



LACWDB Business Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 29, 2025

Location: Department of Economic Opportunity (Hybrid)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Business Engagement Committee Chair Jeffrey Thompson called the meeting of the Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (LACWDB) Business Engagement Committee to order at 4:10 pm.

I. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Jarrold DeGonia honored the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples, reaffirming the County's commitment to reconciliation and tribal engagement. [Board Motion](#) and [Los Angeles City/County NAIC Website \(Click Here\)](#)

II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of Interest protocol from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was read.

B. ROLL CALL

A quorum was confirmed with 5 members present.

C. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Thompson thanked the members and guests for attending while highlighting recent statements on how studios are being organized, reminding the committee that media is a critical sector of the regional economy.

Member Marquez announced that he will be attending with City of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass a delegation to Hamburg, Germany that will focus on apprenticeships. The trip will include meetings with that German Ministry of Labor, visits in Hamburg, Strasburg, Munich, and Bayreuth and include discussions with government officials, chambers of commerce, educational institutions to explore tech and manufacturing apprenticeships, and healthcare apprenticeships.

D. ACTION ITEMS

I. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LACWDB BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 19, 2025



Presenter: Jeffrey Thompson, Chair, LACWDB Business Engagement Committee

Summary: This item presented for review and approval, and any other action deemed necessary, the draft minutes of the LACWDB Business Engagement Committee meeting held on August 19.

Discussion Highlights: There was no discussion on the item.

Member Hewitt made a motion to adopt August 19, 2025 minutes of the LACWDB Business Engagement Committee.

Motion passes with a majority vote.

In Favor (6): Amber Chatman, Mary Hewitt, Maureen McIntyre, Jorge Marquez, Larry Taylor Jeffrey Thompson

Abstain (0):

Recused (0):

Opposed (0):

Absent (2): Tami Hutchins Nunez, Michelle Yanez

E. INFORMATION ITEMS

I. DISCUSSION ON AJCC SECTOR-BASED CENTER OF EXCELLENCE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Presenters: Cheren Kochen, Executive Director, LACWDB
Isidro Villanueva, Program Manager, DEO

Summary: This item presented for discussion and feedback from the committee on business engagement goals of the AJCCs

Discussion Highlights:

LACWDB Executive Director Cheren Kochen started the discussion by explaining that DEO has worked collaboratively with partners including McKenzie and Associates that helped provide data to inform the Center of Excellence (COE) strategies. In addition, discussions with the LACWDB and Business Engagement Committee added to the engagement strategies for the COEs. She noted that the work has been deliberate to ensure that once implemented, it would be strategic and move more efficiently.

Isidro Villanueva, Program Manager for Business Services with DEO, continued the presentation by stating that the Business Services Division works with the various Americas Job Centers of California (AJCCs) implementing the business engagement strategy through a Business Services Representatives (BSRs) at each of the centers. The division also oversees



the implementation and management of DEOs High Road Training Partnerships (HRTPs) and other initiatives including the Fair Chance Initiative and help ensure businesses utilize the different talent pools, resources, and incentives available. He explained that the division works closely with the BSRs at each AJCC implementing engagement strategies and engaging with businesses to match job candidates with appropriate companies in need of employees.

He explained that they attempt to find job opportunities that have a living wage or a career pathway embedded so that workers can skill up, acknowledging that a first job is good for some individuals, but the focus remains on livable wages and economic growth. He also stated that there are multiple service providers, not just DEO, both inside and outside the county at the AJCCs and what the goal is with the COEs is to centralize engagement strategically. In addition, with the COEs, DEO can engage with industry and be more macro in the approach, to strategize both long and short term on business needs. The goal is to capture data and intelligence to disseminate across the system.

Member Marquez asked where a business strategy document or a presentation with business engagement goals can be reviewed. Mr. Villanueva responded that directive which states the goals can be shared.

Chair Thompson asked if McKenzie and Associates or any other third party is assisting with the directorate building. Mr. Villanueva responded no. Chair Thompson requested the committee to offer input before the plan is complete.

Member Chatman asked if there are fewer COEs than AJCCs or does each AJCC have an assigned COE, and how the COEs are expected to serve the full county yet meet their individual goals.

Mr. Villanueva answered that there are 9 COEs, so there are fewer COEs than AJCCs and reminded the committee that the COEs serve the sector, not necessarily the AJCC. He also noted that the AJCCs with a COE will have a dedicated staff member responsible for the COE.

Member Chatman responded that follow up conversations are needed to refine and identify what the role of an intermediary would be and how they would interact with the COE.

DEO Assistant Director Kate Vacanti highlighted that what is needed from the Business Engagement Committee is input on anticipated growth, who are the intermediaries and connections with each sector. She also stated that DEO can share goals on where anticipated growth is expected.



Chair Thompson asked where DEO was receiving its data from and if it had consistent access to reports. It was explained that data comes from the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) as well as McKenzie and Associates who assisted in the development of the strategic plan. There is also access to Dunn & Bradstreet for labor market information as well as information from the Employment Development Department (EDD).

Member Marquez affirmed the layered down approach but that the committee may need to start higher than that, at the governance structure including establishment of business advisory committees that are comprised of businesses that support each COE, and a possible subcommittee of the Business Engagement Committee consisting of COE representatives that reviews how and what business is engaged with in each industry. The committee should also be aware of who are the top 100 employers in that sector and who are the fastest growing companies who are hiring as well.

Member Chatman stated it is important to understand how the AJCCs will share that information and the importance of mapping the connections and relationships.

Member Marquez recommend there be a map incorporated into the strategic plan that should be tied to the marketing strategy for DEO so the overall marketing strategy and materials could be tied into the business engagement strategy for the COES.

Member Hewitt asked what success would look like at the very end of the process. Mr. Villanueva stated that 4000 placements within the COEs are the goal.

Ms. Vacanti also responded that they could change the goals to include 240 employers outreached to regular industry convenings, bringing together at least 10 partners 2 or 3 times a year.

Member McIntyre commented that the State Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) undertook a similar exercise several years ago utilizing a statewide grant. There were sectors statewide and consumers were assigned specific counselors that specialized in the sector the consumer was interested in. She said the committee can ask DOR how their strategies were developed by a partnership with San Diego State University.

Chair Thompson asked who was putting the goals together for the AJCCs and how the goals were set.

Mr. Villanueva explained that his team set the goals by reviewing the capacity of the business services, which is one member per COE, and there are different goals while working alongside



the BSRs. The BSRs have the actual business engagement goals to help identify an additional 240 employers to bring into the system.

Member Chatman asked to define outreach. Mr. Villanueva responded it is having a conversation and talking about the services that are available through the system noting that that hiring and utilization of resources is the main objective.

Member Marquez asked if there is differentiation from employers. Mr. Villanueva responded that there is. Member Marquez noted that different employers require different outreach and timing. He used the medical field as an example that outreaching to a provider the size of a Providence Health would require more effort than an individual medical practitioner. He also explained that the number of hiring commitments over a three-year commitment is a practical way to track outcomes.

Member Marquez identified that the City of Los Angeles (LA) conducted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for each sector lead in the city's identified sectors. He also questioned what success would be based on, would it be placement goals or commitments, noting that maybe both could be tracked.

Executive Director Kochen agreed and that it could be tracked as to why hiring commitments were not being met.

Member Chatman asked if placements are measured in sector engagement strategy or is it still leaving an opening for the individual AJCCs to do their own work separately tracking from the COE strategy. She also asked if it was discouraged for the AJCCs to make referrals or placements outside their COE.

Mr. Villanueva responded that each AJCC is responsible for their case load, but the COE is responsible for how to strategize with their assigned sector both currently and in the future with the system. AJCCs can make referrals outside their own assigned COE.

Assistant Director Vacanti reminded the committee that the AJCC and COE goals can be modified next year and amended as each one is activated.

Member Marquez explained that there needs to be two types of ways for accountability. The first could be additional funding available for agencies that meet the sector-wide goals to support their efforts and, on the downside, AJCCs could be rated every year on performance and if standards are not met, performance funding levels are reduced.



Chair Thompson reminded the committee and DEO that jobs of the future need to be continuously reviewed and incorporated into the discussion. Member Hewit agreed with the sentiment asking that DEO be ahead of the employment needs of industry.

Executive Director Kochen also asked the committee to be mindful in ensuring that there is business attraction and engagement in marginalized communities noting that there must be a data informed approach.

Member Chatman asked for an example of marginalized communities that could be utilized for outreach. Executive Director Kochen mentioned that there are some communities harmed by certain industries using the manufacturing corridors along the 710 and 605 Freeways. She stated that an environmental approach in ensuring business attraction, that green employers are being outreached as well.

Assistant Director Vacanti mentioned that DEO is finalizing a strategic plan that will include pillars such as supporting small business growth and industry clusters.

Member Marquez requested that the committee and DEO work with the City of LA's Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) because of similar industry clusters identified by DEO. He also stated that EWDD hired an intermediary expert.

Chair Thompson would like to allow the committee to review DEO's strategic plan from a business engagement perspective when possible.

Assistant Director Vacanti stated that DEO would give the COEs clear goals and monitor their performance noting that the first year of implementation will be reviewed closely as the AJCCs have not received direction and that the committee is assisting in the drafting of the direction.

Chair Thompson asked that jobs of the future be considered seriously when developing policy, programs, opportunities, apprenticeships, etc. and to be innovative in that area.

Member Marquez stated that LA City EWDD prepared a full strategy before they went to RFP to sector leaders. He recommended that DEO prepare a full/visual strategy that aligns with the strategic plan.

Assistant Director Vacanti requested a copy of the LA City EWDD plan for review and then DEO could respond to the committee after the review and report at the next committee with a prepared presentation around goals and implementation.

Executive Director Kochen reminded the committee that the City of LA modeled their RFP after DEO's Modernization efforts so there could be intentional alignment.



DEO Program Manager Isidro Villanueva commented that within each sector COE, each sector has defined occupations. However, AJCCs previously targeted easier placed jobs to obtain goals. He questioned whether it is best to train for the top employers or for the sectors.

Member Marquez responded that the focus should be on the top three to five occupations in the next five years, and review what the skills sets needed are. Also, he stated that both the number of employers and employer commitments are needed to drive outcomes.

Member Chatman also stated it is important to look at the pathway to identified occupations.

Member Marquez also questioned employee mobility as an employment driver and reiterated that the industries will dictate occupation demand. He reminded the committee that one of the purposes and goals of the committee to is to bring business to the table, to create mobility with an employer focus.

Chair Thompson also stated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be a focus on a high growth sector using prompt engineers as an occupation example reiterating that the goal is not just getting clients hired but employed with living wage jobs.

Assistant Director Vacanti stated that the goal is to have the business engagement plan active by January 1, 2026.

Member Marquez also noted that Nancy Hoffman Vanyek from the Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce maybe interested in joining the Business Engagement Committee.

Member Taylor commented on notes he had taken and asked why the committee could not see the DEO draft strategic plan or the City of LA's strategic plan. He commented that he would like to see a one-page summary of the business engagement plan.

Member Marquez also commented that it would be good to review the Request for Proposal from the City of LA relating to their Sector intermediary consultant.

Member Thopson also recommended that DEO should incorporate Key Performance Indicators (KPI) into the strategic plan.



II. DISCUSSION WITH UNITE-LA ON IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYER INTERMEDIARIES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Presenter: Amber Chatman, Member, LACWDB Business Engagement Committee

Summary: This item presents for discussion potential partnerships with employer intermediaries utilized by UNITE-LA

Attachments: Unite-LA Intermediary List

Due to time constraints, this matter was continued to the next meeting.

III. RESOURCE MAPPING

Presenter: Jeffrey Thompson, Chair, LACWDB Business Engagement Committee

Summary: Review existing partners, approve connections to partners identified through Resource Mapping, identify potential partners in specific geographic areas including:

- a. Business Groups/Organizations
- b. Affinity Groups
- c. Training Partners
- d. Non-Profits, Community-Based Organizations, and Others

Due to time constraints, this item was continued to the next meeting.

III. CONTINUED REVIEW OF THE PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE: ENGAGEMENT, OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

Presenter: Jeffrey Thompson, Chair, LACWDB Business Engagement Committee

Summary: This item is for continued discussion and direction on the creation and framework of a Business Engagement Plan containing elements identified below:

- a. Increase the skilled workforce available in key sectors through the development of strategic business partnerships
- b. Support implementation of the Centers of Excellence (COE) and identify needs and work with providers relating to their population and geographic base of each COE
- c. Identify key strategic partners for opportunities and needs based on the COE
- d. Support business engagement to increase hiring opportunities for key initiatives and programs, including the Fire Recovery and Resilience Workforce Program, Rapid Response, Youth@Work, Fair Chance Campaign, Prison 2 Employment, and other programs serving priority populations.



Due to time constraints, this item was continued to the next meeting.

E. NEXT STEPS

- Share business strategy/engagement goals chart with Business Engagement Committee.
- Allow members of the Business Engagement Committee to offer input into the Sector Based Centers of Excellence directive.
- Review possible COE subcommittees or advisor/stakeholder groups that advise the Business Engagement Committee on status and updates relevant to their COE and related skills needed in the top three to five high growth occupations within each COE with relevant training programs with apprenticeships.
- Review with Member McIntyre request to look at past DOR strategies.
- Send copy of DEO Strategic Plan to the Business Engagement Committee once the plan is released by DEO.
- Outreach to LA City EWDD on opportunities to partner and review industry clusters as identified by the intermediary expert contracted by EWDD.
- Contact City of LA for copy of Business Intermediary Sector Consultant RFP.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were submitted.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of September 29, 2025 LACWDB Business Engagement Committee was adjourned at 5:55 pm to November 3 at 4:00 pm.