



Job and Workforce Development Workgroup Minutes
January 28, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:30pm
Boone Electric Community Building (1413 Rangeline, Columbia MO) and via Zoom

BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY

Meeting Objective: Set workgroup goals for 2026.

Attendees: Lisa Driskel-Hawxby, facilitator (Regional Economic Development, Inc (REDI)), Kristalle Johnson (Connections to Success), Nadia Ryakhmyarullof (Love Columbia (LC)), Zach Neal (Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)), Roger Brisley (DHEWD), Katie Siegel (Columbia Public Schools), Lisa Buxman (LC), Brandi Chick (Missouri Job Center), Megan Weaver (Moberly Area Community College), John Scalie (Job Point), Brooke Eskridge (Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)), Taylor Williams (CMCA), Joanne Nelson (Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD)), Gina Jenkins (BCCSD), Enola-Riann White (BCCSD)

1. Welcome

- a. Enola started the meeting by welcoming everyone. She introduced a new sign in method via QR code and provided an overview of the new “Workgroup Wednesday” meeting structure. Enola had everyone introduce themselves.

2. Follow up from last meeting

- a. Enola provided a recap of the November 2025 meeting. The workgroup had begun work on an ‘Upwardly Mobile Employer’ list to aid in shaping a definition of an upwardly mobile business in Boone County. Discussion included if the list would be shared externally, internally, or taken to employers for additional input. The workgroup had a robust discussion on Results-Based Accountability and the existing work being done by organizations in the room. The group also discussed wanting to use the workgroup meetings as ‘working meetings’ using the time in-meeting to make progress collectively without additional responsibilities between meetings.

3. Workgroup 2026 Goals

- a. Lisa Driskel-Hawxby discussed the initial goals of the workgroup and how the landscape of resources has changed, leaving the workgroup to consider where to focus efforts now. She presented ideas to the workgroup including development of an internship framework for employers and creation of a workforce readiness badge or credential. The workgroup discussed the benefits of an internship framework for employers to build structure support around expectations and mentoring. Additionally, a robust discussion was held around the central idea of creation of a workforce readiness badge/credential. While the workgroup recognized the need to determine additional aspects of the program, ideas included that it could be for individuals or agencies, and be built on employer defined skills and work readiness criteria including transportation, identification, banking information, interviewing skills, resumes, communication, etc. The workgroup would include plans to develop a rubric for credentialing and an application process for agencies.

4. Partner Updates

- a. Brandi Chick (Missouri Job Center) shared more information about the partnership with 1-70 Program at Hickman High School which is a two-week after-school class. Upon completion students receive a certificate, \$200 plus a \$350 stipend (for phone, work clothing, etc.). She also shared information about the COTY (Career Opportunity and Training for Youth) program, with is 320 hours of paid work experience at \$16/hour.



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- b. Lisa Buxman (Love Columbia) shared the Love Columbia website has been updated with the dates of the 2026 Homeowner and pre-homebuyers' classes. Lisa Dirskel-Hawxby encouraged the workgroup to review the Career Next Steps website to connect clients with the opportunity for local career exploration.
 - c. Kristalle Johnson (Connections to Success) shared that the PPP classes are offered every two weeks. Participants attend for 60 hours and gain life skills, work readiness, have mock interviews, etc.
 - d. Lisa Driskel-Hawxby (REDI) encouraged workgroup members to sign up for the bi-weekly Newlinks email. She shared the next quarterly connect meeting is February 26 4:00pm-6:00pm at The Landing at Harpos.
 - e. Roger Brisley and Zach Neal (DHEWD) shared on March 18, 1:00pm–4:00pm they will restart walk-in Wednesday hiring events at Daniel Boone Regional Library, which most recently connected 10 employers with 80 job seekers. Roger also said they are working on a workforce development day for employers in Jefferson City, with more information to come. Additionally, Zach shared information about the Veteran Resource Fair on February 10th and March 10th 1:00p.m. to 3:00pm at The Food Bank.
 - f. John Scalise (Job Point) share the Cosmopolitan Club will have their annual pancake breakfast on January 31st 6:00am – 1:00pm. Job Point is looking for students for their trades programs, such as the CDL program. John shared that the home, located at 903 Garth, is in final states. He anticipates it will be for sale in early March. John encouraged the workgroup to direct individuals with SSI or SSDI benefits who have questions about working to Job Point. Additionally, John mentioned they are planning a reverse job fair at Boone Electric, with more information to come.
 - g. Kaite Siegel (Columbia Public Schools) shared that CPS is facilitating transportation for students to the Home Builders Association Careers UnderConstruction event on February 26 at the Boone County Fairgrounds. She also shared an update on the Columbia Chamber of Commerce's Business in Motion Event in April and Worlds of Work in September.
 - h. Brooke Eskridge (Central Missouri Community Action) shared they are continuing to enroll individuals in SkillUP, which is for those that are receiving SNAP benefits. The Columbia Employment Training Program is the same as SkillUP, but there is no SNAP benefit requirement. Brooke also shared that they have received a small transportation grant for vehicle repairs and maintenance in CMCA's service area.
5. Next Steps
- a. Prior to the next meeting, the workgroup should research existing badge/credential and work readiness programs to look for models and tools already in use. Findings can be input into the shared Excel document. Workgroup members needing access should email upward@boonemo.gov.
 - b. During the next workgroup meeting the workgroup will use the research to clarify if the audience of the credential (individuals, agencies, or both), begin discussions of structure (rubric, application, etc), and determine what information is needed from employers prior to surveying them.
6. Closing
- Joanne closed the meeting, thanking everyone for attending.

Next Workgroup Meeting: February 25, 2026, 3:00pm – 4:30pm via Zoom or in person at Boone Electric Community Building (1413 Rangeline, Columbia MO)

**Upward Mobility is an initiative of the Boone County Community Services Department
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