



**NEW ORLEANS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

NOWDB Full Board
JOB1 Business and Career Solutions Center
1307 Oretha Castle Haley – New Orleans, LA
December 3, 2025 | 11:00AM
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Members Present

Melissa Sparks
Mikal Anderson
Chris Bardell
Charlene Bonck
Danielle Garrett
Angelle Hava
Floyd James
Claire Jecklin
Rachel Mackey
Carla Major
Andrew O’Brien, Sr.
Peter Pappas
Jerry Repka
Allen Square
Rodney Wallis
Arlanda Williams-Smith

Members Absent

Gregory Curtis
Dottie Belletto
Desiree Stelly Bordenave
Thelma French
Jeffery Martin
Chante Rice-Graham
Jeffrey Schwartz
Stacey Shepperson
Allyson Wilson

Staff and Guest

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

I. Vice-Chair Welcome

11:09am Vice-Chair Missy Hopson called the meeting to order. Ms. Hopson advised the Board that she would be presiding today’s meeting due to Chairman Curtis being unable to attend and that Deputy Director Tammie Washington would be proving the Staff Updates in Director Tyra Johnson Brown’s absence.

II. Roll Call

Board Manager Neia Limar completed roll call. Board members Chante Rice-Graham and Stacey Shepperson attended the meeting virtually.

III. Vice-Chair Updates

Vice-Chair Hopson advised the group that movement on Action Items would be delayed until there was a sufficient number of Board members present to have a quorum. She reminded the Board to complete their annual Louisiana Board of Ethics Training online and to forward their Certificate of Completion to Ms. Limar. She advised that penalties and fines could result as a failure to complete. She added that the Financial Disclosure Form deadline is also approaching in May 2026. She encouraged Board members to finalized these two items in order to stay in compliance with the State of Louisiana. Ms. Hopson asked members to acknowledge the 2026 calendar of NOWDB meeting dates that were provided in their packets. She encouraged members to select one of the four subcommittees (Programs & Services, Finance, Business Engagement, and Youth) to serve on and to confirm their selections with Ms. Limar. Vice-Chair Hopson confirmed that quorum had been met and addressed the Action Item on the agenda.

Approval of the NOWDB Full Board Meeting Minutes from October 7, 2025

Motion by: Rodney Wallis

Second by: Claire Jecklin

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

IV. Staff Updates

Deputy Director Tammie Washington reported that the City Council approved the 2026 budget. She thanked the Board members who attended the budget hearing and offered a testimonial in support of the programs and services provided by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and JOB1. Announcement of the City's final budget is pending and notice of the impact on the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) is still unknown. Louisiana Works held an Entrance Conference this morning to start the comprehensive review of administrative, programmatic and financial activities of the local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs for Fiscal Year 2025. The OWD will submit all required documentation to Louisiana Works and will keep the Board apprised throughout the monitoring process. Additionally, Louisiana Works will be conducting on-site focus groups at the JOB1 American Job Center to gain feedback from employers and job seekers to improve processes and customer service. The goal is to host the focus groups with employers and job seekers during the 1st Quarter of 2026. The focus groups will be hosted in each workforce region. Louisiana Works will hold a meeting with the local areas to further review the plans for the initiative. Ms. Washington stated that the MSYEP Fall Internship successfully ran from September 22nd to November 14th, employing 80 participants across diverse worksites, including City departments and community partners like Smoothie King and the UNO Scan Lab. She concluded by acknowledging the end to the federal government shut down. There were no financial implications to JOB1 programs. The OWD has continued to submit all required fiscal and programmatic reports without any delays or issues. She directed attention to JOB1's 2024-2025 annual report which was included in the meeting packet.

V. Committee Reports

Youth Committee

Youth Committee Chair Claire Jecklin reported that the committee met on November 17th and discussed Youth Works Program updates highlighting the increased interest in HiSET Diploma Program, 16 participants enrolled in the WEX work experience, and the upcoming Young Adult Expo scheduled for Spring 2026. Expansion of the TABE testing capacities were discussed as well as the aforementioned results of the Fall Internship program. She announced that additional professional development workshops will be offered as part of the 2026 MSYEP. Recruitment of business partners is ongoing to provide more opportunities and options for youth who will be participating in the MSYEP 2026. The Youth Committee will meet again on January 7, 2026.

Business Engagement

Business Engagement Chair Dr. Arlanda Williams-Smith reported that the committee met on November 13th and discussed the previously released employer survey. A conversation was had around how to increase response to the survey and improve the effectiveness of the feedback received from the survey. The suggestion was made to present the email as a sweepstakes offering the chance to win prizes as a result of completing the survey. Other suggestions such as hosting round table chats and panel discussions were also considered. The committee also discussed recruiting more members. The group agreed that an invitation to Board members Rodney Willis and Andrew O'Brien should be extended to balance to dynamics of industry representation. The committee will meet again on January 14, 2026.

Vice Chair Hopson offered the suggestion to have Board members include a cover letter over their signature with the email employer survey to help increase the responsiveness.

Board Secretary Allen Square asked for clarity on the survey's objective. Dr. Williams confirmed that the survey's intent is to garner an understanding of the hiring needs of employers and businesses in the local area to help shape training and service programs. Board member Peter Pappas added that another byproduct of the survey would be redirecting Human Resources from focusing on job titles on applicant resumes to acknowledging the skill set that job candidates bring. Board member Carla Major endorsed the need to expand the focus for Human Resources and Talent Acquisition when considering new hires. A healthy discussion was had around the topic.

Finance Committee

Finance Chair Floyd James reported that the Finance Committee met on November 25th to discuss the expenditures through October 31, 2025. The overall expenditure rate for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs stands at 27.66%. Of the total grant funding, 30% of the carryover funds remain and 80% of the current PY25 allocation is still available. The expenditure rate could be higher however, administrative guidance recommended to reduce spending through December 2025 due to the city's ongoing cash flow challenges. The building lease is set to expire on December 31, 2025 and is currently under review by the Law Department. If approved, a change in janitorial service responsibility-from the Lessor to the Lessee- will take effect. A funding request for janitorial services has been included in the 2026 budget proposal currently under City Council review. The Pathway IV grant continues to enroll participants and goals to meet the grant's enrollment targets are optimistic.

VI. Operator Report

Director Zanders reported that the Adult & Dislocated Workers program has 206 enrollments, 383 job placements, 55 training placements and 73 participants have attained credentials. JOB1 celebrated the graduation of the lineman program, which is done in collaboration with Delgado, Entergy and other regional companies that need linemen. Additionally, JOB1 and the New Orleans Culinary and Hospitality Institute (NOCHI) have worked to support five training participants in their cohort who have also recently graduated. The Business Solutions Department reported that there are currently 8 transitional job participants through the program year. JOB1 is excited to launch the NOLA Connects initiative on December 10th in partnership with Goodwill in New Orleans East to host a city-wide job fair that is specifically targeting employers and job seekers in the New Orleans East area. This job fair will be the first of three. Plans for job fairs on the Westbank and the Lower 9th Ward are underway. Additionally, online registration for Mardi Gras Cleanup has begun and in-person registration will take place in January 2026. Mr. Zanders reported that the Youth Works program has 31 enrollments, 25 job placements, 10 training placements and 780 work permits issued. A total of one hundred permits were generated and issued in November to youth who secured employment opportunities. Five young adult participants earned recognized credentials and secured employment within their chosen career pathways. He noted that registration and enrollment for the Pathway Home IV/RESTORE grant continues through December 2025. Thus far there have been 61 participants who were released and 22 participants who have secured employment. Follow up support will be offered in 2026. Mr. Zanders highlighted the success of the ARPA Training and Supportive Service programs: expanded Training Scholarships, "Earn and Learn" stipends, Transportation Assistance in partnership with Uber for Rideshare assistance, Documentation Assistance in collaboration with ABC Title of Uptown. He concluded his report by sharing that the State of Louisiana gave recognition to JOB1 for effectively issuing 1,700 work permits in 2024.

VII. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

VIII. Open Discussion

Ms. Limar advised the Board that calendar invitations for all 2026 NOWDB meetings will be emailed before December 31st.

Ms. Washington noted that any omission of Board member names in the JOB1 Annual Report would be corrected and a PDF of the corrected version will be emailed.

Ms. Jecklin inquired about the impacts of the change in mayoral administration on the composition of the NOWDB. Ms. Washington stated that the Mayor can review the current Board of Directors and make changes at will.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by: Andrew O'Brien

Second by: Carla Major

No Opposition

The motion was approved by unanimous decision.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40am