

**Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Monroe County/Rochester Workforce Development Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, February 24, 2026**  
**8:00 to 9:00 AM**  
**Meeting Scheduled via ZOOM**

**Present:** Cherie Becker, Chris Bonawitz, Christina Bakewicz, Shawn Futch, Heather Gole, Judy Honan, Lia Festenstein, Melanie Russo, Rosalie Clemens, Shawna Gareau-Kurtz

**Staff and Guest:** Dave Seeley, Lee Koslow, Mary McKeown, Laura Seelman, Viatta Carter, Marisol Cruz-Melendez

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion to approve the November 18, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Lia Festenstein and seconded by Rosalie Clemens. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Review of PY 2025 Quarter 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker Performance:**

Lee Koslow began this discussion by reviewing the Adult and Dislocated Worker Performance, Program Year 2025, Quarter 1, July-September, on the WIOA primary indicators of performance for Monroe County. He noted there are 5 primary Federal Performance Indicators that we are measured on, plus 1 State measure. The reason we do this with this group is that the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee of the Board provides oversight for our Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, so every time we get new quarterly performance, which is almost every meeting, we share it with this committee so that you can see it and ask any questions that you might have. Performance is summarized in the Workforce Innovation and Performance Committee slideshow.

**Group Discussion: Policy 104 Individual Training Account Guidelines, Maximum Funding Amounts:**

Possible Revision to Policy 104 Individual Training Account Guidelines:

**Current Language:**

**IV. Availability of Funds**

- A. **Maximum Funding Amounts.** Pending the availability of funds, the maximum amount allowable for training will be **\$6,000** for WIOA eligible Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth ITAs. The following **exceptions** apply:
1. Adults and Dislocated Workers seeking **CDL training** will only be approved for a maximum amount of **\$4,000**. Individuals pursuing employment for over-the road driving jobs may be eligible for other sources of financial assistance through tuition reimbursement or student loan repayment plans available through the trucking school. However, for **low-income individuals** (recipients of cash public assistance, SNAP assistance, or individuals at or below the higher of the federal poverty level or 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level) only the dollar limit for ITAs for Commercial Driver License (CDL) training has been raised to **\$5,000**.

Lee began the discussion noting this is a policy item that is up for review and possible revision.

One of our local policies governs our Individual Training Accounts, the RochesterWorks Training Grant, and who is eligible for it, how much they get, and what types of programs can get funded. In this case, the question came up in discussions with staff, why is there a differential amount for CDL training? Lee noted anecdotal reports of participants facing financial hardships due to the lower cap for CDL training compared to the regular \$6,000 cap and mentioned that this policy has been in place for about 10-15 years.

Lee discussed the challenges with CDL training programs, noting that while they are less academically rigorous and heavily marketed, many participants lack genuine interest in over-the-road trucking jobs. He explained that the program faced issues when participants claimed interest in trucking but preferred local, home-based positions, resulting in a waste of investment and resources. To address this, differential funding caps were introduced, requiring participants to take out loans, backed by trucking companies, and which would be paid off through payroll deduction. The student investment helped ensure genuine interest in the jobs that were available to newly licensed truck drivers.

Lee posed the following question to the group for discussion: Should we still have the differential rates?

- The group discussed raising the funding cap for CDL-A to match the cap for all other training programs, which was universally supported as it would help employees obtain certifications and achieve living wages.

Lee also asked if there were any concerns about eliminating the differential, that we would get some bad results.

- No concerns were raised. Lee noted what downside there was is not as significant as it used to be. We can always monitor placements from the different schools that we fund, and if the numbers are not where we want them to be in terms of job placements, there are other means that we have to remedy that, such as limiting how many students we will fund from each school in a particular program year. It does not have to be done through differential funding caps.

A motion to strike the exception from the policy and to advance the committee's recommendation to the full Board was made by Cherie Becker and seconded by Shawna Gareau-Kurtz. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Workforce Board Seeks Private Sector Candidates:**

Dave Seeley announced that the Workforce Board has vacancies on the private sector side and is seeking candidates with HR experience or executive decision-making roles in industries like Manufacturing, Construction, and Healthcare IT. Please submit your recommendations to Dave or Lee.

**Other:**

Melanie Russo shared that the Transportation Management Authority survey closes Friday and requested organizations to complete or share it to help Reconnect Rochester gather enough data to determine the feasibility of the Transportation Management Authority.

Lee thanked everyone for the excellent discussion today.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Shawna Gareau-Kurtz and seconded by Rosalie Clemens. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting Scheduled:** May 19, 2026

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 AM

Submitted by: Mary McKeown

Reviewed by:

Lee Koslow 2/27/2026