

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

**Attendance**

**WIB Members:** Amanda (Bergdorf) Sandner, JT Britton, Gloria Brummer, Jenifer Deweese, Jason Dockter, Jeff Durbin, Robert Frazier, Reiko Hurd, Robert Kerr, Victor Martinek (Board Chair), Ryan McCrady, Patty Mendoza, Jennifer Miller (David Lacy), Twyla Moore, Suellen Morgan, Mark Sprehe, Lance Thurman (Jamar Scott), Matthew Yard

**WIB Members Absent:** Chris Barham, Carrie Brady, David Fowler, David MacDonna, JP Fyans, Nicole Porter, Justin Roesch, Katie Vitale, Mark Winkler

**Staff in Attendance:** Guenevere Black Ford, Michelle Brookens, Sarah Graham, Michelle Griebler, Diane Jones

**Meeting Called to Order:** 4:30 p.m.

**Welcome/Attendance/Introductions:**

Roll call was taken by Sarah Graham.

**Approval of Minutes:** (pgs. 3-6)

All in attendance had a chance to review the last meeting's minutes. No questions were asked.

**Motion to Approve May 2023 Minutes:** Motion made by Jenifer Deweese, seconded by JT Britton. **Motion Carried.**

**Program Information:**

**1. County Liaison Reports** (pgs. 7-12)

Cass County—Michelle Brookens reported that Cass County totaled 7 center visits with 11 services provided. There are 7 Cass County residents enrolled and 6 in follow-up services.

Christian County—Michelle Brookens reported that Christian County totaled 21 center visits with 31 services provided. There are 15 Christian County residents enrolled and 9 in follow-up services.

Logan County—Michelle Brookens reported that Logan County totaled 17 center visits with 36 services provided. There are 10 Logan County residents enrolled and 2 in follow-up services.

Menard County—Michelle Brookens reported that Menard County totaled 8 center visits with 18 services provided. There are 7 Menard County residents enrolled and 2 in follow-up services.

Sangamon County—Michelle Brookens reported that Sangamon County totaled 411 center visits with 810 services provided. There are 166 Sangamon County residents enrolled and 125 are in follow-up services. We have received 4 referrals from partner agencies and issued 62 referrals. We have also received 245 pre-applications since July 1, 2023.

The full County Liaison Reports were included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**2. Business Services** (pgs. 13-14)

Michelle Brookens reported on the local layoffs in the area, including David's Bridal (with 5 full-time and 13 part-time employees affected), Autism Home Services (all employees were absorbed by another company), and Christian Horizons, which resulted in 101 layoffs. Rapid Response materials were delivered and Christian Horizons declined further services. Memorial

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

Health System laid off 484 employees and Rapid Response materials were delivered to them via their online employee portals. A few affected individuals from Memorial have visited the Resource Room for help with job search.

Michelle Brookens discussed the 3 Incumbent Worker Projects: the Illinois Rural Water Association, Richardson Manufacturing, and Solomon Colors, which will begin their program in November. She also discussed the 5 on-the-job trainings being conducted at Evolve Salon, Wilkerson Service Center, MJ Kellner, and the Mary Bryant Home. The program has provided almost \$63,000 in wage reimbursements to these employers. However, the MJ Kellner placement was let go after failing to conform to their attendance standards. MJ Kellner has reached out to us since about receiving a replacement. There have been multiple job fairs, hiring events, and employment workshops spanning from July until the current meeting, with 2 still upcoming: the LLCC Workforce Expo on September 21<sup>st</sup>, and the CASPN Fall 2023 Career Fair on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The full Business Services Report was included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**3. Contractors and Special Projects (pgs. 15-16)**

Michelle Brookens reported that we have exceeded enrollment goals (41/40 enrollments) for the DWG QUEST grant and that 100% of these participants are enrolled in training programs that result in jobs in high-growth industries. 51% are enrolled in training related to the healthcare field. Fishes and Loaves has 8 out of 24 planned enrollments, Lawrence Education Center has 2 out of 20 planned enrollments, and Capital Area Career Center has 14 out of 25 planned enrollments. The full Contractors and Special Projects Report was included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**4. Center Activity, Performance, Enrollment Reports (pgs. 17-19)**

Michelle Griebler provided an overview of the Center Activity, Enrollment, and Performance reports. We are near the end of the first quarter of the program year and are currently meeting 9 out of the 15 performance measures set and exceeding 6. Full Center Activity, Enrollment, and Performance Reports were included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**Motion to Approve Program Information Reports:** Motion made by Gloria Brummer, seconded by Ryan McCrady. **Motion Carried.**

**Fiscal Information and Review:**

**Expenditure and Grant Reports (pgs. 20-25)**

Diane Jones provided an overview of current grants as well as the expenditure status of the grants. We currently have the QUEST Grant, which is obligated at 82.5% and 44.4% expended, the PY' 22 Grant, which is obligated at 100% and 68.7% expended, and the PY' 23 Grant, which began in July, is obligated at 62.5% and 0.6% expended. Detailed information on the QUEST Grant and the PY' 22 and PY' 23 Grants was reviewed, as well as operating costs and expenditures by county. Detailed information on the budget for PY' 22 was reviewed as well as the current budget for PY' 23. The full Fiscal Information Report was included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

**Motion to Approve Fiscal Information Reports:** Motion made by Matthew Yard, seconded by JT Britton. **Motion Carried.**

**Administrative Information:**

**1. Director’s Report** (pgs. 26-28)

Sarah Graham reported that there are still business vacancies on the WIB and asked for referrals, especially from our non-Sangamon County members. She added that the newest version of the WIB member list was attached to the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet and the list would be approved during the upcoming recertification. Sarah reminded everyone that the November WIB meeting will be the annual Awards Banquet and that, along with WIB members, the awardees and CEOs have been invited. Sarah mentioned the new WIB/CEO document link that was added to the website and prefaced Guenevere’s walkthrough of it. Sarah provided an update on the MOU, stating that corrections are normally received around October or November. We have also responded to the State of Illinois seeking another QUEST Grant and participated in information sessions relating to it. Sarah stated that she meets with the regional DCEO Manager once a month at our Illinois workNet Center. Our office remains open with no changes to times or availabilities. The full Director’s Report was included in the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet.

**Motion to Accept Director’s Report:** Motion made by JT Britton, seconded by Jeff Durbin. **Motion Carried.**

**2. Action Items for Approval** (pg. 26)

Transfer \$300,000 from Dislocated Worker to Adult

Sarah Graham explained the shifting of grant money from the Dislocated Worker to Adult categories which normally occurs in September and asked for approval to transfer \$300,000 from the Dislocated Worker pool to the Adult pool.

Recertification of WIB and Members

Sarah Graham explained that the Board is recertified every 2 years with the State of Illinois and directed members to the updated member list on pages 1 and 2 of the September 2023 WIB Meeting Packet. Sarah introduced Robert Kerr, Patty Mendoza, and Twyla Moore.

Approved Programs

Sarah Graham discussed the 3 new provider/program recommendations: St. John’s College of Nursing for an online BSN bridge degree and The Miller Academy of Allied Health’s Phlebotomy Technician and Basic Nurse Assistant training. Sarah recommended funding all 3 programs and adding them to the ETPL list. Sarah further recommended that, as a new provider, The Miller Academy have a soft cap of 5 enrollments per program for the first year.

Jason Dockter asked if there is a difference in how we approach a new provider versus a provider we have worked with in the past who is offering a new program. Sarah answered that there is. For a new provider, LLWA does a site inspection as well as a cap on their enrollments. After the first year, LLWA reevaluates the effectiveness of the

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

provider and programs. Michelle Griebler added that all of our programs and providers need to be recertified every 2 years.

QUEST Grant

Sarah Graham sought approval to enter into another QUEST (Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training) grant in the amount of \$350,000 to be utilized for Dislocated Workers.

Supplemental WIOA Funding

Sarah Graham discussed a supplemental funding opportunity in the amount of \$228,643 and asked for approval to utilize the amount for IMEC manufacturing training. There are 8-10 manufacturers in our workforce area that we could fund training for. Sarah mentioned that we would also be able to consider other manufacturers who reach out with an interest in training.

Approval to Hire Workforce Specialist

Sarah Graham asked for approval to hire a new Workforce Specialist.

**Motion to Approve Action Items:** Motion made by Mark Sprehe, seconded by Jenifer Deweese. **Motion Carried.**

**Sarah Graham departed for a personal event.**

New CEO/WIB Portal Demonstration (handout)

Guenevere Black Ford demonstrated a quick usage of the new CEO/WIB password protected document page on the workNet 20 website.

**Around the Table: (4:59 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)**

Twyla Moore, a 2023 new member, introduced herself as the Workforce Director for the Springfield Urban League. She discussed workshops the SUL offers, like resume building and interviewing training. She said the workshop calendar is available on their website and in their office. She mentioned that the SUL has partnered with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission to aid high school and post-high school students who are looking to continue their education. The SUL is offering financial aid, college application, and scholarship workshops from October 2023 to early January 2024.

Robert Frazier introduced himself and discussed news from All-In-One Laundry Services. He explained that he has created the “SUDS” project (Stability for Underserved through Diverse Support) through the non-profit Clean Slate Advocates which serves all LWIA 20 counties. It allows anyone who needs laundry services, such as the elderly, people without home laundry services, or those who cannot afford laundry services, to have their laundry done. He added that, during the last major storm in Springfield, they were able to do over 14,000 loads of laundry for those who needed it. SUDS also now has a street team of people who go door-to-door to make sure people are aware of the services. A second aspect of the SUDS project provides clean linens, such as blankets, pillows, sheets, and bath towels, to those who are unable to afford them. Robert Frazier handed out cards with information related to the project.

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

Amanda Sandner from Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries introduced herself and shared that her organization was selected by the 2023 Leadership Springfield Group as a project non-profit. She said a team of students will be conducting a community needs assessment to see what the needs of the community are for the services Land of Lincoln Goodwill Industries offers. She will share the results once they are compiled.

Dr. Jason Dockter from Lincoln Land Community College announced that they will be holding their Workforce Expo on Thursday, September 21, as well as their Agricultural Expo and the Lineman Rodeo on the same day. About 900 high school students will attend these events on the LLCC campus. About 70 employers related to agricultural careers will be on site.

Patty Mendoza, the Director of Adult Education and Literacy at Lincoln Land Community College said that LLCC is always taking students for adult education and that there is a current diesel technologies class which she hopes will continue into next year.

Reiko Hurd from Lawrence Education Center discussed their recent move to White Oaks Mall. The move has been good for LEC thus far, and they have 128 enrollments. LEC is in its second year of partnership with the City of Springfield for the Brighter Futures grant to help students achieve their high school diploma or equivalency degree.

Ryan McCrady from the Springfield-Sangamon Growth Alliance thanked Sarah and the LLWA for our efforts, citing an IDES statistic saying there are 2,300 more people employed in the Springfield Metro area than this time last year.

Robert Kerr with the UIS Innovation Center introduced himself and provided an overview of the Innovation Center, which will open in 2025. He explained that the Innovate Springfield incubator will be a part of the new Innovation Center, with 4 other pillars at the core of the organization: early entrepreneurship, public policy, social innovation, and the talent pipeline. The Sangamon CEO Program has been transferred to UIS in partnership with the Regional Office of Career and Technical Education. The Innovation Center also plans on opening up EdgeTech, a 3-D printing maker's space, and utilizing it for product design and prototyping. He sees the main audiences for this as high school students, community members, and post-secondary UIS students. Robert Kerr said that he hopes to partner with LLCC for the Innovation Center.

Victor Martinek asked if he would talk more about the CEO Program, as there is a similar program in Logan County which resulted in a recent high school graduate continuing her business post-graduation.

Robert Kerr elaborated on the Sangamon CEO Program. It has been around for over 10 years and it teaches high school age students entrepreneurial skills, teamwork skills, and how to implement a business idea in the real world. The Ice Rink at the Old State Capital was a Sangamon CEO project.

Michelle Brookens mentioned that it would be nice to have the Christian County CEO Program collaborate with the Sangamon CEO Program.

David Lacy with IDES said that they have started their fall schedule for virtual job information workshops, which run from September to November 16.

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

Gloria Brummer with St. John's College Department of Nursing said that they are always ready to accept new students and that they offer pathways from the BSN all the way to a doctorate. She asked for anyone who knows of any interested parties to be in contact.

Suellen Morgan with the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services announced that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and that DRS will be offering a Resource Fair on October 16, 2023 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. She explained that they are looking for and hosting entities and agencies who work with those with disabilities to speak with the attendees. Suellen handed out flyers with the information for the Resource Fair.

Mark Sprehe with Bunn-O-Matic shared that Bunn is doing well and that their workforce has stabilized after the COVID pandemic.

Jenifer Deweese with the Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois addressed events and news related to Logan and Menard County. She discussed the Community Services Block Grant and some of the initiatives it allows, such as case management to connect customers with training and educational resources, as well as additional funds to assist customers with short-term needs.

Victor Martinek prefaced the next WIB Meeting, which will be the Awards Banquet. He explained that this meeting is valuable because it allows board members to connect with the individuals directly who have received assistance. He then asked if anyone else had any remarks before adjournment.

Robert Frazier suggested an alternate meeting agenda which would lead into more dialogue from board members. He stated that, during the meetings he has been to, he has heard little discussion from other members and few questions asked during the presentation of LLWA reports. He suggested flip-flopping the order of the agenda to conduct the Around the Table first, followed by report presentations, in the hope that it would facilitate more discussions.

Michelle Griebler replied that we would consider that for the March WIB meeting.

Michelle Brookens answered a few questions regarding EO and statistics and said that we do keep track of that information and have it available at any time.

Robert Frazier continued by saying that, as an employer, he has been surprised at the amount of people who seek to apply at his business who do not know how to fill out the application or conduct themselves for a proper job interview. He asked how we can better prepare people and/or reach out to them rather than simply directing them to us down the street.

Michelle Brookens answered that soft skills are lacking and that we see that often. She explained that once a customer fills out a pre-application, the career planners offer such services such as job application, resume creation, and interview preparation, even if specific customers are not funded for training.

Jeff Durbin shared his individual experience about being helped with similar programs when he was laid off. He said the soft skills training was what really helped him achieve not only a job, but his current position.

**WIB Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday – September 18, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**Northfield Inn & Conference Center, Springfield, Illinois 62702**

Robert Frazier continued, saying that people struggle with realistic expectations regarding starting salaries and wages. Michelle Brookens responded that we do cover wage information with those individuals who are funded for training and explain to them the opportunities for job growth within their chosen industry. Michelle also explained that our local policy allows individuals to receive funding who meet up to 200% the low income standard based on their current wages (based on the LLSIL set by the Department of Labor). This income level is also adjusted based on size of family. Robert Frazier said that he wanted to collaborate with us in knowing how to address wage information and questions. He said that communicating this information through our office is one thing, but getting the information to people on the street is a different process, but equally as important.

Victor Martinek thanked everyone for their comments and reminded members that no question is a bad question.

Jamar Scott (for Dr. Lance Thurman) also added that many factors discussed also apply to teachers and those pursuing positions in education.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Upcoming Events:** (pg. 31)

- Next CEO Meeting – November 8, 2023 from 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Next WIB Meeting – November 13, 2023 from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Awards Banquet)

**Adjournment:** 5:32 p.m.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Motion made by Robert Frazier, seconded by Jenifer Deweese.  
**Motion Carried.**