

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

**Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, also available via Zoom  
Meeting Platform  
Altoona, Pennsylvania**

**ACTION SUMMARY**

Following are the major actions taken by the SAWDB Executive Committee at its regular meeting held on January 13, 2026, via the Zoom meeting platform.

1. Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2025.
2. Approval of Review of Multiple Policies

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**Members Participating**

Brock Kull	Manpower
Cory Sisto	IFC Services
Craig Shield	OVR
Jesper Nielsen	Croyle-Nielsen Therapeutic Associates
Keith Baker	BWPO
Rosalie Danchanko	Highlands Health
Wendy Melius	CCA

**Non-Members**

Amy Horwath	Goodwill
Amy Kimmel	Tableland Services
Barb Covert	E & T
Brad Burger	Goodwill
Dan Hornbake	BWDA Oversight Representative
Debbie Ankney	Tableland Services
Gwen Fisher	Goodwill
Heather Saly	BWPO CareerLink®
Judy Lutz	E & T
Lisa Phillips	Tableland
Rebecca Lowry	Tableland Services
Renee Imgrund	Goodwill
Sarah Helman	Goodwill
Jennifer Sklodowski	SAP&DC
Steven Howsare	SAP&DC
Emily Hite	SAP&DC
Jill Reigh	SAP&DC
Sydney Burkes	SAP&DC
Tim Baranik	SAP&DC
Carrie Fisher	SAP&DC

**Call to Order**

SAWDB Chair, Mr. Cory Sisto, called the meeting of the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board Executive Committee to order at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was open to the public and available virtually using Zoom.

## **Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2026**

Mr. Cory Sisto asked for a motion for approval of minutes from December 9, 2026, Executive Committee meeting. There were no questions, concerns, or discussions regarding the minutes.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen entered a motion to approve the December 9, 2025, SAWDB meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Keith Baker seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

## **Director's Report**

### Red/Green Report

Ms. Jennifer Sklodowski referred to the Red/Green Report and noted that this report reflects five months of expenditures. Invoices are due on the 12<sup>th</sup> of every month. Quarterly expenditure rates are measured against 80% expenditure requirement. The invoices from December were due yesterday, there will be a better financial picture in February's meeting. Providers are moving in the right direction.

Ms. Sklodowski referred to page 2 of the Red/Green report and stated that it tracks expenditure rates as measured against the 20% and 75% WIOA expenditure requirements. Providers are in a strong position. Mr. Sklodowski shared that during the February meeting there will be a request to remove money from reserves to supplement for summer programs.

## **Review of Multiple Policies**

Mr. Sisto recommended breaking the policy updates into three tranches. The first being those policies that just have corrections of spelling, dates being updated, and policies needing updated. The second being policies that marked for deletion. The last being the policies that have substantial changes and those that need more discussions can be dealt with at another period in time.

Mr. Bock Kill entered a motion to approve the Policy Updates with Basic Corrections Such as Grammar, Dates and Title Updates. Mr. Jesper Nielsen seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

## **Policy Deletions**

Mr. Tim Baranik shared The Individual Referrals for Youth Policy, which will be deleted because it is not applicable to WIOA which was effective April 1, 2006. The policy was a WIA Policy prior to WIOA coming into effect in 2014.

Ms. Sklodowski suggested deleting a memo listed in the regulations dated in May 21, 2012 a policy titled Regulated Selective Registration Requirements for WIA Funded Title I programs which had fallen under WIA and was still listed under the policy and procedures. Another from July 13, 2004 which was Self Sufficiency which should be deleted in context in WIOA customer flow and no longer relevant. There was another memo in July 13, 2004

which was The Flow of WIA Service policy. Southern Alleghenies are asking to rescind these policies.

Mr. Keith Baker entered a motion to approve the Deletion of the Policy/Memos that are outdated and not consistent with current policies amended by the State. Mr. Jesper Nielsen seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

### **Policy Changes**

Mr. Jill Reigh spoke of the HPO Demand List which was a policy implemented by SAPDC which is now issued from the state. The HPO Demand List was updated in July 2024. Mr. Reigh made changes to the first paragraph to indicate the HPO Demand List developed each year with the July 1 effective date and the policy will include reference to the Annual Department of Labor and Industry High Priority Occupation Policy.

Mr. Keith Baker shared the Policies verbiage still showed the title of Southern Alleghenies Workforce Investment Board

Mr. Brock Kull entered a motion to approve the HPO Demand List Policy update and revisions. Mr. Keith Baker seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

The Measurable Skills Gain Policy is an update in title with a revision. Ms. Reigh was taking advantage of the Policy that does address credential attainment. There were marks missed in year 2024 in adding measurable skill gains through functionality which has made great strides. When there are measurable skill gains it will be added in to the CWDS database under the correct codes.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen entered a motion to approve the OJT Measurable Skill Gains Policy as revised. Mr. Brock Kull seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

The Youth Incentive Payments Policy that Ms. Jill Reigh revised and removed the gift cards because they weren't applicable anymore. If the participants came in on a strong foundation by the second year they could show the improvements. The referral bonus was removed due to that not being approved.

Mr. Sarah Helman asked if Ms. Reigh could clarify the part where it states participants may receive a 100\$ incentive and on page two it states participants will receive a 50\$ incentive for credentials.

Mr. Brock Kull asked what the budget was associated with the incentives. He was concerned that keeping the credential incentive at 100\$ if there will be enough to cover all of the participants.

Ms. Sklodowski shared there is enough in the budget to serve the incentives.

Ms. Barb Covert offered a solution removing the last bullet that states participants earning a successful attainment of an Industry Recognized credential when enrolled in the program completion may also receive the \$100 incentive. It was already addressed and is the same thing spelled out different ways.

Cory Sisto asked then to change the \$50 incentive to an \$100 incentive on the second page.

Mr. Brock Kull entered a motion to approve the Youth Incentive Payments Policy update and revisions. Mr. Jesper Nielsen seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

The Priority of Service to Access Individualized Career Services and Training Policy was to update the financial guidelines and hasn't been updated for 10 years. The policy will be removed, and the board will be a reference to source material to remain current.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen entered a motion to approve the removal of Priority of Service to Access Individualized Career Services and Training Policy and to Reference the current sources. Mr. Brock Kull seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Mr. Baranik was given feedback on the Work Based Training Policy and the training lengths associated with the police. There are various types of work experience such as Youth, OJT, transitional with each being different. With the policy being 12 weeks or 360 hours, it causes the Youth to be short because the Youth can only work part time. The suggestion was to eliminate the 12 week and just keep the 360 hours.

Mr. Sisto inquired if the 12-week policy was an internal guidance or a state limit. Would it be more practical to have a 12 week limit but an exception clause or to eliminate a 12 week limit.

Ms. Covert informed that the OSY have a barrier from the beginning because they are only able to work part time, which sometimes is only 20 hours a week. She suggests that putting 12 weeks and/or 360 hours then it can be at the counselor's discretion. The Youth participants only work less hours a week and more than likely will fail. Youth participants may start at 10 hours a week and work their way up to longer hours.

Ms. Sklodowski asked Mr. Nielsen if he remembered why the 12 weeks was chosen.

Mr. Nielsen said it was a matter of insuring that it wasn't dragging out forever.

Ms. Sklodowski asked providers if there was ever a problem with SAPDC Board staff extending the period when requested.

Ms. Helman shared the providers have been doing a case-by-case basis based on the needs of the customer and to keep it a 14-week max. Sometimes that doesn't always work with compound and complex barriers and might need extra time to complete those hours.

Mr. Nielsen asked what percentage of Youth were able to manage completion in 2024. If the timeline was doubled, would it take care of the problem and mitigate some of the concerns regarding barriers that would prevent that level of time commitment.

Mr. Sisto suggested the policy should state 24 weeks or 360 hours.

Ms. Judy Lutz said there were some that would have to end prior to the hours being completed because there are some with significant intellectual or learning disabilities and it would be discriminatory for them not to have the same chance for them to succeed because they can't do it in the same amount of time.

Mr. Brock Kull shared it could be discriminatory either way and the verbiage should just include

the hours and not the week timeline.

Mr. Sisto agreed and shared there isn't a lot of cost with anyone involved regarding compliance.

Ms. Covert questioned the transitional worker if the 480 hours was new because it had always been 360 hours prior. The providers budget for 360 hours at \$11 an hour.

Mr. Baranik pointed to the last page that the wage for Youth under the old policy it was \$9 for TANF and \$10 for WIOA at the meeting it was agreed upon and voted on by the board for TANF and WIOA to both be paid 10\$ an hour.

Ms. Gwen Fisher asked how often the policies related to either an employer reimbursement for a program or a job seeker's wage be reevaluated based on a self sufficiency wage for the area. With the changes of the property guidelines that the self-sufficiency wage would change.

Mr. Sisto asked if there were any policies where any type of wage structure or reimbursement to be reviewed every three years or with regularity or is just when it is willfully inadequate it needs updated.

Mr. Nielsen shared it's the ladder and it's brought to the board's attention to be updated.

Mr. Sisto proposed that there should be a policy that when the budget is completed annually there should be a committee with providers and board members to review the wages and recommend any changes.

Ms. Sklodowski shared her concerns that once the wages are raised there isn't any way to go backwards in case of cuts to funding.

Mr. Sisto suggested being conservative. There isn't a guarantee there will be an increase but the board does need to make sure annually that we are compliant with anything that is governed by regulatory framework or supposed to be guided by poverty levels. There is a fiduciary obligation to review the wage increase.

Mr. Baranik shared this isn't a self-sustaining wage and is part of a work experience training program. This is to be a steppingstone for work experience and being paid while working.

Ms. Sklodowski informed the board that last year there was a cut made to Youth and the fiscal department is looking to balance out the Youth program and are counting on the next allocation to come in. If for some reason those allocations aren't awarded there is going to be a choice between the amount of Youth we serve or wage. With the cut in Youth money were not going to be able to serve as many Youth as prior. She likes the idea of the workgroup getting together fiscally to review the budget. She suggested tabling this policy due to the necessary changes.

Ms. Sydney Burkes provided the updates made to the Supportive Services Policy which was combined the Youth, Dislocated and Adult with specifications.

Mr. Sisto provided context on the policy as being services provided across several programs consolidated into one policy.

Ms. Burkes shared the only point that was added was the maximum \$500 auto repair reimbursement.

Mr. Baranik specified that three policies were virtually the same, which then was consolidated. The auto repair was in prior policies, but it wasn't mentioned that the \$500 auto repair was covered. There are participants with barriers to getting to training or work with a working vehicle. The cap was set at \$500. While looking at other Workforce Development Board policies across the state most only have one supportive service policy with auto repair being common. There is also a supportive service covering childcare which states: Child Care Assistance may be provided until the participant receives their first full paycheck when enrolled in OJT or subsidized work experience. The word full was added due to the first check usually being a partial check.

In the Youth Supportive Service there weren't any restrictions if they were receiving childcare or transportation, they could continue to receive them while working, with Youth most are working 10-20 hours a week the paycheck restriction wasn't included in the Youth portion. He recommended putting a clause that this requirement does not apply to WIOA Youth. There isn't an exclusion for Youth as far as paychecks were concerned due to the minimal hours.

Mr. Sisto clarified to add that exclusion for Youth. He asked who made the decision on the services provided, if it was the providers or state.

Ms. Jill Reigh said that the providers submit the services provided to SAPDC staff and then is presented to Mr. Jennifer Sklodowski to present to the board.

Mr. Baranik shared services are reviewed carefully and want to help people avoid barriers.

Mr. Sisto suggested tabling the Supportive Services Policy due to the approval process not being outlined in order for the providers to follow the process. He also wanted to add the exclusion for Youth.

Mr. Brock Kull shared it will help against discrimination as well if it is documented.

Ms. Judy Lutz inquired about the Transportation assistance during ITA participation is available only if the participant is unemployed and unable to secure other transportation resources. She spoke with Mr. Jim Walker prior to retirement about adding the words under employed. Under employed for an ITA participant per WIOA guidelines would ensure the participant is receiving services.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen asked about how under employed is defined. There would have to be very specific guidelines to determine under employment.

Mr. Sisto suggests reviewing when brought to the full board meeting to add unemployed or under employed according to WIOA guidelines.

Ms. Imgrund under employed falls under part time but also could fall under the self-sufficiency wage and the verbiage would have to be specific. There are guidelines through WIOA to define under employed.

Mr. Sisto referred to the Monitoring and Oversight QA Policy and asked for a motion for approval of the revisions and updating the dates and names.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen entered a motion to approve the revisions and updates to the Monitoring and Oversight QA Policy; Mr. Brock Kull seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Ms. Barb Covert suggested this type of policy is something that Title II programs do with Adult Education while doing their monitoring and risk analysis. They also share the score with providers. This Policy can be built into the continuous improvement plan, professional development for the team to help providers. This will help with the Risk Analyst monitoring from the state, it shows those opportunities already accomplished to eliminate any risk or issues before that monitoring visit. She asked that Southern Alleghenies share our monitoring with program operators and give areas that can be potentials to do continuous improvement.

### **One-Stop Operator Report**

Mr. Brad Burger provided an update on employer and customer satisfaction in December remained high. While looking at data for the region and he is beginning to see a tension point between Real GDP and employed persons that is reflective of lower productivity. Clients have come back from the pandemic at a steeper rate than Real GDP going up which means productivity is not going up proportionate to the clients entering the workforce. This goes back to the work that the board has been doing providing the Robotic Process Automation training opportunities for employers to help with incumbent worker training. There does seem to be a growing tension within productivity. From a historic standpoint it decoupled many years ago where GDP was going up at a faster rate than employed people. At the national level there is a decoupling right now between smaller workforces and productivity going up. The discussions about the incumbent worker support types of training adopting various hardware and software-based interventions to help expand that labor footprint is good timing. The Blair CareerLink® that resides at the Altoona library that is on the school district campus, the lease is up mid-year. There is a process with criteria as to where to put a CareerLink is where the heatmap shows the highest usage in an affordable place and that there isn't a commitment to being there forever. The process involves collecting data, looking at costs because every dollar spent in CareerLink® is a dollar taken from direct services which all the partners contribute to the CareerLinks®. They begin a negotiation process and then take it back to the partners to show where the numbers are coming from, then it is up to the partner's approval. They are in one of the cycles currently with the Altoona School District. Mr. Burger just wanted to reassure the board that they do a lot of back-end math, data crunching and negotiating. In some cases, they can be very complicated. In Bedford it took months to find a place to make the financial model work. They do rely heavily on the input of the partners in the actual center of being responsive from the customer service standpoint to their needs.

### **Commonwealth Update**

Mr. Keith Baker shared on January 8<sup>th</sup> the House passed a partial funding package of the WIOA Reauthorization to avert another shut down but is unsure what will happen after January 31<sup>st</sup>.

He spoke on the TEGL 10-23 Work Authorization Verification that was issued in July. WIOA states, "Participation in programs and activities or receiving funds under Title I of WIOA shall be available to citizens and nationals of the United State, lawfully admitted permanent residents aliens, refugees, asylees, and parolees, and other immigrants authorized by the Attorney General to work in the United States" BWDA is finalizing Impact Analysis which includes changes to CWDS and changes to process in offices. This loosely translates to verifying if the participant is legal to work in the United States. BWPO will have access to UC SAVE system but only as a last resort and all other methods to verify legal status must be exhausted. BWPO is waiting for BWDA to release their Impact Analysis before putting anything into action. They suspect there will be a drop in CareerLink® traffic.

Mr. Jesper Nielsen asked if there was a specific verification process to be followed.

Mr. Baker answered not that he has seen yet.

Ms. Gwen Fisher asked if there would be a conflict with the CareerLink® equal opportunity actions in the facilities. CareerLink® employees are to help anyone who walks in.

Mr. Baker said that BWDA is looking into it.

Ms. Renee Imgrund asked if it was everyone who walks into the door or is it just WIOA services and pointed to the WIOA Self Attestation with Quality Assurance/Continuous Improvement policy that states they don't have to verify the Social Security number. The policy is inaccurate. With the EEO 1 having to sign it and is thinking that won't be good enough moving forward.

Mr. Baker said that will apply more to data validation.

TEGL 05-25 Maximizing Innovation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act is to better serve job seekers and employers by providing state and local workforce development systems waiver opportunities, to promote flexibility within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula funded programs and supports the Administration's workforce priorities outlined in Executive Order (EO) 14278, preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future. Basically L&I will give states opportunities to request waivers around some of the policies to be more flexible with what they do.

Mr. Baker asked Ms. Sklodowski what the protocol for the local board to get a waiver from the state.

Ms. Sklodowski said there has been talk about it, and there is form to apply for that waiver.

Mr. Baker updated about the Workforce Reimagined. What COVID has taught us was that there are services to deliver anything directly to the consumer. Which L&I developed Workforce Reimagined with a virtual CareerLink® that is in the works. There is an online case management software that helps case manage online and as the process was started the office of administrations OIT put a halt to it because that system that UC procured can only provide access to the commonwealth staff. The CWDS person in the borough is looking at another system that looks like OAOIT will approve it. They haven't defined it yet but they are looking for them. The Workforce Reimagine groups include:

- Digital Intake Redesign is a kiosk to input information. This was to collect demographic information and barriers information.
- Communications
- Marketing
- Personnel/HR
- Policy & Procedures
- Statewide Workshops
- Training
- Virtual CareerLink®

The Technology needs face barriers by COPA and partner staff due to inability to share technology. There needs to be prioritization of seamless service delivery over rigid IT policies with things like Google Docs, Sharepoint and Local software choices. The good news is that BWPO staff will be getting CoPilot.

### **Other Business**

None

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

*A motion was made by Mr. Jesper Nielsen to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brock Kull seconded the motion.*

The next meeting of the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board Executive Committee will be held on **Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**