

MINUTES
ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
March 15, 2024

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened on March 15, 2024, beginning at 9:36 a.m. The meeting was conducted virtually. Chairman Tom Anderson presided with the following members voicing their attendance: Mr. Mike Rogers, proxy for Governor Sarah Sanders, Mr. Thomas Anderson, Commissioner Joseph Baxter, Mr. Len Blaylock, Ms. Karen Breashears, Dr. Charisse Childers, Mr. Miles Crawford, Mr. William French, Ms. Abby Houseworth, Ms. Candice Lawrence, Mr. Brian Marsh, Dr. Trenia Miles, Mr. George Nunnally, Mr. Justin Major, proxy for Clint O'Neal, Ms. Latanyua Robinson, Mr. Kelley Sharp, Mr. Robert Thorne, Dr. Ken Warden, and Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes.

Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Rebecca Ives, Mr. Charles Johnson, and Ms. Holley Little were unable to attend. A quorum was established.

Chairman's Opening Comments: Chairman Anderson welcomed the board.

Agenda Item 1: ACTION-Full Board Minutes Approval: Chairman Anderson asked if any revisions/corrections needed to be made to the February 28, 2024, meeting minutes.

Hearing none, a motion was made by Mr. Kelley Sharp to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Brian Marsh. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Agenda Item 2: Informational:

Staff Report: Deputy Director Eddie Thomas proposed an initiative of using 7b discretionary funds from the Wagner Peyser grant for an Employment Services virtual services center. The purpose of the service center will be to provide virtual employment services to recipients through the use of increased technology in conjunction with a hybrid model that also allowed customers to visit any Arkansas Workforce Center, if preferred. Discussions between ES staff and DOL are in progress to make sure an initiative like this will be feasible and effective for the client population being served. Assistant Director Angela Cook provided information on the Pathway Home 5 Reentry Initiative. This initiative aims to reduce the recidivism rate while providing successful outcomes for individuals approaching their release date. A case manager would be assigned to an incarcerated client to provide pre-release services on-site at the correctional facility and post-release services after the client's release from the correctional facility. Members of the board asked various questions and participated in discussion surrounding the ideas. A formal vote was not taken yet the consensus showed favorable support for the projects.

Agenda Item 3: ACTION-5.4-WIOA Outreach Allowable Activities: Deputy Director Eddie Thomas provided an overview of Policy 5.4. Policy 5.4 is an issuance and state policy derived from the guidance of the United States Department of Labor. Language from TEGL 3-23 was adopted into Policy 5.4. The federal government is encouraging states, service providers, and local workforce development boards to use print media, social media, social media influencers, and other forms of advertisement to increase participant enrollment in the WIOA programs. ADWS will fund up to \$15,000 per local workforce development board for outreach activities to increase WIOA program enrollments across the state. Local boards will have an opportunity to apply for funding through a proposal submission.

Chairman Anderson called a motion to approve Policy 5.4-WIOA Outreach Allowable Activities. Several members of the board discussed the funding amounts and asked about realistic projects being funded at the proposed level of funding. Additionally, board members expressed the need to conduct outreach strategically on the local level, yet also encouraged the state to give consideration to conduct outreach on a state level with targeted messages that could benefit all boards and all WIOA programs.

A motion was made by Mr. Len Blaylock III to approve Policy 5.4 and the \$150,000 state set-aside amount to fund the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brian Marsh. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Agenda Item 4: ACTION-Policy 5.3, Change 1B-High Concentration of Youth Awards: Mr. Doss Burgess directed the board members to pages two and three of Policy 5.3 and pointed out the addition of language in part 1 page 2 and section Item A on page 3. Chairman Anderson called a motion to approve policy 5.3, Change 1B-High Concentration of Youth Awards.

A motion was made by Ms. Candice Lawrence to approve Policy 5.3 and seconded by Mr. William French. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Agenda Item 5: ACTION-Policy 6.4, Change 1-Certification of Arkansas Workforce Centers: Deputy Director Eddie Thomas stated that every three years all workforce centers have to be recertified. Each Arkansas Workforce Center, whether comprehensive or affiliate, must be evaluated for certification by the appropriate entity by the close of business on May 31, 2024. Dr. Claudia Griffin explained that the purpose of Policy 6.4, Change 1 is to make things easy and clear for everyone to understand. Chairman Anderson called a motion to approve Policy 6.4, Change 1-Certification of Arkansas Workforce Centers.

A motion was made by Ms. Karen Breashears to strike language on pages 8 and 9 due to concerns from local workforce development boards. After discussion, there was not a second made to Ms. Breashears' motion; subsequently the motion failed. A second motion was made to approve Policy 6.4 as presented by Mr. William French and seconded by Ms. Candice Lawrence. 15 members were in favor of the motion and Ms. Karen Breashears, Mr. Len Blaylock III, and Mr. Kelley Sharp opposed the motion. Motion passes.

Agenda Item 6: ACTION-Policy 6.5, Change 1-Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards: Ms. Rebecca Edwards stated that the governor is required to certify the local workforce development board every two years. Arkansas Division of Workforce Services serves as the administrator for the governor for local board certifications. After an explanation of the requirements, Chairman Anderson called a motion to approve Policy 6.5, Change 1-Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards.

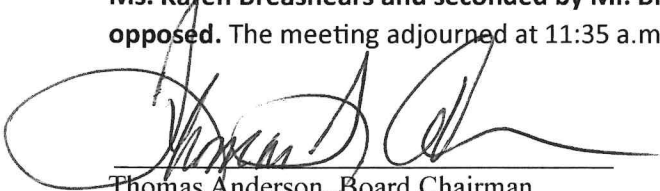
All board members were in favor of approving Policy 6.5. Motion passes.

Board Open Discussion: None

Public Opportunity to Address the Board: None

Announcements: None

Adjournment: Chairman Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Karen Breashears and seconded by Mr. Brian Marsh. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Anderson', written over a horizontal line.

Thomas Anderson, Board Chairman
Arkansas Workforce Development Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charisse Childers', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director
Arkansas Workforce Development Board & ACOM Workforce Policy & Innovation

*Minutes recorded by Victoria Hall
Arkansas Workforce Connections Staff*