STARK TUSCARAWAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
September 9, 2026 11:45 a.m.
Tractor Supply Distribution Center-Navarre, OH

PRESENT	ABSENT	STWDB STAFF
Rick Baxter	Marla Akridge	JoAnn Breedlove
Stephen Carson	Damus Cole	Armon Cook
Lauren Dalesandro	Para Jones	Rebecca Harris
Andrew Fowler	Alison Kerns	Claudia Lemley
Mike Lauber	Susan Lenigar	Maddy Miller
Marc Manheim	Rick Moss	Aleisha Stout
Joel McKenzie	Steve Rippeth	Scott Varian
Scott Robinson		
Tracy Sabo		
Joseph Sekely		
Sarah Spies	**GUESTS**	**JOB CENTER OPERATOR** **FISCAL AGENT** **DESIGNATED PROVIDER**
Patrice Yacko	Spencer Johnson-Office of Senator Husted	Chuck Byrd
	Michelle Carver-ODJFS	Carrie Domer
		Freda Martin
		Amy Miller
		Dan Sipe
		Renee Steurer
		Rena Wright
		Lori Yager

BUSINESS MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Scott Robinson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:49 a.m.

Guest Introductions / Announcements ..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

Robinson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking **Tractor Supply Company** for hosting the board meeting at its distribution center.

Guest Introductions Robinson introduced and welcomed guests: Spencer Johnson, Deputy Director for the Southeast Area in the office of Senator Husted, and Michelle Carver of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development.

Board Member Term Renewals Robinson thanked the following members for renewing their terms on the board: Rick Baxter, Damus Cole, Andrew Fowler, Mike Lauber, Susan Leniger, Marc Manheim, Scott Robinson, Joe Sekely, and Patrice Yacko and reflected appreciation for their continued service.

Meeting Minutes..... ..... *Scott Robinson, Chair*

July 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes.....Scott Robinson, Chair (Attachment A)
MOTION: SEKELY MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE JULY 8, 2026, MEETING MINUTES. LAUBER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Host Remarks..... *J. McKenzie, Tractor Supply Company*

Joel McKenzie, HR Business Partner at Tractor Supply Company and a board member, gave an overview of the company and its distribution center. The facility is about 950,000 square feet and supports 250 stores from Michigan to South Carolina. It runs 24/7 with about 500 team members. McKenzie highlighted the company's mission, "work hard, have fun, make money," and the facility's recent milestone of 365 days without an OSHA recordable incident. He also reviewed the $20 starting wage, tenure-based raises, incentive pay, tuition reimbursement, and a supervisor training program. In response to member questions, he explained the shift schedules and the facility's safety practices. He also said turnover dropped from about 120% in the first year to about 56% in the third. Members were invited to tour the facility after the meeting.

Director Update..... *J. Breedlove, Executive Director*

Workforce System: Current Landscape & Updates (Attachments B/C)

Workforce Development Month Breedlove thanked Tractor Supply Company for hosting and noted that September is Workforce Development Month, a time to recognize the workforce system's work supporting employers and job seekers. Related posts are on the board's LinkedIn page. The executive director's summary is included in the packet as Attachment B.

Federal Updates A continuing resolution signed by the President keeps the federal government operating through December 11th. Proposed changes to the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Grant Guidance, which had been expected to take effect October 1, are on hold as part of the continuing resolution.

Workforce Pell Workforce Pell took effect July 1, 2026, and is rolling out slowly nationwide. In Ohio, training providers must certify short-term programs through the Ohio Department of Higher Education. They must document program hours, the credentials earned, and wage outcomes, and the federal government must then approve each program. The process is strict: about 11 or 12 Ohio submissions have not met the guidelines. Breedlove will keep members updated.

Earn to Learn and Work Based Learning The federal administration continues to focus on apprenticeships, with a national goal of 1 million apprentices. It is also emphasizing work-based learning such as paid and unpaid work experience, internships, on-the-job training, and incumbent worker training. Work experience is already part of our youth programs.

Ohio TechCred Changes The redesigned TechCred program takes effect October 1. Employer reimbursement will decrease from $2,000 to $1,000 per credential, while the $30,000 employer cap will remain unchanged. Trainees must already be employees of the company applying, and credentials must be selected from a new list of eligible technology-focused credentials. Training must be provided by one of six specified Ohio training entities or systems. Additional details are available on the Ohio Department of Development website at https://development.ohio.gov/.

JobsOhio Technician Earn and Learn Program JobsOhio announced a 10-year, $300 million program to train more technicians in Ohio. Employers can receive up to $10,000 per participant, paid at set milestones. The Ohio Manufacturers' Association was selected as the state oversight entity and will work with a vendor, Guild, which will run the employer portal and make payments. Regional "concierge service providers" will work directly with employers. A consortium of eight Northeast Ohio workforce boards, including STWDB, submitted a strong proposal to serve as the region's concierge provider but was not selected.

New Treasurer's Report Format Starting July 1, the beginning of the program year, the Treasurer's Report (Attachment E) uses a new format. It now includes all funds under the board's authority to make it easier to follow.

Program Year 2024 Performance Final adjusted performance reports for Program Year 2024 (Attachment C) show the workforce area meeting all five federal performance measures for both the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker and CCMEP WIOA reports. Breedlove thanked Workforce Initiative Association staff and the contracted vendors for their work in supporting individuals to meet their goals

Performance Standards Negotiation This was a negotiation year for WIOA performance standards. The board asked to renegotiate three Dislocated Worker standards and met with the state the day before this meeting. After the discussion, the state approved the board's proposed standards, and a confirmation letter is expected by the end of the month.

Upcoming Board Activities The board has outlined an 18-month calendar of required activities from July 2026 through December 2027. It includes:

- A youth services procurement, since the current youth contracts end September 30, 2027
- Negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding for the OhioMeansJobs system/partners (about 16–17) in early spring 2027
- Modifying the East Ohio Region Plan with our regional partners (every two years)

Program Summaries and Pathways 2 Progress The packet includes one-page summaries of board initiatives (Attachment D). Stout and Cook will give more details on Pathways 2 Progress, the board's Pathway Home grant through Midwest Urban Strategies. Programming and services began in early 2026.

Report to the Community The Report to the Community for Program Year 2025 is in production, and board staff desire to provide a copy at the November meeting.

Upcoming Career Fair The fifth annual Black College Football Hall of Fame Community Career fair at the Pro Football Hall of Fame is on September 22 from 2-4 p.m. Breedlove thanked all staff involved for their work/coordination.

Program Updates (Attachment D) ..... *A. Stout, Assistant Director*

Stout explained that the Board's work is organized around two primary, interconnected areas of focus. The first encompasses its responsibilities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including governance, planning, accountability, oversight of designated services, and the local public workforce system, including OhioMeansJobs centers. The second focuses on strategic initiatives that build upon these responsibilities and leverage available resources, including WIOA and other funding sources, to

address local employer and job seeker needs. She referred members to the one-page summaries of these initiatives included in the meeting packet.

She highlighted the Business Resource Network (BRN), a long-standing employer-focused initiative overseen by the Workforce Solutions Manager. Over the past year, Board staff have been reviewing the BRN's approach to strengthen its effectiveness and responsiveness to employer needs. This work includes an increased emphasis on using workforce data and employer intelligence to identify business challenges, emerging needs, and opportunities to connect employers with resources and solutions.

She also introduced the Career Connect Manager and provided an update on the Career Connect initiative, which recently transitioned from the Stark Economic Development Board to the Workforce Development Board. She noted that Career Connect is already being aligned with existing grants, programs, and partnerships to strengthen coordination, leverage resources, and expand opportunities for job seekers.

Stout then introduced Armon Cook, who provided an overview of the Pathways 2 Progress initiative. Following his presentation, she emphasized the Board's approach to aligning its strategic initiatives to maximize resources, strengthen partnerships, and expand opportunities for participants. As an example, she noted that Career Foundry, a manufacturing-focused initiative developed through Career Connect in collaboration with community partners, will also be available to Pathways 2 Progress participants. She also recognized Cook for his strong work in data management and grant administration, noting that he was invited to present at the RESTART new-grantee orientation later this month to share his experience and practices with other grantees.

Program Highlight-Pathways 2 Progress..... *A. Cook, Program Manager*
Cook gave an update on Pathways 2 Progress, the board's local version of the Department of Labor's Pathway Home 6 initiative. The program serves people at the Stark Regional Community Correction Center (SRCCC) who will be released into Stark or Tuscarawas County. It works in partnership with the Greater Stark County Urban League. Participants receive life skills, job readiness training, and credential opportunities before release, then case management and job placement support after release. The goal is for each participant to be working or in training within 30 days of release. Program goals include enrolling 125 participants, 60% credential attainment, a 55% placement rate, and recidivism below 30%.

Since programming began in early 2026, 63 participants have enrolled and 22 have been released. Nine have been placed in jobs, all within 30 days of release, averaging $17.50 per hour and mostly in manufacturing. All nine are still employed after 30 days, and seven are past 60 days. The program is on target. Next priorities are adding pre-release credential options, building employer hiring pipelines, and keeping participants engaged after release. Cook named transportation and housing as the main barriers participants face. He asked board members to share employer contacts and training opportunities.

Treasurer / Financial Report (Attachment E) .....*Dan Sipe, Fiscal Agent Representative*

Sipe presented the Treasurer's report (Attachment E). **Stark County:** Facilities spending was slightly over budget, but savings in other areas more than made up for it. Staffing costs were just over 70% of budget, and supplies and equipment were under 80%. Stark County's total spending was 96.1% of budget. **Tuscarawas County:** Facilities spending was nearly 130% of budget because of the recent remodeling project. Staffing was under budget and equipment was under 70%, which covered the renovation costs.

Tuscarawas County's total spending was 99.7% of budget, just under the full amount. The report also includes a breakdown by partner and county for the full 12-month period.

MOTION: SPIES MOVED TO ACCEPT THE JULY 31, 2026, TREASURER'S REPORT AS PRESENTED. SEKELY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Featured Updates

- **Service Provider (Designated)**.....*Lori Yager, Program Mgr., Workforce Initiative Association*
  Yager gave the service provider update on the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP). She noted that employment is the goal for every participant, but it is not always where participants start. She shared the story of Kayla, who was referred to CCMEP through Stark County Job and Family Services in January 2025. At the time, Kayla was pregnant with her first child and had worked only gas station jobs with irregular hours. Her goals were stable housing and a dependable job. She was placed with Goodwill, one of the board's vendors, and attended consistently. She took maternity leave in June and came back with childcare, reliable transportation, and stable housing already in place. She began her job search in January 2026. After a few early rejections, she was hired full time in March as a fleet specialist at Kenan Advantage, earning $21.25 per hour, meeting self-established goals.

  Yager also reviewed CCMEP exit outcomes. Unlike other programs, CCMEP counts entering training as a successful outcome. Of participants leaving the program, 56% successfully entered employment, training, or a credential program. Another 35% chose not to continue services for reasons such as moving or no longer engaging, and 9% were not eligible for TANF. She said the program aims to raise the share of successful outcomes.

- **Job Center Operator (Procured)....** *Renee Steurer, Employment Services Mgr., Workforce Initiative Association*
  Steurer reported strong growth in three core services at the job center. She compared June and July 2026 with the same two months in 2025. Resume creation rose 63%, resume reviews rose 46%, and job matching rose 298%, from 125 matches to 498. More people were served, too. Customers receiving resume creation went from 60 to 96, resume review customers went from 24 to 35, and job matching customers went from 26 to 62, an increase of about 138%.

  She credited two main factors for the growth. The first is deeper community outreach, including new access points closer to residents and continued marketing support. The second is process improvements made in 2026: a redesigned job matching process with more follow-through, a shift from one-time transactions to building relationships with customers, organization-wide customer service standards, and an "offer versus ask" approach of offering help before customers ask. Next, the job center will focus on reaching more customers, building new employer connections, and strengthening each service.

Meeting Adjournment

MOTION: YACKO MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. CARSON SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Adjourned: 12:50 p.m.

Tour of Tractor Supply Distribution Center

An optional guided tour of their facility was offered following the meeting by Tractor Supply Company staff.

NEXT MEETING: November 4, 2026 -Aultman Health System / Aultman College