



LANE WORKFORCE BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 22, 2025

3:00PM – 5:00PM

MINUTES

In Attendance: Angela Miller-Pomlee (proxy for Julie Davidson), Billy Dover, Jeff Graham, Courtney Griesel, Phil Hohnstein, Shondra Holliday, Laura Luther, Lynn McDonald, Bailey McEuen, Chelsea Miller, Matt Sayre, Shelley Tinkham

Absent: Jennifer Adams, Monica Bielski Boris, Bettina Hannigan, Solomon Harris, David Heavirland, Heidi Larwick, Jeff McGillivray, Stan Pickett, John Stapleton, Charlene Vermilyea, Steve Yamamori

Board Staff: Ashley Espinoza, Anne Nestell, Tiffany Cink, Cindy Perry, Stephanie Lovell, Ryan Kounovsky

Others: Wren Ganey, Jasper Riogeist, Agustin Olivares Lucero

APPROVALS

Recommendation	Motion	Seconded	Status
Approve Full Board Meeting Minutes (February 27 th , 2025)	Courtney Griesel	Billy Dover	Unanimous Approval
Approve Board Officers to serve for a two-year term beginning July 1, 2025: Solomon Harris, Chair John Stapleton, Chair-Elect Jeff Graham, Treasurer Billy Dover, Secretary Shondra Holliday, Past Chair	Matt Sayre	Courtney Griesel	Unanimous Approval

I. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

Shondra Holliday called the meeting to order.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

Courtney Griesel moved to approve the February 27th, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes. Billy Dover seconded, and the motion was approved.

IV. PRESENTATION: UNLOCKING POTENTIAL – CAREER PATHWAYS FOR LANE COUNTY'S WORKFORCE MPA Capstone Project, 2025

Presenters: Wren Ganey, Jasper Riogeist, and Agustin Olivares Lucero

Ryan Kounovsky provided a brief introduction to the presentation, sharing that earlier this year, Lane Workforce Partnership (LWP) engaged the University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research and Engagement to support a student-led research project. He explained that these Master level students were assigned projects across the community, and LWP was selected as one of the project recipients. Ryan expressed appreciation for the high-quality, detailed work the student team has produced, noting that their capacity to dive deeply into research has brought valuable insights.

Overview of the Presentation

The presenters thanked the Board for the opportunity to participate and outlined the presentation structure: an overview of the project scope, analysis of two key employment sectors (healthcare and housing), followed by recommendations and opportunities for future research.

The project focused on developing workforce strategies for Lane County's ALICE population—defined as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed. The team's work was informed by LWP's 2024 State of the Workforce Report and originally began with 12 sectors, which were narrowed to six and ultimately refined to two sectors: healthcare and housing. These sectors were chosen based on their potential for sustainable job creation and strong relevance to individuals living in or near poverty.

Research Questions and Methodology

The central research question was: *How can workforce development strategies be used to support ALICE households in accessing higher-paying, sustainable careers?* The methodology incorporated a mixed-methods approach, including career flowchart visualizations to illustrate common entry points, advancement pathways, required certifications, and wage progression. Data sources included Lane Workforce Partnership's reports, the U.S. Census, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Workforce Landscape Context

The presenters established income thresholds for identifying ALICE individuals (\$47,673) and households (\$63,419). Approximately 33% of households in Lane County fall into this category, with many lacking sufficient resources to meet basic living expenses. The sectors of healthcare and social services (28%) and construction and administrative services (23%) were identified as employing a large portion of the ALICE population.

Sector Analysis – Healthcare

Healthcare is Lane County's largest employment sector, with over 21,700 workers, representing 12% of the county's total workforce. Roles analyzed included home care, emergency services, nursing, and dentistry. Average annual salaries in this sector are approximately \$72,000, with 15% projected growth over the next decade, including 3,000 new roles.

Career pathways in healthcare vary by entry requirements and cost. For example, individuals can begin as home care workers with minimal requirements and progress through certifications to roles with higher earning potential. The nursing flowchart demonstrated multiple on-ramps, including a low-cost CNA-to-LPN-to-RN pathway as a lower-risk alternative to a four-year BSN degree.

Sector Analysis – Housing

The housing sector, while smaller than healthcare, also offers strong opportunities for entry-level employment and long-term career growth. As of 2023, more than 8,000 workers were employed in construction and maintenance roles, up from 5,200 in 2011. Average annual salaries in this sector are approximately \$66,000, with 15% projected growth over the next decade. The next ten year are projected to bring approximately 1,100 new jobs and over 7,000 replacement openings.

Flowcharts illustrated pathways for skilled trades such as plumbing, electrical work, and general construction. Apprenticeship programs were identified as key entry points, though access remains a challenge due to limited availability. The team described these constraints as "bottlenecks" in the career pipeline and emphasized the importance of pre-apprenticeship activities to improve placement rates.

Comparative Findings and Observations

The analysis compared sectors based on accessibility, earning potential, and training pathways.

Sector Advantages: Career clusters such as home care and emergency health services present low barriers to entry and quick progression to roles above the ALICE income threshold. In the housing sector, the skilled trades career cluster provides high-earning potential through structured apprenticeship programs, though access to these programs remains competitive and limited.

Availability of Employment: While many entry-level roles are accessible, sustained upward mobility often depends on the availability of training, certifications, and support services. Apprenticeships, community college programs, and other educational trainings are helpful for career progression but are not accessible to all residents.

Recommendations and Future Research

Preliminary recommendations:

- Promote Awareness of Career Pathways
- Invest in Data and Evaluation
- Partner with Training and Educational Organizations

Future research should explore bottlenecks in career progression, refine wage and job availability data, and assess long-term job demand and transitions across pathways. The team noted the importance of community-wide involvement in addressing systemic barriers and called for deeper integration between workforce programs and social service supports.

V. BOARD OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Shondra Holliday led the discussion on the proposed officer appointments beginning with the 2025 – 2026 Program Year. She provided background information and shared the Executive Board's recommendation, which included updated interest in the Secretary position.

Matt Sayre moved to approve Solomon Harris, Chair; John Stapleton, Chair-Elect; Jeff Graham, Treasurer; Billy Dover, Secretary; and Shondra Holliday, Past Chair to serve as board officers for a two-year term beginning July 1, 2025. Courtney Griesel seconded, and the motion was approved.

VI. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PROCUREMENTS

Cindy Perry provided an informational update regarding the recently concluded procurement process for the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, and One-Stop Operator services.

- *Procurement Overview:* LWP is required by policy to conduct procurement for the WIOA Adult and Youth Programs every five years. In addition, federal WIOA legislation mandates procurement of the One-Stop Operator every four years. To better align these timelines, LWP ended the existing adult contract one year early, bringing both Adult and Youth Programs onto the same cycle.
- *WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Program:* Four organizations submitted proposals: Career Team, Equis, Lane County Health & Human Services, and Grant Associates. All proposals were reviewed by an Evaluation Committee comprised of board members and community subject matter experts. Grant Associates received the highest overall score. The Executive Board approved awarding the Adult Program contract to them.
- *One-Stop Operator:* Three proposals were received; however, two did not meet minimum qualifications. The third proposal—submitted by an organization bidding on all three service areas—was deemed non-responsive due to a budget based on securing all contracts, which was not allowed. As a result, the Executive Board approved a recommendation for Lane Workforce Partnership to serve as the One-Stop Operator for a one-year period, pending approval from the Governor’s Office. This temporary arrangement will provide time to strengthen service alignment and prepare for a new competitive process in the next year.
- *WIOA Youth Program:* Four proposals were submitted by Equis, Grant Associates, Looking Glass, and Connected Lane County. Looking Glass and Connected Lane County were the highest scoring in the written evaluations. The Executive Board authorized an extended evaluation period, which included site visits and oral interviews to better understand the unique strengths of each organization. Following this comprehensive review, Looking Glass was identified as the highest scoring respondent overall. The Executive Board approved awarding the Youth Program contract to Looking Glass.

VII. PROGRAM YEAR 2025 – 2026 BUDGET

Tiffany Cink provided an overview of the budget for the upcoming program year, noting that this cycle was particularly challenging due to significant reductions in projected revenue. Overall, the organization is planning a decline of just over \$2 million, primarily resulting from the conclusion of several funding sources.

- *Key Funding Reductions:*
 - The HOW-TO grant, a partnership with the Oregon Health Authority and Nurturely, has ended and is no longer included in the budget.
 - Funding through the Future Ready Oregon initiative is entering its third year, and funds previously available in year two have been expended and are not recurring.
 - Federal WIOA formula funding, which flows from the US Department of Labor to the state and then to local boards, has been reduced by 10% statewide.

- *Strategic Budget Planning:* Due to uncertainty in multiple funding streams, LWP has chosen to fully fund its planned carryforward to ensure financial stability. Funds received will be used to strengthen contracts set to begin July 1.

- *Expenditure Notes:* Tiffany noted that while initial budget planning estimated the subcontract for the WIOA Adult Program with Grant Associates at approximately \$835,000, this amount was based on the exclusion of General Fund dollars from the State of Oregon. Historically, these funds have been delayed in becoming operational, sometimes not arriving until March. However, for the upcoming year, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission has already developed work plans and is planning to release funds once the Governor’s budget is signed. As a result, General Fund dollars have been added back into the WIOA contract, bringing the total to approximately \$1,025,000.

- *Reserve Status:*
While reserve levels are lower due to reduced revenue, they remain adequate. The organization is maintaining 20% of its WIOA carryover funds and 50% of its State General Fund dollars.

VIII. BOARD BUDDIES PROGRAM

Ashley Espinoza provided an overview on the Board Buddy Program, designed to strengthen relationships between Lane Workforce Partnership board members and staff. The program aims to improve board meeting efficiency, foster stronger interpersonal connections, and enhance board member engagement and confidence.

Ashley shared that each board member has been paired with a designated staff member who will serve as their “Board Buddy.” These partnerships focus on regular engagement through informal, conversations scheduled before each quarterly board meeting. Conversations are intended to provide clarification on agenda items, offer background, and answer any questions board members may have prior to formal discussions.

Ashley emphasized that staff buddies are responsible for initiating outreach prior to each board meeting and supporting the needs of their assigned board members. The idea is to create a more informed, engaged, and confident board, which will in turn support stronger governance and better decision-making. A listing of current board-staff pairings was shared.

IX. CHAIR’S REPORT

Shondra Holliday noted that action item summaries from the LWP Board, Executive Board, and Lane Council meetings are on pages 20 – 22 of the board packet.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ashley Espinoza provided an overview of organizational activities, strategic initiatives, and legislative updates.

- **Trauma-Informed Care: Train the Trainer Program:** LWP, in partnership with Lane County and facilitated by the Trauma Healing Project, will be launching four quarterly continuing education and networking events to strengthen trauma-informed practices within the workforce system. The program supports staff well-being and will help build capacity among trainers serving youth and adults across Lane County.
- **National and State Engagement:** LWP attended the 2025 NAWDP Annual Conference in Virginia Beach, VA where Team Oregon Build was honored as the Workforce Program of the Year. Ashley mentioned that she was recently appointed to the NAWDP Board of Directors representing Region 6 (Alaska, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau). Her board service starts July 1st.

LWP joined workforce leaders at the Oregon Employment and Training Association (OETA) statewide conference (powered by Oregon Workforce Partnership), which focused on service alignment and peer learning. Highlights of the conference included a panel discussion focusing on the Critical Sector Grant - Hospitality Sector Partnership and Nancy Pance with Opportunity Oregon received the Workforce Champion award.

- **Strategic Goals and System Alignment:** Ashley reiterated LWP's commitment to its 2024 – 2028 strategic goals, which include:
 - Increasing awareness and use of the workforce system
 - Creating strategic alignment and fostering innovative collaboration
 - Embracing transparency and accountability
 - Advancing prosperity through an inclusive workforce
- **One-Stop Operator Update:**

LWP will serve as the One-Stop Operator for a one-year term, as previously approved by the Executive Board. This interim role allows LWP to enhance system coordination and participant navigation while preparing for a new procurement cycle next year. Through the One-Stop Operator work, we will be looking at: Initial Contact (welcoming intake process); Assessment (skills evaluation and career planning); Training (customized skill development); and Employment (job placement and retention support).
- **State of the Workforce Roadshow:**

Ashley and Henry Fields (Workforce Analyst with OED) are conducting a series of presentations to share highlights from the 2024 – 2026 State of the Workforce Report. Confirmed presentations include: Springfield Rotary, Eugene Rotary, Lane County Board of Commissioners, Southtown Rotary, LCOG Board, Lane County Human Resources Association.

- **Legislative Updates:**

- HB 3826 (CDL Training): Proposes a \$2M allocation for CDL training. Advocacy groups are urging an \$8.2M investment to expand access, particularly in rural areas and for underrepresented populations.
- HB 3011 (Childcare Workforce): Proposes \$20M to support early childhood education training programs, degrees, and on-campus childcare centers.
- HB 2972 (Reentry Services); Requests \$3M to enhance workforce preparation for adults in custody, supporting reintegration efforts and public safety.
- SB 5525 (Prosperity 10,000): A \$35M amendment to support high-demand sector training and wraparound services.
- WIOA Reauthorization: Congress is working toward reauthorization of WIOA, last updated in 2014. Yesterday, the One Big Beautiful Bill passed through Congress does contain elements of workforce including extending apprenticeships, increasing the childcare credit, expanding Pell Grants to support trade and career-ready pathways beyond traditional four-year degrees, etc. The bill now goes to the Senate.

XI. BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Ryan Kounovsky provided an update for the two board committees.

Workforce Services Operations Committee: The committee spent significant time supporting the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) process—a substantial undertaking. With that work now complete, the group will reconvene to determine next steps. Upcoming priorities are expected to include a focus on the One-Stop Operator and identifying opportunities to increase board engagement in the broader workforce system.

Community Engagement Committee: The committee has been actively collaborating with Lane Education Service District (LaneESD) to strengthen career and technical education (CTE) talent pipeline efforts. This includes working with K–12 schools to schedule career-connected learning opportunities earlier and more strategically, ensuring both schools and students can fully participate. The group is making progress in aligning industry partners with classroom experiences to increase student awareness of local job opportunities and provide real-world exposure whenever possible.

XII. BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Matt Sayre (CollaborativeEDO): Appointment July 2024

- Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon (March 20, 2025): Highlighted the success of the luncheon which brought together a geographically diverse audience – from the coast to Oakridge, Junction City, and Cottage Grove, to discuss the future of workforce and job creation. The panel emphasized the importance of connecting people to high-quality jobs, not just creating them. The event sold out for the second consecutive year.
- Bridge Lane Event: The event is being held today in Blue River, one of the most rural communities in the region. Taking place at the local K-12 school, the event is student-forward, with participation from all middle and high school students. This marks continued efforts to bring real-world learning experiences to rural areas.

- Regional Innovation Hub – Cascades West Innovation Hub Region: Lane County is part of the four county Cascades West Innovation Hub, alongside Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. The region is transitioning from a planning and mobilization phase into a new “scale-up” phase aimed at increasing regional capacity to support traded-sector startups. A grant application is currently in progress that involves numerous partners.
- **Bailey McEuen (Homes for Good): Appointment July 2020**
 - No updates to report.
- **Chelsea Miller (Vocational Rehabilitation): Appointment September 2024**
 - Provided update on developments within VR including changes related to service delivery and intake processes due to budget constraints. VR is preparing to enter into the Order of Selection, a federally regulated process used when resources are insufficient to serve all eligible individuals. Once enacted:
 - Clients currently in service or with an active employment plan will continue receiving support.
 - New applicants will be placed on a waitlist based on the severity of their disability-related barriers to employment.
 - Priority will be given to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
 - A statewide waitlist will be managed at the county level, with all eligible individuals still encouraged to apply for services.
 - A new centralized intake and eligibility unit launched on May 1st. This state-level unit is now responsible for processing all applications, replacing the previous branch-level approach. The model will eventually impact Lane County. Currently, VR intake appointments in the region are booked out until October. The shift to the Order of Selection is expected to improve consistency and streamline client access across.
 - The waitlist has been challenging for staff who are continuing to provide services and training under normal operations. Staff will be given at least one week’s notice prior to the Order of Selection implementation, and current clients will receive written communication outlining their assigned priority category.
 - Local Office Move: The Eugene and Springfield offices were originally scheduled to merge into a single location at 10 Shelton McMurphy Blvd. in June but has been postponed until later this year.
- **Laura Luther (Lane County): Appointment July 2019**
 - The County experienced a modest workforce reduction this year due to budget constraints.
 - A successful community event, Say Hey, was hosted at the University of Oregon last month.
 - An internship co-op fair was also held at the University of Oregon, resulting in internship placements for Indigenous students with Lane County.
 - The Equity Job Fair, hosted at WorkSource Lane this past Monday, saw strong attendance. Fourteen government agencies participated, offering current job openings. Additional resources were provided for jobseekers, including free professional headshots and a LinkedIn workshop to support career readiness.

- **Angela Miller-Pomlee proxy for Julie Davidson:**
 - Angela serves on the management team at WorkSource Lane and brings 13 years of experience with the agency.
 - She expressed her strong commitment to supporting individuals on their employment journey – helping them move from point A to point Z.

- **Jeff Graham (Danone/So Delicious): Appointment July 2023**
 - Danone is an international brand producing International Delight Creamers, Oikos Yogurts, bottled water, etc. Locally, they produce the So Delicious dairy-free frozen novelties, including ice cream bars, sandwiches, pints, and quarts for Canada.
 - Recently completed a \$7 million engineering project focused on refrigeration system upgrades. The plan is currently addressing final post-implementation adjustments to ensure the new freezers are fully optimized and operational.
 - In September, the plant will install a robotic palletizer to enhance production efficiency and address ergonomic and safety concerns. The local facility is the most manual plant of the 13 plants in North America.
 - Due to increased demand during the summer season, the plant anticipates scheduling two to four overtime production days between June and July.
 - Nationally, introduced a new line of ready-to-drink 30g Oikos protein shakes.

- **Shondra Holliday (Lane County Medical Society): Appointment November 2024**
 - Physician Wellness Program: Prioritizes physician wellness recognizing that the loss of a single physician can impact patients and the broader healthcare system. Have expanded access to counseling services by partnering with external programs. Recently, additional counselors were added to their program with services paid for by the Foundation to support mental health, prevent burnout, and reduce risks such as suicide and substance use.
 - Shondra’s role includes donor engagement and grant development to fund wellness initiatives and ensure sustainability. She also helps oversee foundation programs to ensure that physicians have access to financial resources, training, and personal development support – particularly in areas where they may lack experience or confidence, like self-care and financial literacy.

- **Shelley Tinkham (Lane Community College): Appointment July 2025**
 - New Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program: LCC received formal approval to offer a second baccalaureate degree: a BSN. This enhances Lane’s role in addressing local healthcare workforce needs.
 - National Accreditation: All nursing programs at LCC have been awarded accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) – a significant professional endorsement.
 - Medical Assisting Program Changes: LCC has made the decision to scale back its Medical Assisting Program following a programmatic review. The review highlighted the importance of ensuring that program credits are transferable and stackable toward higher degrees – especially bachelor’s degrees that lead to higher wages. While the program continues, it will be more strategically aligned with student pathways and workforce outcomes.

- LEAP (Lane Early Access Program): This long-standing tuition-free opportunity for high school students has now been officially branded. Beginning fall 2025, high school juniors and seniors in Lane County can take one course, tuition free, through the new LEAP program.
 - Behavioral Health Certificate Launch: Starting a pathway program with LaneESD in Behavioral Health. LCC's Board of Education recently approved a new Behavioral Health Certificate program. Though still pending final state approval, development is underway.
 - Trades Growth: LCC recently hosted a successful Trade Expo attended by 473 high school students and 88 industry representatives from 40 companies. Many of the college's trade programs now have waitlists, reflecting strong demand from students and employers alike.
- **Lynn McDonald (IBEW #280): Appointment July 2024**
 - Current Hiring Landscape: Currently, all of our apprentices are employed. The hiring environment is heavily influenced by regional construction demand. Central Oregon is experiencing a higher volume of hiring compared to the Willamette Valley, which remains somewhat slower.
 - Entry into the apprenticeship program is competitive, with only about 6 – 7% of interviewees accepted. The selection process includes an aptitude test, a comprehensive interview, and a review of relevant experience.
 - Program Bottlenecks: There is an ongoing bottleneck between the number of applicants and available apprentice positions.
 - Workforce Mobility: You are typically not going to work in your home town. Construction jobs are mobile by nature, and those who are willing to travel are more likely to maintain full-time employment and earn higher wages. Conversely, those less open to travel may experience periods of underemployment or slower progression.
- **Courtney Griesel (Sierra Pacific Industries): Appointment July 2023**
 - No updates to report.
- **Billy Dover (Ireland Trucking): Appointment July 2023**
 - Ireland Trucking currently operates three terminals in Lane County and is working to triple their capacity.
 - The company currently employs 8 drivers and aims to expand that number to 30.
 - According to data from the State of Oregon, the trucking industry will need approximately 30,000 drivers statewide over the next 10 years. In Lane County alone, the projected need is 2,500 to 3,000 drivers.
 - Exploring strategies to increase exposure to trucking careers, including reaching high school students.
- **Phil Hohnstein (Hillside Heights): Appointment December 2013**
 - Hillside has been approached by another CNA program to serve as a clinical training site.
 - New pilot mentorship programs are underway, with the Hillside Administrator mentoring the new Volare Administrator along with the Director of Nursing mentoring as well.

- Lane Community College's Nursing Program is now utilizing community sites for education, with 2–3 students per week visiting Hillside Heights for hands-on experience in long-term care.
- Of the nine CNAs who entered nursing programs, five are now working as LPNs at Hillside, and four are on track to graduate as RNs.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Ashley Espinoza recognized Shondra Holliday for her twenty years of service to the Lane Workforce Partnership Board, including her leadership as Board Chair over the past two years. Ashley expressed heartfelt appreciation for Shondra's commitment, noting that her thoughtful presence, steady leadership, and engaging conversation have left a lasting impression.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Shondra Holliday adjourned the meeting.