



WDB Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2026

7:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.

Members Present

Jenny Batista
Peggy Kershner
Nic Thomas
Cindy Line
Ashley Chambers
Barry Unger
Ryan Breisch
Alexia Pursley
Crystal Houser
Debra Millman
Patricia Shermot
Kimberly Baskett
Dr. Michael Stauffer

Members Absent

Marianne Brown Egolf
Kimberly Schneider
Ed Bernitsky
William Dorward
Michael Fischetti
Christy Pisker
Brian Noecker
Karyn Troxell
Kristina Houck
Dr. Radha Pyati, Ph.D.

WDB Staff Present

Amber Columbo
John Moser
Mary Stelmach
Jesenia Santos

Guests Present

Pamela Menet	County of Berks Director of Community & Economic Development
Derek Harris	County of Berks Economic Development Coordinator
Amanda Wagner	Equus Workforce Solutions Vice President of Operations
Larry Melf	PA CareerLink® Berks County Operator
Aidelsa Calaman	PA CareerLink® Berks County Site Administrator
Dilika Tissera	PA CareerLink® Berks County Adult & Dislocated Worker Program Director
Elizabeth Reddinger	PA CareerLink® Berks County EARN Program Director
Amanda Wilson	PA CareerLink® Berks County Business Services Director
Robert Kerecz	PA CareerLink® Berks County Employment Services Team Supervisor
Mike Dopkin	PA Department of Labor & Industry – Assistant Regional Director
Stephanie Threadgill	The Collective Haven

This meeting was held in-person at PA CareerLink® Berks County on June 18, 2026. WDB Chairperson, Ms. Batista called the meeting to order at 7:37 a.m.

Ms. Columbo announced public comments will be accepted in person. Speakers must please state their first name, last name and municipality for all comments. Each citizen can comment once. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 5 minutes. This time may be extended at the discretion of the Board. Please be concise. Any comments that are germane to Workforce Development business will be read during the meeting and should not be considered to be interactive dialogue. Any response to public comment will be made at the discretion of the Board.

Ms. Columbo welcomed new board staff John W. Moser, Assistant Director and Mary Stelmach, Fiscal Manager for the Workforce Development Board.

Ms. Columbo announced that the meeting was being recorded for minute purposes only and would be deleted after their completion. Board members were asked to state their names when commenting, making, or seconding any motion to assist staff in taking the minutes.

Ms. Batista asked the members if there were any items the board would like to have moved from the consent agenda. Hearing none the board will move to adopt the consent agenda. No objections. Ms. Batista asked if any members would like to abstain from accepting the agenda with one abstention from Ms. Kershner.

I. Executive Committee Report

Ms. Batista then invited Ms. Columbo to comment on the Budget vs Expenditures report. Ms. Columbo reported on the budget and actual expenditure results through June 30, 2026, showing all expenses are within budget.

Next, Ms. Columbo presented a proposed PY2026 budget with the following changes: (1) Reduction in Title I WIOA Adult/DW and Business Services due to the PY2026 funding reduction (2) Reduction of two training contracts for Connections Work R3 Program and the Allied Health Program provided by Tec Centro due to overall WIOA Title I Adult PY2026 funding reduction (3) TANF Youth funding received an increase for PY2026 and (4) Inclusion of the Veterans Grant that started April 1, 2026 through November 30, 2027.

Ms. Columbo asked the committee for a recommendation to approve the proposed PY2026 budget as presented. Mr. Unger motioned for a recommendation, and Dr. Stauffer seconded the motion. All committee members affirmatively voted their approval. There were no objections or abstentions.

Mr. Moser reviewed PY25 Quarter 3 statewide performance metrics. The State and Berks did receive the desired “green check mark” for Q3.

II. Planning Committee Report

Ms. Millman shared that the committee is working on a matrix of recommendations for the Berks Workforce 2030 to use as a guide to keep the 4-year plan on track. Dr Weitz suggested putting things into two WDB action step categories, influencing and educating followed by further defining action steps and potential collaborations. Ms. Columbo suggested looking at all six categories and placing them into an influence or educate category and identifying who the community partners are to help lead those conversations to ensure long-term success. The committee decided the three most relevant TPMA report recommendation categories to focus on immediately should be Population and Workforce Trends, Labor Force Participation, and Education.

Ms. Millman reported the industry sectors are identified and valid through 2028. Ms. Columbo suggested preparing a one-page document that highlights each industry sector and what is going on within industries in Berks County. This will not only help simplify the data but could be used as a tool for public information moving forward.

III. Access & Opportunities Committee Report

Ms. Kershner referred the board to the “By the Numbers” report and provided a brief update. The numbers showed that overall foot traffic remained stable but noted a decrease in resource room usage, welcome services and virtual utilization. An increase in new training accounts went up by 10.4%. Unemployment services remain one of the most utilized offerings at the one-stop center. Participation in the

UC Connect Program has seen a significant increase, in-UC calls up by 32.7% and UC appointments 24.8% when comparing the Q3 YTD numbers of PY25.

Ms. Kerschner reported The Spring Job Fair took place on April 28, 2026, at the Redner's Event Center at the Reading Fightin' Phils Stadium from 1pm to 5pm. This event welcomed over 970 job seekers as well as string employer participation. Ms. Columbo announced PA CareerLink® Berks County will not be hosting a Fall job fair and will replace it with more micro industry specific job fairs located at the PA CareerLink® Berks County.

IV. Youth Committee Report

Ms. Columbo reported that the 3rd "Undecided Career Fair" for seniors took place on April 16, 2026, at the County of Berks South Campus location. The focus is primarily on high school seniors who don't have an identified plan for graduation. To date 27 employers attended the event as well as local colleges including Albright, Alvernia, Penn State Berks, RACC and Kutztown University. Seven schools attended the event with 66 young adults. A new focus has shifted to rebranding the name for 2027 to increase participation from school districts.

V. Training & Industry Partnership Committee Report

Ms. Columbo reported on the Training and Industry Partnership Committee and informed the board that the current obligation of the WDB's allocation of \$100,000 in IWT/RA matching funds for PY2025. To date, six applicants have been approved totaling in the amount of \$71,851.11 or = 72% obligated. Of these obligated funds, \$64,959.11 has been expended. Mr. Stevenson has been working with approved applicants to process eligible reimbursement in a timely manner so that PY2025 obligated funds are fully expended by June 30.

VI. Director of Workforce Report

Ms. Columbo shared the Director of Workforce report by reminding members of the monthly board member engagement sessions to help increase board member engagement, help to get to know each board member, their potential hiring needs, community involvement, review of the Berks Workforce 2030 report, and to aid us in our market intelligence discussions for future board meetings. The next group will meet on July 8th, at United Way of Berks County.

Ms. Columbo reported on a new Business Education Partnership (BEP) grant opportunity for local boards has taken a new approach to align with Governor Shapiro's Ten-Year strategic plan for Economic Development and the PA WIOA Combined State Plan. Required grant activities include Career Exposure, Experience, Readiness and Employability Skills. The Berks WDB will partner with the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) to host/manage the Career Ready Berks Platform to be utilized as a place for K-12, post-secondary education, employers, parent resources and awareness to gather information. Applications are due July 16, 2026, for a start date of September 1, 2026.

Following the Director of the Workforce Report, Ms. Columbo opened the market intelligence discussion.

Ms. Line shared a formal report that provided an overview of enrollment numbers for General Education Development and English for Speakers of Other Languages registered in the Community Education Literacy Programs held at Reading Area Community College. When the students registered for the program, they were prompted to list an employer. Based on the information received electronically a list of those employers was provided to help raise awareness among members of the board. Ms. Line lastly announced that PA CareerLink®

Berks County will now provide Welcome Orientation for all students during class to meet students where they are.

Public Comment – Ms. Batista then asked for any comment from the public. Ms. Threadgill passed out information on the Collective Haven Framework non-profit organization.

CY2025 Meetings - The next Berks County Workforce Development Board Meeting will be held as follows:

- Friday September 18, 2026 (In-Person @ County of Berks South Campus)
- Friday December 18, 2026 (Hybrid: In-Person @ County of Berks South Campus & Virtual: MS Townhall)

Following a motion to adjourn, Ms. Batista announced that the meeting officially adjourned at 9:07 am.