



NORTHEAST IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

CORE PARTNER MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Join by Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87408861692?pwd=2yDExaTd7akenWabUmocZsb4xRxj3c.1>

ID: 874 0886 1692 **Passcode:** 773979

Or Dial by Phone:

1.646.931.3860

Passcode: 773979

Attendance

PARTNERS	MINUTES ATTENDED
Molly Anderegg	0m
Sarah Baebler	0m
Sara Cook	58m
Dan Crosley	58m
Caraline Eggena	58m
Zeke Ellis	58m
Gloria Graves	0m
Bob Henderickson	0m
Laura Hidlebaugh	0m
Niki Litzel	32m
Erika Lippmann	58m
Marla Loecke	39m
Jennifer Nuss	58m
Victor Ochoa	39m
Lisa Ortner	0m
Gregory Pappas	58m
Jessica Reimer	37m
Katelyn Shears	0m
Karen Siler	58m
Brian Warner	0m
Joe Weigel	0m

Notes

The meeting provided the opportunity to introduce Zeke Ellis, the new One-Stop Operator for Northeast Iowa who will be taking over the organization of core/required partner meetings, and Jessica Reimer, the new director of Title I from Dynamic Workforce Solutions. It also focused on the generation of ideas for the upcoming Workforce Development Month in September, which allowed for the team to perform a trial run of breakout rooms; this is what the new Event Coordination Committee will use once it is inaugurated.

Starting off the conversation was a discussion surrounding the tragic events in Postville, IA. Marla Loecke, Victor Ochoa, Jessica Reimer, and Zeke Ellis provided a first-hand account of how the rapid response efforts have been going and what's next for the dislocated workers of the Agri Star Meat Processing Plant. A video depicting the Mobile Unit Team is linked [here](#).

Next, Zeke led a discussion about his new role with IowaWORKS. He described how his dedicated role will allow him to change how the OSO role is involved in the day-to-day operations of the four One-Stop locations around NEIA. Additionally, he outlined his objective to finish a Workforce Systems Assessment of the One-Stops by the end of September. The findings from this report will be made transparent to all core partners.

Erika Lippmann then talked about referral system updates. A meeting between Creative Planning, Zeke, and Erika will be held next week to obtain a clearer picture of when the rollout is expected to be. Training is expected to begin in September, but more concrete information is to come. Erika provided a quick update about Core 4 and the integrated service delivery model in general. The Integrated Resource Team has been hard at work to minimize gaps and barriers in customer service delivery.

Erika debuted a new initiative from the Board: an Event Coordination Committee. Zeke led a brainstorming session to showcase what this committee could look like once formed. The team used the upcoming Open House in each One-Stop to experiment with using breakout rooms to capture core partners' imagination. One room focused on how to get businesses engaged in the event ("What is the draw for Businesses?"), another looked at it from the job-seeker perspective ("What's in it for the average job-seeker to come?"), and finally, the third room talked about how to get the community engaged ("Who are we targeting with this event?").

Many brilliant ideas were spawned from this brainstorming session. Victor, Niki, Sara, and Marla looked at the business angle. Victor wanted to align Dubuque's Open House with their Make-Your-Mark Monday hiring event. Sara continued a conversation with Erika to talk about the community angle. The two thought about integrating entertainment for kids into the event (e.g. kids' LEGO table). Erika pitched having a professional photographer take headshots at the event. More ideas: coffee bar, bakeoff, food bank, etc. Then, to think about it from the job-seeker's perspective, Jenny, Greg, Karen, Dan, and Caraline took a more meta-approach. They felt that the history of this event was full of highs and lows, which might be contributing to the low job-seeker turnout in the previous years.

To conclude the meeting, Erika had a brief discussion surrounding the Wednesday Morning Trainings and their overall effectiveness. She talked about some next steps, including the adoption of an accommodations request form. As the Equal Opportunity Coordinator, this is an initiative that will be part of Equal Opportunity Monitoring.

The next core partner meeting will be held on September 1, 2026 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., though now that Zeke is taking over the meetings, a poll will be sent around to see if a different time is preferred.