

Stark Tuscarawas Workforce Development Board

YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING

March 2, 2026

11:00 a.m.

Zoom Meeting

BUSINESS MINUTES

Present: Alison Kerns, Wendy Azzardi, Angela Cantwell, Susan Lenigar, Danelle Lightner, Amy Miller, Lori Yager

Absent: Dan Sipe

STWDB Staff: JoAnn Breedlove, Rebecca Harris, Maddy Miller, Aleisha Stout

Meeting Called to Order: Susan Lenigar, Chair at 11:03 a.m.

Youth Committee Chair Transition JoAnn Breedlove, STWDB
Breedlove reported that Alison Kerns, who has chaired the Youth Committee since approximately 2017, submitted her resignation effective December 31, 2025. Breedlove recognized Kerns' leadership, expertise in youth and CCMEP programming, and her contributions to the committee. She further announced that Susan Lenigar of Stark County Job and Family Services, a long-serving Youth Committee member with extensive CCMEP and youth experience and STWDB board member, has volunteered to assume the Youth Committee Chair role.

Youth Committee Meeting Minutes 9/8/25– (Attachment A) Susan. Lenigar, Chair

MOTION: KERNS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE 9/8/25 YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. LIGHTNER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CCMEP Current Overview (CCMEP Lead Agency) Amy Miller, Lori Yager & Angela Cantwell, WIA

- **Lead Agency Updates**

Yager reported that the CCMEP program plan for PY25–27 has been submitted to the state, accepted, and will be posted on the ODJFS CCMEP State Plans webpage once updated; in the meantime, staff can request a copy if needed. Due to budget changes, a few CCMEP programs were eliminated, and participant incentive amounts were reduced, including employment incentives and post-secondary incentives. Employment incentives are now set at \$250 for each employment milestone (e.g., 30 days, 90 days, etc.), and the postsecondary enrollment/attendance incentive was reduced from \$500 to \$250. Yager noted that ODJFS has launched CCMEP 101 trainings for new staff, and all local staff are participating to stay current with state expectations. Additional trainings are planned in March 2026 to address a potential replacement for the GOAL4 It program, while Stepping Stones remains a required assessment. She also reported that the area will undergo state CCMEP monitoring this week, with the sample of cases already received.

- **2025/2026 Youth Working Group Updates**

Yager reported that the November 2025 meeting was used for professional development, featuring a training by Deb Easton (Kent State University) on working with Generation Z, which received positive feedback from staff and providers. Ongoing bi-monthly calls hosted by Cantwell provide an informal forum for vendors to ask questions and share issues; the January 2026 call was canceled due to a winter storm, and the next call is scheduled for March 16, 2026. Yager noted that the Youth Working Group meeting for all vendors and staff will be held on May 11, 2026, 2:00–4:00 p.m. at the Stark County OhioMeansJobs Center, and that the topic for the November 2026 training will be selected based on provider input gathered at the May meeting.

- **2025/2026 Technical Assistance Visits by ODJFS**

Yager reported that ODJFS conducted a CCMEP technical assistance visit at the Stark County OhioMeansJobs Center on October 14, 2025. The session reviewed CCMEP basics, allowed local staff and providers to ask detailed questions, and included sharing of best practices from other areas, such as successful job-fair models. Yager noted strong provider participation and said the visit was helpful in clarifying state expectations, with ODJFS indicating an intent to hold similar visits annually, likely again in October 2026. Miller added that, in addition to state-led visits, Cantwell has been conducting ongoing on-site technical assistance with individual providers, focusing on relationship-building, problem-solving, and timely support so that vendor staff can get questions answered and issues addressed quickly.

- **Success Stories to share**

Cantwell shared a CCMEP case illustrating relationship-based progress. She described a 21-year-old participant and parent of a two-year-old who had been in the program since November 2024 and placed at Goodwill but was not making meaningful progress toward her stated goals. As part of a focused review of participants in the program for more than three to six months, staff met with her to revisit goals, confirm her interest in obtaining a high school credential, and address lack of movement. With support from Goodwill, she enrolled in Stark High School and earned her high school diploma, after which she quickly secured employment, left cash assistance, and exited the program. Cantwell noted that the participant also expressed interest in the nursing field; staff provided career research and, after the participant resolved a minor legal charge, continue to encourage next steps such as STNA training through quarterly follow-up and ongoing support. She highlighted the strong relationship built between the participant and case manager emphasizing that trust, persistence, and recognition of “small successes” are central to positive outcomes. Lenigar and Breedlove affirmed this is a significant success, noting both the milestone of earning a diploma and the participant’s continued engagement in work and future goals.

Performance (Attachment B & C) JoAnn Breedlove, STWDB

- **PY25 1st Quarter CCMEP & CCMEP WIOA Performance**

Under CCMEP and CCMEP WIOA Performance, Breedlove reported on PY25 results, noting the program year runs July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026, and that the committee received unadjusted first-quarter performance reports in the packet, including a condensed summary of state and local outcomes and a link to the ODJFS performance website for full data. She reminded members that first-quarter figures are preliminary and reviewed the timeline for final adjusted performance, with ODJFS extracting and submitting data to USDOL after year-end and final PY25 results expected around June 2027. Breedlove highlighted that CCMEP serves roughly 14,000 youth statewide, that the reports include demographic and funding-source breakdowns (TANF-only, WIOA-only, and dual), and that the local area intentionally maximizes dual enrollment of TANF and WIOA to serve more youth, resulting in higher local dual-enrollment rates than the statewide average.

Legislative Updates / Other Discussion

- **Workforce PELL** JoAnn Breedlove, STWDB

Breedlove reported that federal legislation has created a new Workforce Pell Grant for short-term workforce training programs (approximately 8–15 weeks and under 600 hours). Unlike traditional Pell, which is tied to longer postsecondary programs, Workforce Pell will fund shorter, stackable training that leads to portable credentials aligned with employer demand. Programs must be offered by accredited institutions and meet minimum completion (≥70%) and job placement (≥70%) thresholds, with earnings benchmarks also anticipated. Breedlove noted that rulemaking is complete but not yet published in the Federal Register, so a required public comment period is still pending, making the anticipated July 1 implementation date very aggressive. The state will determine which short-term programs qualify, and both traditional Pell and Workforce Pell will count toward an individual’s lifetime Pell limit, though they cannot be used simultaneously. She emphasized that this could be a positive development for participants seeking short-term, stackable training, while also noting there are many outstanding implementation details and that further updates will be provided as state guidance is released.

- **SNAP / Medicaid**..... Susan Lenigar, Chair

Lenigar reviewed significant recent federal and state policy changes affecting JFS-administered programs, focusing on SNAP. She reported that new citizenship and non-citizen eligibility rules led the state to run a batch closure that ended benefits for some non-citizen recipients, including certain asylees, refugees, and parolees. After additional guidance was issued in December 2025, staff were required to review these cases individually and reinstate benefits where lawful permanent resident or other qualifying status could be verified. Staff now must perform / verify more detailed SAVE system checks and apply complex five-year waiting-period rules, which has increased workload and slowed some eligibility decisions.

Lenigar noted further changes to SNAP budgeting, including tighter rules for the standard utility allowance (SUA) and new requirements to count specific third-party energy payments as unearned income, both of which may reduce benefits for some households. She also outlined revised work requirements for able-bodied adults, which broaden the group subject to time-limited benefits and the 20-hours-per-week / 80-hours-per-month participation requirement. The state has issued written

notices and robocalls, and local offices are seeing more inquiries from clients trying to understand and meet the new rules.

She additionally highlighted upcoming cuts in federal SNAP administrative funding and new payment-error-rate penalties that could place substantial fiscal pressure on Ohio and counties, requiring expanded local case review without added resources. Finally, she reported that a Medicaid work-requirement/community-engagement program for expansion adults is expected by January 2027, with implementation details still pending, and characterized the overall policy landscape as increasingly complex and rapidly changing for both clients and staff.

In follow-up discussion, Breedlove asked how the SNAP changes—especially the loss of the homeless exemption and expanded work requirements—might affect CCMEP-eligible youth and Ohio Works First (OWF) cash-assistance work-required referrals in Stark and Tuscarawas Counties. Lenigar indicated they do not expect a major impact on CCMEP participation from the new SNAP work rules, as most CCMEP youth are underage-based exemptions or already engaged in other requirements and services, though some SNAP households may be affected by utility and eligibility changes. Regarding OWF (Ohio's TANF cash-assistance program), they noted that OWF caseloads have steadily declined and there are currently very few work-required cases in the CCMEP age range. They added that a forthcoming OWF pilot for adults 25 and over is expected to create a more individualized, CCMEP-like work participation model, which may reduce sanctions and could eventually increase ongoing OWF participation, but any effect on youth and 18–24 referrals remains uncertain.

Next meeting-September 14, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.

Adjourned -12:09 p.m.