

**CEO Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday – June 11, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.**  
**Illinois workNet Center, 1300 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St., Springfield, IL 62703**

**Attendance**

**CEOs:** Ramona Douglass, Linda Curtin, Casey Constant

**CEOs Not in Attendance:** James Glenn, Troy Cummings

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

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

**Welcome/Attendance/Roll Call:** Roll Call was taken by Guenevere Black Ford.

**Approval of Minutes:** (pgs. 2-7)

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

**Motion to Approve March 2025 Minutes:** Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

**Program Information:**

**1. County Liaison Reports (pgs. 8-13)**

Cass County – Christina Sugars reported 51 Cass County center visits with 107 services provided. There are currently 9 Cass County residents enrolled in training, and 5 participants in follow-up services. Of those enrolled, 4 residents have completed training and are actively looking for or have secured employment. Christina reported that WIOA flyers and CACC Step 25 flyers were sent out to Cass County schools. JBS Pork hosted a job fair on April 5<sup>th</sup> and LLWA coordinated with Resource Employment Solutions to host a job fair at the Beardstown Lincoln Land Community College site on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Christina attended the Overall Economic Development Commission (OEDC) meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Christina then reported on job openings in Cass County, including jobs at Cargill, Tractor Supply Company, DD Homes, and more.

Christian County – Michelle Griebler announced the departure of Alicia Dean from LLWA and reported on Christian County. There are 63 Christian County residents receiving services with 99 services provided. There are currently 8 enrollments in Christian County with one LLCC enrollment beginning in July for Massage Therapy. Christian County residents are encouraged to still reach out to Michelle Griebler and the other career planners. Appointments can be scheduled at the One-Stop Center or in Christian County as needed. Michelle shared the job posting details of the Christian County Career Planner. LLWA continues to receive referrals from DHS in Taylorville and has participated in various Christian County community events such as the Taylorville Correctional Center Re-Entry Summit. Michelle continues to provide virtual monthly workshops for returning citizens. LLWA will also participate in the Taylorville CMS Career Fair. The Regional Office

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of Education recently released a directory of services for students experiencing homelessness. The directory was shared with the Christian County Interagency team.

Linda Curtin expressed excitement for the new Starbucks which will open soon.

Logan County – Michelle Griebler explained that the Logan County Career Planner position is still vacant. She reported that there have been 48 Logan County residents who have received services and 77 services have been provided. There are currently 8 Logan County participants enrolled in training and 9 participants enrolled in follow-up services. Logan County residents are reaching out to Michelle and other career planners and appointments can be scheduled at the One-Stop Center or in Logan County as needed. Michelle Griebler stated that she works with the Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Planning Group monthly. Michelle Brookens presented Business Services to the Small Business Coalition at Copper & Oak in Lincoln. Michelle Griebler asked CEOs to share the information about LLWA's open job postings with anyone who might be interested.

Menard County – Christina Sugars reported 26 Menard County center visits with 45 services provided. There is currently 1 Menard County participant enrolled in training and she recently graduated and is seeking employment. There are 7 participants enrolled in follow-up services. The Menard County Chamber of Commerce and Post 129 of the American Legion offered \$500 scholarships to Menard County students. WIOA flyers and CACC Step 25 flyers were sent out to Menard County high schools. Christina reported that the Menard County Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for full-time Corrections Officer and a 911 telecommunications position. Other job openings include Sunny Acres, Home Instead, Sloan Implement, Dollar General, and more.

Sangamon County – Michelle Brookens reported 6,913 Sangamon County center visits with 11,185 services provided. There are currently 174 Sangamon County participants enrolled in training and 189 participants in follow-up services. LLWA has received 70 referrals from other organizations and provided 176 referrals to other organizations. There have been 1,217 pre-applications for funding received since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, which is 140 more than the entire PY' 23 program year.

The full County Liaison reports were included with the June 2025 CEO Packet.

**2. Business Services (pgs. 14-15)**

Michelle Brookens mentioned a few of the business closing and/or laying off workers in LWIA 20, including Joann Fabric, Dunkin Donuts, Maribis Dispensary, Springfield Clinic,

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and Cygnus Home. The US Office of Personnel Management has laid off federal workers, but only a handful from our local area. Traffic in the Resource Room has increased, though individuals have been more affected by seasonal work layoffs and performance issues rather than mass layoffs or closures. The Incumbent Worker Project for the Riverton Rural Water Association is complete. There have been 3 On-the-Job Trainings at MJ Kellner, Next Level Mastery, and Andrews Tire & Service. The placements at MJ Kellner and Next Level Mastery were unsuccessful, but both employers are interested in another OJT opportunity. The placement at Andrews Tire & Service is going well and the participant is a high honors student from Lincoln Land Community College. Michelle gave a quick overview of the various job fairs, hiring events, and workshops that LLWA has been involved in, including the WIOA Summit, where LLWA/LWIA 20 and IMEC were awarded an Excellence in Collaboration Award. Michelle discussed the Compass One hiring event, which, due to unforeseen circumstances, was not attended by the recruiters. Michelle explained that Resource Room staff assisted the 14 job seekers who attended. Michelle also discussed the Workforce Summit with Nikki Budzinski which Michelle attended as a WIOA panelist. Boeing, Jet Blue, Ameren, and other employers were present at the Summit. Upcoming events in LWIA 20 were discussed.

**3. Business Services (pgs. 16-18)**

Michelle Brookens discussed the current status of the QUEST Grants, with QUEST II being our only active QUEST Grant. QUEST II ends 9/30/2025 and 93.60% of the enrollment goal has been met with 81% of participants exiting training with high quality jobs paying an average of \$21.38 per hour. The Supplemental Grant ends on 6/30/2025 and there were 3 areas of focus: manufacturing in rural counties, assisting low-income single parents, and providing technology (virtual reality headsets) to rural middle schools for career exploration opportunities. All training has been completed and all middle schools have received their virtual reality technology.

Michelle Brookens then discussed Youth Contracts, and informed CEOs that Christina Sugars is now the Workforce Coordinator after Alicia Dean's departure. The total planned enrollments are 49, and we are currently at 39. There are 24 participants enrolled at Fishes and Loaves with 12 in follow-up services, and there are 15 participants enrolled at Capital Area Career Center with 15 in follow-up services.

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

Michelle Griebler provided a summary of the Center Activity and Services provided in all counties. In the last 11 months, LLWA has provided 11,513 career and training services

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to 7,101 to job seekers and participants. This represents a 46% increase in services in comparison to PY' 23. Michelle explained the increase is likely due to the continuing COVID recovery as well as a push for on-site services. IDES is now also accepting walk-ins along with appointments, which has also increased traffic in the Resource Room.

Casey Constant asked what the mixture is of our enrollments who are Youth directly out-of-school or choosing to pursue training rather than a degree in higher education versus participants who are being retrained for a new career. Michelle Griebler answered that a participant being “retrained” would most likely fall under the Dislocated Worker category. Casey clarified by asking if there are students in high school who are looking at our training programs as their next step, such as CNA training. Michelle Griebler and Michelle Brookens confirmed that the Youth population includes participants directly from high school up to age 24. There was discussion regarding the shifting emphasis from 4-year degrees to trade/technical education. There was discussion about how to best reach the youth population, and Michelle Brookens mentioned Riverton has been successful implementing a “parent university” to educate parents and students on training opportunities. Michelle Griebler mentioned how LLWA aligned State Supplemental Grant (SSG) programming to the PaCE framework requiring career exploration opportunities for grades 6-12, and reiterated that the VR headsets provided through the SSG were part of this initiative.

Ramona Douglass asked if the local schools have high quality guidance counselors. Michelle Griebler answered that there are guidance counselors at the schools but that, when LLWA receives a Youth participant, we start from scratch in educating them about Labor Market Information, career pathways, and educational requirements.

The total enrollments for PY' 24 as of 5/31/2025 is 348 with 228 enrollments being brand new participants. There have been 78 additional enrollments for PY' 24 compared to PY' 23. The preliminary performance outcomes for PY' 24 indicate that LLWA is exceeding 7/15 measurements and meeting 8/15 measurements.

Michelle asked if there were any questions and there were none. The full program information reports were included in the June 2025 CEO Meeting Packet.

**Motion to Approve Program Information Reports:** Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion carried.**

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**Fiscal Information, Budget, and Review:**

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

Diane Jones gave an overview of all current grants. LLWA has 4 open grants with 2 of those closing at the end of June 2025. The PY' 23 Formula Grant closes on 6/30/2025 and is 100% expended. The State Supplemental Grant (SSG) is 86% expended and 98.6% obligated. Diane explained that there is just some final housekeeping that needs done to expend the remaining 14%. All of the SSG funds will also be spent. The 23 QUEST Grant ends in September of 2025 and is currently 97% obligated and 90.8% expended. In May, LLWA received an additional \$30,000 of QUEST Grant funds, which put the total Grant amount at \$380,000. The final Grant is the PY' 24 Formula Grant. A requirement for the Formula funding is that the Grant needs to be 80% obligated at the end of the first year. We are currently obligated at 78% with 54.7% expended, and Diane stated that it will be 80% obligated by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Diane explained that LLWA has applied for an apprenticeship specialist grant in the amount of \$200,000, which we hope to use to hire a Business Services/Apprenticeship Specialist. We are also expecting to receive another State Supplemental Grant. Detailed information about the individual grant expenditures was reviewed, including expenditures broken down by title and county. In addition to salary and fringes for staff, the largest expenditure is tuition. Sangamon County by far expends the most funding, but the funding levels also correspond to County populations, with Sangamon having the highest population. Diane explained the requirement by which we are not allowed to spend more than 50% of our budget on operating expenses. The current operating budget is at 35.30%, which is well within that range. Diane reviewed the PY' 24 Operating Budget, which indicates LLWA is under budget overall. This is due mostly to being understaffed, with our estimate expenditure for this period of the program year being 91.7% and our actual expenditures being 72%. The largest line expenditure on the PY' 24 Budget is for Small Equipment Purchases, and Diane explained that was due to the new computer purchases necessary due to the discontinued support for Windows 10. Even with that unplanned purchase, LLWA remains well under budget.

**2. PY' 25 Program Year Allocations (pg. 27)**

Diane explained the PY' 25 Program Year Funding Allocations. LWIA 20 is set to receive \$2,843,504 across the Adult (\$904,589), Dislocated Worker (\$1,014,388), and Youth (\$924,527) categories. Compared to PY' 24, we will receive an additional \$500,000. Due to administrative changes at the federal level, we were not expecting to receive an increase. This expectation is the reason for the delay in hiring for our open positions. Michelle Griebler explained that it is still possible that there could be recissions within

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the next quarter. Michelle then shared information from the separate handout which detailed the progress on WIOA Reauthorization. The current Administration's plan includes a 35% cut to the Department of Labor, and the goal is to combine all workforce programs into one funding stream under the Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant. One major change is the elimination of the Job Corps. The plan for the next Fiscal Year also aims to eliminate Adult Education programs. LWIA 20's Adult Education provider is Lincoln Land Community College, and Michelle attested that at LLCC's graduation the night before the CEO Meeting, approximately 130 individuals graduated with their GED/Illinois High School Diploma. Within the MASA framework, there will be more emphasis placed on apprenticeships with at least 10% of funding required to be dedicated to registered apprenticeship programs. Beyond that, we hope to know more in September but there is no guarantee. Diane added that we will be conservative with our budget and spending in light of the possible recessions.

Casey Constant asked if, regarding the proposed cut to Adult Education funding, there is a chance that any funding would go directly to the training provider rather than through a third-party. Michelle answered that we do not know, but the current WIOA structure, including Title I and Adult Education, fall under the Department of Labor.

**3. PY' 25 Budget** (separate handout)

Diane Jones presented the proposed budget for the upcoming program year. The PY' 22 and PY' 23 actual expenditures were included for comparison as well as the 2023 and 2024 budgets. Diane worked on a "wishlist" of things we would like to fund, including things such as replacing the staff in those positions which have remained unfilled for a while, ordering WIOA/workNet marketing materials, and ordering laptops for staff.

Casey Constant asked why we do not only use laptops and docking stations rather than laptops and desktop computers. Michelle Griebler answered it is just our preference but that could be an option for the future.

Diane discussed how the budget will be split between Program, Admin, Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker costs.

Diane asked if there were any questions about the budget. Casey Constant asked if we still plan on hiring contractual staff due to the line item amount. Diane and Michelle clarified that only indicates the fees paid out for hiring someone through an employment agency. Costs are approximately \$8,000 per person, and hiring from an

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agency is the second option in case there is difficulty finding qualified applicants for the positions.

**Motion to Approve the Expenditure and Grant Reports and the 2025 Budget:**

Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

**Motion to Approve the WIOA Program Year 2025 Funding Allocations:**

Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

**Administrative Information:**

**1. Director's Report (pgs. 28-29)**

Michelle Griebler presented the Director's Report. She informed the CEOs that DCEO's Central Region Manager retired in December, and they have since hired a replacement, who visited LLWA on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Michelle has attended many hiring events\workshops, and she discussed the positive impact of the most recent EDR #1 Regional Partner Meeting, which involved HR leaders from Memorial and HSHS to discuss the current needs and challenges of the local healthcare industry. Michelle has also been in contact with the Operations Director of the new Scheels Sports Complex to assist with their need for hiring. They are looking to hire approximately 50 full and part time staff. Michelle then discussed office updates, including the 3 open positions (2 career planner positions and a Business Services representative). The installation of 25 new Windows 11 computers in the Resource Room and 12 new staff computers is complete. The move to the Public Health building is still being planned for, but no major updates to report since March. However, we do know the Sangamon County Veterans Commission now also intends to move to Public Health as well.

Michelle Brookens presented the Annual Policy Update/Review (pgs. 30-31). Most policies remain unchanged. The ITA Policy updates include the sunseting of TABE 11 & 12 to be replaced with TABE 13 & 14, the CASAS GOALS Math Assessment changed to CASAS GOALS 2 Math Assessment, and the BSST exception is now available for outside training entities that do their own TABE testing. Youth Living in High Poverty Areas has been added to the Priority of Service, determined by the QCT Map, and the Youth Defined Barriers added Youth Living in High Poverty Areas and criteria (the criteria to qualify is the Illinois workNet Qualified Census Tract/Disproportionally Impacted Area Map). The Income Guidelines have been updated and have been effective since 5/19/2025. The Career Planner and Staff Training Guide will be updated to reflect the above changes in ITA Policy, Priority of Service, Youth-Defined Barriers, and the Service Matrix. The IWT Waiver regarding the percentage of funds that can be reimbursed to

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employers for training has been extended through 6/30/2028. Smaller employers are able to receive more as a reimbursement. The WIOA 7.2.1 training aligns with current ITA Policy.

Casey Constant asked if the reimbursement was for wages paid while the employee was being trained. Michelle Brookens answered that it is training costs calculated by the employees' wages and the amount that the employer can match.

Based on the explanation of the updated policies, Michelle Griebler requested approval for the policy updates.

Michelle Griebler announced that Dr. Jason Dockter, Vice-President of Academic Services at Lincoln Land Community College, volunteered for the Vice-Chair position on the WIB, but that any appointment to an officer position on the Board is subject to CEO approval. Michelle requested approval to appoint Jason Dockter as Vice-Chair to the WIB.

Michelle requested approval to hire a Career Planner/Christian County Liaison.

Michelle requested approval to move forward with the Apprenticeship Specialist Grant Application in the hopes of being able to hire an Apprenticeship Specialist. The Grant, if received, would fund the salary of the Specialist for two years.

Michelle requested approval for the final Youth Contract Renewal Amounts. The Youth Contract with CACC final amount is \$90,974, and the final amount for Fishes and Loaves is \$192,126.

Michelle clarified that she listed the approval of the PY' 25 Funding Allocations and Budget twice, so it does not need to be voted on again. She asked if there were any questions on the action items, and there were none.

**Motion to Approve Jason Dockter as the WIB Vice Chair:** Motion made by Ramona Douglass, seconded by Casey Constant. **Motion Carried.**

**Motion to Approve Hiring of Christian County Liaison/Career Planner:** Motion made by Linda Curtin, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

**Motion to Approve the Apprenticeship Specialist Grant:** Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

**Motion to Approve the Annual Policy Updates:** Motion made by Ramona Douglass, seconded by Casey Constant. **Motion Carried.**



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**Motion to Approve Final Youth Contract Amounts:** Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

**Executive Session:** None.

**Announcements/Upcoming Events:** (pg.32)

Next CEO Meeting 9/10/2025 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Next WIB Meeting 6/16/2025 from 4:30 p.m.to 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Motion made by Casey Constant, seconded by Ramona Douglass. **Motion Carried.**

**Meeting Adjourned at 3:38 p.m.**