



FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Youth Council
May 21, 2026

SUMMARY MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT – Michelle Engel-Silva, Erin Evans, Kurt Madden, Katherine Martindale, Terry Metters, Jr., Vasili Sotiropulos, Michelle Tutunjian, and Rick Watson

ABSENT – Alysia Bonner and Keda Buttles

AGENDA CHANGES: None

ABSTENTIONS/RECUSALS/
DISCLOSURES OF
POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST: Engel-Silva – Item 3

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Item	Description/Action Taken
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1. **February 19, 2026, Youth Council Meeting Minutes**

Blake Konczal, Executive Director, Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB), presented the February 19, 2026, meeting minutes for the Youth Council's (Council's) approval, or correction and approval.

MADDEN/TUTUNJIAN – APPROVED THE FEBRUARY 19, 2026, YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES. (UNANIMOUS)

2. **Young Adult Program Success Stories**

Martha Espinosa, Deputy Director of Marketing, Grants and Business Initiatives, FRWDB, presented the success story of FRWDB's Fourth Quarter Youth Achievement Award winner, Kyaira Wattree. Ms. Espinosa shared that Ms. Wattree had an inspiring story of growth, perseverance, and determination through the Workforce Connection's Youth Program. Ms. Wattree earned her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification through Fresno Adult School and was hired as a CNA at Stonehaven Senior Living. Ms. Espinosa shared a video highlighting Ms. Wattree's story.

This was an information item.

3. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Young Adult Funding Recommendations for Program Year 2026-2027

Mr. Konczal presented and distributed an updated agenda item that included allocation recommendations for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Young Adult Program Year (PY) 2026-2027 funding for the Council's approval. He explained that the Adult and Youth budgets were down, while the Dislocated Worker budget was significantly up. Mr. Konczal briefly discussed each budget, as it was part of a larger construct and showed how much money came from the Department of Labor. It was recommended that the Youth Council recommend to the Board that a three percent (3%) carryover of funds be maintained. Mr. Konczal explained that maintained carryover amounts had lessened the pain of funding decreases in one fiscal year over to another.

Phyllis Stogbauer, Senior Deputy Director, FRWDB, mentioned that Youth participants could be qualified to utilize Adult funds, if they were co-enrolled. Director Sotiropulos asked what the age cut off for the Young Adult Program was. Mr. Konczal and Ms. Stogbauer clarified that the age range was 16 to 24, and individuals 18 to 24 may be co-enrolled into the Adult Program.

Cheryl Beierschmitt, Deputy Director of Fiscal Services, FRWDB, shared that revised funding recommendations would be brought to the Youth Council meeting in November, once the PY 2025-2026 year had been closed out.

Mr. Konczal explained that the approved item would allocate \$7.5 million of WIOA Youth funds.

MARTINDALE/METTERS – RECOMMENDED THAT THE FRWDB APPROVE THE WIOA YOUNG ADULT FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2026-2027. (UNANIMOUS, WITH ABSTENTION NOTED ABOVE)

4. Young Adult Discretionary Grants Report

Rodney Casillas, Interim Young Adult Services Manager, FRWDB, provided an overview on the following FRWDB discretionary grants: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps, Growth Opportunities, One Fresno Youth Job Corps Program (YJCP), and Student Training and Employment Program (STEP) 3.0.

He shared that the EMS Corps prepared young adults for careers in emergency medical services through training, certification, and wraparound support. The first cohort had 22 participants and the current cohort had 21, with a total of 43 served to date.

Growth Opportunities prepared justice-involved youth from ages 18 to 24 for the world of work through education and training, paid work experience, mentorship, and leadership development. There were currently seven (7) enrollments in the first cohort, and there was a wait list for the next cohort.

The YJCP provided supportive services needed for employment. Mr. Casillas stated that there were 95 participants served to date through the YJCP.

Mr. Casillas stated that the STEP 3.0 Program offered paid work experience and subsidized employment to help participants build skills and transition to unsubsidized jobs. The program has served 21 participants to date in 2026. Mr. Casillas explained that summertime is generally when the largest numbers are seen for this program.

Council Member Martindale asked what the goal for the number of participants was for the STEP 3.0 Program. Mr. Casillas explained that the goal was 80 participants.

This was an information item.

5. **One Fresno Youth Job Corps Program Navigator Contract Award**

Mr. Casillas presented for the Council's recommendation for FRWDB approval, a contract extension and additional funding to Equus Workforce Solutions to continue providing services under the One Fresno Youth Job Corps Program from June 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, in the amount of \$108,663.15. The current contract was set to end on May 30, 2026. The extension would ensure continuity of services, maximize participant outcomes, and fully achieve the program's intended impact.

MARTINDALE/EVANS – RECOMMENDED THAT THE FRWDB APPROVE THE ONE FRESNO YOUTH JOB CORPS PROGRAM NAVIGATOR CONTRACT AWARD. (UNANIMOUS)

6. **Consent Items 6A – 6C**

MADDEN/MARTINDALE – RECOMMENDED THAT THE FRWDB ACCEPT CONSENT ITEMS 6A - 6C. (UNANIMOUS)

7. **Young Adults Demographics Report**

Ms. Stogbauer presented the PY 2025-2026 Third Quarter Young Adult Demographics Report for the Council's review. She noted that the report included the PY 2024-2025 data for comparison purposes and stated that there was very little change between years. She reviewed the changes that were made to the Youth Ethnicity graph, recommended by Director Madden at the last Youth Council Meeting. The number of participants who had not left a response were removed from the graph and were put into a note. The new graph only reflected the number of participants who responded. The updated graph format would continue to be used going forward.

Ms. Stogbauer expressed concern regarding 402 participants who had not provided responses to the demographic questions. She stated that beginning July 1, 2026, FRWDB will assume Basic Career Services for Adult and Dislocated Worker and staff will take steps to ensure that demographics information is collected from all participants. The same effort will be made for incoming Youth participants, to ensure that all demographics questions are answered.

Council Member Martindale asked what was the importance of completed demographic questions. Ms. Stogbauer explained that the information collected was evaluated by FRWDB staff and the Department of Labor to document participants' barriers to employment.

After reviewing the demographic report, Ms. Stogbauer presented the Workforce Connection Assistance Request Form report in response to an action item from the previous meeting. She provided an update on efforts to track how participants hear about Workforce Connection using data collected from the electronic Workforce Connection Assistance Request Form, completed by individuals during the orientation and intake process.

There was also a discussion regarding expanding data collection to individuals receiving Basic Career Services who were not formally enrolled, using the same form to better identify service needs for both adult and youth participants. FRWDB staff indicated that they would provide a quarterly report reflecting this expanded data analysis moving forward.

Council Member Tutunjian asked what the difference between emergency shelter and homeless assistance was. Ms. Stogbauer explained that even though they were similar, they were two (2) separate categories, and mentioned that FRWDB staff could update the category names for more clarity.

Director Sotiropoulos asked whether young adults had requested vocational training programs for which funding was unavailable. Ms. Stogbauer stated that since 20% of WIOA Youth funds must be dedicated to work experience activities, available funding for vocational training was limited. However, most youth are eligible for Pell Grants, which cover the cost of their training. In addition, if a youth is eligible, they may be co-enrolled in the Adult program and utilize Adult training funds to support their training needs.

Ms. Espinosa shared that the marketing team would like to take a deeper look at participants' marketing habits through a marketing survey. She noted that the survey would help identify which outreach methods participants use or have seen, such as social media platforms, billboards, or word-of-mouth referrals. She explained that gathering more detailed information would provide a better understanding of how participants learn about the FRWDB.

She also shared that on May 13th, FRWDB met with leaders on the West Side of Fresno County for a roundtable discussion to better understand the barriers West Side participants face, and identify strategies to help address those challenges. Participants included local elected officials, community-based organizations, and representatives from state government.

Director Sotiropoulos and Council Member Martindale thanked Ms. Espinosa for the effort made to understand the needs of individuals on the West Side.

This was an information item.

8. Agenda Items for August 20, 2026, Meeting

Mr. Konczal asked if Council Members had any items for the August 20, 2026, Youth Council Meeting. There were no items added by Council Members.

9. Meeting Feedback

Council Member Watson stated that this was his last Youth Council meeting. Mr. Konczal thanked Council Member Watson for his service to the Youth Council.

Director Sotiropoulos shared that he had information about local nonprofits that could help participants who need clothing for interviews.

Council Member Engel-Silva expressed that being able to sit on a scholarship panel was an amazing opportunity. She recommended that all the other Council Members and Directors participate when they had the opportunity. Director Metters stated that he would participate with scholarship panels if they were held on a day other than Tuesday.

Ms. Espinosa shared that all Youth Council members should have received an invitation to the May 27th free Business Resources Fair Mixer, and encouraged all to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.