

CEO Meeting Minutes
Wednesday – March 11th, 2026 at 2:30 p.m.
Illinois workNet Center, 1300 S. 9th St., Springfield, IL 62703

Attendance

CEOs: Linda Curtin, Troy Cummings, Tom Madonia Jr., Bill Merriman

CEOs Not in Attendance: James Glenn

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

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

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

Approval of Minutes: (pgs. 2-8)

Motion to Approve November 2025 CEO Minutes: Motion made by Bill Merriman, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Program Information:

1. County Liaison Reports (pgs. 9-15)

Cass County

Christina Sugars reported that there have been 40 Career and Training Services provided to 25 job seekers and participants. There are currently 8 Cass County residents enrolled in occupational training and 6 in follow-up services. Lincoln Land Community College is offering GED and English Language Learning classes, as well as a free citizenship class which began in February and will end in mid-April. LLCC is also looking for an Office Assistant for the Adult Education and Literacy program through September 30th, 2026. Christina provided other community updates, such as the IDOC Corrections Screening, and shared the various meetings she participated in as well as job openings in Cass County.

Tom Madonia, Jr. joined the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Christian County

Michele Griebler reported on Christian County. The Christian County Liaison position remains vacant. There have been 60 Career and Training Services provided to 46 job seekers and participants. There are currently 12 Christian County residents enrolled in occupational training and 5 in follow-up services. DHS in Taylorville refers customers to our programs, and those referrals are process and distributed to the Career Planners by Michelle Griebler. Michelle summarized events LLWA has participated in as well as upcoming events.

Logan County

Michele Louis reported that there have been 60 Career and Training Services provided to 43 job seekers and participants. There are currently 14 Logan County residents enrolled in occupational training and 10 in follow-up services. Michele reported that she is at the Heartland Community College campus every Thursday. Michele reported on other meetings, councils, and projects, such Heartland beginning to offer HVAC training to students in the Fall of 2026, and a new

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Incumbent Worker Training with Eaton that will provide Project Management Training to 20 employees. Michele also provided community updates, such as job openings at the Logan County Department of Health and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice for the Monarch Youth Center.

Menard County

Christina Sugars reported that there have been 38 Career and Training Services provided to 24 job seekers and participants. There is 1 Menard County resident who just completed CDL training through Lincoln Land Community College and is job searching. There are 3 in follow-up services. Christina attended the Menard County Coordinating Council Meeting on March 5th. Christina reached out during the meeting about engaging more Menard County residents. Christina learned that residents are being referred to her, but there is little follow-through from the potential customers. Transportation and Childcare are barriers in Menard County. Many Menard County residents also need to receive their GED/Illinois High School Diploma. Christina also provided community updates such as openings, acquisitions, and a speaking engagement she has scheduled at PORTA High School on March 26th.

Troy Cummings asked for more information about the time and location of the Menard County Coordinating Council. Christina answered that it is a quarterly meeting held at the Annex.

Sangamon County

Michelle Brookens reported that there have been 9,491 Career and Training Services provided to 5,477 job seekers and participants. There are currently 207 Sangamon County residents enrolled in occupational training and 165 in follow-up services. Michelle highlighted some of the more non-traditional trainings such as Construction Management, Front End Web Developer, Criminal Justice, Integrated Media and Design, and more. Michelle reported on the usage and staffing of the Springfield Resource Room. TABE testing is held once a month and as needed for particular participants. One Stop Partners are available by Direct Linkage and some are available in person during certain days of the week. LLWA has received 60 referrals from Partner organizations and provided 123 referrals to Partners. Since July 1st, 2025, 952 pre-applications for funding have been received.

2. Business Services (pgs. 16-17)

Stephanie Danielson reported on layoffs and closures affecting LWIA 20, including Save-A-Lot, Route 66 Solar, Taste of Seoul, Buzz Bomb Brewery, MCL Cafeteria, Fire & Ale, The Curve Inn (due to fire), and Francesca's. Levante Grill and Café opened February 1st and Bob's Discount Furniture opened February 13th. Stephanie discussed current On-The-Job Trainings at Andrews Tire & Service, Modern Brake & Alignment, Richardson Manufacturing Company, Next Level Mastery/Bless'It Salon. All employers are realizing a 75% wage reimbursement for the first 6

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months of the OJT. Stephanie also met with Regency Care on March 3rd to discuss potential OJT placements and business services needs. Stephanie attended various hiring events, workshops, and meetings, and will be attending LLWA's Manufacturing Hiring Event on March 19th, the UIS Career Connections Expo on March 20th, and the CACC College Career Fair on March 27th. Michelle Brookens will attend the Riverton Parent University on March 27th as well. Michelle Brookens added that as part of the March 19th event, LLWA is hosting an employer luncheon with presentations from IMEC and the Department of Labor.

3. Contractors and Special Projects (pgs. 18-21)

Michelle Brookens reported on the status of the PY' 25 State Supplemental Grant. There are currently 3 focus areas for the grant: Manufacturing Incumbent Worker Projects, Workforce Exploration for High School Students, and Individualized CDL Training for Justice-Touched Individuals. For the Manufacturing Incumbent Worker Projects, there have been 6 companies and 88 participants scheduled to train in 8 different programs. Three projects have been completed with the remaining to be completed by May. One more project with Eaton is still in the works. LLWA partnered with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce to hold a large career fair targeting high school students on March 3rd. The Individualized CDL Training currently has 8 trainees. LLWA has also received a 1E Manufacturing Grant, which has enabled the creation of a multi-workforce area manufacturing project which will provide outreach to employers, businesses, workers, and Partners with the goal of continuous improvement in the workforce development of the manufacturing sector. To date, the project has enabled LLWA to reach out to 234 individuals who have been unemployed long term (RESEA referrals from IDES), attend one hiring event, attend 12 outreach events, and assist 10 manufacturing businesses. There were 2 Youth served with one now in a full-time apprenticeship and the other enrolled in a manufacturing-related training at LLCC. Additionally, the March 19th Manufacturing Hiring Event will include Richardson Manufacturing Company, Springfield Plastics, Certified Tank Manufacturing, Simplex, Drake-Scruggs, JBS, and Eaton, and the event will include a Lunch & Learn for the employers with presentations by IMEC and the Department of Labor. The 1E Manufacturing Grant will run until September 30th, 2026. Michelle then discussed the Apprenticeship Specialist Grant, its activities and goals, and ongoing plans. Local policy has been drafted to address an employer incentive structure, and ongoing plans are looking to explore the training and apprenticeship funding to assist local ambulance companies with a shortage of EMTs. One apprentice was placed at Richardson Manufacturing Company in January. The Apprenticeship Grant runs until June 30th, 2026.

Michelle Brookens then discussed the Youth Contracts. The total planned Contractual Enrollments across all providers were 49 and there are currently 23 enrolled. Fishes and Loaves has 24 out of 24 planned enrollments, with 8 participants now in the process of testing for their CNA credential. One participant is enrolled in WBL/OJT at Springfield Suites and there are 20 participants in follow-up services. Capital Area Career Center had 25 planned enrollments with 8

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currently enrolled, and 6 in follow-up services. There were 8 participants who earned OSHA 10 certificates, one earned the AWS credential, and one earned the EPA 608 HVAC Credential.

4. Center/Enrollment/Performance Reports (pgs. 22-24)

Michelle Griebler reported that LLWA has provided 9,689 career and training services to 5,615 job seekers, participants, and claimants across the five counties. There have been 333 participants served during the program year, with 242 participants currently enrolled as of February 28th, 2026. LLWA is currently meeting 12/15 performance measures and exceeding 3/15.

Michelle Griebler asked if there were questions on any of the presented program information, and there were none.

The full Program Reports were emailed and included in the March 2026 CEO Packet.

Motion to Approve Program Reports: Motion made by Troy Cummings,
seconded by Tom Madonia, Jr. **Motion Carried.**

Fiscal Information and Review:

1. Expenditure and Grant Reports (pgs. 25-29)

Diane Jones reviewed and summarized all active grants. There were no grants recently closed. There are 5 active grants. The 2025 Apprenticeship Grant has been 31.7% spent. The 2025 Central IL 1E Grant has been 29.0% spent, and Diane stated that we will not spend the allocated \$2,500 for travel expenses within the 1E Grant. The 2025 State Supplemental Grant has been 18.2% expended, and Diane explained the goal of all expenses being turned in by May to enable Diane to request the money before June. The PY' 24 Formula Grant is 99.5% expended and 100% obligated. It will end June 30, 2026. The PY' 25 Formula Grant is 31.7% expended and 77% obligated. It ends June 30, 2027, and Diane explained the requirement that the Formula Grants must be 80% obligated by the end of the first year. Diane then presented a detailed summary of the PY' 24 and PY' 25 Formula Grant expenditures by Admin, Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker costs. Diane explained that 20% of Youth funding needs to be spent on Work-Based Learning (WBL). Currently, there needs to be an additional \$37,276 obligated for Youth WBL to reach the 20% requirement, and while we have until June 2027 to reach that, Diane asked CEOs for any referrals for a Youth placement to help us reach that required amount. Detailed grant information broken down by each county was also reviewed. LLWA is required to keep operating expenses for Adult and Dislocated Workers less than 50%, and we are currently at 35.9%. The PY' 25 Operating Budget was then discussed, and at 8 months into the program year, we should be 66.7% expended, and we are currently at 52% expended overall. Diane explained some specific line items and asked for any questions on the Expenditure and Grant Reports.

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Michelle Griebler added a bulk of the expenditures for the State Supplemental Grant will be received in March and April and discussed the lack of staff earlier in the year contributing to being under budget.

The full Expenditure and Grant Reports were emailed and included in the March 2026 CEO Packet.

There was discussion regarding bundling the fiscal reports for approval, and there were no objections.

Motion to bundle Expenditure and Grant Reports, PY' 2026 Youth Contracts and the IWP Dues Increase Amounts: Motion made by Bill Merriman, seconded by Tom Madonia, Jr. **Motion Carried.**

2. PY' 2026 Youth Contracts (pg. 32)

Michelle Griebler requested approval to fund Capital Area Career Center's Skilled Trades Essentials Program (STEP) and Fishes and Loaves' Pathway to Success Program (PTS) in the total amount of \$299,341. This amount is pending PY' 27 funding allocations which should be received in late May or June 2026.

3. IWP Dues Increase

Michelle Griebler explained the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) dues increase. The IWP is an organization of workforce directors which helps lead workforce activities across the state. The organization is growing and rebranding, and due to this, the membership dues are increasing from \$1,500 per year for two voting members to a temporary tiered increase over three years based on funding allocations. LLWA falls into Tier 2, which would increase the annual dues to \$4,000. After three years, the rates would return to a flat rate. Michelle requested approval to pay the temporary dues increase.

Motion to Approve the Expenditure and Grant Reports, PY' 2026 Youth Contracts, and the IWP Dues Increase Amounts: Motion made by Tom Madonia, Jr., seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Administrative Information:

1. Director's Report (pgs. 30-31)

Michelle Griebler reported that LLWA's fiscal and programmatic monitoring was completed the week of December 8th, 2025, and we had an exit meeting on February 26th, however, we are still waiting on the formal findings letter. Michelle anticipates some findings related to the required data entry timing.

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Michelle reported on the progress of the building move. As of March, there are now several agreements in place. Once construction begins, it might be approximately 15 months until the physical move.

Michelle reported on the progress of the updated IWDS 2.0 system. LLWA staff will have training on the new system in late May and will be live July 1st, 2026.

SNAP recipients are now required to work 80 hours a month. One exemption from the requirement is being enrolled in training programs like WIOA. By May 2026, some recipients may reach the cutoff deadline for the requirement. LLWA staff and front-line staff will receive training on the new requirements on March 26th.

Michelle also provided updates on the workforce Pell grants which will be effective July 1st, 2026. They are geared toward short-term trainings (CNA, CDL, etc.). Michelle anticipates learning more about the requirements and how to collaborate with colleges and training providers by April.

Michelle reported on the status of various administrative processes such as the One Stop MOU negotiations, Regional and Local Plan updates, and participating in various hiring events and workshops. The Christian County Liaison position is still vacant.

Michelle also requested approval to hire for the Program Assistant position at \$44,500, as Guenevere Black Ford will be departing April 3rd, 2026 from the Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance.

Mark Sprehe, WIB Chair, and CEOs determined to vote on each action item separately.

Motion to Approve Director's Report: Motion made by Bill Merriman, seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Michelle requested approval to add Indra Perry, HR Director from Concordia Village to the Workforce Innovation Board to replace Eric Guthrie from Springfield Clinic. Indra will fill out Eric's remaining term.

Motion to Approve Indra Perry's WIB Appointment: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Tom Madonia, Jr. **Motion Carried.**

Michelle requested approval for the One Stop MOU which will take effect July 1st, 2026 through June 30th, 2027. Marcella Consulting Corp. was selected as the independent negotiator. There have been minor updates to the MOU narrative and budget, and all Partners in attendance gave verbal approval during the March 5th meeting.

Motion to Approve PY' 2026 One Stop Partner MOU: Motion made by Bill Merriman, seconded by Tom Madonia, Jr. **Motion Carried.**

Michelle requested approval for the revised Regional and Local Plan. Revisions have been based upon DCEO guidance and analysis of regional labor statistics. The major changes made were the

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removal of any references to “workforce equity lens.” This language was replaced with “responsiveness, inclusivity, and accessibility.” Updates were made to highlight the development of sector partnerships. Three sections were added to align with the State plan regarding serving immigrants and migrants, adhering to new SNAP requirements, and coordination of services in regard to the new workforce Pell grants. Michelle confirmed that the R&L Plan modifications were posted online for a 30-day public comment period, and no comments were received.

Motion to Approve Regional and Local Plan Modifications: Motion made by Tom Madonia, Jr., seconded by Linda Curtin. **Motion Carried.**

Michelle requested approval to add 2 new Lincoln Land Community College programs to the Eligible Training Provider List: the Industrial Maintenance Technology Certificate of Completion and the Industrial Maintenance Advanced Technologies Certificate of Achievement. The programs and details were included on page 33 of the March 2026 CEO Informational Packet.

Motion to Approve LLCC Program Recommendations: Motion made by Bill Merriman, seconded by Troy Cummings. **Motion Carried.**

Michelle requested approval for the new Employer Incentive Policy for Apprenticeships. She explained that we are required to have a local policy in place to reimburse employers for apprenticeships. Michelle Brookens added that employers can receive incentives for each category (such as the initial involvement, registering a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) with the DOL, providing classroom education, and more). The policy has been left open-ended to allow for changes with future grants.

Motion to Approve Employer Incentive Policy for Apprenticeships: Motion made by Tom Madonia, Jr., seconded by Troy Cummings. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Approve Hiring Program Assistant: Motion made by Tom Madonia, Jr., seconded by Bill Merriman. **Motion Carried.**

Executive Session: None.

Announcements and Upcoming Events: (pgs. 36-38 & handout)

Michelle Griebler shared the Program Assistant position description as a separate handout for the CEOs.

LLWA’s Manufacturing Hiring Event - 03/19/2026

Illinois Workforce Summit - 05/07/2026-05/08/2026

Next CEO Meeting - 06/10/2026 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Next WIB Meeting - 06/15/2026 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment: None.

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Motion to Adjourn: Motion made by Troy Cummings, seconded by Tom Madonia, Jr.

Motion Carried.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.