



NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Session

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

NC State University McKimmon Center | Webinar

1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Raleigh, N.C.

Minutes

Present:

Chair Tom Rabon, Daniel Briggs, Sherry Carpenter, Rodney Carson, Wesley Davis, Andrea Desantis (*Secretary Lee Lilley*), Kindl Detar (*Governor Josh Stein*), Robert Doreauk, Chris Egan (*Secretary Devdutta Sangvai*), Jeffrey Frederick, Christopher Gergen, Jim Hartman, Byron Hicks (*President Peter Hans*), Stephen Hunt, Suzanne Johnson, Himanshu Karvir, Paul Lawler, Candace Lowry (*Secretary Gabriel Esparza*), Darla McGlamery, Nikki Nissen, Olalah Njenga, Tammy Simmons, Cynthia Speight, Gregory Thompson, Sandra Thompson, Kim Toler, Mark Richardson, Hope Williams, Pam Townsend, Annie Izod

Absent:

Chris Arabia, Rebecca Axford, Shawn Brown, Superintendent Mo Green, John Loyack (*President Jeff Cox*), Marti Martin Mathews, Sharene Pierce, Cheryl Richards

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chair Tom Rabon welcomed the Commission members and guests to the second quarterly business session of the year at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. Chair Rabon thanked the McKimmon Center staff and North Carolina State University for hosting the meeting, and for being a key workforce development partner in this region.

Opening Remarks

Chair Rabon introduced Chief Deputy Secretary, Jordan Whichard to provide an update from Governor Stein. He reported that there has been a lot of progress across the state, and the Governor continues to recruit jobs to North Carolina, and make known pending opportunities. Chief Deputy Secretary Whichard spoke specifically about three new opportunities established by the Governor which are:

- **The [Council on Workforce and Apprenticeship Council](#)**, (Executive Order No. 11) brings together state officials, education leaders, employers and other stakeholders to consider ways to enhance North Carolina's workforce.
- **The *Childcare Taskforce***, (Executive Order No. 10) seeks to identify solutions to expand access to affordable, high-quality childcare and support to grow the childcare workforce.
- The creation of the new ***Division of Community Revitalization*** within the Department of Commerce, (Executive Order No.3) that will oversee the rebuilding of homes destroyed or damaged by Hurricane Helene and to coordinate and lead efforts to revitalize the economy of western North Carolina.

Workforce Updates

Chair Rabon provided an overview of the morning's earlier session of the annual joint meeting with the North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards Executive Directors Council. During this meeting, the commission heard from Drs. Annie Izod and Andrea DeSantis, along with Presidents Rodney Carson and Wendy Walker-Fox.

Chair Rabon then stated the NC Department of Commerce recently announced that Work-Based Learning grants, funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), have provided training and skill development to 823 workers at small businesses across North Carolina through a partnership between Commerce and local Workforce Development Boards. He also mentioned the recent renaming of the Business Services Unit within the state Division of Workforce Solutions. The new name is the "Industry and Talent Development" (I&TD) Unit. The unit's new name provides a better fit with the mission and goals of the Division of Workforce Solutions and North Carolina's workforce system.

Chair Rabon congratulated Sherry Carpenter, who is the chief organizational development and mission advancement officer at Goodwill Industries of Northwest NC. Sherry was recently on the cover of the March issue of Forsyth Woman magazine, with a 4-page article about the great work of Goodwill Northwest NC. Chair Rabon reflected that in March, North Carolina's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate held steady at 3.7 percent, unchanged from February but up 0.2 percentage points from a year before. Also, Western North Carolina, especially the Asheville metro area, continues to recover from Hurricane Helene. There is strong confidence that western North Carolina will emerge stronger and more resilient than before. Governor Stein also recently launched a website for displaced workers impacted by the hurricane or recent federal cuts, encouraging them to consider job opportunities with the State of North Carolina.

May Minutes Approval

Chair Rabon asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 12th quarterly business session. Mark Richardson made the motion to approve, and Jeff Frederick seconded the motion. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

NC Workforce System Advocacy Taskforce

NCWorks Commission member Himanshu Karvir provided an update on the NC Workforce System Advocacy Taskforce. Himanshu stated the taskforce is currently developing an advocacy plan to increase awareness of our workforce system, including planning a Workforce Advocacy Day for Spring 2026. Additionally, the taskforce is working on developing a unified tagline for our workforce system and a unified method for all our partners to record and submit workforce system success stories to be utilized for contextual storytelling in our advocacy efforts, including clear explanations and real-world examples of the impact of our workforce programs (on both businesses and individuals) across the state. Additional plans are to develop a messaging toolkit which will contain two tiers of talking points: high-level/introductory for legislators, business leaders, general audiences and technical/deep dive for workforce practitioners, analysts, etc. The taskforce is also developing an infographic that presents key outcomes using refined language and updated metrics. The Advocacy Plan will be rolled out during the August 13th commission meeting.

Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships

Tammy Simmons, a member of the NCWorks Commission, and a member of Governor Stein's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships (Council) provided an update and noted that Governor Stein has a goal of being the best state in the nation for business and economic opportunities for all North Carolinians.

Our workforce 1) fuels our state's continued economic growth, 2) ensures employers have the talent they need, and 3) expands pathways to careers for North Carolinians that support thriving families and communities across our state. The next Council meeting will be held virtually on May 22, 2025, when the members will confirm the goals and those responsible for tracking the goals for the next four years.

Committee Updates

Skills and Education Attainment Committee

Chair Sherry Carpenter reported during their last meeting on April 15th, they welcomed Sonja Godsey, Talent Pathways Coordinator at the NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). As a subject matter expert, she will represent the newly renamed Industry and Talent Development (I&TD) Unit at the NC Department of Commerce, supporting work on career pathways and sector partnerships, including logic model analysis. Dr. Chris Harrington also spoke about registered apprenticeships—covering their economic impact, goals, and strategies. As of March, North Carolina has 13,000 active apprentices, with a goal of reaching 26,000 by 2029. The committee is organizing a panel discussion on apprenticeships for the August Commission meeting. Updates were provided on AdvanceNC and the NCWorks Credentials Advisory Council. A reentry workshop proposal was submitted for the NCWorks Partnership Conference in October, which highlights the Work Release Expansion Program, Charlotte Works, Project Reentry, and Operation Gateway reentry programs.

Employer Leadership Committee

Chair Jeff Frederick reported that during their last meeting on April 16th, the Employer Leadership Committee heard from guest speaker Ginger Brick, Director of the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board. She shared a summary of successful sector partnership initiatives aimed at raising awareness and improving access to business services. Freemon Denton, a Data Analyst for NC Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions I&TD, led a discussion focused on creating a simplified dashboard for employer engagement and activities. Additionally, Sonja Godsey, Talent Pathways Coordinator for NC Department of Commerce DWS Industry and Talent Development, provided updates on career pathways and sector partnerships.

Local Innovation Committee

Chair Cynthia Speight reported the Local Innovation Committee last met on March 19th. The committee reviewed accomplishments, next steps, status of committee goals, and upcoming projects. Additional updates were provided on all Local Innovation grant projects, and 3rd party evaluations. Further updates included progress with spotlight articles, webinars, and ongoing outreach to secure potential presenters with a focus on bringing in experts to provide valuable workforce insights on crucial topics. The committee submitted 3 workshop proposals for the NCWorks Partnership Conference. Two proposals involve Artificial Intelligence, and the third provides Local Innovation Grantee updates. The committee continues to explore innovative ideas with the intent of replicating these initiatives across our state.

Governance and System Alignment Committee

Chair Chris Egan reported that the Governance and System Alignment Committee met on May 5th. During the meeting, the committee reviewed and voted to accept two new Commission Policy Statements- CPS 02-2025 Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (and) CPS 03-2025 Recapture, Reallocation, Minimum Obligation, and Minimum Expenditure Requirement of WIOA Title I Formula Funds. Also, during the committee meeting, James Bain provided updates to the committee on the Workforce System Advocacy Taskforce and Wendy Johnson provided

updates to the committee on the 2025 NCWorks Career Center Certification process, which is currently underway across the state.

Approval of the Commission Policy Statements

The Commission voted to unanimously approve CPS 02-2025 Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (and) and CPS 03-2025 Recapture, Reallocation, Minimum Obligation, and Minimum Expenditure Requirement of WIOA Title I Formula Funds.

Closing Remarks

In closing, Chair Rabon reminded the members that the August 13th, 2025, meeting will be at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh, and finally the November 19th, 2025, meeting will occur in Beaufort, N.C., with the exact location still being determined. He then turned the floor over to Dr. Annie Izod for her closing remarks.

Dr. Annie Izod reminded everyone that the 38th annual NCWorks Partnership Conference will be held October 15 - 17 in Greensboro at the Sheraton Four Seasons. The theme this year is: "Stronger Together. Unlimited Possibilities". Dr. Izod also congratulated the 2025 Strategic Workforce Leadership Initiative graduates! The Strategic Workforce Leadership Initiative is a comprehensive professional development program designed for those engaged in workforce or economic development.

Dr. Izod turned the floor over to Dr. Andrea DeSantis with a DWS report about how they plan to highlight jobs with benefits for NCWorks Jobseekers on the home screen of www.ncworks.gov in each local workforce development area.

Chair Rabon thanked Dr. Izod and Dr. DeSantis for their updates. He asked for any additional business or discussion on the reports from the floor. No new or additional discussion was presented, and Chair Rabon closed the meeting by thanking everyone for all their work. He then adjourned the meeting and wished everyone safe travels on their return trips.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Annie Izod

Approved on August 13, 2025