



Jobs and Workforce Development Workgroup Minutes

January 22, 2025, 1:30PM – 3:00PM

Boone Electric Community Building (1413 Rangeline, Columbia MO) and virtually via Zoom

Attendees: Ray Hall (Dream Tree Academy), Tara Shade (Woodhaven), Lisa Driskel-Hawxby (Regional Economic Development Inc (REDI)), Miles Gibson (First Last Mile), Lester Woods (Urban Empowerment), Russ Unger (MO Works Initiative), Beatrice Stewart (Flourish), Katie Siegel (Columbia Public Schools), Liz Sensintaffar (Job Point), Nikki Chilton (Saint Louis University), Leslie White (Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD), Emilio Ayala Youngblood (BCCSD), Kerby Webb (BCCSD)

Meeting Objective: Continue to Plan 2025 Jobs and Workforce Development Workgroup Efforts

1. Welcome and Introductions

Lisa welcomed all attendees and opened the floor for introductions. Lisa gave a brief overview of Upward Mobility, the Jobs and Workforce workgroup, and past efforts and developments.

2. Follow up from last meeting

The workgroup looked at the Workgroup Plan document that was worked on last meeting, which includes strategies and action steps along with notes on who is responsible for working toward each specific task.

3. 2025 Workgroup Plan Review and Updates

Members who were present at the previous meeting gave a summary of what their strategy focus group discussed in regard to the Workgroup Plan document. There was discussion among the group on any additions that should be reflected in the Workgroup Plan.

The work group discussed different assessments available related to career paths. One of the places to access assessments discussed by the workgroup was [Missouri Connections](#), noting it used by Columbia Public Schools and other local organizations. The workgroup discussed the need to collect data to better understand what is happening locally and address opportunities for further collaboration. Examples of challenges employers are sharing about hiring and retaining employees were mentioned, noting the potential for further communication about available programs in the community which support those in or entering the workforce could be beneficial to more widely share with businesses.

Liz shared about a program at the Job Center which offers [Federal Bonding](#) to incentivize employers to hire individuals which might be considered at-risk job seekers. The workgroup discussed the potential to spend time at upcoming meetings learning more about available programs to compile in a living document the workgroup can utilize and share with others.

4. Next Steps

Love Columbia will have their Manufacturing page go live on their website. There will be a website preview at the next meeting with hopes to move onto construction or healthcare pages next.



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5. Closing

a. Partner Updates

- Columbia Public Schools will be partnering with QuesTec to have a career night for high school juniors and seniors on February 19 from 6:00pm-8:00pm. [Sign up](#) is required.
- [The Source Summit Global](#) will be having a roundtable on February 11 at 10:00am.
- Four areas Columbia Chamber of Commerce is focused on related to jobs and workforce were described.
 - [Business In Motion Expo](#) on April 17.
 - [Show Me Careers](#) in June 2025, which is a Missouri Chamber initiative, is a program to provide a hands-on learning experience on career pathways to educators.
 - [World of Works](#) in October 2025, will provide a direct connection between students and businesses through activities to experience different fields.
 - Boomerang is a marketing campaign to target working age individuals with a connection to Columbia to provide education about local career opportunities.
- The City of Columbia wanted to share information on their [CARE Program](#).
- Columbia College will host the Black Business Expo on February 1 from 11:00am to 2:00pm.
- Russ gave an update on the [Missouri Works Initiative](#), which offers programs to introduce and train individuals in trades.
- Nikki provided information on the [Saint Louis University Transformative Workforce Academy](#) expanding to Columbia. There is currently an open position for an Employment Specialist, and they are seeking someone with lived experience.
- Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry is hosting a free [Fair Chance Hiring Academy](#) in Jefferson City February 26-27 which provides employers with information to support providing second chances. Registration is open with limited spaces and individuals are encouraged to share this opportunity with others in the business community.
- The Missouri Security Operations Center (MOSOC) is hosting a paid 8-week certification program for individuals in their senior year of high school to age 24 to learn about physical security training.

b. Comments and Questions

It was recognized that the Fair Chance Academy in Jefferson City will create a conflict in schedule with the next workgroup meeting. Prior to adjourning, the workgroup discussed there might be potential changes to the content and location for the next meeting. Email updates to the workgroup were planned once this was finalized.

Next Meeting: February 26, 2025, 1:30PM-3:00PM, in the Friends Room at Columbia Public Library (100 W Broadway, Columbia, MO 65203) or virtually [via Zoom](#).