

Quarterly Meeting Minutes
South Central Region 8 Workforce Board, Inc.
January 21, 2026 – Noon to 1:30pm (Via Zoom Invite)

Board Members Present: Brenda Reetz, Scott Baker, Adam Gross, Blayze Damron, Derek Cronin, Michael Stieglitz, Marce Johnson, Teresa Dukate, Jennifer Kelley, Michelle Ellis, Pam Metz, Scott Adams, Jeff Pipkin, Mike Norris, Lisa Hein, Apryl Kidd, Patrick Todd

Board Members Present via Zoom/Call-In: Linda Henderson, Kendra Langford

Others Present: Rob King, Susan Neal, Carla Crowe, Mandy Mahurin, Don Kent, Erin Brewer, Sandy Friedman, David Tucker, Gail Mitchell, Sam Perkins, Brian Rawlins, Arin Pritchard, Jane Kupersmith, Jill Campbell

Board Members Absent: Kevin Bush, Terry Pittman, Scott Wilcoxon, Sam Craig

Call to Order

Board Chair, Brenda Reetz, called the meeting to order at Noon and a quorum of the Board was confirmed as present. Rob King acknowledged new Board member Jennifer Kelley, Director of Human Resources at Simtra BioPharma Solutions, as a Business Representative for Monroe County. Rob also welcomed Marce Johnson as the newly appointed Regional Economic Development Representative.

Approval of Minutes

Jeff Pipkin moved to accept the minutes of the 09/24/2025 meeting of the South-Central Region 8 Workforce Board, Inc. Derek Cronin seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the minutes were approved.

Financial Reports and Grant Updates

Carla Crowe, with Crowe LLP, the Board's Fiscal Agent, distributed and presented the financial report for the period ending December 31, 2025. Carla noted that 36% of the Total Annual Budget was expended through December 31, 2025. Carla reviewed adjustments to the Budget and Expenditures. Funds added/adjusted to the budget included the following:

- Rapid Response \$25,000
- Pathway Home 6.0 \$474,045
- VU – Service Provider \$503,045
- Direct Client Services \$15,000 (-)

Susan Neal provided updates for the Power-Up Grant, Workforce Ready Grant, and Home Pathway 6 Grant.

Michelle Ellis moved to approve the financial report and budget, and Rapid Response Contract Amount for \$24,700 to Vincennes University. Scott Baker seconded the motion. Blayze Damron abstained from the financial budget vote, all other Board members voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Regional Plan Mid-Year Update (2024-2027)

Rob King informed the Board that the Local Workforce Four-Year Plan modification will be starting on or around May or June of 2026 and should be due to the State by September 30, 2026. Rob reminded Board members that WIOA requires Workforce Boards to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local plan to the State for approval. This plan must address current and future strategies to advance workforce system programs and support a customer-centered system. The regional Workforce Board vision and service provision operational goals are included as part of the workforce plan. This plan must align with the State plan and includes information such as labor market trends, regional sector partnership collaborations, employer engagements and community resources identification.

The workforce modified plan must be published for public comment for at least 30-days prior to submission to the State. It is anticipated that draft modifications will be ready to post for public comments around the middle of August.

Regional Realignment to READI Regions

Rob provided the Board with an update on the proposed State of Indiana Regional Realignment to the READI Regions. Board members were provided information about the realignment to include the proposed maps and white paper included in proposal last Fall. At that time, the Board recommended sending a letter to the Governor and Secretary of State Offices requesting that regional Board Members be included in discussions about realignment. Rob stated that Board Chair Brenda Reetz and RCEO Sam Craig did have some discussions with DWD Reps, but nothing major in terms of input on the actual recommendations during those meetings. Rob also stated that Board Members along with regional partners such as the Economic Development Organizations, ROI, Radius, and Adult Education collaborated on our public comment's response in November to the proposed alignment. The response included a supported sentiment that expansion from eight (8) counties to 19 counties was too much for one Board to effectively oversee and implement programs. Region 8 recommended changing up that number and included a recommendation on how the region would be overseen if the State of Indiana moves forward with the current proposal. Regardless, Region 8 will adapt to any new environment and implement to its best ability in the future. Rob thanked all partners for their participation and input to the public response.

Region 8 Website Update

The new website is up and running. Rob encouraged all Board members to review when they get a chance. The new website is provided at no cost and is a tool that VU WDS Region 8 is able to provide for the Board. Bios and Pictures are almost ready and we anticipate starting to post within the next few weeks. It is anticipated all Pictures and Biographies will be available to view onsite by our June Board meeting.

Regional Grants Update

Susan Neal had one update to provide on the Registered Apprenticeship Funds. Susan stated that the ABA Grant will end in May of 2026 and Region 8 is on track to expend all funds by this

date. There are several apprenticeships starting at Ryan Fire Protection and the remaining funds will be used to serve these clients. Michelle Ellis, Adult Education Representative, mentioned that Lieutenant Governor Micah Beckwith will be visiting Wagler Education and Training Center to review their WRG and WIOA program trainings provided and to discuss the strong collaboration all Region 8 Adult Education providers have with the South-Central Indiana Workforce Board.

JAG Program Update – Region 8

Sam Perkins, Region 8 JAG Program Manager, provided the Board with an update on the JAG Program. Sam stated that Region 8 continues to provide JAG services to the following four schools:

- 1) Bloomfield High School
- 2) Eastern Greene High School
- 3) Owen Valley High School
- 4) Paoli High School

Sam stated that as of the beginning of this calendar year, the focus has shifted to career exploration and assisting students identify scholarship and apprenticeship opportunities. They are also preparing students for the upcoming Job Fair season, which begins in March. As a reminder, Region 8 is funding these programs through Board funds through June 30, 2026, with the JAG Program winding down by 12/31/2026.

WorkOne Report

The WorkOne report was distributed to the Board for review. Donald Kent, Executive Director of VU-WDS in Region 8, highlighted the report and provided updates on regional WorkOne office operations, RESEA, National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant (DW-ERG), UI Data, Performance Highlights, TAA, JAG Program, Rapid Response and Business Services activities, and Next Level Jobs Data. A copy of the complete WorkOne Region 8 Report is available on the South-Central Region 8 Workforce Board's website at <https://www.vinu.edu/south-central-region-8-workforce-board/index.html>.

Other Business – Public Comments

Rob informed Board members of the upcoming regional events: 1) - Power-Up Forum with IEDC at Ivy Tech Bloomington on March 4th from 10am until Noon. 2) – County Spotlight at Board meetings to begin in PY26.

With no further business, Michelle Ellis made a motion to adjourn, Derek Cronin seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

Prepared By: Rob King