

CEO Meeting Minutes
Wednesday – March 12, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.
Illinois workNet Center, 1300 S. 9th St., Springfield, IL 62703

Attendance

CEOs: Ramona Douglass, Linda Curtin, Troy Cummings

CEOs Not in Attendance: Bill Merriman, Bryan Sharp, James Glenn, Bob Lott, Andy Van Meter IV, Casey Constant

Staff & Guests: Mark Sprehe (WIB Chair), Michelle Griebler, Michelle Brookens, Diane Jones, Guenevere Black Ford, Alicia Dean, Christina Sugars

Meeting Called to Order: 2:32 p.m.

Welcome/Attendance/Introductions: Greetings were exchanged before the start of the meeting. Roll Call was taken by Guenevere Black Ford.

Approval of Minutes: (pgs. 2-6)

All in attendance had a chance to review the minutes. No questions were asked.

Motion to Approve November 2024 Minutes: Motion made by Ramona Douglass, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Program Information:

1. County Liaison Reports (pgs. 7-14)

Cass County – Christina Sugars reported 43 Cass County center visits with 90 services provided. There are currently 9 Cass County residents enrolled in training, and 7 participants in follow-up services. Christina reported that Lincoln Land Community College is offering GED classes and English Language Learning classes at their Beardstown location, though the ELL classes have a waitlist. Christina delivered Transfr VR Headsets to the Beardstown High School and Middle School on January 27th. Christina reported that First Methodist Church of Beardstown purchased a building with the intent to open a “Matthew 25” shelter which would provide temporary housing and direct those in need to other services. The shelter will open in the summer. Embrace Life Childcare opened on January 23rd. Christina reported that there was an IDOC Hiring/Screening Event at the Beardstown Park District on February 5, and that there are job openings at Summit Health Care, DD Homes, VMC, West Central Bank, and more.

Christian County – Alicia Dean reported 51 Christian County center visits with 81 services provided. There are currently 11 Christian County residents enrolled in training, and 14 participants in follow-up services. Alicia attended the Greater Taylorville Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Awareness Day in February. Two Transfr VR Headsets were delivered to Taylorville CUSD #3. Alicia will attend the Re-Entry Summit at the Taylorville Correctional Center on March 18th. LLWA staff will also attend the LLCC Business Partners Meeting on March 21st.

Logan County – Michelle Griebler reported on Logan County, as Tatiana Smith’s last day was March 7th. The Logan County Career Planner/Liaison will need to be filled once more. There have been 39 Logan County center visits with 64 services provided. There are currently 11 Logan County residents enrolled in training, and 6 participants in follow-up services. Transfr VR Headsets were provided to Lincoln ESD #27 and Mt. Pulaski junior high. Michelle reported that registration for Heartland Community College’s summer classes opened on March 4th and that Heartland is now offering welding classes at their Lincoln location. There are job openings at Sysco, Eaton, St. Clara’s, and MHS.

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Menard County – Christina Sugars reported 20 Menard County center visits and 33 services provided. There are currently 5 Menard County residents enrolled in training, and 3 participants in follow-up services. Christina Sugars reported that she attended the Menard County Coordinating Council meeting on December 5th, 2024. The Broadgauge and the 1st and 3rd Boutique and Wine Bar closed at the end of January. Christina also delivered Transfr VR Headsets to the Porta Junior High School. Job openings in Menard County include positions at Sunny Acres, Menard County CCDC, CAPCIL, and more.

Sangamon County – Michelle Brookens reported 5,238 Sangamon County center visits and 8,231 services provided. There are currently 220 Sangamon County residents enrolled in training, and 149 participants in follow-up services. Healthcare is the largest training area. LLWA has provided 127 referrals to partner organizations and received 52 referrals. Since July 1st, 2024, LLWA has received 833 pre-applications. The Resource Room usage has increased dramatically over the last few months.

The full County Liaison Reports were included in the March 2025 CEO Packet.

2. Business Services (pg. 15)

Michelle Brookens reported that there have been several layoffs that have affected the LWIA 20 area, including Big Lots, Party City, Macy's, and others. The US Office of Personnel Management indicated that some of the 187 Illinois Public Administration employees being laid off will be from LWIA 20. There is one Incumbent Worker Project at the Illinois Rural Water Association in Riverton that will finish in June. Michelle Brookens reported that the MJ Kellner OJT participant left after one month to pursue a different venture. There are two other current OJTs at Next Level Mastery and Evolve Salon. Michelle also reviewed the various job fairs, hiring events, and workshops, including the Logan County Career Spark Event during which LLWA demoed the Transfr VR Headsets in which LLWA has/is participating. There are multiple upcoming job fairs and events, such as the Springfield Chamber Job Fair on March 25th, the Capital Area Career Center Job Fair (which was rescheduled from April 4th to April 25th), and the Primient Hiring Event to be held at the Illinois workNet Center, as well as others.

3. Contractors and Special Projects (pgs. 16-18)

Michelle Brookens reported on the Contractors and Special Projects. The QUEST I grant ended 9/30/24 and 102% of the enrollment goal was met. The ongoing QUEST II grant ends 9/30/25 and we have already met 184% of its enrollment goal. The State Supplemental Grant has three areas of focus, including Manufacturing in Rural Counties, servicing Low-Income Single Parents, and Virtual Reality Headsets for Career Exploration in Rural Middle Schools. There have been 64 rural manufacturing employees who have completed training with 38 still currently in training; 25 low-income single parents have been identified to participate in training and 10 have already completed the training; 10 VR Headsets with career exploration software have been delivered to rural middle schools. The Supplemental Grant ends on June 30th, 2025.

Our Youth Contract planned enrollments were 49 and we are currently at 37. There are 22/24 participants enrolled at Fishes and Loaves with the final 2 participants starting March 17th. There are 15/25 participants enrolled at Capital Area Career Center. Of those, 14 have received their

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OSHA 10 Certificate, 2 have received their AWS Welding Certificate, 1 has received an EPA 608 AC & Refrigeration Certificate, and 1 has received their HBI Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate. Michelle Brookens asked if there were any questions, and there were none.

4. Center Activity, Performance, and Enrollment Reports (pgs. 19-21)

Michelle Griebler provided a summary of the Center Activity and Career Services provided in all counties. From July 2024 to February 2025, there have been 8,499 services provided to 5,391 customers. Current enrollments across all counties and funding streams are 257. There have been 220 new participants enrolled for PY' 24. The preliminary performance outcomes for PY' 24 indicate that LLWA is meeting 7/15 and exceeding 8/15 performance measures, based on Quarter II data from December 2024.

The full program information reports were included in the March 2025 CEO Meeting Packet.

Motion to Approve Program Information Reports: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Fiscal Information, Budget, and Review:

1. Expenditure and Grant Reports (pgs. 22-26)

Diane Jones gave an overview of all current grants. LLWA has four grants currently open and the 22 QUEST Grant ended on 9/30/24. The 23 QUEST Grant is still open, and 83.2% of it has been expended. It is obligated at 99% and ends 9/30/25. The State Supplemental Grant, which ends 6/30/25, is 39.7% expended and 87.4% obligated. The PY' 23 Formula Grant also ends 6/30/25, and it is 98.5% expended and 100% obligated. The PY' 24 Formula Grant is 23.6% expended and 77% obligated. Diane explained that after we pay Spring Tuition, the expenditure will increase. Detailed information about the individual grant expenditures was reviewed, including expenditures broken down by title and county. Diane pointed out that Menard County currently accounts for 0.75% of our expenditures. Overall, the expenditures roughly correspond to county populations. Diane explained the requirement in which we are not allowed to spend more than 50% of our budget on operating expenses. The operating budget is currently at 37.16%. This percentage was higher in November but brought down by training expenditures between the November and March meetings. Diane then reviewed the PY' 24 Operating Budget by line. LLWA is currently also under budget overall, and most of that is from the salary and fringes as we have been understaffed. We are at 52% of our operating budget for salaries, and the estimate for this period of the program year is usually 66.7%. The 23 QUEST and the Supplemental Grants also help provided approximately \$20,000 towards salary and fringes costs. Diane reviewed the small equipment purchases and the unplanned need for a new server switch purchase. In addition, she mentioned that that we are hoping to purchase 12 new computers for staff due to the current staff computers being unable to be upgraded to Windows 11. Diane explained that purchase will fall under the small equipment line item, which will appear over budget, but confirmed that we would still be under budget overall. The new computers will be a little under \$10,000. Michelle Griebler added that the other contractual line in the amount of \$6,000 for an MOU negotiator would also not be spent this year.

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Troy Cummings asked for detail on the Contractual Staff budget line item. Diane explained that this line is for any fees we have paid to Express Personnel for temporary or new hires, which is actually also a part of staff salary and fringes. Michelle Griebler added that she had been performing dual roles as the AD and Interim Director for 9 months before being hired as Executive Director, which contributed to those lower amounts expended for salaries and fringes in addition to other staff turnover.

Motion to Approve Fiscal Information, Expenditure, and Grant Reports: Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Troy Cummings. **Motion Carried.**

Administrative Information:

1. Director's Report (pgs. 27-28)

Michelle Griebler presented the Director's Report. Michelle asked Mark Sprehe if he had heard from Christine Novaria regarding the vice-chair position. Mark replied that she was still considering accepting it. Michelle relayed that the Logan County Board has a new Chair, James Glenn.

Michelle explained that the DCEO programmatic and fiscal monitoring was conducted in December. The packet includes a letter outlining the two programmatic findings. There were no fiscal findings. Michelle explained that we are required to enter case notes within 10 days of services and some of the audited files had dates later than 10 days. There was one file in which the Basic Skills Screening Tool form was dated after the TABE assessment was conducted. Michelle responded to the findings and reported that, on March 10th, we received another letter stating our responses were acceptable.

Michelle discussed the progress of WIOA Reauthorization, which is still pending. Negotiations accelerated late November with hope of a compromise, but nothing passed by the end of December 2024. There are currently no substantive updates on WIOA Reauthorization.

We are also waiting on a Continuing Resolution to continue to fund the Government decision, which is expected by March 14th. This passage would avoid a Government shutdown. We have confirmed with DCEO that we will continue to have access to cash.

Michelle discussed the mid-year reviews with Youth Service Providers to discuss 1-year renewals.

VR Headsets and 3-year software licenses have been delivered to all targeted rural middle schools as part of the State Supplemental Grant.

The LLWA will host a job fair for Primient on April 10th.

The Logan County Liaison/Career Planner's last day was March 7th.

Michelle Griebler announced that the Assistant Director position has been filled by Michelle Brookens.

Michelle directed CEOs to the new, proposed layout for the Sangamon County Community Center on page 35 of the packet. IDES is also now looking to relocate with us to the Center. IDES representatives and LLWA conducted a site visit in late January. The next KEB facilitated partner

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meeting is scheduled for March 27th. Construction is expected to begin by the end of June of 2025.

Troy Cummings asked to remind him where the new location will be, and Michelle answered it is behind J.C. Penney on South Grand near the interstate.

Michelle indicated she would like to proceed with requesting approval to hire a Logan County Career Planner as well as a Business Services Representative now that Michelle Brookens has become Assistant Director. However, these postings would be postponed until PY' 25 funding allocations have been received and reviewed.

Michelle discussed in detail the need to purchase new computers for both staff and public usage in the Resource Room due to our current computers being unable to be upgraded to Windows 11. The timeline for purchasing has been sped up because of the recently implemented tariffs and predicted shortages of items. Michelle shared the quote for the 12 staff computer purchase, which is good through April 6th. Michelle also discussed getting 25 new computers for the Resource Room, which would be paid for by One Stop Partners. The quotes for both purchases are through the Sangamon County IT Department. The staff computer purchase would amount to a little over \$8,600 and the Resource Room would cost a little over \$17,000. Michelle explained there are other approvals she needs to get but would like to purchase the computers on March 26th if possible. The One Stop Partners have approved.

Michelle requested approval to proceed with the renewal process for 1-year contracts with our Youth Service Providers, Capital Area Career Center and Fishes and Loaves. Final numbers on contract amounts and provider budgets will be presented at the June meeting for final approval.

The MOU for the next program year is being updated. PY' 25 is another modification year. One Stop Partner negotiation meetings have been underway. There are no changes to the template and no major changes to the proposed budget. PY' 26, the year of the proposed move, is when we may see significant changes to the MOU.

Michelle discussed the 3 new LLCC program recommendations to be added to the Eligible Training Provider List: the Cardiovascular Sonography Associates Degree, Construction Management Associates in Applied Science, and Construction Technologies Certificate of Achievement. All programs provide training for in-demand occupations and LLWA recommends they be added to the Statewide ETPL.

All action items were voted on separately.

Motion to Approve the Director's Report: Motion made by Ramona Douglass, seconded by Troy Cummings. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve 2024 DCEO Monitoring Results: Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve Hiring of Career Planner (Logan County Liaison): Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve Hiring of Business Services Representative: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

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Motion to Approve Purchases of New Computers: Motion made by Ramona Douglass, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve Youth Contract Renewals for CACC and Fishes and Loaves: Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Troy Cummings. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve PY' 25 One-Stop MOU: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve New Training Provider Programs at LLCC: Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Ramona. **Motion Carried.**

Executive Session: None.

Motion to Approve November 2024 Executive Session Minutes: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Announcements/Upcoming Events: (pg. 36)

Next CEO Meeting 06/11/2025 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Next WIB Meeting 03/17/2025 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Michelle asked if there were any updates from the CEOs. Troy Cummings added that the 1st and 3rd Wine Bar closed because it sold and the new owners are putting in a coffee shop. It is set to reopen.

Michelle Griebler added that LLWA will conduct more outreach in Menard County, and Troy Cummings commented that he feels the population is unaware of our opportunities. Michelle Griebler added that spring is a good time to reach out to high school seniors.

Public Comment: None.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

Meeting Adjourned at 3:18 p.m.