

WCCA BOARD MEETING
January 21, 2025

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held January 21, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, Danni Segebart and Keith Bruck

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Angie Winkvist, Mills- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Cynthia Williams, Fremont- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Jean Heiden, Crawford	Charla Schmid, Montgomery
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Pat Berendes, Montgomery
Evert Colunga- Harrison	Lisa Connell, Page
Tom Brouillette, Monona	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Brent Watkins, Monona	Bryan Swain, Shelby

SEATING OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Wendy Mueller introduced the following new Board Members: Jean Heiden, Crawford County Board of Supervisor, will serve as the Public Representative for Crawford County. Angie Winkvist, Glenwood, Iowa Mayor, will serve as the Public Representative for Mills County. Todd Maher made a motion to seat Jean Heiden, Public Representative for Crawford County and Angie Winkvist, Public Representative for Mills County to the West Central Community Action Board of Directors, Brian Rife seconded. Motion was carried.

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve the agenda, Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES

Molly Cummings made the motion to approve the November minutes, Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Every two years we need to elect officers to form a nominating committee. The committee has to be comprised of a board member from each of the three sectors. The committee will then need to meet to form the slate of officers. The following Board of Directors volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee: Charla Schmid, Public, Montgomery County, Lisa Connell, Private, Page County, and Molly Cummings, Low-Income, Pottawattamie

County. The committee will present the slate of officers at the March board meeting and the election will be held at the Annual meeting in May.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY UPDATES

Wendy explained every two years for CSBG Organizational Standards, Board of Directors need to complete a new Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Nepotism policies. All Board of Directors received the policies in the January board packet to complete and return. Please return the completed forms as soon as possible so WCCA is in compliance with CSBG Organizational Standard 5.6.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received copies of Personnel Policies #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #510 Emergency Closings, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #713 Confidentiality. Angela Bladt, HR Director, explained all proposed changes to the board and the proposed changes were also approved by Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire the WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Brain Rife made the motion to approve changes to #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #510 Emergency Closings, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #713 Confidentiality and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Connie McGee seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PARENTING CURRICULUM APPROVAL

Danni Segebart presented the Learning Genie Curriculum Proposal for the Head Start program. Currently, Head Start uses Ready Rosie for parent curriculum. Danni stated this curriculum has more features, is more user friendly than what's currently being used, easier for parents to implement at home, and lower in cost. Donna Maddox made the motion to change the Head Start parent curriculum to Learning Genie, Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START TRAINING

Danni Segebart presented the Board of Directors with an overview of the Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Brittany will also be emailing the presentation to the Board of Directors and will get with Danni to get anyone who completed it, a certificate.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START ELIGIBILITY TRAINING

Danni provided eligibility training to the Board of Directors. She explained the factors that are needed to help determine eligibility for applicants for Head Start/Early Head Start, how it is verified, required records, violating policies and procedures, and meeting with potential clients to complete applications.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Currently we have 12 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. We continue to advertise and interview potential candidates.
- The end of December enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are looking great. Current enrollment numbers are: 246 in Head Start with 1 accepted, funded enrollment is 249 (99%). 88 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (96%). 52 children on the Head Start waitlist and 14 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- ACF-OHS-PI-25-01- The notice explains the procedures for Tribal and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start grantees using Head Start funds for construction or major renovation of Early Childhood facilities.
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-01- The memo explains how funds may be used to connect young children and families with traditional indigenous foods and food practices..
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-02-This memo outlines the OHS monitoring process for FY 2025. It describes the types of monitoring reviews that recipients may experience.

- We are still waiting on our official Notice of Award for budget period of 2/1/25-1/31/26. They just reviewed our grant application which was submitted November 1, 2024 and had a few questions Keith had to answer. We are hoping to receive our Notice of Award prior to February 1.
- We notified the Essex Community School District earlier this month that we will not be renewing our Head Start partnership agreement for the 2025-2026 school year. The decision was made due to the difficulty in recruiting eligible children and the district was not meeting some of the required Head Start program requirements.
- We received our 45-day notification of our Focus Area 1 Review. The review will be conducted the week of March 3 and will be virtual. The FA 1 Review will determine if grant recipients are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Uniform Guidance, and the Head Start Act. It allows us the opportunity to share our processes and systems that are in place to provide high quality services to children and families. They will review the quality of education services, family and community engagement, fiscal operations, health and safety practices, requirement and selection criteria and program structure. Danni and her team along with the WCCA admin staff will be preparing for the review.
- We are still looking for space in Harrison County to move our Head Start classroom to for the next school year. As Wendy mentioned in the last meeting, Missouri Valley notified us they will be needing the space we currently occupy next year. If we are unable to secure a location rather quickly we will be looking at moving the slots to Council Bluffs where we have a large waiting list.

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Wendy recommended that we do not have a February meeting and that March 18th will be the next meeting. Molly Cummings made the motion to not have a February Board of Directors meeting, Brian Rife seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

There was nothing new to add to the fiscal report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- We continue to see a steady increase in LIHEAP applications and requested an amendment to move \$217,000 in ECIP funding to Regular LIHEAP assistance to pay LIHEAP approved households. We are waiting for the feds to release the additional 9-10% of funds to the states. We are hopeful we will be able to provide a LIHEAP benefit to all households that apply. We continue to work with the new LIHEAP system and some improvements have been made. We were able to make our first payment of over \$1.4 million dollars to vendors. It was a long and tedious process with the new system. Wendy, Keith, Ivy, and Brittany worked together to complete payments last week. Wendy thanked them for their help.
- WCCA should be receiving the HEAP contract amendment for Weatherization anytime. We ended last year with \$811,149 in HEAP funding. We did receive amendments to our Alliant, Black Hills, and Mid-American contracts for the Weatherization program. Black Hills was \$73,381, Alliant was \$13,374 and Mid-American was \$77,664. The amounts are all similar to last year's contracts.
- A Weatherization Program Notice was included in the board packet. It describes the new Flat Rate method, which Wendy has talked about the past few months. In order to help control costs Weatherization contractors will be paid a flat rate for services performed based on last year's average costs. Agencies will simply award contractors the homes instead of contractors bidding on the project. HVAC and Electrical contractors will still bid for jobs. Agencies had to implement the new process by January 17.
- FaDSS Day on the Hill is February 4 at the State Capital. Mary Wisnieski, FaDSS Director, one of her staff and Wendy will be attending the event. This meeting allows us to highlight the accomplishments of the FaDSS program to our state representatives.

- WCCA will have our FaDSS Fidelity Audit the month of February conducted by the State FaDSS staff. They will review client files, conduct home visits with staff, have interviews with staff and Wendy, review staff personnel files and a few other items. It will be a great way to showcase what we do and correct any items we need to improve upon in the future.
- The FaDSS renewal grant application is due on February 25. It is a renewal grant application for FY26-FY28. Mary, Keith, and Wendy have been working on the application to get it completed.
- FaDSS has 56 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95. We are now looking for 2 FaDSS Specialists as we had one of our new specialists take a job elsewhere. We have an interview scheduled this week with a potential candidate and are hoping it will be a good fit.
- Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company were here December 12-13 and January 8-10 to conduct our annual agency audit. The major programs audited were Weatherization and Head Start. We do not anticipate any compliance issues, and everything is looking good for fiscal year 2024. Wendy thanked Keith and his staff for all their hard work. The audit will be presented at the March board meeting.
- Keith and Wendy had our annual agency insurance renewal meeting in December. Due to the significant storms last year we will be seeing an increase of 30% in our premiums for coverage.
- On December 20, 2024, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed another Continuing Resolution (CR) to extend federal spending and avert a government shutdown. The CR extends all federal funding—including for Head Start—at Fiscal Year 2024 levels until March 14, 2025.

Todd Maher made a motion to adjourn at 6.04 p.m. Brian Rife seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
March 18, 2025

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held March 18, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Keith Bruck, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom
Jean Heiden, Crawford- Zoom
Cynthia Williams, Fremont- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom
Angie Winquist, Mills- Zoom

Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom
Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom
Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Donna Childress, Crawford
Connie McGee, Crawford
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont
Evert Colunga, Harrison
Donna Maddocks, Mills
Tom Brouillette, Monona

Brent Watkins, Monona
Lisa Connell, Page
Jeannine Liljedahl, Page
Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Bryan Swain, Shelby

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Angie Winquist made the motion to approve the agenda, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

Angie Winquist made the motion to approve the January minutes, Wendy Richter seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2024 AUDIT PRESENTATION BY DAVID GINTHER OF GRONEWOLD, BELL, KYHNN & COMPANY P.C.

Board of Directors were emailed a copy of the FY 2024 Audit prior to the board meeting. A hard copy of the audit was also mailed to them. Faith Hinrichs of Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company P.C. presented the FY 2024 Audit in detail. Faith stated the auditor's report issued an unmodified opinion. There were no instances of non-compliance, findings or questioned costs related to the financial statements, internal controls or that pertain to costs for federal awards. West Central Community Action remains a low-risk auditee. Faith commended Keith and his staff on their great work in the Fiscal Department.

FY 2024 AUDIT APPROVAL

Justin Williams made the motion to accept the FY 2024 Audit, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy thanked Keith and his staff on their great work and stated Keith does an outstanding job as the Chief Financial Officer.

WCCA FISCAL MANUAL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Keith explained the changes to the WCCA Fiscal Manual of Accounting Policies and Procedures. Changes included OMB changes that were effective October 2024 pertaining to equipment and increasing the amount from \$5,000 to \$10,000, an increase in capitalization and bids for items and services has been increased to \$2,000. There have also been staff changes in the fiscal department, so Keith removed the specific job title and changed it to fiscal team or designated employee. The explained changes were made to the following Fiscal Procedures: #209 Cash Reimbursements/Correspondence Control, #215 Cash Receipts/Correspondence Control, #413 Petty Cash Accounts, #611 Direct and Indirect Costs, #615 In-Kind Costs, #717 Estimating Labor Costs (Payroll Procedures), #743 Competitive Bid Process, #749 Determining Need for Purchase Order, #807 Record and Report Agency Property and Equipment, #809 Record of Real Property, #811 Agency Leased Property and Equipment, #813 Physical Inventories, #944 Travel Using the Agency Corporate Vehicle, #947 Employee Mileage Reimbursement, #949 Mileage Reimbursement for Board of Directors/Policy Councils, #953 Employee In-Area Travel Allowance, #955 Out of Area Travel Expense Documentation. The explained changes were made to the following Fiscal Policies: #105 Definition of Terms, #207 Signature Authorities, #222 Credit Card and Store Accounts, #319 Audit, #323 Procuring Audit Services, #411 Bank Accounts, #413 Petty Cash Accounts, #419 Leases, #421 Capitalization of Equipment, #425 Title or Lien-Interest to Acquired Property with Federal Funds, #615 In-Kind Costs, #617 Valuation of In-Kind Contributions, #743 Competitive Bid Process, #805 Identification of Property and Equipment, #819 Disposition of Real Property and Equipment, #944 Travel Using Agency Corporate Vehicle, #951 Employee Out of Area Travel Allowance, #952 Employee Lodging, #955 Expense Documentation. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire the WCCA Fiscal Manual of Accounting Policies and Procedures. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve all changes and the entire WCCA Fiscal Manual of Accounting Policies and Procedures. Charla Schmid seconded. Motion carried.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT CSBG FY 2025 NPI REPORTS

Brittany presented the 6-month FY 2025 NPI reports that will be submitted to HHS at the end of the month. The reports are used to present a uniform and coherent national picture of community action outcomes. Overall, we are right on track and have adjusted a few targets to better reflect more accurate and achievable outcomes. A copy of the reports were included in the board packet.

FY2026 CSBG COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN AND APPLICATION APPROVAL

The Planning and Evaluation Committee met prior to the Board Meeting. Brittany stated the Planning Committee discussed the FY2026 CSBG Community Action Plan and Application which are aligned with WCCA's mission, vision, beliefs and values. It is a full application this year and is due June 2nd. She discussed and explained the three parts of the application: narrative, National Performance Indicators Report (NPI), and the budget. The grant narrative describes how our agency follows the ROMA cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results and evaluation. Using the ROMA cycle ensures that CSBG funds are used on programs that are anti-poverty based, anti-poverty focused, and tie directly to the community needs assessments. The narrative describes our process of how our Board of Directors, Administrative Management Team, and various sub-committees are involved in all stages of the ROMA cycle. It also defines how our agency meets the CSBG assurances in assisting low-income families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, secure employment, obtain emergency assistance, and make better use of available income. The CSBG Budget Summary illustrates how CSBG funds will be used during FY 2026. The majority of the funds will be used to operate the outreach offices in our ten counties. Funds can also be used to co-fund CACFP and a few other programs if needed in order to enhance services. The NPI Report identifies and captures the outcomes our agency plans to achieve through our

programs and services during FY 2026. The targets for the NPI report will be made in the fall. Copies of the CSBG Community Action Plan and Application are available to those who would like one. Brian Rife made the motion to approve the FY 2026 CSBG Community Action Plan and Application and that it is aligned with WCCA's mission, vision, beliefs and values. Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy thanked Brittany for her hard work on the CSBG NPI's and preparing the FY 2026 CSBG Grant Application and Keith for completing the budget.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Wendy Mueller stated the Strategic Planning Committee met March 13, 2025 to review the FY 2025 6 month NPI reports, FY 2026 CSBG Grant Application and 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. Everyone received a copy of the updated FY 2025 Strategic Plan in their board packet. Wendy highlighted progress so far this year: We have implemented the new statewide LIHEAP database and staff are trained. So far we have approved 4,125 LIHEAP applications. 397 unduplicated households have received a food pantry during the current fiscal year. 20 households have received Weatherization services. Currently 59% of registered child care homes are enrolled in CACFP. Board of Directors have completed the conflict of interest and nepotism forms for CSBG organizational standards. The WCCA grievance policy was updated and approved at the January board meeting. We have implemented the new CSBG database and outreach staff are starting to input household information. WCCA has only had one work comp claim to date during the fiscal year which is an improvement. 91% of our job openings are currently filled with a goal of 95%. 35% of Head Start families have attended 1 family night with a goal of 50%. The committee will meet again in October to analyze the final results and create the new FY 2026 Strategic Plan. A thank you goes to Brittany and all the staff for working hard on the specified goals.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START SELF-ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

Danni explained the timeline of the self-assessment. The self-assessment analyzes program data and shows if we need to make adjustments to programming. Danni will present the results at the August board meeting.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START TRANSPORTATION WAIVER

Danni Segebart presented the Head Start Transportation Wavier. We are requesting a transportation waiver for both the child safety restraint system, Standard 1303.71(d) and 1303.72(a)(1). Due to our school partnerships providing bus transportation we do not meet the requirement of child restraint systems. We are also seeking a waiver for bus monitors. We are unable to provide staffing for this requirement due to the additional cost and number of staff needed. We are still in compliance with Iowa DHS licensing regulations and would provide a bus monitor when there are at least 7 children on the bus or transit system. This waiver was also approved by Head Start Policy Council last week. Angie Winquist made the motion to approve the Head Start Transportation Wavier. Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Danni explained the proposed changes to the Eligibility for Head Start Services. Due to the final ruling, staff are required to see documentation of a child's date of birth. The policy has been reworded to clarify which program services which ages. For Early Head Start we added wording that extends the amount of time a child turning three can remain in Early Head Start. Once the child turns three, they can stay until the end of the program year or transition to Head Start or another preschool program when there is an opening. Currently 30 days after the child turns three, they have to be placed in a Head Start slot or another preschool program and if one is not available, they are dropped. This change will not only accommodate families to ensure their child has continuity of services but will also assist in our Early Head Start enrollment numbers. The proposed change also provides clarification that only one income verification type is needed for eligibility. The policy changes have already been approved by the Head Start Policy Council. Justin Williams made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy changes, Todd Maher seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- We currently only have 6 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start: Atlantic Head Start Assistant Teacher, Council Bluffs Head Start Assistant Teacher, Harlan Family Advocate, Council Bluffs Family Advocate. Health and Nutrition Coordinator and an Education Support Specialist – Council Bluffs & MO Valley.
- The end of February enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are holding steady. Our current enrollment numbers are: 249 in Head Start, funded enrollment is 249, which is 100%. 82 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92, which is 89%. 52 children on the Head Start waitlist and 15 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- We have received four school contracts back for the 2025-2026 school year. We have completed contracts for Clarinda, Harlan, Council Bluffs, and West Monona. We should be receiving Red Oak's contract very soon.
- Danni and Wendy met with the West Harrison Superintendent and Elementary Principal on February 19, to discuss a possible school partnership for the upcoming school year. West Harrison School District is located in Mondamin. Marty Fonely, the West Harrison Superintendent is also the superintendent for the West Monona School District, so he is already familiar with our program and supports our school partnership in West Monona. We will be contracting with them and will have to determine how many slots later this spring as we determine income eligibility for incoming preschoolers. We have up to 10 slots to provide in the partnership. We are excited for the new partnership as it will allow us to continue to provide services to Harrison County. The current staff working in MO Valley have all taken open positions in Council Bluffs.
- With the weather we have been having, a few of our sites are not going to meet their required hours (1,020). We have and will continue to make up hours at the sites we are able, but with a few of them we depend on building access, food service and transportation services from school districts so it is not possible to make up hours. Danni has notified our Program Specialist at the Regional Office, and she instructed us to document the attempts we have made to make-up and the barriers we are experiencing.
- We accepted a bid from Woodhouse Chevrolet of Missouri Valley for two Malibu vehicles. One is a replacement vehicle from the storm damage we received this summer and the other is needed in the program.
- We had an incident occur on February 13, in one of the Council Bluffs Head Start classrooms. The child was not injured in the incident; however, the action goes against our code of conduct and was unacceptable behavior exhibited by a staff member. The staff member was terminated as this was not the first incident she had been involved in. The parent of the child, DHS, and Region VII Head Start were all notified of the incident. DHS did not accept the call and we are waiting on a decision from Region VII.
- We had our Focus Area 1 review March 3-5. The FA 1 Review determines if grant recipients are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Uniform Guidance, and the Head Start Act. It allows us the opportunity to share our processes and systems that are in place to provide high quality services to children and families.
- Danni and Wendy had the exit interview with the reviewer on March 5. She stated that everything looked really good and that we have great processes in place. The reviewer also commented that all staff were very prepared and everyone knew what was going on in the program. We should receive the report in 60 days. A big thank you goes to Danni and her staff along with Keith and Angela.
- The Office of Head Start sent out a notification to all grantees on Friday, March 14, informing them that the Office of Head Start will no longer approve the use of federal funding for any training and technical assistance or other program expenditures that promote or take part in diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have also been advised to carefully review our next application submission to ensure we are complying.
- Once Danni goes on maternity leave Wendy will be officing at the Head Start Admin building on Tuesday's and Thursday's until she returns.

APRIL BOARD MEETING

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in April. The Executive Committee meeting can always be scheduled if needed. Brian Rife made the motion to not have an April Board of Directors meeting. Angie Winquist seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

There was nothing new to add to the fiscal report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) will no longer be funding CCR&R services due to the Governor's new Early Child Care Continuum grant. A majority of ECI funds will be used to support the new project. However, the Department of Health and Human Services will be allocating additional funds to cover the ECI funds we will be losing which is roughly \$205,000.
- Child Care Resource and Referral held their first annual Pottawattamie County Child Care Tour on March 14. They invited community members and legislators the opportunity to talk to 4 early childhood center directors and staff, including our Head Start Center in Council Bluffs. They showcased what early learning looks like from the directors and staff working with the littlest population of Southwest Iowa every day. It was very successful and really brought a spotlight to childcare and the need for additional resources. There was also a reporter from Channel 3 News and Danni did a great job being interviewed.
- We are looking for a new outreach specialist for our Page County office in Shenandoah. Robina Courtney is retiring from WCCA. She did a great job for us over the years as she worked both in Head Start and outreach.
- A letter from the Department of Health and Human Services dated March 4, is included in the board packet. The letter allocates second quarter CSBG funds for a total amount of \$263,312. CSBG funds are used primarily to fund the outreach offices and staff. We requested a contract extension until June to expend CSBG FY 24 funds. It was approved by the state.
- We submitted the FaDSS renewal grant application on February 14. Wendy thanked Mary and Keith for getting it completed. Brittany emailed everyone the grant approval letter awarding WCCA the new FaDSS Contract that we just received today.
- We have hired two new FaDSS Specialists, and they are in the process of training. It takes three months of training before they are able to take a caseload of participants.
- The state FaDSS program managers requested a meeting with Mary and Wendy on February 25, to discuss a budget amendment and our inability to meet our requirement of 95 enrolled participants. The state is only allowing a 30-day funding extension instead of 3-months for the FaDSS grant. Keith submitted a budget amendment to the state to reflect a more accurate picture of expenses through July 31, which was a reduction of over \$93,000. The contract ending period is June 30.
- The FaDSS Audit finally concluded on February 24. They had to reschedule the in-person visit twice due to weather. Mary, the FaDSS Specialists and Wendy had the exit interview with the FaDSS state personnel on March 5. The final report was included in the board packet.
- The fidelity audit conducted is in a new format and is an extensive deep dive into the program. We have never experienced an audit like this in the FaDSS program. The report highlights a few program strengths such as specialists are knowledgeable about community resources and are highly regarded by our colleagues in Promise Jobs. Promise Jobs stated they had a strong working relationship with our staff. This is where we receive a majority of referrals for the program. The report also stated staff want to do a good job and care deeply about the families we serve. Staff are open to learning new techniques and have a growth mindset. We did have numerous areas that needed improvement specifically around documentation. We need to improve our timeliness of items needing entered into the state database as well as improving our goal setting and skill building activities with families. We need to provide more evidence of the items we are completing with participants. Our new director Mary is extremely detailed oriented and has already made changes to improve our documentation and improve services. She is committed to improving and growing the program. The state will be checking on our documentation progress and meeting with Mary more frequently to address any issues we are having. Mary will also be conducting more home visits with staff to ensure program compliance. The

families that were interviewed were very complimentary of their FaDSS specialists which is great to hear. Wendy thanked Mary and the FaDSS staff for their assistance during the fidelity review.

- LIHEAP will be ending April 30. We have limited ECIP funding available to help with disconnects.
- Congress passed the continuing resolution on Friday which funds the government through September 30, 2025. The CR maintains CSBG, LIHEAP, Head Start and Weatherization funding at FY 2024 levels for the remainder of the year. The next challenge will be the FY2026 budget and appropriations process which will more than likely see steep domestic cuts. Wendy will inform everyone as she receives information in the future.

Charla Schmid made a motion to adjourn at 6:20p.m. Brian Rife seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
May 20, 2025

The 59th Annual Meeting of the West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held May 20, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Angela Bladt, and Brittany Schoof.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Jean Heiden, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom
Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom	

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Justin Williams, Cass	Evert Colunga, Harrison
Donna Childress, Crawford	Angie Winkvist, Mills
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Tom Brouillette, Monona
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Jean Heiden made the motion to approve the agenda, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES

Jeannine Liljedahl made the motion to approve the March minutes. Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Everyone received a copy of the FY 2024 Annual Report in their board packet. The report highlights all programs, services, number of clients served, demographic information, and our audit. We served a total of 13,747 unduplicated individuals and 6,233 unduplicated households. A big thank you goes to Brittany for all of her hard work in completing the annual report.

PROPOSED CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF THE WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY-LAWS

Wendy stated the By-laws have to be reviewed every two years as part of the CSBG organizational standards. Proposed changes are in section Article VI: Composition of the Board 6.01 & 6.02. Proposed changes include replacing City Councils with Elected Officials to match what is stated in the Iowa Code 216A.94 Community Action Board. Bryan Swain also recommend a few wording changes in the same sections. Molly Cummings made the motion to approve the changes to the WCCA By-Laws. Jean Heiden seconded. Motion was carried. All Board of Directors will receive an updated copy and will sign off that they received them for CSBG Organizational Standard compliance.

FY 2026 FADSS CONTRACT DESIGNEE APPROVAL

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors is the official authorized to execute any amendments related to FY 26 FaDSS contract. We are requesting board approval to allow Charlie Parkhurst as Board President to designate the Executive Director or the Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the FaDSS contract. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve the Board President to designate the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Information memorandum ACF-OHS-IM-25-04: Expanding educational freedom and opportunities for families in Head Start programs. Memo describes our role in promoting parent choice to select the early care and education providers that best meet their needs. They want us to actively participate in state and local efforts to coordinate early care and education. Assess our program model and determine how our offerings respond to family needs and promote family choice. OHS is also encouraging programs to re-examine community partnerships and evaluate how they can be strengthened and expanded to offer full day services. WCCA is already providing full day services in both Head Start and Early Head Start. We also have a mixed delivery system with our 6 school partnerships and use a coordinated enrollment process to streamline enrollment.
- We received our Notice of Award on May 2. This action awards the balance of funds for the Head Start and Early Head Start program operations for the budget period of 2/1/25-1/31/26. The total award is over \$7.3 million with \$5.8 million in funding and a non-federal share requirement of almost \$1.5 million.
- Currently there are 8 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. Atlantic Head Start Assistant Teacher, Council Bluffs Head Start Teacher, Denison Assistant Teacher (3), Harlan Assistant Teacher Floater, Council Bluffs Family Advocate and Education Support Coordinator - Council Bluffs.
- We have hired a Health and Nutrition Coordinator who started on April 29 and is located at our Council Bluffs campus. We have also hired the Family Advocate for Harlan.
- The end of April enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are looking great. Our current enrollment numbers are: 248 in Head Start, funded enrollment is 249, which is 99%. 92 in Early Head Start with 1 accept, funded enrollment is 92, which is 100%. 48 children on the Head Start waitlist and 14 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- We have fully executed school contracts for the 2025-2026 school year from all our school partners, which include Clarinda, Council Bluffs, Harlan, Red Oak, West Monona and West Harrison.
- Our Head Start program had two incidents that occurred in April. On April 15, in our Atlantic Head Start classroom a child was left outside in our fully fenced playground for over 3 minutes. The staff

reported the incident and we reviewed the camera footage to verify the information. The staff noticed they were one child short after they went back to the classroom and immediately returned outside to locate the child. The child was not injured. We reported the incident to childcare licensing, Head Start Region VII and notified the parent. Policy Council was also notified during their meeting on May 8. Our Region VII program specialist reviewed the documentation and corrective action plan and closed out the case.

- On April 25 in our Denison I Head Start classroom a child was left inside the classroom while the students were transitioning outside. The child was left in the classroom unattended for over 3 minutes as was discovered by our food service personnel, who was in the connecting classroom. The child was not injured. We reported the incident to childcare licensing, Head Start Region VII and notified the parent. Policy Council was also notified during their meeting on May 8.
- Due to the two serious incidents occurring within 10 days, Wendy had a zoom meeting with all teaching staff to stress the importance of active supervision and following procedures. Having reportable incidents can put our grant at risk.
- Head Start/Early Head Start staff are actively recruiting for the 2025/2026 school year. If you know of any families that would be interested, please refer them to WCCA's Facebook page or call the Head Start office at 712-755-7537.
- The last day of school for our Head Start standalone classrooms is May 21.
- On April 1, five Head Start Regional Offices were closed, and employees terminated. Offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Seattle were all closed in accordance with Secretary Kennedy's plan for reducing the size of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The closures will have a significant impact on grant oversight, funding distribution, program monitoring, and training and technical assistance for all grantees. They just released the new Regional Map and our Region is now called the Midwest Region. The region will now have 10 states instead of 4. The office headquarters will remain in Kansas City which is good news.

JUNE AND JULY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in June or July. The Executive Committee can always schedule a meeting if needed. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to not have a June or July Board of Directors meeting. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add to his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- Harrison County received a disaster declaration due to the severe winter storm on March 19. Harrison County residents who are 200% or below of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and suffered damage due to the storms are eligible for assistance up to \$7,000 per household. Households had until May 12, to apply for assistance. We are also offering disaster case advocacy services to any household regardless of income. There are no funds associated with the advocacy program. We had 42 applications submitted and are in the process of reviewing, approving or denying them. A majority of the applications were for food replacement due to the power outages. We also had two more disaster declarations on April 18, for Fremont and Page Counties due to the strong storms. Families affected

have until June 2 to apply for Individual Disaster Assistance. We are working on a transition plan with ICAA and Homeland Security as our disaster contract will end June 30. Wendy wants it to be as smooth as possible for our families.

- Keith submitted the proposed FY 2026 CCR&R budget on 5/15/25 in the amount of \$1,074,958, which includes \$80,000 for the Growing Iowa Incentives. The incentives are provided to registered childcare homes or centers for health and safety items, developmentally appropriate toys or equipment. At the anticipated funding level, we plan to employ 10 full-time CCR&R positions to provide resources, education, and advocacy to support quality childcare in 17 counties in Southwest and West Central Iowa. The new amendment starts July 1.
- LIHEAP officially ended on April 30th. We saw a decrease in applications from last year of 15%. We are attributing the decline to not having the online application working properly. We usually have over 500 applications completed online and this year we had around 50. We approved 4,568 applications for over \$2.3 million dollars. A big thank you goes to the LIHEAP staff and outreach for their hard work. We have also paid out over \$50,000 in ECIP crisis funding since October. All of our ECIP funding has been exhausted. We are hoping to receive a few more ECIP dollars this summer as the remaining 10% of federal funding for LIHEAP is being released to the states. We are still able to assist clients with other utility funds such as Black Hills Cares, Alliant Hometown Cares and Mid-American ICARE funds.
- A Weatherization monitoring review letter and report from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services are included in the board packet. The review consisted of evaluating specific documents for compliance with rules, regulations, and policies. There were no programmatic findings. It was a great review and Wendy thanked Kelly Mahlberg and his staff for a job well done. A copy of our HEAP amendment was also included in the board packet. The amendment is for \$296,030 which is significantly lower than last year. Our 2024 HEAP contract was for \$486,944. We are hopeful more funds will be distributed later in the program year.
- A CSBG amendment was included in your board packet. It moved \$35,000 from personnel, other and indirect costs to co-funded programs for outreach services.
- The outreach offices again will be closed on Fridays in the summer except for Sidney and Harlan locations. CSBG funding constraints along with the fact we do not have ECIP funding to distribute we are reducing the outreach offices hours. The change in hours will be from June 9-August 29.
- Our new Page County Outreach Specialist will start in June. The Page County office will continue to be open 32 hours a week Monday-Thursday year round.
- FaDSS has 74 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95, which is 78%. Staff are currently contacting families on the waiting list to see if they are still interested in participating in the program. We are continuing to increase the number of families enrolled which is good news.
- The letter dated April 8 from the Department of Health and Human Services is amending our current FaDSS grant contract requiring all FaDSS personnel to participate in 2 hours of training related to diversity, equity and inclusion. A Federal Executive Order was issued in January terminating the use of federal funds to support the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The FaDSS program requirement has been eliminated.
- The FY 2026 “Skinny” Federal Budget was released on May 2. In the proposal LIHEAP and CSBG are slated to be eliminated. Head Start was not on the list and is expected to be funded for the upcoming year but we are unsure at this time at what funding level. This is just a proposed budget and there are a lot of challenges ahead before this could even become a possibility. Wendy highly encouraged everyone to contact senators Grassley and Ernst and Congressmen Nunn and Feenstra and stress the importance and value our programs have on families. The loss of CSBG and LIHEAP

programming would have a significant impact on our agency and the communities we serve. Those two programs pay for staff and office space. If the programs were eliminated all outreach offices would be closed and there would be no more food pantries, clothing rooms, utility assistance or referrals. Wendy will keep you in the loop if any new information is provided.

- Brent Watkins, WCCA's Low-Income Representative for Monona County has resigned from the board as he has moved out of our service area to Texas.
- All WCCA offices will be closed on May 26, for Memorial Day, June 19, for the Juneteenth Holiday and July 4.

Charla Schmid made a motion to adjourn at 6:05 p.m. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
August 19, 2025

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held August 19, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Keith Bruck, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Jean Heiden, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Angie Winquist, Mills- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom
Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom	

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Charla Schmid, Montgomery
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Todd Maher, Page
Tom Brouillette, Monona	

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Brian Rife made the motion to approve the agenda, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the May minutes. Jeannine Liljedahl seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2024 IRS FORM 990 PRESENTATION BY DAVID GINTHER OF GRONEWOLD, BELL, KYHNN AND CO.

Faith Hinrichs from Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Co. P.C. presented the FY 2024 IRS Form 990 in detail to the Board of Directors via Zoom. IRS Form 990 was emailed to all Board of Directors prior to the board meeting. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve accepting the FY 2024 Form 990, Molly Cummings seconded. Motion was carried.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received copies of Personnel Policies #120 Orientation of New Employees, #305 Holidays, #318 Iowa Public Employee's Retirement System (IPERS), #702 Drug Free Environment and #715 Whistleblower Protection. Angela Bladt, HR Director, explained all proposed changes to the board. All proposed changes were also approved by the Head Start Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Justin Williams made the motion to approve changes to #120 Orientation of New Employees, #305 Holidays, #318 Iowa Public Employee's Retirement System (IPERS),

#702 Drug Free Environment, #715 Whistleblower Protection and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT 2025-2026 BUDGET APPROVAL

Keith reviewed the board handout USDA Statement of Budget, Income and Equity for the Shelby County Early Childhood Center for the period of October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. Keith explained this is a requirement for USDA and the building houses Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Angie Winquist made the motion to approve the USDA Rural Development 2025-2026 Budget. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2026 ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET APPROVAL

2025-2026 Organizational Budget was provided to all Board of Directors in their board packet. Keith stated this is a requirement for CSBG but provides a great overview of the Agency. Keith explained the budget in detail. He stated there was a decrease from the previous year in revenue due to a decrease in utility assistance funding. There was an increase in salary and wages from the previous year due to adding a third person into some Head Start classrooms. Jean Heiden made the motion to approve the Annual Agency Wide Organizational Budget for 2025-2026, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2026 LIHEAP CONTRACT APPROVAL

We have not received the FY 2026 LIHEAP contract yet, however we are expecting to receive a similar budget to FY 2025. Amendments will be forth coming throughout the program year. We will end FY 2025 with a budget of \$3,077,482 for LIHEAP. We are requesting Board approval to accept and have the Board President and Executive Director sign the FY 2026 LIHEAP start-up contract once it is received from the State. Lisa Connell made the motion to approve the Board President and Executive Director to sign the FY 2026 contract, Jean Heiden seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2026 CSBG, LIHEAP, AND WEATHERIZATION CONTRACT DESIGNEE APPROVAL

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors is the official authorized to execute any amendments related to the FY 2026 CSBG, LIHEAP, and Weatherization contracts. We are requesting board approval to allow Charles Parkhurst as Board President to designate the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Kris Olson Harmon made the motion to approve the Board President to designate the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Jean Heiden seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

Danni stated the Head Start Community Needs Assessment is a program requirement that needs completed every 5 years and updated annually. Danni presented the information and explained they will use this information for program planning and budgeting for the Head Start grant. We are requesting board approval of the Head Start Community Needs Assessment. Justin Williams made the motion to approve the Head Start Community Needs Assessment, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Danni explained the changes to the following policies: Developmental (ASQ-3) and Behavioral Screenings (ASQ-SE: 2), Community Needs Assessment, Daily Attendance for Center-Based Classrooms, and Purchase Request. The Parent Conduct policy is a new policy that was suggested by our attorney for the safety of our children, parents, and staff. The procedure explains the process that will be followed and actions that will be taken if issues were to arise. The policy changes and new policy have already been approved by the Head Start Policy Council. Angie Winquist made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start policy changes and new policy, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM GOALS UPDATE

Danni explained the self-assessment report. The goals are as follows: Goal 1: WCCA Head Start will empower families and maintain strong community connections that will enable future success for children and families. Goal 2: WCCA Head Start will effectively and efficiently utilize data and database systems to streamline services for continuous improvement. Goal 3: WCCA Head Start will cultivate high quality staff to promote and ensure safe, secure, and supportive environments. Goal 4: WCCA Head Start will promote a culture that fosters and supports high quality relationships. Danni stated the chart shows which ones have been met and which goals are still in progress. Danni will provide additional updates on the progress in the future.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- There were two letters from the Administration for Children and Families included in the board packet. The first one notifies us of a monitoring review in FY 2026 for our Head Start program. There is a new monitoring framework that will replace the FA1 and FA2 reviews. We will be receiving two reviews during the fiscal year.
 - Comprehensive Transitional Review (CTR)-this review will build off the information we provided in our FA1 review. The review will be conducted through a hybrid approach of virtual and onsite. The new format is supposed to reduce the burden on grant recipients. It was reported that 50% of the questions will be eliminated, however the fiscal assessment will be more intense.
 - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)-this observation assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions. Classrooms will self-record their classroom instruction and submit the videos for observation.
- We will receive additional information 45 days prior to the review. The Office of Head Start is also working on an information memorandum detailing the new process.
- The second letter notifies us of our continuation grant funding and enrollment levels for 2/1/26-1/31/27. The enrollment of 341 slots and funding amount of \$5.8 million dollars remains the same as the current year. The continuation application is due November 1, and Danni will present it at the October board meeting.
- Program Instruction PI-25-02-Announces One-time Supplemental Funds for Nutrition and Healthy Eating for Head Start Children and Families. It outlines the process for Head Start grant recipients to request one-time funds to promote nutrition services and healthy eating for enrolled children and families. It also details allowable uses for the funding. We will not be seeking the funding as we are already requesting one-time funding to repair/replace several playgrounds for our program due to health and safety concerns. Thanks to the Board of Directors for voting yes to submit the grant application.
- It was discovered the Head Start Admin building in Harlan has foundation issues due to the ground settling. It has created significant gaps throughout the entire inside of the building and is creating a safety hazard. Keith and Danni met with Thrasher Foundation Repair and they provided us with a bid for \$58,723.94. They are lifting the building and installing 18 steel rods to secure the foundation. Any expenditure over \$40,000 needs to be approved by the Board President and Executive Director. Both Charlie and Wendy approved the expenditure after reviewing all the information. The repair will be capitalized and the Head Start grant will pay for the cost monthly over the next 10 years. This repair needed to be completed ASAP to prevent further damage. They are currently completing the project.
- On July 10th, the US Department of Health and Human Services rescinded the 1998 interpretation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act to ensure that program benefits are not provided to illegal immigrants. Most if not all our programs will be included in the new rule including Head Start and CSBG. We are waiting on more guidance and clarification on how to implement the ruling from our federal program administrators. Until then we have been advised to conduct business as usual.
- On the federal level the Senate Appropriations Committee is proposing an \$85 million dollar increase for Head Start funding for FY26 for a total of \$12.4 billion. The House Appropriations committee will not be marking up any HHS programs until they return in September. We will have to wait and see what plays out over the next month.
- For the month of July we were 97% of funded enrollment for Early Head Start with 89 children with a funded enrollment of 92 slots.

- We currently have 5 open positions in the program. Angela and the Head Start staff have been very busy recruiting, interviewing, and conducting new employee orientations.
- All Head Start staff returned August 18 for pre-service and will be getting ready for the new school year. The first day of school is September 2 for our stand-alone classrooms.

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in September. The Executive Committee meeting can always be scheduled if needed. Wendy recommended that we do not have a September meeting and October 21, 2025 will be the next meeting. Brian Rife made the motion to not have a September Board of Directors meeting, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add to his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- CCR&R finished FY 2025 on June 30, and started their new grant on July 1. The program had a very successful year. Our program had the highest percentage of eligible providers rated on the IQ4K scale in the state at 25% and the highest percentage of ChildNet (25 hours of educational trainings to ensure best practices) certified child development homes at 14%. Our overall satisfaction rating was 97%. We currently have 324 registered providers in our service territory. There continues to be a loss of registered child development homes and the growth of capacity (slots) for childcare centers in the region.
- The state has accepted our FY 2026 CSBG plan and application for the upcoming year. The funds are primarily used for the outreach offices and staff. A big thank you goes to Brittany and Keith for completing the grant application. A copy of the CSBG FY 2026 approval letter is included in the board packet. The contract should be issued in September.
- We received our final FY 2025 CSBG allocation in the amount \$531,944, which was \$2,007 less than our FY 2024 grant award. We had to submit a revised budget amendment by July 31, to reflect the final award amount. Due to the time constraint, we had the Executive Committee approve the new budget so we could submit it on time. A copy of the amendment is included in the board packet.
- We are in the process of completing the FY 2026 Child and Adult Care Food Program Center Based and Home-Based renewal funding applications. The applications are due to the state by August 29. Sometimes we request an extension for the Center Based application as it takes our approved food vendor additional time to have the contract reviewed by their legal team. For center based we receive cash reimbursements for meals and snacks at 14 Head Start and Early Head Start Classrooms and are included on 6 school district's CACFP reimbursements. The Home Based CACFP provides reimbursement to licensed home childcare providers that serve approved CACFP meals to income eligible children. We are projecting to work with 60 homes per month and will employ 2 staff.
- The new FaDSS contract started July 1, with the same contracted capacity number of 95 families. We currently have 79 families enrolled. We are actively recruiting families with children for the program.
- LIHEAP season is right around the corner. Elderly and disabled clients can start applying October 1, and all households can start applying November 1. We have sent out Automatic Applications to clients who qualify. The state is still working on the new database and making adjustments, we are hopeful the application process will go smoother this year vs. last year. The state is unsure on when we will get regular funding to pay LIHEAP applications this year due to everything happening at the federal level. If LIHEAP gets funded we may not receive funds until December or January.

- Federal fiscal year 2025 ends September 30. The Senate and House will have to agree on all 12 appropriations by the end of September or face a government shutdown. A likely scenario will be a short-term continuing resolution to keep the federal government operating until December.
- We did have good news come out of the Senate Appropriations Committee. CSBG was marked up at the current level of \$770 million, LIHEAP was increased by \$20 million to \$4.045 billion, and Head Start was also increased by \$85 million to \$12.4 billion. They did not finish the Energy appropriations which includes Weatherization.
- The House Appropriations Committee will not discuss any HHS programs until they return next month. They did markup Weatherization before they left on recess with a decrease of 45% in funding.

Lisa Connell made a motion to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. Brian Rife seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
October 21, 2025

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held October 21, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Cynthia Williams, Fremont- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Angie Winquist, Mills- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Wendy Richter, Cass	Brian Rife, Harrison
Jean Heiden, Crawford	Tom Brouillette, Monona
Donna Childress, Crawford	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the agenda, Angie Winquist seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

Molly Cummings made the motion to approve the August minutes, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT AND APPROVAL

Everyone received a copy of the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. Wendy stated the Strategic Planning Committee met on October 17 and reviewed the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. All goals have been accomplished this year except one, which will be moved to next year's plan. A few highlights include: 61% of registered in home child care providers participated in the CACFP program, 1,435 food pantries were distributed, 47 households received Weatherization, 93% of children met school readiness goals, 50% of Head Start families attended family night, all programs increased partnerships and attended community events, WCCA implemented the new LIHEAP and CSBG databases, the Employee

Grievance Policy #181 was updated, the volunteer handbook was updated, reduced our workplace injuries, 96% of all Agency jobs were filled and Board of Directors policy sign-offs were completed.

Everyone also received a copy of the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan. Setting goals for the new fiscal year requires looking at information from our Community Needs Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Customer Satisfaction data. We also need to structure the plan around the Three National Goals and use the Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle (ROMA). Goals that are included in the Strategic Plan for FaDSS, Outreach and CACFP are also part of the FY'26 CSBG Grant Application. New goals for the FY2025-2026 Strategic Plan include: implementing the new LIHEAP database online application, registered child care homes will attend CCR&R's PBIS training series, WCCA will be in compliance with all CSBG Organizational Standards and Program Standards, Board of Directors will complete training on fiduciary duties and responsibilities, review and update the Employee Safety Manual and Business Continuity & Emergency Disaster Plan, complete an agency employee survey and WCCA will complete an Agency Risk Assessment. Goals for child care providers participating in CACFP, Weatherization, staff attending community events, increasing community partnerships, filling agency positions, evaluate WCCA wage and salary structure, parents attending family nights and children meeting school readiness levels will remain on the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan. The board agreed all goals align with WCCA's mission statement. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan, Molly Cummings seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

Danni stated the Head Start Community Needs Assessment is a program requirement that needs completed every 5 years and updated annually. Danni presented the information and explained they use the recommendations to write the Head Start grant. The assessment goes through changes in the service area, population, poverty level update, employment, and housing. Recommendations this year included: monitoring enrollments for families on public assistance such as SNAP which has decreased in our service area and to monitor ages and services per county such as Crawford County where we only have home-based Early Head Start. Danni is continuing to search for a location where we can potentially bring back center-based Early Head Start services. Angie Winquist made the motion to approve the Head Start Community Needs Assessment, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy commended Danni on her hard work for completing the assessment.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START 2026-2027 GRANT SUBMISSION APPROVAL

A Head Start Budget Justification for FY 2026-2027 was included in the board packet. The grant application is due November 1st and is for year three of a five-year grant cycle. The new grant will start February 1, 2026. The grant application is for the same budget amount of \$5,894,307 dollars with 249 slots for Head Start and 92 slots for Early Head Start for a total of 341. Wendy explained the budget categories in detail. Jeannine Liljedahl made the motion to approve submitting the Head Start 2026-2027 Grant. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried. Wendy thanked Keith and Danni on their hard work to complete the grant application.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Information Memorandums ACF-OHS-IM-25-05 and ACF-OHS-IM-25-06 were included in the board packet. The first memo explains the monitoring process for FY 2026. OHS has refined the monitoring approach to be more focused, efficient, and responsive to program needs. They are intending to streamline the review questions from 449 to 203 and shorten the on-site review days from 5 days to 3.

The reviews will focus on elements for child safety and program integrity, as well as reviewing for compliance. We will be having our FA2 Comprehensive Services Review and CLASS review this year. The FA2 review allows us to demonstrate how we deliver high quality services to children and families and meet the Head Start Standards. The CLASS review assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions using a valid and reliable observation measure. The second memo addresses vacant slots due to chronic absenteeism in Head Start. The memo clarifies policy guidance and when programs should consider a child's slot vacant after long-term absences. Danni and her staff do an excellent job of working with families who have an attendance issue.

- Danni successfully wrote for a Monogram Foods Loves Kids Foundation grant and our program was awarded \$10,000. The funds will be used to update our playground equipment in Harlan. Danni and Wendy attended a reception in honor of the award at Monogram Foods on October 9. They do a great job of giving back to the community and we are very thankful for the funding.
- October is Head Start Awareness month so it is a great time to honor leaders and staff who provide vital early childhood education to children and families.
- We currently have 6 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. Early Head Start Home Based Visitor in our Southern Counties, Early Head Start Floater in Council Bluffs, Harlan Head Start Assistant Teacher Floater, Denison Head Start Assistant Teacher, Council Bluffs Head Start Assistant Teacher, Education Support Coordinator Denison
- The end of September enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are looking good. Staff have been working to recruit and get children enrolled. Our current enrollment numbers are: 249 in Head Start, funded enrollment is 249 (100%), 87 in Early Head Start with 1 accept, funded enrollment is 92 (95%) and 31 children on the Head Start waitlist and 8 on the EHST waitlist are over income.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

Wendy had nothing new to add to Keith's fiscal report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- We did receive our FY 2026 CSBG contract, a copy is included in the board packet. We will receive an amendment with our funding amount once funds are approved and released at the federal level.
 - CCR&R has one job opening for a Child Care Consultant in Creston.
 - FaDSS currently have 87 families enrolled with a capacity of 95, which is 92%. We are so close to meeting the 95% enrollment requirement.
 - The first day of LIHEAP was October 1, for disabled and elderly (60+) clients. All clients can apply beginning November 1st. As of today, we have taken 1,634 applications. Outreach offices are taking applications by mail, email, phone, or in person by appointment.
- We did receive our LIHEAP FY 2026 contract award along with our start up amendment in the amount of \$199,780. The funds were allocated into two separate contracts. \$84,150 was allocated into the FY 25 contract and \$115,630 was allocated into the FY 26 contract to pay propane vendors in case funding is delayed at the federal level. The contract along with both amendments are included in the board packet. We will receive additional funding once the federal government releases the money, which could be significantly delayed this year. Typically, we receive our funds in November or December but are unsure at this time when they will be released due to the government shutdown.

- Outreach offices are extremely busy with LIHEAP applications and distributing food pantries. Our Crawford County Outreach Office is only open on Tuesdays and Thursdays due to a staff members absence. Ivy Nielsen the LIHEAP Director will be taking applications at the office two days a week by appointment only. The clothing room is also closed during this time.
- We are anticipating an increase in food pantry requests as the state issued a notice on Friday stating they would not be issuing November SNAP benefits to over 130,000 households due to the government shutdown. Unfortunately, many of our food pantries are struggling for donations and we only have one staff member per office and they are busy taking LIHEAP applications. Our offices will do the best they can to meet the needs of families.
- We had our preliminary agency insurance meeting with our broker Assured Partners at the end of September. The market has softened a little from last year and we are hopeful we can get a better premium rates for 2026.
- Wendy and Angela have the health insurance renewal meeting this Thursday.
- Our fiscal year ended September 30 and we have now embarked on FY 26.
- Currently we are still able to conduct services as normal during the government shutdown. We are still able to draw down funding from the federal Payment Management System for Head Start and getting reimbursement from the state on our other contracts. We have not had an update on CACFP, as of right now we are only getting reimbursed through October 31. We are waiting for the state to provide additional updates.
- WCCA has enough LIHEAP administrative dollars to get us through mid-to the end of December. We are still operating on FY 2025 CSBG funding.
- Weatherization, FaDSS and CCR&R continue to get reimbursed as normal from the state.
- Head Start will remain operational through the end of January as our new contract starts February 1.
- We will be having a November board meeting on November 18 at 5:30, both in person and zoom. If you are a part of the personnel committee there will be a meeting before the board meeting starting at 4:00 and Angela will be send out that information.
- Brittany will be scheduling Wendy's County Board of Supervisors visits, which will start in November. Wendy appreciates your continued financial support.

Lisa Connell made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary