ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE**

AGENDA

August 18, 2023

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

10:00 a.m.

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Call to Order.....Mr. Tom Anderson, Chairman
Roll Call.....Board Staff

Welcome..... Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS)

Agenda Item 1: ACTION

Approval of Minutes- August 4, 2023 Meeting

Agenda Item 2: INFORMATIONAL

Discussion of Workforce Strategy

Introduction of Mike Rogers, Arkansas Governor's Office, Chief Workforce Officer

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, ADWS

Review current workforce strategy, including WIOA State Plan

Mr. Eddie Thomas, Assistant Director, Office of Employment Assistance, ADWS

Overview of Governor's priorities & discussion of strategies to present to Governor from the AWDB

Mr. Mike Rogers, Chief Workforce Officer
Arkansas Governor's Office

Next Steps

Location – Arkansas Department of
Commerce/Via Zoom Video Conferencing



Committee Open Discussion

Public Opportunity to Address the Committee

Announcements

Adjournment

Location – Arkansas Department of
Commerce/Via Zoom Video Conferencing



MINUTES
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD- Executive Committee
August 4, 2023

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board- Executive Committee convened on August 4, 2023, beginning at 9:32 a.m. The meeting was conducted virtually. Chairman Tom Anderson presided with the following members voicing their presence: Mr. Tom Anderson, Mr. Mike Rogers, proxy for Governor Sarah Sanders, Commissioner Joseph Baxter, Ms. Karen Breashears, Mr. Miles Crawford, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. William French, Ms. Candice Lawrence, Mr. Justin Majors, proxy for Mr. Clint O’Neal. A quorum was established.

Chairman’s Opening Comments: Chairman Anderson moved to the first agenda item.

Agenda Item 1 – ACTION – Approval of Minutes: Chairman Anderson asked board members to review the minutes of the June 15, 2023 meeting, found in the board packet.

Chairman Anderson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes.

Hearing none, a motion to approve was made by Ms. Karen Breashears, followed by a second motion by Mr. Justin Majors. All members voted in favor and the motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Agenda Item 2 – ACTION – ReImagine Grant Extension Chairman Anderson provided a summary of the June 15, 2023 Executive Committee meeting and discussions related to the ReImagine grant. Mr. Anderson stated that the executive committee voted to deny a request for a one year no-cost extension. Chairman Anderson recognized Assistant Director Eddie Thomas and Ms. Shenaye Johns, ReImagine Project Director, to provide an overview of the current status of the grant.

Mr. Thomas yielded the floor to ADWS Director, Dr. Charisse Childers for remarks. Dr. Childers thanked everyone for their time and for joining the meeting.

Ms. Johns restated the purpose of the grant and introduced ReImagine grant subrecipient presenters from Shorter College and the University of Arkansas at Global Campus.

Dr. Angee Valentine began with an overview of the presentation and introduced Shorter College President- Dr. Jerome O. Green. President Green expressed his desire to enter into a fourth year of grant and noted that Arkansas was the only state of nine states who had not requested an extension. Mr. Green addressed three major points of concern: low outcomes, fiduciary responsibility of the board, and the need to continue the grant post-pandemic.

Dr. Valentine shared information including program partners and initiatives, completion rate plans, retention strategies, employment rate plans and employer partnerships through a grant with Winrock International. Dr. Valentine introduced internship partners and program participants who shared their success stories.

Dr. Tara Dryer with the University of Arkansas at Global Campus asked to address and clarify information included in the previous meeting minutes. Dr. Dryer stated that the Idatafy contract served both UAGC and Shorter College and explained that the contract end date was extended further that the grant period of performance so that participants could receive resume’ development services, even after the grant ended. Ms. Dryer continued by making a point that she felt that the performance reports and outcome data that was

shared with the board was not accurate. She provided examples to support her claims, including the data collection methods used to report outcomes. She concluded by sharing that her intentions were to address any questions that the board may have for UAGC versus presenting information about her institution's program.

Mr. Eddie Thomas stated that the presentations by subrecipients had concluded and turned the meeting back over to Chairman Anderson. Chairman Anderson thanked all presenters and asked if there were any questions or comments from the board.

Mr. Miles Crawford asked for clarity on UAGC's intent to request an extension. Dr. Dryer explained that in May 2023, UAGC's position was that the institution was not requesting an extension but was open to a discussion. Mr. Thomas explained that in a monthly meeting following the June Executive Committee meeting, both subrecipients verbally asked for an extension and Shorter College followed up on the request by submitting an official letter. Mr. Crawford shared his frustration concerning miscommunication between ADWS and the subrecipients. Mr. Crawford continued by sharing his frustration with claims that the data and reports, shared by ADWS, were inaccurate and incomplete. Ms. Karen Breashears voiced the same concerns and asked if measures had been taken to address any discrepancies in reporting.

Mr. Thomas interjected by providing more clarity on ADWS' data collection and reporting procedures and respectfully disagreed with Dr. Dryer's claim that the data and reports were inaccurate. He yielded the floor to Ms. Shenaye Johns, and Ms. Beverly Lovett, ADWS staff who work closely with ReImagine performance and data. Ms. Johns offered her concurrence and explained that ADWS reconciles reporting data sometimes weekly in collaboration with Shorter College and UAGC. Ms. Johns also explained that the data is submitted directly from the subrecipients and compiled into one spreadsheet that is submitted to the US Department of Education. Ms. Lovett further described the efforts that ADWS has made to provide technical assistance and training on reporting requirements. Dr. Dryer expressed that her perspective was different from what ADWS shared and requested wage data from ADWS. Mr. Thomas and Ms. Johns reminded Dr. Dryer that a signed data sharing agreement would need to be fully executed prior to honoring that request. Dr. Valentine asked if Shorter College could proceed with wage sharing, considering Shorter's data sharing agreement had been submitted. Mr. Thomas confirmed that ADWS would proceed with Shorter's request.

Mr. Crawford, based on real-time data and a possible discrepancy in reporting, made a motion to table the decision until more data could be provided. A second was made by Mr. Justin Majors. Chairman Anderson confirmed the motion and second and asked if there were any discussion from the floor.

Ms. Candice Lawrence asked if delaying the vote would yield more time to gather data before the end of the grant. Mr. Thomas responded and mentioned that it might be likely with Shorter College but he could not confirm at timeline with UAGC, due to no data sharing agreement being in place. Ms. Breashears asked both subrecipients if newer data would realistically change the outcomes. UAGC and Shorter could not confirm but stated that a significant change is anticipated. Ms. Lawrence asked if the scope of the project grant and strategic plans would change based on newfound data. Both subrecipients confirmed yes. Ms. Lawrence acknowledged the efforts of both Shorter and UAGC and congratulated the accomplishments of program participants.

Ms. Lawrence asked if the 'Idatify resume' development service could be a requirement for all program participants. Dr. Dryer stated that it was a good idea and would be considered if the grant was extended. She also explained that the 'SMART resume' is a never-ending service and participants will have access on a long-term basis. Dr. Valentine stated that all internship participants are required to complete a 'SMART resume' at Shorter.

Mr. Thomas attested that both Shorter College and the University of Arkansas Global Campus have made great strides in achieving the goals of the grant. He acknowledged the challenges that similar workforce and education grants face with serving individuals with barriers to employment. Mr. Thomas reiterated that the current scenario of the grant- if the grant is not extended for an additional year, unspent funds would be returned to the Department of Education. He asked both subrecipients to address how that would impact their goals, their students, and their communities. President Green and Dr. Dryer responded by sharing what the grant has done for the state and also shared their future plans and sustainability efforts.

Chairman Anderson shared his desire to continue on with an additional year. Mr. Thomas asked subrecipients if they would be willing to provide quarterly reports to the board if the grant was extended. Both subrecipients agreed. Mr. Justin Majors challenged ADWS and the Department of Commerce to support all efforts that have been mentioned in the meeting, including improving communication among all parties and assisting in developing clear and concise reports.

Chairman Anderson stated that a motion was on the floor that had been seconded. He asked the board if they were ready to proceed with the vote or if the motion should be withdrawn. Chief Workforce Officer, Mike Rogers stated that the ReImagine grant could play a pivotal part in the Governor's Workforce Strategy and with the creation of new portals launching in October, many of today's concerns could be addressed. Dr. Charisse Childers offered a response to comments made by Mr. Majors and shared more details regarding wage reporting within ADWS.

Mr. Crawford asked for more clarity on Chief Rogers statements. Chief Rogers confirmed that ReImagine would be included in a larger workforce strategy and would be aligned with other initiatives in the state. Mr. Crawford asked fellow board members for feedback on his previous motion. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. French expressed that their willingness to make a decision today. Mr. Crawford withdrew his motion.

A motion was made to extend the ReImagine Workforce grant through a one-year no cost extension, by Ms. Candice Lawrence; followed by a second motion by Mr. William French. Judge Brandon Ellison expressed his agreement. All members voted in favor and the motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Board Open Discussion: Chairman Anderson opened the floor for open discussion. No comments were made.

Public Speaking Opportunity: Chairman opened the floor for public comment. No comments were made.

Adjourn: Chairman Anderson adjourned the AWDB Full Board meeting on a motion made by Ms. Karen Breashears, followed by Judge Brandon Ellison making the second motion. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Thomas Anderson, Board Chairman
Arkansas Workforce Development Board

Charisse Childers, Director
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

*Minutes recorded by Eddie Thomas
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Staff*



Department of Labor, National Governors Association announce partnership to enhance state workforce development systems

Seeks to maximize benefits of historic federal investments in infrastructure, economy

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor today announced a partnership with the National Governors Association to bring federal partners, state policy advisors, workforce development boards and agencies, and other policymakers together to support states’ planning processes.

The partnership will take advantage of employment opportunities made possible by the Biden-Harris administration’s historic investments to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure and promote economic growth.

The Workforce Strategic Planning Collaborative is a partnership between the department’s Employment and Training Administration and the association’s Center for Best Practices that will enable federal agencies and state governments to collaboratively make strategic improvements in the delivery of workforce development services using the 2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan.

“Working with the National Governors Association and our federal partners, we hope to bolster workforce development services delivered nationwide to ensure that workers in the U.S., including traditionally underserved populations and those with significant barriers to employment, get on a path to high-quality jobs and careers,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Brent Parton.

“Together, we can better align resources across the Biden-Harris administration to provide jobseekers with the training needed to meet employers’ needs for a skilled workforce.”

The partnership is intended to accomplish the following:

- Develop and align guidance and resources from the department, other federal agencies and the association to develop a state planning tool.
- Promote equity and job quality in jobs created by the new investments.
- Provide technical assistance and elevate best practices in state plans to empower governors and their states to leverage WIOA boards and planning processes as cross-system, strategic opportunities.
- Ensure the workforce system is demand-driven and matches employer needs as federal funding opportunities are implemented.

As part of the partnership, the department will seek input from state planning partners and the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation.

[Learn more about the Employment and Training Administration.](#)

Agency

Employment and Training Administration

Date

August 9, 2023

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[Arkansas' WIOA State Plan PYs 2022-2023](#)

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the governor of each state must submit a state plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy.

Source: <https://dws.arkansas.gov/workforce-services/workforce-innovation-wioa/>

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
PROCLAMATION

EO 23-16

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME - GREETINGS:

**EXECUTIVE ORDER TO CREATE THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE CABINET
AND THE CHIEF WORKFORCE OFFICER.**

WHEREAS: Arkansans must have the skills to compete for employment in the current job market;

WHEREAS: In Arkansas, approximately six out of ten jobs require credentials beyond a high school diploma, however, less than half of the workforce in Arkansas is credentialed beyond a high school diploma;

WHEREAS: In Arkansas, fewer than fifty percent (50%) of high school graduates attend college or postsecondary training;

WHEREAS: Currently, there are six state agencies in Arkansas state government that provide or coordinate career and technical education and workforce development;

WHEREAS: It is the policy of this Administration to create a single entity to coordinate and to assist in career and technical education, which in turn, will ensure that young adults who are entering the workforce are prepared for high-wage, high-growth careers; and

WHEREAS: The Governor seeks to establish the Governor's Workforce Cabinet and the Chief Workforce Officer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, acting under the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

- (1) There is hereby created the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (the "Cabinet"), which shall advise the Governor on issues regarding workforce development and career education in Arkansas.
- (2) There is hereby created the Governor's Chief Workforce Officer ("CWO"), who shall be appointed by the Governor, and who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
 - a) The CWO shall coordinate, manage, and direct the Governor's workforce development policies and career education strategy for the State of Arkansas.
 - b) The CWO shall serve as chairman of the Cabinet.

- c) The CWO shall undertake additional duties as assigned by the Governor.

(3) The Governor shall appoint the members of the Cabinet all of whom shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Cabinet shall be composed of:

- a) The Secretary of the Department of Commerce, or his designee;
- b) The Secretary of the Department of Corrections, or his designee;
- c) The Secretary of the Department of Education, or his designee;
- d) The Secretary of the Department of Human Services, or her designee;
- e) The Secretary of the Department of Labor and Licensing, or his designee; and
- f) The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or his designee.

(4) The Cabinet shall have the following duties:

- a) To collaborate under the direction of the CWO to manage, coordinate, and prioritize all workforce revenue streams and investments across state government;
- b) To engage with the CWO in managing, coordinating, and prioritizing workforce development and career education.
- c) To optimize Arkansas' return on investment by:
 - i. Reviewing the services and use of funds and resources under applicable state and federal programs to determine whether the state is maximizing desired outcomes for the state's workforce;
 - ii. Advising the Governor on methods of coordinating the services and use of funds and resources consistent with the laws and regulations governing relevant state and federal programs.
- d) To advise the Governor on how to ensure a talent-driven education and workforce system by:
 - i. Addressing current and future needs for Arkansas employers and individuals;
 - ii. Strengthening Arkansas' operational efficiency by integrating state and federal resources;

- iii. Simplifying the processes and removing unnecessary barriers for Arkansans to access workforce education and training; and
- iv. Providing strategic alignment for state agencies and organizations driving workforce, education, and economic development.
- e) To prepare and recommend a data-driven strategic plan to accomplish the goals outlined in Paragraph 4 of this Executive Order, and to deliver this strategic plan to the Governor by October 1, 2023.
- f) To monitor, direct, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic plan, leveraging high-quality state data and subject matter experts and providing regular updates to the Governor.
- g) At the direction of the Governor, to create working groups to assist in the strategic plan and mission of this Executive Order, which may be comprised of:
 - i. Business and community leaders;
 - ii. Leaders in K-12 education, including but not limited to superintendents, school board members, principals, teachers, and parents;
 - iii. Leaders in postsecondary education;
 - iv. Experts in workforce and economic development; and
 - v. Arkansas' Chief Data Officer.

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive orders.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 9th day of February, in the year of our Lord 2023.




Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor

Attest:


John Thurston, Secretary of State