

WCCA BOARD MEETING  
January 20, 2026

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held January 20, 2026 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	Charla Schmid, Montgomery-Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Pat Berendes, Montgomery-Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page-Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Angie Winqvist, Mills- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom
Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom	

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Jean Heiden, Crawford	Todd Maher, Page
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
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 NOVEMBER MINUTES

Charla Schmid made the motion to approve the November minutes, Angie Winqvist seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

WCCA RISK ASSESSMENT

Wendy stated the Risk Assessment needs completed every two years in order to be in compliance with CSBG Organizational Standard 4.6 and it was last completed in January 2024. We used the risk assessment tool from the National Community Action Partnership that is designed specifically for Community Action Agencies through a partnership with the NonProfit Risk Management Center. There were 14 modules completed on the following areas: Risk Management Basics, Governance Risk,

Facility and Building Security, Human Resources and Employment Practices, Financial Reporting and Internal Controls, Contracts, Client and Participant Safety, Transportation, Technology and Privacy Risk Management, Special Events, Crisis Management and Business Continuity Planning, Volunteer Risk Management, Fundraising and Resource Development, and Service Delivery Risk. The assessment was completed on November 19 by Wendy and Brittany. The results were reviewed by the management team on January 14. Wendy presented the Risk Assessment and the recommendations that were identified for further review: 1- Complete Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) check on all employees. 2- Conduct phishing tests or other exercises to gauge level of awareness of staff with respect to scams. 3- Data Classification Policy. 4- Basic screening process for regularly scheduled volunteers. 5- Social Media Policy for employees. Wendy and the program directors will address the recommended areas and make the necessary changes required. Since completing the Risk Assessment as required over the last 10 years, WCCA has implemented many new procedures and updated numerous policies to reduce risk for staff and the agency.

#### 2026 WCCA COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY APPROVAL

Brittany Schoof, CSBG/CACFP Director, presented the 2026 Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary that was included in the board packet. This is required for CSBG and is valid for 3 years. This was last updated in May 2024 and the only updates were the Iowa Community Action Agencies Needs Assessment Community Stakeholders Results and WCCA's FY 2025 Client Characteristics. The Executive Summary helps show us where the biggest needs are for assistance in our 10 county area and what CSBG funds should be used for as well as agency resources. The stakeholders survey was completed by 221 individuals. The top community needs included: housing, child care, unemployment/low wages/education, transportation and mental health and substance abuse. Survey respondents indicated our service area has many strengths when addressing the needs of low-income families and children. Those top strengths were: sufficient number of accessible and affordable early childhood/pre-school education programs, sufficient number of recreation opportunities and community facilities, sufficient number of food resources, sufficient number of police, emergency medical and fire department personnel and violent crime was not an issue. Respondents who have connected with WCCA in the past 12 month: 96% agree/strongly agreed staff with friendly and helpful and conducted business in a professional manner. 94% agree/strongly agreed staff had thorough knowledge of agency programs and services. West Central Community Action is committed to operating programs and collaborating with other organizations in order to assure the best possible support and outcomes for clients. While WCCA does not meet every need identified in the survey, the agency has services and referrals options in place to combat many of the issues. The Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary is used along with our agency's mission and vision to determine what CSBG funding should be used for along with other agency resources. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve the 2026 Executive Summary. Angie Winquist seconded. Motion was carried.

#### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

##### 2026 EMPLOYEE HOURLY RATE INCREASE APPROVAL

Wendy stated the Personnel Committee discussed the 2026 Employee Hourly Rate Increase options prior to the board meeting. Keith had already budgeted annual raises into all the program budgets. The Personnel Committee recommended to the board a 3% + \$0.10 raise effective February 1, 2026 for all employees. Lisa Connell made the motion to approve the 2026 Employee Hourly Rate Increase of 3% + \$0.10. Charla Schmid seconded. Motion carried.

#### PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received a copy of Personnel Policies #715 Whistleblower Protection. Angela Bladt, HR Director, explained to the Board of Directors that the change is a CSBG program requirement to have department titles listed in the policy and the proposed changes were also approved by Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve changes to #715 Whistleblower Protection and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion 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 and guide to complete the training with Academy+. Brittany will also be emailing the link to the Board of Directors to complete the training. Please send Brittany a copy of your completed training certificate for our records.

#### 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 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 goals were established in 2024 and 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 2025-2026 BUDGET AMENDMENT APPROVAL

Danni explained that Keith and herself met with our Head Start Program Specialist the beginning of January and there will be projected funds left at the end of the program year ending January 31. The Office of Head Start will allow us to submit an extension to spend the money during the next program year. Keith explained the funding will be used to update playground equipment at multiple locations. and is roughly around \$480,000. We are requesting board approved to submit a Head Start/Early Head Start 2025-2026 Budget Amendment once Keith has a final dollar amount to update the playground equipment for Red Oak Head Start, Red Oak Early Head Start and Council Bluffs Head Start. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start 2025-2026 Budget Amendment Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

#### HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- A letter dated December 18, from the Administration for Children and Families was included in your board packet. The letter provides 45-day notice of our upcoming Focus Area 2 Review the week of February 2. The review will be conducted onsite and is an intense review of:
  - Program Design, Management, and Improvement
  - Education and Child Development Services

- Family and Community Engagement Services
- Health Services
- Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance
- Fiscal Infrastructure

The monitors want to see how we implement high quality services for children and families. They will interview multiple staff, visit numerous classrooms, and spend a lot of time reviewing financial records and processes. Danni has done an excellent job of getting staff prepared and providing all required documentation to the monitoring team before their arrival.

- We also received a 45-day notice on January 7, from the Office of Head Start regarding our CLASS monitoring review to take place February 23-April 10. The letter is included in the board packet. CLASS stands for Classroom Assessment Scoring System and assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions using standardized observation tools. We will be responsible for recording 25 Head Start classrooms that are selected and uploading them to the Office of Head Start for review. CLASS scores are used by the Office of Head Start for designated renewal system determinations, meaning if we don't score the minimum threshold in component areas that can put our program back into competition. The scores are used to help OHS understand the current experiences of children in Head Start classrooms as a quality improvement opportunity and to offer training and technical assistance to build upon existing program efforts.
- We had to close several classrooms last week in Council Bluffs, Red Oak and Harlan due to staff illness and we did not have the staff to back fill.
- We currently have 11 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. We continue to advertise and interview potential candidates. If you know of someone who would be a good fit with our agency please send them our way.
- The end of December enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are: 240 in Head Start with 2 accepts, funded enrollment is 249 (96%). 78 in Early Head Start with 4 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (85%). Continuing to look for a Home Based Teacher. 25 children on the Head Start waitlist and 6 children on the EHST waitlist are over income. We are currently not meeting the 97% enrollment requirement.
- We are waiting on our official Notice of Award for budget period of 2/1/26-1/31/27. The Midwest Region submitted our application to the Office of Head Start on January 2, after we answered a few clarifying questions, they had regarding our application. We may not receive our award until the end of January. We are hoping we receive the NOA before our contract ends on January 31, or within the first few days of February.
- On January 20, the House Appropriations Committee released a compromised draft of a funding bill that includes the Senate funding proposal for Head Start which is a \$85 million increase including a \$75 million dollar cost of living adjustment or COLA. They also included an increase of \$5 million dollars for CSBG. The compromise draft has been agreed to by leadership in both parties in both chambers and is expected to pass the House this week and the Senate next week. Fingers crossed the President signs the bill as the government is currently funded until January 30.
- Danni stated we have met our 10% disability requirement and will not need a waiver this year.
- Recruitment for the 26-27 school year will begin on Feb 1.
- The Fall Family Survey results were included in the board packet. Danni stated they were positive and have provided feedback on areas of attendance and Learning Genie that Danni and her leadership team were needing to address. The results from the survey will be very useful to make future changes.

## FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Wendy recommended that we do not have a February meeting and that March 17<sup>th</sup> will be the next meeting. Brian Rife made the motion to not have a February Board of Directors meeting, Lisa Connell 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

- There is a CSBG grant award notice dated December 16, from Health and Human Services included in the board packet. The letter awards us the first quarter of FY 2026 CSBG funds in the amount of \$180,940.
- We will be having our CSBG program review and organizational standards assessment January 29-30. The review will be conducted both remotely and onsite. Brittany has worked very hard to ensure everything is ready for the review.
- WCCA continues to see a steady increase in LIHEAP applications this year including a lot of first-time applicants. We made our first payment of over \$1.4 million dollars to vendors on December 19. It was a team effort to get the payments processed. Wendy thanked Keith, Ivy, and Brittany for their assistance. We are waiting for the feds to release the additional 9-10% of funds to the states. We will need the additional regular LIHEAP funding to provide a LIHEAP benefit to all households that apply.
- We had our Weatherization Home Inspection/House File Review Audit November 17-18, 2025. There were a few items that needed to be corrected on two homes. All homes have been completed and the response along with pictures were sent to the state for approval and the state accepted our response on December 29. A copy of the response and approval are included in the board packet.
- We did receive some good news for Weatherization. The House and Senate both passed the final FY 2026 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill on January 16. Total funding for Weatherization was approved at \$369 million, which is a \$3 million dollar increase from FY 2025 (\$366). This amount includes: Weatherization regular grant funds of \$329 million. Weatherization readiness funding at \$30 million and training and technical assistance at \$10 million. Weatherization had been slated to take a steep decrease in funding, so we are excited to see the increase in funding levels. We also received additional Black Hills funding for Weatherization in the amount of \$76,644.00.
- FaDSS Day on the Hill is February 3, at the State Capital. Mary Wisnieski, FaDSS Director, and three of her staff will be attending the event. This meeting allows us to highlight the accomplishments of the FaDSS program to our state representatives. We have 84 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95, which is 88%.
- Our Denison Outreach Office is now back open 4.5 days a week as our outreach specialist has returned from medical leave.
- Wendy is currently working with the landlord of our Denison outreach office to rent the end unit of the same building. This new space is currently being remodeled and will house both our Outreach office and five Denison Head Start staff. After negotiating and contracts are signed, we will rent the new space beginning March 1. This space will also have ample parking for our agency vehicles.
- Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company were here December 11-12 to conduct our annual agency audit. The major programs audited were LIHEAP and HEAP. We had our exit interview on January 15

and there were no compliance issues, and everything is looking good for fiscal year 2025. Wendy thanked Keith and his staff for all of 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. We had an 8.8% increase in premiums which is lower than the industry average.
- We are looking for two people to fill the low-income representative spots in Monona and Harrison Counties. They do not have to be low-income themselves just represent the low-income population interests. If you know of anyone that would be a good fit, please send Wendy their contact information.
- Wendy finished the last County Board of Supervisors meeting today and thanked everyone for letting her present on our services and for the continued support.

Lisa Connell made a motion to adjourn at 6:09 p.m. Wendy Richter seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon  
WCCA Board Secretary