

**LCWDB Joint Talent Pipeline & Employer Connections Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 9:00 AM

UCC Environmental

2100 Norman Drive West, #6753, Waukegan, IL 60085

Present: John Castillo, Carolyn Corcoran, Steve DeBretto, Jennifer Everett, DeMar Harris, Lisa Johnson, Dr. Michael Karner, Nicole Large, Rachel Loberg, Eva Locke, Amy Maksudian, Dr. Carlotta Roman, Ashananti Ross, Jennifer Serino, Quinton Snodgrass, Amy Van Strien, Kimberly Wimer

I. Call to Order..... Chairwoman, Kimberly Wimer

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 9:05 AM by Employer Connections Chairwoman Kimberly Wimer. Board staff thanked members for attending and noted that the purpose of this joint session was to move beyond program updates and focus on shared observations, emerging themes, and strategic alignment across committees. The discussion is centered on how employer engagement insights and talent pipeline work can more intentionally to inform one another.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

III. Chair Report

No chair report.

IV. Regular Business (ACTION ITEMS)

a. Authorize staff to enter negotiations with Symbol Training Institute to develop a contract for manufacturing sector training and workforce development services, for an amount up to \$340,000, consistent with the proposal submitted.

i. Motioned to approve: Lisa Johnson

ii. Motion seconded: John Castillo

iii. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. *Authorize staff to enter negotiations with United Way of Lake County (UWLC) for implementation of the WIOA Education Sector Strategy: Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships initiative, for an amount not to exceed \$100,000.*
 - i. *Motioned to approve: Jennifer Everett*
 - ii. *Motion seconded: Dr. Michael Karner*
 - iii. *One abstention was noted.*

V. Strategic Focus

a. **Shared Observations from Committee Work**

- i. *Committee members shared observations drawn from recent employer engagement, education partnerships, and program implementation, including:*
 1. *Employers across sectors are increasingly emphasizing **skills, adaptability, and work readiness** over formal credentials alone.*
 2. *There is growing demands for **short-term, industry-aligned training** that can quickly respond to hiring needs.*
 3. *Employers value **work-based learning models** (apprenticeships, internships, OJT) but often need support navigating these options.*
 4. *Job seekers and students benefit most when career pathways are clearly defined and tied directly to real hiring opportunities.*
 5. *Communication gaps sometimes exist between employer-facing efforts and talent development initiatives, limiting system-wide impact.*

b. **Strategic Discussion: From Observation to Alignment**

- i. *Building on these observations, committees engaged in a facilitated discussion focused on aligning strategies and priorities:*
 1. **Aligning Employer Demand with Talent Pipelines**
 - a. *Members discussed the importance of using employer engagement data to inform **training investments**, RFP development, and pathway design.*
 - b. *Emphasis was placed on ensuring that sector strategies reflect **current and future hiring needs**, not just historical demand.*
 2. **Strengthening Skills-Based Approaches**

- a. *The discussion reinforced the shift toward **skills-based hiring** and the need to embed skills language into career navigation, employer outreach, and training design.*
- b. *Members noted opportunities to better prepare job seekers to articulate transferable skills across industries.*

3. Work-Based Learning as a Core Strategy

- a. *Committees agreed that apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and OJT should be treated as **foundational system tools**, not add-ons.*
- b. *Employer Connections members highlighted the need for clearer messaging and simplified processes for employers interested in hosting work-based learning.*

4. Cross-Committee Communication and Coordination

- a. *Members identified opportunities to improve information-sharing between committees so that employer insights consistently inform talent pipeline decisions.*
- b. *Suggestions included joint planning sessions, shared data reviews, and intentional alignment around sector priorities.*

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 AM.