



**Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB)
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2026
2:00 P.M.**

EKWIB Members

Bruce Carpenter
Travis Cox
Tracey Smith
Ben Collier
Tonia Prewitt
Keith Gabbard - Chair
Mikeal Fannin
Tal Jones
Paul Dole – Proxy – Ali Hill
Brent Sturgill
Dennis Messer
Kevin Chesnut – Vice Chair
Vince Minix
DJ Washington
Jeff Johnson
Ron Frazier

EKCEP Staff

Rebecca Miller – Executive Director
Bridget Back
Tonya Collins
Cris Ritchie
Jordan Phipps
Sharon Poff
Travis Winkler
Ethan Phipps
Crissy Sexton
Melissa Williams
Theresa Noble

Absent EKWIB Members

Amy Greene Hope Potter Kim Asbury Jennifer Lindon Raymond Banks

Guests

Mike Fine Brian Fields

Minutes

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) held its quarterly meeting on June 10, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. The hybrid meeting was held at 145 Citizens Lane Hazard, Ky or via zoom (if requested).

Welcome & Call to Order

EKWIB's Chair, Keith Gabbard called the meeting to order. All board members were reminded to have their cameras on during roll call and voting. Chair Gabbard also asked board members to state their name as they made 1st or 2nd motions. The roll call resulted in 16 WIB members being in attendance. A quorum was established.

Approval of March 11, 2026 EKWIB Minutes

Chair Gabbard requested a motion to approve the March 11, 2026 EKWIB minutes. Brent Sturgill made the motion to approve the minutes. Jeff Johnson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

Introducing of new EKWIB Member

Rebecca Miller, EKCEP's Executive Director introduced and welcomed Ron Frazier, as a new EKWIB member representing the private sector from Harlan, Kentucky.

EKCEP Finance

Rebecca Miller discussed the PY26 Workforce Development Services Agreements with the Community Action Agencies throughout the EKCEP service area. A link to the agreements was included with the meeting agenda to allow EKWIB members the opportunity to review the documents prior to the meeting. Mrs. Miller explained that the Performance Metrics section of the agreements was marked "TBD" because the State has not yet provided the required performance metrics.

Chair Keith Gabbard called for a motion to approve the PY26 Workforce Development Services Agreements. Jeff Johnson made the motion to approve the agreements, and Tal Jones seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

Rebecca Miller introduced Tonya Collins, EKCEP Director of Accounting, to present the PY 2026–2027 WIOA budget. Mrs. Collins reviewed the proposed WIOA budget totaling \$15,035,544, noting that the budget reflects a reduction in funding due to a decrease in STORM funding. A copy of the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures was included in the meeting packet for the Board's review.

Tracey Smith made the motion to approve the PY 2026-2027 WIOA budget, and Vince Minix seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

Partnership Agreement

Mike Fine, EKCEP Legal Counsel, reviewed the Partnership Agreement between the EKCEP Board of Directors and the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB). He explained that the agreement remains current and continues to accurately reflect the partnership between the two boards. However, as a matter of best practice, the agreement is periodically reviewed and re-executed. Since no revisions were necessary, no board action was required. EKCEP Board Chair Gilbert Holland and EKWIB Chair Keith Gabbard will re-execute the agreement with the updated 2026 execution date.

Mr. Fine also informed the Board that, during the EKCEP Board of Directors meeting held earlier that day, the Board elected to re-elect its current officers to serve an additional three-year term. Gilbert Holland was re-elected as Chair, Keith Gabbard as Vice Chair, and Sharon Poff as Secretary.

KWIB Meeting in Hazard – August 27, 2026

Rebecca Miller reminded the attendees the next KWIB meeting will be held at our offices here in Hazard, Ky at 1:30.

SETA Fall Conference Louisville, Ky – August 30 – September 1, 2026

Rebecca Miller told the group that Kentucky has the honor of serving as the host state for the 2026 Fall SETA Conference. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor will be in attendance and will be presenting on topics of interest to conference attendees.

Rebecca Miller has asked that any Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) member who is interested in attending the conference please let me know.

EKCEP Program Overview

- Tonya Collins reviewed the third quarter of the program year expenditures. The expenditures reflect approximately 64.38% of the budget was expended through the third quarter of the program year.
- Bridget Back reviewed EKCEP's workforce services and provided an update on current program activity. She asked attendees to pay particular attention to the number of active clients being served across the agency's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs). Ms. Back reported that there are currently 1,334 active clients, representing approximately a 50% decrease from the level needed to meet program goals.

To address this decline, Mrs. Back explained that EKCEP staff will begin working with contractors to establish monthly enrollment goals designed to increase the number of active participants. She also noted that, with reduced funding levels, the agency must adapt its outreach strategy to maximize available resources.

As part of this contract year, Career Advisors are being encouraged to meet customers where they are by expanding community-based outreach efforts and

delivering services in locations that are more accessible and convenient for participants. The goal is to improve engagement, increase enrollment, and better serve individuals throughout the region.

Bridget Back discussed how productive the Prosper Appalachian program was in our region, both for the students and the employers. Business Services was also discussed.

- Cris Ritchie, EKCEP Director of Advancement, reviewed the Marketing and Outreach report that was included in the EKWIB packet. Cris Ritchie discussed several grant projects his department is currently working on.
- Ethan Phipps, Recovery & Reentry Director shared the statistics for the prior quarter.
- Travis Winkler, IT Director, discussed cyber security and AI.

DOL Ranking

Rebecca Miller discussed the U.S. Department of Labor's workforce performance rankings for workforce development boards across the nation and noted that a link to the rankings was included in the meeting agenda. She reported that EKCEP ranked 21st in adults serviced last year. This year EKCEP ranked 8th in the nation, based on the number of adults served.

Lightcast Presentation - ROI

Jade Rohloff of Lightcast presented the PY2025-2026 ROI study performed for EKCEP.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Gabbard requested a motion to adjourn. Tal Jones made the motion. Ben Collier seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none opposed. The motion carried.

The next meeting will be on September 9, 2026