



**NEW ORLEANS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA
June 30, 2026 | 11:00AM
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Members Present

Allen Square
Chris Bardell
Charlene Bonck
Desiree Stelly Bordenave
Thelma French
Danielle Garrett
Claire Jecklin
Rachel Mackey
Andrew O'Brien, Sr.
Peter Pappas
Jerry Repka
Rodney Wallis
Allyson Wilson

Members Absent

Gregory Curtis
Melissa Hopson (virtual)
Mikal Anderson
Dottie Belletto
Angelle Hava
Floyd James
Carla Major
Jeffery Martin
Chante Rice-Graham
Jeffrey Schwartz (virtual)
Stacey Shepperson
Arlanda Williams-Smith

Staff and Guest

Tammie Washington
Neia Limar
Karmen McKinley
Jason DeGruy
Icesiss Guy
Priscilla Cheatham

I. Welcome

11:16am Secretary Allen Square welcomed the Board. Ms. Limar advised that a quorum had not been met. Mr. Allen called for summary reports to be provided by subcommittees until a quorum is established.

II. Operator Report

JOB1 Project Director, Jason DeGruy, reintroduced himself to the Board and presented the Operator Report highlighting JOB1's Training team met 156% of their Adult Training goal with 133 actual out of a goal of 85. Adult and Dislocated Worker programs close the program year with strong performance, exceeding the overall WIOA enrollment goal with 553 enrollments against a goal of 550, achieving 101% of target.

The Business Solutions Department exceeded in three of four measurable goals, falling short by one in the number of Enrolled in OJTs/Transitional Jobs. The number of Hiring Events/Job Fairs met 152% of the goal. JOB1, in partnership with the Office of Workforce Development, has joined with the Global

Black Economic Forum during ESSENCE to host a job fair and bring leading agencies and workforce resources directly to the residents of New Orleans. This collaboration is designed to strengthen community engagement, enhance visibility of JOB1's mission, and ensure that individuals are fully informed of the employment opportunities and comprehensive workforce services available to them.

The Youth Works program hosted the Young Adult Career Expo on Friday, June 5, 2026. The event successfully connected young adults with valuable career and workforce opportunities. The expo welcomed 566 attendees and featured a combined total of 50 partner organizations, demonstrating strong community engagement and collaboration. Through networking opportunities, resource sharing, and direct interaction with employers, training providers, and community resources, the event helped participants explore career pathways and build connections to support future success. The Youth Works department met and/or surpassed target goals in four out of five measurable areas, achieving 90% in Training Placements.

The Pathway Home IV/RESTORE Reentry Program successfully reached the program enrollment goal of 150 participants and is currently following up with enrolled participants to connect them with Supportive Services. Ongoing case management continues to identify participant barriers and connect participants to training opportunities and job placement. The RESTORE Team also assists formerly incarcerated individuals who visit the JOB1 Center seeking reentry support and other services, regardless of their enrollment status in the RESTORE Program. Tracking individuals previously incarcerated within the Orleans Parish Prison system has presented difficulties as much of their contact information is incorrect or outdated.

Mr. Square suggested Mr. DeGruy's team utilize The First 72+ and additionally extended the invitation to be contacted directly to assist the RESTORE Team.

Ms. French stated that she will provide information regarding the next Reentry Task Force meeting to Mr. DeGruy. He confirmed that he will attend the meeting along with other JOB1 staff members.

Mr. DeGruy continued his report noting the ARPA Supportive Services as completed 141 request (114 for Document Assistance and 27 Transportation Assistance). Supportive Services funds are close to being fully expended. Requests will continue to be processed until funds are 100% exhausted.

Ms. Guy presented the One-Stop Operator report. Wellness Wednesdays is a program that was created and launched to enhance Walk-In Wednesday efforts for the community. JOB1 had 100% positive participant and partner feedback and was additionally recognized during State Monitoring as a model practice for disability and mental health services. Adult Education through Delgado Community College has been reestablished with on-site HiSET classes (Tues & Thurs) and HiSET Math Tutoring (Thurs). The JOB1/Delgado partnership implemented orientations, referral workflows, and enrollment support to improve participant success for Adult HiSET. Ms. Guy also noted that the Disability Services Workshop is offered to the community on the 2nd Wednesday each month. JOB1 partnered and collaborated with Inspire NOLA for a Resource Fair at Alice M. Harte Charter School in the Algiers Community and with National Association for Hispanic Elderly (NAFHE) to place Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participants, two of which are currently in house at JOB1 as subsidized workers.

Mr. DeGruy closed the Operator Report stating that the Office of Workforce Development and JOB1 are waiting for the funding allocation from the State of Louisiana. An explanation of plans for the upcoming program year will be presented to the Board once more budget information is received.

Ms. Guy mentioned that JOB1 is in the process of finalizing the MOU/IFA renewal for July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029. There are a few signatures that are still pending. Once the final three signatures have been received, the MOU/IFA will be forwarded to Ms. Washington in OWD and then sent to the State for a second set of signatures.

The goal is to complete this task by the end of business day today.

Mr. Square noted that the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office is approximately 200 deputies short and encouraged Mr. DeGruy to reach out to all departments when JOB1 makes contact.

Ms. Jecklin congratulated JOB1 on the continuous improvement and robust response to the State's last monitoring review in the area of inclusivity.

III. Committee Reports

Youth Committee

Youth Committee Chair, Claire Jecklin, reported that committee met on May 6th. The Youth & Young Adult Expo was held on Friday, June 5th from 10am – 1pm. There were 21-22 young adults in training, 7-8 more in the pipeline to start training, and 38 young adults who were assigned to various employees throughout the city. At the time of this committee meeting, there were roughly 900 applicants for the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. There were at least 100 employer partners who planned to host youth employees and/or interns. The committee also discussed initiatives to loop in all youth programs into a centralized database. The group also spoke about the value of working with guidance counselors and administrators to make them aware of programs and opportunities available to young people and families. Another initiative the committee discussed centered around incentives to entice more employer partnerships. She further added ideas including entrepreneurship, financial literacy, training, and a potential youth business incubator program that would culminate in pitch competitions were also discussed.

Programs & Services Committee

Programs & Services Committee Chair, Thelma French, reported that the Programs & Services Committee met on May 27th. JOB1 has been working with Ms. Bonck with the Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services on addressing the prior year's deficiency regarding outreach to disabled individuals in enrollment. Ms. French congratulated the One-Stop Operator and the JOB1 team for progressing from a deficiency to being recognized as a model example of inclusiveness. She noted that the committee discussed the State's proposed One Door policy and the pilot program in the Florida Parishes. She advised that close attention be paid to the progress of Governor Landry's suggested policy as it will consolidate federally mandated programs that support workforce therefore changing the landscape for local workforce boards. She cautioned that a significant impact would be realized as New Orleans is the largest municipality in the state. Ms. French further noted that several governors from other states have not received responses from the USDOL regarding the waiver requests that were submitted and have interpreted that lack of response as an affirmative to move forward. She advised that closer attention to policy level decisions around funding and the discretionary use of funding be

priority as Governor Landry signed a bill on June 29th into law that didn't have a majority vote. She stated that she hopes to be able to present more information at the next full Board meeting relating to the language of the One Door policy and how it will affect the local workforce.

Business Engagement Committee

Mr. Pappas presented the Business Engagement Committee minutes from the last meeting that was held on May 13th. He stated that Ms. Cheatham shared updates with the committee on the progress of the NOLA Connects initiative. The committee also discussed next steps to the Employer Survey. There are plans to have a short series of virtual meetings with the business representatives who participated in the survey to ask more probing questions related to their responses. The committee also discussed plans to clarify any misconceptions about the programs and services provided by JOB1 that the public or business employers may have.

Ms. Stelly suggested utilizing a liaison to help educate the public and employers to make the task easier and more convenient for individuals and employer partners to learn more about JOB1.

Ms. Jecklin offered to assist in getting more Employer Survey feedback from sectoral employers through help from Christina Kent with the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

Ms. Limar, Board Manager confirmed that a quorum had been established.

Secretary Square noted there were no available updates from the Chairman, and called for approval of the minutes from the April 21, 2026 Full Board Meeting.

Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2026

Motion by: Andrew O'Brien

Second by: Rodney Wallis

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

IV. Staff Updates

Deputy Director Tammie Washington provided updates from the Office of Workforce Development (OWD). She reintroduced Jeffrey Schwartz as the new Deputy Mayor for Economic Development as Dr. Jenny Mains transitioned into a new role. She advised the Board that the City of New Orleans had not yet received Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) budget allocations that are the funding source for JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center. The new program year is set to start tomorrow, July 1st, and run through June 30, 2027. She shared a message that was received via email from Louisiana Works on Friday, June 26th that stated "Please know that we have not received Dislocated and Adult award notifications from the Department of Labor. After we receive the notifications, we will share the timeline of communicating allocation." This status update from Louisiana creates significant obstacles for planning the 2026 program year. The JOB1 and OWD teams have examined the remaining funding that is available to avoid any lapse in services. The programs and services provided by JOB1 are managed by an outside contractor, Equus, whose contract ends today, June 30th. Equus is not required to operate JOB1 past June 30th. The projected budget totals remaining in Equus' contract are as follows: Adult funding = \$0, Dislocated Worker = \$45K, Youth = \$154K. The approximate budget Equus would need for one month of staff costs is \$90K. The OWD considered providing Equus a Letter of

Intent for one month to avoid any lapse in services available to the community. The OWD is seeking the Board's support to provide the Letter of Intent to Equus while it awaits allocations from Louisiana Works.

Ms. French asked if the available balances in the different program funds transferrable. Ms. Washington indicated that funds can move between the Adult program and the Dislocated Worker program however, Youth funds are not transferrable. There is also an ARPA grant for supportive services that some staff costs can be charged to when staff work on those activities.

Secretary Square inquired about the City of New Orleans' (CNO) stance on the situation and whether the Board had faced the scenario of a funding lapse before. He noted that a Letter of Intent would obligate the CNO to fund one month of operating costs.

Ms. French clarified that the Board was being requested to recommend the CNO authorize a Letter of Intent to Equus to renew their contract and utilize existing funding to operate for 30 days.

Secretary Square determined that two motions would be needed from the Board: (1) a motion recommending the CNO authorize a Letter of Intent for Equus to operate for the next 31 days and (2) a motion for Equus to utilize the existing funding for the next 31 days.

Approval to recommend the City of New Orleans authorize a Letter of Intent to Equus

Motion by: Thelma French

Second by: Peter Pappas

Two Abstentions: Rachel Mackey and Charlene Bonck

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

Approval to authorize the NOWDB Executive Committee endorsement of allocations for the 2026 Program Year

Motion by: Andrew O'Brien

Second by: Jerry Repka

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

Ms. Washington continued her report stating that the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program continues to do well. The first round of payroll was successfully processed last Friday, June 26th without any complications. There were exactly 1,013 youth employees hired into the program this summer. The MSYEP will end on July 10th for traditional youth enrollees and on July 24th for interns. A celebratory event will be held at JOB1 to culminate the end of the 2026 MSYEP. A previous donation of five laptops that were slated to be given away as prizes at the event has been rescinded and Ms. McKinley, the Director of MSYEP, requested the Board's help in identifying a potential replacement donor for the devices.

The MSYEP Team will have over 50 young adults interning at the Essence Festival where they will learn about different aspects of the festival's production and operations. Additionally, Ms. Cheatham, Mr. DeGruy and the JOB1 Team will be partnering with Global Economic Forum and Academy for Excellence who will host the Essence Festival Job Fair. JOB1 will be assisting with attracting local employers and event staffing. The job fair will be held at the New Orleans Convention Center on Friday, July 3rd and Saturday, July 4th between 10AM – 3PM.

Ms. Washington concluded her update with the status of the Louisiana Works annual monitoring visit from March 2026. A preliminary FY25 WIOA Monitoring Review Exit Memorandum was received on June 22nd. The OWD has 15 days to respond before a final report is issued to Mayor Moreno. The overall report was favorable and did not include any programmatic findings. Two administrative findings were cited. One of the administrative findings that local workforce boards statewide were issued related to board composition. The finding requires that select NOWDB members who represent human resources for their organization prove that they have optimal decision-making authority or hiring authority for their company. The 2nd administrative finding related to updating inventory with current federal identification numbers. There were four fiscal findings. The first addressed a lack of supervisory signature on the former Director's timesheets. The CNO Audit received two of the findings: (1) a budget variance and (2) late submission. The OWD will submit a response to Louisiana Works on behalf of the CNO. The fourth fiscal finding requires backup documentation for monthly expenditures.

V. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

VI. Open Discussion

Mr. Pappas announced that DXC Technology hosted their 3rd workshop welcoming high-school students representing the STEM NOLA Fellows project that helps train the future of IT workforce in New Orleans. The students work alongside DXC Technology professionals to learn how to solve real-world digital challenges. The workshops focus heavily on workforce readiness, innovation, and digital transformation, equipping local youth with the skills needed for careers in the technology and business sectors.

Ms. Guy noted that Goodwill was added as a mandated partner for the Second Chance Act.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by: Claire Jecklin

Second by: Desiree Stelly

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

Meeting adjourned at 11:48am