



**NEW ORLEANS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA
October 7, 2025 | 11:00AM
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Members Present

Gregory Curtis
Melissa Hopson
Charlene Bonck
Angelle Hava
Floyd James
Rachel Mackey
Carla Major
Andrew O'Brien, Sr.
Peter Pappas
Chante' Rice-Graham
Allen Square
Rodney Wallis
Arlanda Williams
Allyson Wilson

Members Absent

Mikal Anderson
Chris Bardell
Dottie Belletto
Desiree Stelly Bordenave
Thelma French
Danielle Garrett
Claire Jecklin
Jeffrey Martin
Jerry Repka
Jeffrey Schwartz
Stacey Shepperson

Staff and Guest

Tyra Johnson Brown
Tammie Washington
Neia Limar
Sabrina Johnson
Karmen McKinley
Torrie Jakes
Leonard Zanders
Icesiss Guy

Board Members who attended the meeting virtually: Jeffrey Schwartz and Mikal Anderson

I. Chairman Welcome

11:11am Chairman Curtis called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Board Manager Neia Limar confirmed that a quorum had been met.

III. Chairman Updates

Chairman Curtis opened the floor for comments. Mr. Pappas re-raised the topic of changing the optics of NOWDB and JOB1. A discussion was had around changing the public's perception that JOB1 functions as a place for the unemployed population to receive public assistance instead of a place for employers to find new talent and job seekers to gain skills and training. Mr. Curtis responded that serving as a "triage" for businesses and job seekers is one of the functions that the NOWDB and JOB1 provides. He reiterated that the goal is to convey that JOB1 is here to serve individuals needing gainful employment and employers looking to expand their businesses. Mr.

Square added to the discourse noting that more attention should be given to the ease of participation for businesses to become engaged and involved with the employment programs that are available with JOB1. Ms. Washington remarked that the State (LA) has created a more regional business service model to help workforce agencies stay engaged with businesses. A healthy discussion was had around the topic.

Chairman Curtis acknowledged and welcome the newest member to the NOWDB, Carla Major, Chief Human Resources Officer with Delgado Community College.

Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Meeting Minutes from August 5, 2025

Motion by: Arlanda Williams

Second by: Andrew O'Brien

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

IV. Staff Updates

Office of Housing Policy, Community & Workforce Development Director, Tyra Johnson Brown, reported staff changes within the Office of Workforce Development (OWD). The Business Strategies Manager position has been eliminated due to the lack of grant funding. Also, the Hire NOLA & Living Wage Coordinator position has been transferred to the Department of Supplier Diversity. The responsibilities for the Business Engagement Committee that were previously held by the Business Strategies Manager will be turned over to Ms. Limar. The budget hearings for the City of New Orleans are scheduled to start on October 14th with Workforce and Community Development scheduled to appear before the Council on October 22nd. Ms. Johnson-Brown noted that there are concerns related to the sustainability of the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program due to the budget deficit. More information will be available after the final budget has been adopted on December 1st. She added that, as of right now, there has been no financial impact to Workforce Development as a result of the federal shutdown. Additionally, notification from the US Department of Labor was received announcing that the Pathway Home Reentry grant was determined to be "low risk" and that there will be no scheduled monitoring. She also reported that the Louisiana Workforce Commission has officially changed their name to Louisiana Works as of October 1st. The Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), Workforce Development, and Employment & Training Services are now under the supervision of Louisiana Works. The State (LA) is currently making plans to house DCFS Workforce Development services within local American Jobs Centers (AJC). The State will be surveying local AJCs to determine the availability of office space to accommodate their staff. The preliminary PY24 WIOA Performance Report has been received from Louisiana Works that states Louisiana Workforce Development Area 12 (Orleans Parish) is "exceeding or meeting" all performance measures. A final report will be presented to the Board once it becomes available. The Fall Internship cycle of the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) has started and is currently operating with 81 participants. The Fall Internship Program will run until November 14th. Ms. Johnson-Brown concluded her report by announcing that recruitment efforts are presently underway for the 2026 MSYEP with the target of gaining 25 new businesses to expand the placement and career exploration opportunities for youth in the fields of healthcare, engineering, technology, and green infrastructure.

Vice Chair Hopson asked Director McKinley about the composition of MSYEP business employers. Ms. McKinley confirmed that there were 150 MSYEP business employers in 2025. The suggestion was made that the Business Engagement Committee survey that previously did not yield a significant response be emailed to the current MSYEP business employers.

V. Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Finance Chair, Floyd James reported that expenditure reports will be available by the next NOWDB meeting in December. He added that the active office lease agreement which is set to expire at the end of 2025 is currently being reviewed. Ms. Johnson-Brown confirmed that the CNO attorneys are looking over details of the lease and it is projected that a lease will be in place in time.

Youth Committee

Youth Committee Chair, Claire Jecklin, was unable to attend the meeting. In her absence, Ms. Limar reported that the committee discussed the successes and highlights of the 2025 MSYEP and Fall Internship. It was determined that, due to budget restraints, the Fall Internship Program could not enroll additional business partners and/or participants at this time. Chairman Curtis recommended more publication and media attention be placed on the successes of MSYEP to highlight the positive impact that the program has had in the community.

Programs & Services

Programs & Services Committee Chair, Thelma French, was unable to attend the meeting. In her absence, Ms. Mackey reported that the Assistant Secretary of Louisiana Works charged workforce systems and community partners to examine their responses and assistance for current recipients of Medicaid in relation to their compliance and/or volunteer hours. Ms. French surveyed the Head Start parents in the Total Community Action programs and identified at least 600 families that would be considered vulnerable, many of whom were not unemployed but rather under-employed. A discussion was had about the status of ARPA funds. The committee spoke at length about Louisiana Works' area of concern regarding the ineffective community engagement with customers with disabilities. A conversation was had around issues from handicap accessible parking, entryways into the building, ease of access to programs and events on the 2nd and 3rd floor, and how these matters can be rectified. Additionally, Ms. Mackey announced that there will be a youth-focused hiring event at JOB1 on November 5th. She also acknowledged the shutdown of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) which will result in the employment termination of 66 senior workers. During the close of the meeting, Ms. French made the recommendation to have an informational session around which services are available to individuals with disabilities.

Chair Curtis reminded members of the Board to join one of the NOWDB subcommittees to actively participate in the discussions that

VI. Operator Report

Director Zanders reported that Equus is working with OWD to finalize the budget and goals for PY2026. He highlighted that the Career Services Department had over 140 persons enrolled into programs and more than 230 placements which exceeded the goal for the 1st Quarter. He announced that JOB1 had an ARPA training program that launched last program year at the beginning of 2025 of which more than 100 individuals have enrolled. The ARPA Earn & Learn

initiative has had more than 80 people to sign up with an additional 75-100 eligible individuals. The Earn & learn program is hosted through NMC, a third-party entity, who also hosts the migrant initiative and the work experience initiative. The Business Solutions team hosted their national Workforce Development Career & Training event on September 17th where more than 500 people attended and 200 enlisted for training. The Youth program has realized more than 20 youth enroll for work experience this program year and an additional 20 youth who have received placements. More than 100 work permits were issued during the month of September, which makes a total of more than 400 work permits for the 1st Quarter. The Restore program received a favorable report and currently has 142 enrollments out of a goal of 158. Participants are being referred through partnership with Judge Nandi Campbell and the Orleans Parish Criminal Court by way of the Rise After Release program. A Supportive Services initiative within the Restore program is underway to supply individuals with necessary toiletries, transportation, and housing assistance. Conversations with the CNO Sanitation Department are moving the Mardi Gras initiative forward along with a new recycling component. The federal government shutdown has impacted JOB1's ability to access the Selective Service website that is used to vet males eligible for the required WIOA training and the High Poverty Area website used to determine youth that are classified in that category. Mr. Zanders emphasized that JOB1 **exceeded** all but two performance metrics during PY24. He concluded his report by addressing the concerns raised by Mr. Pappas regarding JOB1's employer narrative. Mr. Zanders suggested using social media and JOB1's website to provide a profile of each NOWDB member to call attention to the organizations they represent and the overall composition of the NOWDB. He also offered to re-release or generate a new employer survey on behalf of the Business Engagement Committee. Additionally, he offered to incorporate a webpage designated for the NOWDB on the existing JOB1 website.

VII. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

VIII. Open Discussion

Ms. Limar advised the Board that NOWDB meeting dates for 2026 will be established and provided at the next scheduled board meeting in December. She also announced that the date of the December 2nd meeting will be rescheduled to another date during the first week of December. She closed her comments by informing Board members of the committees that are available for them to join; Youth Committee, Business Engagement, Finance, and Programs & Services.

Ms. Mackey raised a question regarding Job Corp having a representative on the NOWDB. Ms. Washington confirmed that Job Corps is a mandated partner but they are not required to have a seat on the Board. NOWDB's partnership with GNO Inc. was also briefly discussed.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by: Andrew O'Brien

Second by: Arlanda Williams

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04pm