



MINUTES STRATEGIC COMMITTEE MEETING

Workforce Solutions Alamo
100 N. Santa Rosa St., Suite 120, Boardroom
San Antonio, TX 78207
August 8, 2025
10:00 AM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Eric Cooper, Jim Robertson, Angelique De Oliveira, Anthony Magaro, Leslie Cantu

WSA STAFF: Teresa Chavez, Paul Briseno, Dr. Ricardo G. Ramirez, Brandee Perez, Gabriela Navarro Garcia, Penny Benavides, Victoria Rodriguez, Sandra Alvarez, Kristen Rodriguez, Rebecca Espino Balencia, Gregory Villines, Eric Vryn, Chuck Agwuegbo, Juan Palencia, Jesse Maldonado

CONTRACTORS: Manuel Ugues, Gabriela Horbach, Brenda Garcia, Sylvia Perez, Ramsey Olivarez

PARTNER STAFF: Mike Ramsey

AGENDA

Agenda items may not be considered in the order they appear.

Citizens may appear before the Committee to speak for or against any item on the agenda in accordance with procedural rules governing meetings. Speakers are limited to three (3) minutes on each topic (6 minutes if translation is needed) if they register at the beginning of the meeting. Questions relating to these rules may be directed at Janel Santos at (210) 850-2160

The Chair of the Committee will be at the Host Location. The Host location is specified above. Meetings will be visible and audible to the public at the Host location, and there will be a visual or audio recording of the meeting. There will be a two-way audio and video of the meeting between each Board member sufficient that Board members and public can hear and see them. WSA will comply with all Videoconferencing Guidelines.

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Meeting link: <https://wsalamo.webex.com/wsalamo/j.php?MTID=mbd63eb4faedcb87d3284d2c59738d040>

Meeting number: 2489 764 4936

Meeting password: PmQMqUa382

During the Public Comments portion of the meeting (Agenda Item 4), the public may type their name into the chat box or unmute themselves and state their name. The host of the meeting will call each member of the public for comments in order that their names are submitted.

Workforce Solutions Alamo is an equal opportunity employer/program. Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special accommodation should contact Janel Santos at (210) 850-2160 so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Relay Texas: 1-800-735- 2969 (TDD) or 711 (Voice).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

At 10:02 AM, Eric Cooper, Committee Chair called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL AND QUORUM DETERMINATION

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

The roll was called, and a quorum was declared present.

III. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

NONE.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

NONE.

V. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MEETING MINUTES

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

a. Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2025

Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Jim Robertson, seconded by Angelique De Oliveira. All in favor of approving the minutes of the meeting held on May 9, 2025.

VI. PARTNER UPDATES (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Mark Carmona, Chief Housing Officer

a. City of San Antonio Housing Bond

Partner Update: Tabled until further notice.

VII. MARKETING (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Penny Benavidez, Director of Public & Government Relations

a. Media, Marketing, and Communications Update

Penny Benavidez, Director of Public & Government Relations, provided a media, marketing, and communications update that included the following: Kerrville Community Response; Media Coverage. During the July 4 floods in the our team quickly came together to identify how we could best support our Hill Country neighbors. As part of our response, we immediately developed messaging for social media and our website to communicate our efforts and provide timely information to the community. I also want to give another shout-out for the event from August 4 through this past week. Jim Robertson and the team hosted a veterans-focused, construction industry career fair at our O'Connor Center. Special thanks to Jim Helbrack, Jim Robertson, and Al King for leading the media efforts. We were proud to be included and mentioned in several media hits promoting the career fair. Thanks to the entire team for their support! The only thing I'll add is that I really appreciate you saying the event was great. We had a lot of veterans, and many of them were actually hired that very day—which is pretty unusual. We're planning to do it again in Q4. this was the first time in the state that we had partnered on a trades event with Texas Veterans and Workforce Solutions, so we're proud to have kicked that off. Hopefully, this will become a model for similar events across the state. Right now, there are about 150,000 jobs open in trades here in Texas, so it's a fantastic opportunity for anyone interested. Thank you again for giving us the platform to share this.

Eric Cooper, Committee Chair, provided information on how there's a lot of need, and this is going to be a long recovery. Many communities were impacted Out of the 29 counties the food bank serves, 15 were affected. Some of these communities are even outside our WSA territory, like San Angelo, where there's been significant devastation in terms of property, homes, and even the ability for people to get to work.

b. Local Plan 2025-2028 Campaign

The approved plan was added to the website, and the link was sent to TWC on July 31. We are developing a strategic communication campaign to raise awareness, engage employers, educators, job seekers, and community partners, and showcase alignment with the TWC Strategic Plan 2024–2031. Channels & Tactics: Digital: Website, email, social media; Events: Open houses, partner presentations, community and employer events; Media: Local news coverage, radio interviews, op-eds; Print: Flyers, posters, brochures for schools, chambers, and community and Workforce One: Road Show Call to Action: Share your ideas with Penny Benavidez at pbenavidez@wsalamo.org.

VII. PROGRAMS UPDATE (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Victoria Rodriguez, Director of Workforce Services

a. Department of Labor (DOL) Infrastructure Grant

Sandra Alvarez, Assistant Director of Workforce Services, provided the following update: We have received approval from the Department of Labor on all our award-related conditions. Currently, we are actively engaging with potential employers and training providers. One of our training partners is ready to launch a cohort for fiber optics training. However, our current focus is on securing employer partnerships before starting any cohort. We want to ensure that participants will have placement opportunities once they complete their training. This approach applies not only to fiber optics but also to electrical, welding, IT, and energy vehicle positions, as well as other in-demand fields.

b. Workforce One Utilization

In April, we toured the bus through the JBSA bases, which was a great partnership. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with JBSA in the coming months. Specific days have been scheduled at various locations, and they have been helping with marketing these events for us. As a result, we are starting to see participation increase. Our military grant has also been instrumental in supporting these efforts. In June, we utilized the bus for RESEA outreach, which is a separate workforce program. This served as a pilot program, as TWC wanted to explore how a mobile unit could reach individuals who had failed to report for their unemployment outcomes. This outreach is focused on locations such as banks and schools, among others. We've seen very positive outcomes, as people seem more comfortable visiting a mobile unit compared to a traditional center, which can sometimes feel more formal or intimidating. The bus presents a friendly atmosphere, with staff outside greeting people, providing tables and flyers, and engaging with clients where they are. This approach has helped increase participation and engagement.

c. TX FAME

We celebrated at a wonderful event picture from the occasion. In addition, we are

preparing for Signing Day, which is very exciting. This will be our first Signing Day as WSA, with approximately 40 individuals expected to participate. We also have the fall semester beginning soon, and we're very excited to see how it unfolds. Again, WSA is looking forward to these milestones.

d. Teacher Externship

We also have the teacher externship program. This project is designed to give educators real-world experience with industry leaders, which they can then bring back to their classrooms to educate students, parents, and staff based on what they learned during the summer. Our goal was to engage 100 educators, and as we wrap up, we have 96 educators completing the program, with participation from 20 businesses. The tours of the Alamo College facilities were particularly well-received by the educators, and we plan to incorporate that into next year's application. In addition, we were recently invited to participate in the CREW Teacher Apprenticeship Program in partnership with Region 20 and SISD. I'll be attending an orientation today, and we plan to align these initiatives to create a more streamlined process that supports the youth model. We anticipate some changes in how this program is implemented to align with upcoming federal guidelines, such as those related to apprenticeships.

VIII. CEO REPORT (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Teresa Chavez, Chief Operations Officer

WSA Principles remind us that we are taking a holistic approach to serving both our customers and our staff. After this meeting, Janel will be sending an email to everyone with details about the opportunity to participate in our work groups. There will be five phases of the work group, and we encourage anyone who is willing to participate to join us. The goal is to review each phase of the plan, with the intention of rolling it out first among our board and contractor staff and then extending it to our customers. By "holistic approach," we mean that we will not only focus on financial wellness but will also include mental health considerations. Participation will be valuable, as we want to address the holistic needs of the entire family, from children to adults—from the very beginning. Work groups will be conducted similarly to committee meetings. While there is a commitment involved, each of the five meetings will last approximately one to one-and-a-half hours. An email will include invites and proposed dates for the sessions.

IX. CHAIR REPORT (DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION)

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

Eric Cooper, Committee Chair, I want to start by thanking our staff for the incredible work they do. Along with Jim, I had the opportunity to work with the team on our recent career fairs. On Wednesday, one of our rural communities hosted a justice-oriented job fair. The event featured a variety of employees, including TDCJ, Border Patrol, and the local sheriff's department, among others. We were pleased to see approximately 200 job seekers attend, all actively looking for employment. I was personally there and had the chance to engage with both employers and job seekers. Let's leverage our networks and influence support the staff in deploying programs and conducting outreach to job seekers and employers.

Mike Ramsey, Director of Ready to Work, Over the past month, July, I reviewed the data from my team, and it's exciting: after three years of helping many people, our Ready to Work intake portal just recorded the highest number of applications in the program's history. This surge coincided with the election cycle, as conversations about Ready to Work with elected officials and candidates brought more attention to the program. I had mentioned to my team that we had slowed down our marketing and advertising efforts during our transition with a new marketing agency, but clearly, the increased awareness generated a spike in interest. It's a great reminder that all publicity can be good publicity—people are learning about the program, investigating it, and engaging with it. We're excited to ride this momentum and continue pushing to reach as many people in our target populations as possible. The mayor recently had her first orientation meeting on the program. She's supportive and very engaged, emphasizing rapid outcomes. While campaign messaging often mentions "90 days," our goal is to exceed that and aim for 100% placement as quickly as possible. Our metrics continue to improve, thanks to the strategic adjustments we've made over the past three years. Alignment across our partners has been key, and while we've made significant progress, there's still work ahead. The mayor is keen on seeing results and ensuring taxpayer dollars deliver a strong return, which aligns with our focus on program efficiency and outcomes.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to Chapter 551 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Committee may move into Executive Session for discussion on any issue for which there is an exception to the Act as set out in section 551.071 et. seq. including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Government Code §551.072 – Discussions Regarding Purchase, Exchange, Lease, or Value of Real Property if Deliberation in an Open Meeting Would Have a Detrimental Effect on the Position of Workforce Solutions Alamo in Negotiations with a Third Party;
- b. Government Code §551.071 – All Matters Where Workforce Solutions Alamo Seeks the Advice of its Attorney as Privileged Communications Under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas, Pending or Contemplated Litigation; and/or Settlement Offer.
- c. Government Code §551.074 – To deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee of Workforce Solutions Alamo.

No Executive Session

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Presenter: Eric Cooper, Committee Chair

On a motion by Anthony Magaro, the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.