



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF TULARE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Employment Connection Center – 4025 West Noble, Visalia
Thursday, August 21, 2025**

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Present:

Jennie Bautista, Aleyda Montenegro, Michelle Engle-Silva, Jonna Schengel, Larriann Torrez, Carla Calhoun, Tami Olson, Misty Bond, Marco Vasquez

Employment Connection Committee (ECC) Members Absent:

Teri Dobson, Robert Kleyn-Chair, Michelle Miller-Galaz, John Werner, Victoria Guzman, Paul Prado, Jean Cardenas, Danielle Beckett

1) CALL TO ORDER: Jennie Bautista called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2) PUBLIC COMMENTS: Jennie Bautista called for public comments; none were presented.

3) CONSENT ITEMS:

- a) Employment Connection Committee Meeting Minutes
 - i. Approve May 15, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion by Larriann Torrez, seconded by Aleyda Montenegro, to approve the Consent Items; carried.

4) PARTNER PRESENTATION

Parenting Network, Inc.

Shawn Mooney shared an overview of Project Fatherhood, a Parenting Network program designed to engage fathers and promote family stability. Harlye Sanchez provided an overview of Parenting Network programs, which are now collocated at the Visalia Employment Connection. Handouts were presented on the Parenting Network programs and Project Fatherhood.

5) ONE-STOP OPERATOR (OSO) ITEMS

- a) ECC Meeting Date Update & 2026 Schedule

Edith Hernandez provided an update on the upcoming ECC meeting schedule. Due to scheduling conflicts, meetings will now be held on the second Thursday of each month.

- **Next Meeting (2025):** November 13, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- **Proposed 2026 Meeting Schedule** (10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)
 - February 12, 2026
 - May 14, 2026
 - August 13, 2026
 - November 12, 2026

b) PY 25-26 Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) with Employment Connection Partners at the Employment Connection Centers in Porterville and Visalia
Edith Hernandez provided an overview of the Employment Connection IFA timeline, approved by the Board on August 6, 2025. The agreement covers April through September 11, 2025, outlining key phases from partner areas assessments to final signatures. Partners are to return signed copies by September 11, 2025, to meet the MOU completion by September 15, 2025.

c) PY 24-25 Partner Referral Overview
Edith Hernandez provided an overview of the Partner Referral Activity for the 2024-2025 program year.

- 1,174 referrals to Employment Connection
- 420 Youth Services referrals
- 2253 Total Partner referrals

A handout was presented summarizing the referral data.

d) System Integration Workgroup Update
Edith Hernandez provided an update on the System Integration Workgroups and their designated leads:

1. **Partnership Relationship Building Workshops** - Lead: Aleyda Montenegro
2. **Customer Experience-Referral Data Collection and Use** - Jennie Bautista
3. **Training & Professional Development** - John Werner
 - Recommended addition: Denise Douglas (Porterville Adult School)

6) DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

a) WIB Executive Director Report
Adam Peck provided an update on federal and state workforce developments. America's Talent Strategy – U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education collaboration on workforce coordination and industry-driven approaches. Discussion on potential block grant consolidation of WIOA Title I-IV and related funding streams. Short-term Pell Grants have been approved, with rulemaking expected by July 2026. On-going California Master Plan for Career Education and regional coordination efforts. Adam announced his departure as WIB Executive Director, with Jennie Bautista to be appointed Interim Director pending approval by the Board of Supervisors.

A handout was presented on America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age and Adams' farewell gathering.

b) Employment Connection Rural and Balance of Counties Initiatives – Adult and Youth@work Programs

Tom Price with Middlestate and Desiree Landeros with WIB updated on the Rural Service Strategy and Rural Location by Region. They held two large group listening sessions, followed by smaller focus group discussions. Building strong, resilient communities requires holistic, trusted systems—not a patchwork of services.

c) Business Services Updates

Ryan Leisure updated on Business Services.

Recruitment Assistance –Job Connect:

- Upcoming 33rd Tulare County Job Fair - October 1, 2025, at the Visalia Convention Center from 9 AM to 12:00 PM. expecting 1,000-1,500 attendees.

Rapid Response:

- 40 businesses served, 4249 workers impacted; 1460 received individualized assistance. Outreach conducted across Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare, and Visalia

Sector Partnership Highlights:

- Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership: Planning the 2025 Multi-Sector Summit; focus on non-clinical healthcare roles.
- Tulare-King Industrial Partnership: Ongoing review of electrical automation technician programs and upcoming Industrial Summit- October 3, 2025, in Lemoore.
- Tulare-Kings Ag Skills Partnership: Continued collaboration with industry and schools to strengthen career pathways.

d) INNOVATORS by Design - Nicola Wissler

Save the Date: 2025 Innovators by Design (IBD) Conference, October 8, 2025, at the Visalia Convention Center

e) Employment Connection Center and OSO Reports (Handouts)

7) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Partners shared brief updates and expressed appreciation to Adam for his leadership and collaboration throughout his career.

8) ECC Meeting Dates – 2025 – November 13, 2025

9) ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Jennie Bautista at 11:37 a.m.