



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF TULARE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Employment Connection Center – 4025 West Noble, Visalia
Thursday, February 20, 2025

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Present:

Robert Kleyn-Chair, Jennie Bautista, Aleyda Montenegro, Victoria Guzman, Michelle Engle-Silva, Jonna Schengel, Jean Contreras, Danielle Beckett, Gwen Schrank, John Werner, Larriann Torrez, Nuvia Varela, Darlene Tyndal, Carla Calhoun

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Absent:

Teri Dobson, Melissa Abby, Misty Bond, Tami Olson, Michelle Miller-Galaz, Randy Clem

1) **CALL TO ORDER:** Robert Kleyn called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

2) **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Robert Kleyn called for public comments; none were presented.

3) CONSENT ITEMS:

a) Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes

- i. Approve August 15, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes.
- ii. Approve November 21, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes
- iii. Approve January 22, 2025, Employment Connection System Theory of Change Meeting Minutes

Motion by Larriann Torrez, second by Aleyda Montenegro to approve the Consent Items; carried by unanimous vote.

4) REGULAR ITEM

Employment Connection System Theory of Change

Nicola Wissler updated on the EC System Theory of Change

- i. Accept the proposed Employment Connection System Theory of Change.
Nicola presented the finalized Employment Connection System Theory of Change. This included a challenge statement, six values, six strategies, and five outcomes. The document was the result of four partner workshops and broad engagement from system stakeholders. Carla Calhoun with CSET mentioned the importance of social capital as a complement to skills development.
- ii. The committee Recommend that the WIB Approve.

Motion by Larriann Torrez, second by Jennie Bautista, to accept the revised Employment Connection System Theory of Change incorporating language regarding social capital into the "lifelong skills development" value and recommend that the WIB approve; carried by unanimous vote.

5) ONE-STOP OPERATOR (OSO) ITEMS – Edith Hernandez

a) Employment Connection Memorandum of Understanding – Update and Timeline

- Purpose – functional tool and plan on how the WIB and Employment Connection partners will work together to create an integrated service delivery system to service shared customers.
- Review and update every three years.
- Effective July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028
- EC MOU Timeline

6) DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

a) WIB Executive Director Report

Jennie Bautista mentioned our Board approved the release of two RFPs, one for youth services and one for adult and dislocated worker services at our February 20th WIB meeting.

Adam Peck shared updates on federal guidance, executive orders, and implications for DEI/DEIA activities. No immediate changes are required, and the committee was advised to continue current practices until specific federal or state guidance is received. Updates were also provided on funding timelines, WIOA reauthorization.

Discussion on Priorities for the Employment Connection System Integration

Edith Hernandez discussed the five integration priorities that were reviewed.

- Relationship Development
- Shared Customer Focus
- Training and Professional Development
- Data Collection and Use
- Clarifying Roles and Expectations

Committee members provided feedback, emphasizing the importance of actionable definitions for each priority, potential use of data to support outcomes, and ways to ensure meaningful referral and partner engagement. An ad hoc group was formed to define priorities and help guide the next steps.

b) Business Services Updates – John Gonzalez

- Recruitment Assistance – Job Connect, Tulare County Job Fair, EDC
 - i. Job Fairs – Update
He also reported on recruitment assistance efforts, including a recent job fair co-hosted with the Fresno Economic Development Corporation that saw 965 attendees, and the

ongoing collaboration with the EDC for three job fairs annually. Event details are shared via email by Monica Andrade. If you're not currently on that distribution list and would like to receive updates or recruitment support opportunities, please reach out to John Gonzalez to be added.

- Rapid Response
 - i. JOANN will be closing its operations, impacting over 300 employees.
 - ii. Del Monte in Kings County closes in September, with the first phase in March (378 affected).
 - iii. Leprino West in Kings County location planned closure in 2026.
 - iv. Sequoia Brewing layoff response (60 employees).

Sector Partnership Committee meets on the second Friday of each month, Highlights included new partners in the Healthcare Partnership (e.g., Dept. of State Hospitals-Coalinga), efforts under the Good Jobs Challenge in the industrial sector, and the launch of an agriculture sector partnership focused on citrus. Upcoming reviews include quality assurance technician programs and career exploration planning for K-12.

c) Employment Connection Center and OSO Reports (*Handouts*)

7) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Members shared organizational news, new program offerings, and upcoming events including job fairs, expansions, new facility openings, and mental health initiatives.

8) ECC Meeting Dates – 2025 – May 15, 2025, August 21, 2025, and November 20, 2025

9) ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Robert Kleyn, at 11:41 a.m.