

**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 Idatify 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.

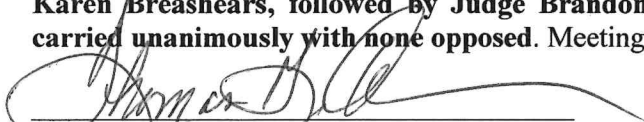
Mr. Crawford asked for more clarity on Chief Rogers statements. Chief Rogers confirmed that ReImagine would be included in a larger workforce strategy and would be aligned with other initiatives in the state. Mr. Crawford asked fellow board members for feedback on his previous motion. Ms. Lawrence and 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.**

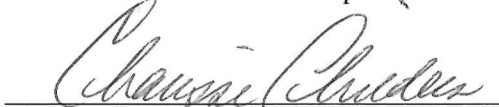
**Board Open Discussion:** Chairman Anderson opened the floor for open discussion. No comments were made.

**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*