

**STATE OF NEVADA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, March 27, 2026 - 9:00 a.m.

The GWDB Employer Engagement and Economic Development Subcommittee held a public meeting
on Microsoft TEAMS

Audio Conference Number: +1 775-321-6111
Phone Conference ID: 564 770 057#

1. Call to Order

Chair Perea called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Tiffany Vazquez, OWINN, called roll and confirmed quorum.

Members Present

Dennis Perea, Chair
Ken Goodrich, Vice Chair
Irene Bustamante-Adams
Louis DeSalvio
Edward Estipona, Vice Chair GWDB
George Gault
Paul Kaplan
Tony Machabee
Andrew MacKay
Janel Thomas
David Schmidt
Elaine Silverstone
Milt Stewart

Absent

Jeff Sutich
Michael Yoder

Others Present

Cindy Kendall
Jon Kovalovich
Frankie Mason
Christopher Scaffidi
Tiffany Vazquez

3. First Public Comment

Chair Perea stated, “This is the first opportunity for public comment. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on the agenda as an action item, we will impose a three-minute time limit. Please clearly state and spell your full name. To provide public comment on any agenda item via telephone, the number is (775) 321-6111. When prompted, please provide the phone conference ID 564-770-057.”

There were none.

4. Approval of November 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes - (For possible action)

Chair Perea called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. It was moved by George Gault and seconded by Louis DeSalvio. The motion carried.

5. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program Overview – (Discussion/Informational only)

Chair Perea announced the agenda item on WOTC, noting that the program is not well known and likely underused. He then introduced Christopher Scaffidi to share his presentation and speak on the subject.

Christopher Scaffidi began by explaining that WOTC is a federally funded program that encourages employers to hire individuals who may face barriers to employment. Going through the presentation on what WOTC is, what it does, and how it helps people.

The process includes:

- The employer hires someone from a target group.
- They complete and submit two applications.
- An automated system reviews and verifies the information.
- If everything checks out, the system issues a certification, which the employer can use when filing taxes (after the employee works the required hours).
- If the person doesn't meet eligibility criteria, the system issues a denial.

Target groups eligible for the WOTC include individuals who belong to specific categories and meet defined eligibility criteria, as outlined in the presentation:

- TANF
- SNAP
- Military Veterans
- Ex-Felons
- Designated community Resident
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals
- SSI
- Qualified Long Term Unemployment Recipient

Mr. Scaffidi emphasized several key points in his presentation to ensure awareness and compliance, noting that these requirements are established by the federal government and must be strictly followed. Also including that businesses/employers must be properly registered and eligible to operate in Nevada, verified through the Unemployment Insurance system and the

Secretary of State. They may also authorize third-party representatives to handle WOTC matters on their behalf through a formal authorization process.

He shared with the committee that individuals can register online by visiting EmployNV.gov. The registration process typically takes 12 minutes to complete.

Mr. Scaffidi ended his presentation with some helpful resources that they provide, such as an informational packet, application instructions, and a payout table outlining the potential credits that employers can receive accompanied by the hours worked by employees.

Chair Perea called for any questions to be answered by Mr. Scaffidi at this time.

David Schmidt asked whether the table outlining the various tax credit amounts was available on a website or in another accessible location where it can be easily shared with others.

Christopher Scaffidi responded that the table is available on the Department of Labor's website and is also included in the program's information packet. While he was not directly involved in maintaining the website, he encouraged employers and tax consultants to reach out with questions, acknowledging that the program can be complex and often requires clarification regarding eligibility requirements.

Edward Estipona inquired whether both employees and business consultants are aware of the program, noting that he is curious because communication between the two groups is not always assumed.

Christopher Scaffidi answered that he has done several trainings, engaged with business hubs, and previously worked with Voc Rehab. He is eager to reconnect there, especially with leadership changes, and is available to answer questions and ensure people know about the resources during the current hiatus.

Irene Bustamante-Adams requested for Mr. Scaffidi to share a success story as the process seems quite complex to her and would be helpful to know how it works in practice.

Christopher Scaffidi highlighted a success story with Brian, a grocery store owner in Reno who hires ex-felons to give them a second chance. Through the WOTC program, he helps employers connect with job seekers, enabling both the employee to secure work and the employer to access potential tax credits, while also building strong relationships with supportive businesses.

Irene Bustamante-Adams followed up with a couple of questions, regarding federal allocations, wanting to know if each state receives a specific amount based on its unemployment population, or is the funding distributed through the Department of Labor? Also, what was the approximate number the state of Nevada utilizes?

Christopher Scaffidi explained that each state receives WOTC funds based on the number of applications they process, and the federal government distributes money accordingly. The WOTC program is run by the Department of Labor, but the actual tax credit is issued by the IRS. Noting in the most recent fiscal year, funding was at \$145,000 for Nevada.

Milt Stewart requested approval from the Chair to ask Cindy Kendall a question on providing context regarding the overall business services delivery model, and whether WOTC is included in the discussions facilitated by the business engagement team.

Cindy Kendall affirmed that WOTC is included in employer outreach. An initial form is provided to employers and more detailed questions are referred to Chris, who is the subject matter expert.

Milt Stewart commented that while he understands that Chris is the subject matter expert, employer engagement is actively occurring through the business engagement hubs, ensuring that outreach is coordinated and not happening in isolation.

Chair Perea mentioned that in past practices, previously DETR would provide a bond around \$3,000 to mitigate risk for employers hiring individuals with criminal histories. Wanting to know if that type of bond program still exists?

Chris Scaffidi recollects that in his over three years of being in his position, he has never encountered or been informed about the topic in question. He acknowledged that someone else may know more, but it has never come to his attention.

Jon Kovalovich, Program Specialist with DETR-ESD contributed to the conversation, addressing the question of federal bonding, each bond is valued at \$5,000, covering up to \$25,000. The program is in place, including pre-purchase bonds available for individuals. More information can be found on federalbonding.com.

Chair Perea thanked Chris for his presentation and since there were no further questions, he moved on to the next agenda item.

6. **Career Enhancement Program (CEP) Program Overview –**

(Discussion/Informational only)

Chair Perea officially introduced Jon Kovalovich and Steve Leakos of DETR to provide an overview of the Career Enhancement Program (CEP).

Jon Kovalovich began by thanking the chair and stating that Mr. Leakos was not available to participate in today's meeting, so he will be covering the overview of the CEP.

The Career Enhancement Program is a state-funded initiative designed to support both employed and unemployed individuals in meeting employment and training needs. Funded through a small portion of employer unemployment tax contributions, the program offers:

- **Reemployment-related expenses:** Assistance with work essentials like work cards, food handler cards, and safety equipment.
- **Vocational training:** Short-term, certification-focused training (e.g., CDL, welding) with rapid enrollment.
- **Career coaching:** Guidance during training and post-training follow-up to address ongoing employment needs.

The program is highly accessible, able to enroll and register participants within two hours. Eligibility requires only authorization to work in the U.S., with minimal barriers to participation.

Mr. Kovalovich completed his presentation and paused for questions.

Irene Bustamante-Adams wanted to know how many individuals the program serves (specifically Nevadans) and what is the approximate total?

Mr. Kovalovich specified in the last fiscal year that 5,000 individuals were served with nearly \$5 million in funding, and in the last quarter, 851 enrolled with 85% securing employment.

Irene Bustamante-Adams particularly wanted to know out of the \$5 million in funding if Mr. Kovalovich had a break-down of numbers by region, as she was interested in the Southern Nevada region information.

Jon Kovalovich stated that he did not have the information readily available at this time but would get the information to the committee with no problem.

Chair Perea and other committee members closed the discussion on CEP confirming that co-enrollment with local boards and partner programs is ongoing and encouraged. Highlighting that certain programs funded by employer contributions rather than federal dollars, allow for faster enrollment which is appealing to both employers and participants. Along with the need for more intentional communication and information sharing across regions.

7. **Additional State Program Overviews** – (Discussion/Informational only)

- **Work Experience Training (WEX) Program**
- **Silver State Works Program**
- **Worker Upskilling (WU) Program**

Chair Perea recognized Cindy Kendall and Frankie Mason, EmployNV business managers from the North and South.

Frankie Mason opened the presentation by outlining the available Incentive Programs, including an overview of eligible employers and the criteria used by Business Hub staff to determine eligibility.

She then went on to the Hiring Incentive Programs (SSW & WEX) and shared candidate eligibility based on specific population categories. She clarified that candidates must be unemployed and meet the criteria for one of the designated categories.

Next Ms. Mason discussed the Silver State Works (SSW) Programs. These incentive programs are employer-focused initiatives which target specific populations, with eligibility determined based on defined criteria. She gave a detailed description of the two options available, which include:

- On-the-job Training
- Incentive-Based Employment

Ms. Mason took a moment to share feedback she received from an IBE client who participated in the program. Stating that employer recruitment and state-funded support provided tools, direction, and a strong start to their career. The employer also highlighted the individual as a standout example, demonstrating how incentive programs help develop skilled workers while offsetting training costs. She then transitioned the remainder of the presentation over to Ms. Kendall.

Cindy Kendall spoke about the Work Experience Program (WEX), which is designed to introduce candidates to new positions with which they are interested, but do not have

experience in the job or job duties. This program provides valuable benefits to both employers and candidates and has achieved much success.

Moving on, she talked about their newest program called Worker Upskilling (WU), a state-funded program that helps Nevada businesses train and retain existing staff. It reduces training costs so employers can promote within and bolster their workforce. Unlike SSW and WEX, this program is designed for people who *are* employed. WU also allows employers to search for training that best serves their needs.

Ms. Kendall completed her part of the presentation and offered to answer any questions.

Milt Stewart asked Cindy to please compare and contrast this with the current incumbent worker training funding that is administered through the boards. Commenting that the program's success in Northern Nevada was driven by industry partnerships and flexible training schedules, wanting clarification on if those elements apply here.

Cindy Kendall replied that she would address the funding issue separately. Noting that the program is designed so participants can promote while working within their regular schedules, and contracted employers have been supportive of this arrangement.

Irene Bustamante-Adams inquired when the program was established as she had not heard of it previously. She also requested statistics on how many people have been served.

Ms. Kendall responded that since the program is relatively new, the data is not available yet.

Chair Perea commented on coordinating multiple workforce programs, including WEX and Silver State Works, along with their youth components, highlighting the challenge of presenting them clearly to employers. While the subcommittee and local boards are working together to streamline communication and program delivery.

Edward Estipona emphasized that while the state has strong programs, lack of marketing makes them hard to access. He suggested focusing on user experience and leveraging technology, especially AI, to quickly match job seekers and employers with relevant services, while humans provide high-touch support.

Janel Thomas praised the Silver State Works program for saving training costs and supporting often younger workers. She noted eligibility is limited to Nevada residents and suggested creating a concise fact sheet for businesses to easily access and navigate the many available workforce programs.

David Schmidt suggested condensing services into clear, common categories on a simple hand-out to make offerings easily understandable and employer focused. He believes employers focus more on solutions to their workforce needs such as recruitment, training, and tax incentives rather than the names of specific programs.

Chair Perea concluded by recommending to add this discussion to a future agenda on how the committee can guide the full board in presenting workforce and economic development programs to employers, noting that coordinating funding and programs is complex but improving.

8. New Business and Next Steps - (Discussion/Informational only)

Chair Perea called for any other programs or presentations to be discussed, or any new business.

There were none.

9. Second Public Comment

There were none.

10. Adjournment

Chair Perea called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Edward Estipona and seconded by Irene Bustamante-Adams. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 am.