



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, May 14, 2026

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Present: Robert Kleyn-Chair, Mary Rodarte, Michelle Engel-Silva, John Werner, Krishna Adams, Aleyda Montenegro, Michelle Miller-Galaz, Carla Calhoun, Jonna Schengel, Esbeydy Ruvalcaba, Nuvia Varela, Tami Olson

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Absent: Teri Dobson, Victoria Guzman, Misty Bond, Paul Prado, Jean Cardenas, Larriann Torrez

1. **Call to Order:** Esbeydy Ruvalcaba, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. **Public Comment:** Esbeydy Ruvalcaba, Vice Chair, called for public comments; there were no public comments.
3. **Consent Items:**
 - a. Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes
Approve February 26, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by John Werner and seconded by Aleyda Montenegro to approve the Consent Items. The motion carried by unanimous vote.
4. **Roundtable Discussion:** Partners shared brief updates, services and information.
5. **Regular Items:**
 - a. Employment Connection Partner Guide and Partner At-A-Glance Template Updates
The Employment Connection Partner Relationship Building Workgroup recommendation to Approve.
 - i. Update the Employment Connection Partner Guide to include an annual review and update schedule.

- ii. Update the Partner At-A-Glance Template to support consistent, customer-centered partner referrals and improve staff awareness of partner services and resources across the Employment Connection

A motion was made by Mary Rodarte and seconded by Carla Calhoun to approve the Employment Connection Partner Guide and Partner At-A-Glance Template Updates. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

b. Employment Connection Referral Process Improvements

The Employment Connection Customer Experience & Referral Data Collection & Use Workgroup recommendation to Approve:

- i. Update the Employment Connection Referral Guide to strengthen coordination, communication, and follow-through between partner organizations.
- ii. The Employment Connection Referral Process May to support consistent referral practices and improve customer navigation across the Employment Connection System.
- iii. The Customer Satisfaction Survey is part of the referral process to gather customer feedback and identify opportunities to improve coordination, service connection, and customer outcomes.

A motion was made by Carla Calhoun and seconded by Tami Olson to approve the Employment Connection Referral Process Improvements. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

c. Employment Connection System Training & Partner Learning

The Employment Connection Training & Professional Development Workgroup recommendation to Approve:

- i. 2026-28 Professional Development & Training Plan on four core training themes:
 - Communication with Success
 - Advanced Customer Service
 - Practical Trauma-Informed Service
 - Cross-training and System knowledge
- ii. Employment Connection System Training Navigator Model Guide to support engagement, knowledge sharing, and systemwide learning efforts.

A motion was made by Tami Olson and seconded by Aleyda Montenegro to approve the Employment Connection System Training & Partner Learning. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

6. One-Stop Operator Items:

- a. MOU Updates & FY 26/27 IFA Timeline
Edith Hernandez updated on the timeline.
- MOU updates to include new partners.
 - Timeline for the 2026-2027 Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).
 - Annual co-location assessments will be completed with participating partners before the final IFA is presented for approval.

7. Information/Discussion Items:

- a. Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Report
Jennie C. Bautista provided updates on the Workforce Investment Board activities including:
- Announcement of a \$1 million, two-year James Irvine Foundation grant to support workforce innovation through human-centered design.
 - Grant priorities include:
 - Improving access to quality jobs.
 - Strengthening sector partnerships.
 - Expanding partnerships with community-based organizations.
 - Increasing community engagement.
 - Supporting entrepreneurship initiatives.
 - Human-Centered Design Contract
The Board approved entering into a contract with Civic Makers to provide human-centered design services in support of the Irvine Foundation Initiative. staff explained that Civic Makers would partner with former Middle State staff to continue implementation activities.
 - Staff updates:
 - Diego Lopez joined the Youth Services team.
 - John Gonzalez was appointed Deputy Director of Operations.
 - Recognition of retiring committee members Carla Calhoun and Jonna Schengel. Both were recognized for their years of service and contributions to workforce development.
- b. Business Services Updates
Business Services staff Ryan Leasure reported:
- Multiple recruitment events and job fairs were successfully held, including:
 - Visalia Economic Development Job Fair
 - Porterville College Job Fair
 - Healthcare Job Fair

- Rapid Response services assisted businesses experiencing layoffs and closures.
- Sector Partnerships continue to focus on Industrial Partnership, Agriculture, and Healthcare
- Current initiatives include work-based learning, apprenticeships, healthcare career pathways, and employer engagement.

c. Employment Connection Center and OSO Reports (Handouts)

8. ECC Meeting Dates:

August 13, 2026, November 12, 2026

9. Good of the Order/Adjourn: There being no further business, Esbeydy Ruvalcaba, Vice Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.