



**Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Community Awareness Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, July 29, 2026 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Committee Members Present

- Kyle Swartz, Chair
- Melissa Johnson
- Susan Kimball
- Nikki Stallings

Committee Members Absent

- Steven Brockman-Weber
- Josh Paselk
- Heather Watson

Ex Officio Member Absent

- Margaret Lindsey, Former Board Chair

Guests Present

- Paul Fletcher
- Diane Cook
- Caelyn Swendner

Staff Present

- Berenice Smith
 - Brian Hernandez
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Call to Order

Committee Chair Kyle Swartz called the meeting to order at **11:09 a.m.**

Roll Call / Establish Quorum

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was established.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Consent Agenda

The Committee approved the following meeting minutes:

- February 11, 2026
- March 10, 2026
- May 27, 2026

Motion: Susan Kimball

Second: Kyle Swartz

Motion carried unanimously.

Information and Discussion Items

Signing Day Initiative

- Staff provided an update on the regional Signing Day initiative.
- Planning is underway for two regional Signing Day events to better serve students across the Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area.
- Staff are also exploring partnership opportunities with neighboring workforce areas to expand participation.
- The Committee expressed support for the regional approach and discussed the benefits of increased collaboration and community engagement.

Rapid Response Program Overview

- Diane Cook, Chief Operating Officer, presented an overview of Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area's Rapid Response Program.
- The presentation highlighted how the program assists employers and workers affected by layoffs or business transitions through early intervention, workforce services, training opportunities, and reemployment assistance.
- The Committee discussed the importance of increasing employer awareness of Rapid Response services and recognized the value the program provides to businesses and employees during workforce transitions.
- The Committee recommended sharing a similar overview with the full Board at a future meeting.

Marketing and Communications Update

- Staff shared updates on recent marketing and communications initiatives, including continued growth in website engagement, digital outreach, podcast performance, and the Higher Learning video series.
- Staff also provided an update on the upcoming public launch of the Career Ready Central Texas website.
- The Committee was invited to participate in future storytelling initiatives and share opportunities to highlight employers and workforce success stories.

Storytelling Internship Update

- Communications Storytelling Intern Caelyn Swendner shared highlights from her summer internship, including her work developing youth-focused workforce content, supporting digital campaigns, and learning workforce communications strategies.
- Staff announced plans to continue offering storytelling internship opportunities in future semesters.

Upcoming Skills Development Fund Grant Award Ceremony

- Staff provided a preview of the upcoming Skills Development Fund Grant Award Ceremony recognizing Ascension Texas.
- Committee members were invited to attend the event and additional information will be shared as planning continues.

New Business

- No additional new business was presented.
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Board Staff Follow-Up Items

- Continue planning the regional Signing Day initiative.
- Launch the campaign promoting the Career Ready Central Texas website.
- Continue expanding marketing, storytelling, podcast, and video initiatives.
- Provide additional information regarding the upcoming Skills Development Fund Grant Award Ceremony.
- Explore presenting the Rapid Response Program to the full Workforce Development Board.

Next Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed to schedule its next meeting for **Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.**, pending final confirmation.