

SC WORKS | WORKLINK WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Priority Populations Committee

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 | 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Attend in person at the Clemson SC Works Center Conference Room or via Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: [Join the Microsoft Teams meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 264 519 831 135 284

Passcode: eK3Jv9Bt

Recording Notice: This meeting may be recorded. By joining the meeting, participants acknowledge that audio, video, chat, shared content, and meeting participation information may be captured as part of the official meeting record.

Agenda Item	Lead	Action
I. Welcome and Introductions	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Information
II. Approval of August 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Vote
III. Follow-up on PY26 Priority Population Action Items	Windy Graham / Partners	Discussion
IV. One-Stop Manager and Partner Updates	Billy Hunter / Committee	Information
V. WorkLink Data and Community Profile Update	Windy Graham	Discussion
VI. PY26 Priorities: Transportation, Access, and Partner Coordination	Committee	Discussion
VII. Other Business		
• PY' 26 WorkLink Committee and Board Meeting Schedule	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Vote
VIII. Upcoming Meetings		
• WorkLink Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 4, 2026	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Information
• Priority Populations Committee Meeting: Tuesday, January 26, 2027		
IX. Adjourn	Lisa Gillespie, Chair	Vote

An Equal Opportunity Employer / Program

Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities

For program funding details in compliance with the Stevens Amendment, please visit the Funding Opportunities page of the www.worklinkweb.com website.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS COMMITTEE

Welcome and Member Introductions

Agenda Item I | Tuesday, October 13, 2026

Committee Member	Organization	Perspective Represented
Lisa Gillespie, Chair	South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (VR)	Lisa represents vocational rehabilitation. VR works with individuals with disabilities and businesses to support successful employment matches.
Janice Chastain, Vice Chair	South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SC DEW)	Janice joins the Committee as the SC DEW representative, replacing Pat Pruitt. SC DEW connects jobseekers and employers and supports reemployment and workforce services.
Cynthia Sprinkle	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)	Cynthia represents veteran employment services. DVOP specialists provide intensive, priority employment services to eligible veterans, including career coaching, referrals, résumé assistance, and connections to training.
Cherri Boller	South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB)	Cherri represents services for South Carolinians who are blind or have low vision. SCCB vocational rehabilitation services support employment planning, training, assistive technology, placement, and retention.
Billy Hunter	Eckerd Connects	Billy represents the workforce-services provider perspective. Eckerd Connects delivers workforce development services that connect youth, adults, and dislocated workers with training, career services, supportive services, and employment opportunities.
Sandy Jordan	Able SC	Sandy represents the disability-led community and employment-support perspective. Able SC provides employment programs, benefits-related support, career guidance, workplace support, peer support, and disability advocacy.

SC WORKS | WORKLINK WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Priority Populations Committee

Agenda Item II | MEETING MINUTES

Voting Item: DRAFT - Pending Committee Approval

DATE	TIME	FORMAT
Tuesday, August 11, 2026	3:00-4:00 p.m.	Clemson Center and virtual participation

Attendance

Attendance Category	Names
Members Present	Lisa Gillespie, Chair Pat Pruitt, Vice-Chair Cyndi Sprinkle Cherri Boller
Members Absent	Billy Gibson Sandy Jordan
WorkLink Staff Present	Victoria Britton Keith Keller Windy Graham
Guest Present	Billy Hunter

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Lead: Lisa Gillespie, Chair | **Action:** Information

The Priority Populations Committee meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. Members were welcomed and introductions were made. Participants were advised that the meeting was being recorded and that attendee information may be visible in meeting reports and recordings. The purpose of the meeting was to review Program Year 2025 activities, discuss workforce priorities for PY26, and identify strategies to improve outcomes for priority populations.

2. Approval of March 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Lead: Lisa Gillespie, Chair | **Action:** Vote

The Committee reviewed the March 10, 2026 meeting minutes. No corrections or revisions were proposed. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion	Second	Result
Pat Pruitt	Cyndi Sprinkle	Approved as submitted

3. PY25 Wrap-Up and PY26 Priorities

Lead: Windy Graham | **Action:** Discussion

Staff provided an overview of Program Year 2025 activities and progress made toward WorkLink Strategic Plan goals. Discussion focused on current workforce trends, opportunities for partner collaboration, and barriers affecting workforce participation.

Members reviewed the priority population categories:

- Youth with barriers
- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Low-income individuals
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Returning citizens

The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining a focus on underserved populations while improving access to workforce services and training opportunities.

4. America's Talent Strategy and Strategic Alignment

Lead: Windy Graham | **Action:** Discussion

Windy Graham reviewed America's Talent Strategy and its influence on federal, state, and local workforce planning. The Committee discussed the five strategic pillars of Industry-Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, Integrated Systems, Accountability, and Innovation. Members noted how these pillars align with WorkLink Strategic Plan goals related to increasing workforce participation, engaging underserved populations, expanding labor market analytics, and strengthening funding alignment and partnerships.

5. Barriers to Workforce Participation

Lead: Committee | **Action:** Discussion

The Committee reviewed findings from the statewide Priority Populations Scan and discussed barriers affecting workforce participation throughout the WorkLink region. Identified barriers included:

- Transportation
- Vital records and identification documentation
- Housing and housing navigation
- Coordination of services among partners
- Benefits counseling

Transportation was emphasized as a significant barrier affecting access to employment, training opportunities, supportive services, healthcare, and workforce retention. Members discussed opportunities to improve coordination among community partners and increase awareness of available resources.

6. Performance Measures and Accountability

Lead: Windy Graham | **Action:** Discussion

The Committee reviewed workforce performance indicators used by the workforce system, including employment during the second and fourth quarters after exit, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains. Members discussed pilot initiatives being implemented statewide to strengthen accountability by measuring employment retention and training-to-employment alignment. The importance of transparent performance outcomes and continuous improvement was emphasized.

7. Community Profile and Workforce Data

Lead: Windy Graham | **Action:** Discussion

Regional labor market information for Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties was presented. Members reviewed the 2025 annual unemployment rate of 4.2 percent, together with regional totals of 198,514 employed individuals and 8,717 unemployed individuals. While overall workforce performance remained strong, members agreed that targeted strategies are necessary to address persistent barriers facing priority populations.

The Committee also reviewed demographic data relevant to veterans, individuals with disabilities, and high school students. Discussion focused on opportunities to increase workforce participation and improve access to services and training. Transportation challenges were again highlighted, including approximately 9,907 housing units without access to a vehicle and limited public transportation options throughout the region.

8. Program Updates and Workforce Initiatives

Lead: Committee Members | **Action:** Information and Discussion

Committee members shared updates regarding workforce and community initiatives across the region. Topics included:

- Regional job fairs and resource fairs
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities planned for October
- Vocational Rehabilitation outreach and employment events
- Veteran-focused employment initiatives
- Accessibility improvements through JAWS software implementation and dual-monitor workstations
- Employer engagement efforts and outreach activities

Members discussed the need for increased coordination among workforce and community partners to prevent scheduling conflicts and maximize participation opportunities.

9. Other Business and Follow-Up Actions

Lead: Committee Members | **Action:** Information and Follow-Up

The Committee reviewed upcoming initiatives and partner activities. Discussion included distribution of National Disability Employment Awareness Month materials, continued outreach to veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations, employer engagement, job-fair coordination, and opportunities for stronger workforce-system collaboration.

Owner	Follow-Up Action
Windy Graham	Distribute digital copies of the “Hire Me” poster, the PowerPoint presentation, and the Conflict of Interest Form to committee members.
SCDEW	Coordinate with workforce partners to reduce overlapping job-fair schedules.
Committee	Continue discussions related to transportation barriers and potential solutions.
Billy Hunter	Collect employer survey information for submission by the first Friday in October.
Staff	Monitor implementation of the SCPATH-to-SCWOS transition scheduled for completion by the end of September.
Members	Prepare for the next Priority Populations Committee meeting on October 13, 2026.

10. Adjournment

Lead: Lisa Gillespie, Chair | **Action:** Vote

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 | 3:00 p.m.
Clemson Center and Microsoft Teams

Respectfully submitted,

Windy Graham

Staff Liaison

WorkLink Workforce Development Board

Priority Populations Committee

Compliance Notice

An Equal Opportunity Employer / Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS COMMITTEE

Agenda III | Follow-Up on PY26 Priority Population Action Items

LEAD	ACTION	SOURCE
Windy Graham / Partners	Discussion	August 11 draft minutes

Discussion Overview

The August 11 meeting identified follow-up activities for staff and partners. The three items below have been reported as complete. This review provides an opportunity to note the outcome of each action, identify whether any additional follow-up is needed, and formally close the item when appropriate.

Owner	August 11 Follow-Up	Status	Outcome / Additional Follow-Up
Windy Graham	Distribute digital copies of the "Hire Me" poster, PowerPoint presentation, and Conflict of Interest Form to Committee members.	✓ Complete	
Billy Hunter	Collect employer survey information for submission by the first Friday in October.	✓ Complete	
Staff	Monitor implementation of the SCPATH-to-SCWOS transition scheduled for completion by the end of September.	✓ Complete	

PRIORITY POPULATIONS COMMITTEE

One-Stop Manager and Partner Updates

Agenda Item IV | September 2026 Monthly Report

LEAD	ACTION	REPORTING PERIOD
Billy Hunter / Committee	Information	September 1-30, 2026

Report Overview

The September report summarizes customer traffic, orientations, hiring events, workshops, rapid-response activity, and staff development and outreach across the WorkLink service area. The figures below are presented for committee information and partner discussion.

CENTER TRAFFIC	ORIENTATION ATTENDANCE	HIRING-EVENT PARTICIPATION	WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE
1,126	29	1,004	2

Center Traffic by Location

CENTER	CUSTOMER COUNT	SHARE OF TOTAL
Anderson	474	42.1%
Clemson	367	32.6%
Seneca	237	21.0%
Easley	48	4.3%

Service and Outreach Highlights

- Orientation attendance totaled 29 across Anderson, Clemson, and Seneca SC Works locations.
- Twelve hiring or job-and-resource events reported 1,004 participants in total.
- One virtual Expungement Information Session was held with 2 participants.
- Rapid Response activity was reported as 0 for the month.
- Staff activity included outreach, partner meetings, job fairs, staff interviews and onboarding, finance and manager meetings, and conference participation.

Committee Discussion Prompts

- Note partner updates, upcoming events, or service changes that may affect priority populations.
- Identify opportunities to coordinate outreach, referrals, workshops, and hiring events.
- Flag any access, scheduling, or service-delivery issues requiring follow-up.

Source and reporting note: September 2026 One-Stop Operations monthly reports. Hiring-event participation reflects the reported event totals. This committee insert summarizes aggregate operational information and excludes participant-level records.

WORKLINK PRIORITY POPULATIONS COMMITTEE
Executive Summary

Agenda Item V | Who We Focus On and What the Data Tell Us

Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties | August 2026 | PY26 Planning

Current Labor-Market Context

August 2026 preliminary, not seasonally adjusted estimates show unemployment rates of 4.2 percent in Anderson County, 4.2 percent in Oconee County, and 4.1 percent in Pickens County. Anderson reported 4,516 unemployed residents, Oconee reported 1,619, and Pickens reported 2,813. The rates are closely grouped, so small differences among counties should not be treated as a complete measure of need. The overall unemployment rate does not show whether residents facing transportation, disability-related, financial, housing, educational, or reentry barriers can access and retain available jobs.

Anderson 4.2% 4,516 unemployed	Oconee 4.2% 1,619 unemployed	Pickens 4.1% 2,813 unemployed	Regional demand 38,731 online job postings
---	---	--	---

How to Read the Chart

The chart separates two different ideas. The seven priority groups define who the committee is responsible for keeping in view. The six regional measures show what the currently available data can tell the committee about financial need, youth disconnection, disability, veteran labor-force connection, transportation access, and employer demand. The measures do not match the seven groups one-for-one. Some measures relate directly to a priority group; others, such as transportation and job postings, cut across several groups. Additional program and partner data are needed for returning citizens, people unemployed for a long time, and people experiencing homelessness.

WHO WE FOCUS ON 7 priority groups	WHAT WE KNOW 6 available regional measures
Youth who face barriers	Financial hardship: 15.9% below poverty
People with disabilities	Youth disconnected from school and work: 2.5%
Veterans	Working-age residents with disabilities: 13.2%
People returning from incarceration	Veterans participating in the labor force: 74.9%
People unemployed for a long time	Occupied housing units without a vehicle: 5.8%
People with low incomes	Employer demand: 38,731 online job postings
People experiencing homelessness	More partner data needed for groups without a regional measure

Plain-language takeaway: the seven groups tell us who to consider; the six measures tell us what the available regional data show.

Who We Focus On: Seven Priority Groups

The following narrative explains how each priority group should be reflected in committee monitoring. Where a comparable public unemployment rate is not available, the committee should use clearly labeled administrative or partner measures rather than substitute an unrelated statistic.

1. Youth who face barriers

The regional economic overview identifies 704 disconnected youth, representing 2.5 percent of the defined youth population. This specific measure covers ages 16 through 19 who are not enrolled in school, are not high-school graduates, and are unemployed or outside the labor force. It does not include every young person who may face a barrier. For a fuller committee view, the indicator should be combined with WIOA youth outreach, enrollment, credential attainment, employment, and retention information.

2. People with disabilities

The region includes 33,494 residents ages 18 through 64 with a disability. Of that population, 14,016 participate in the labor force, a participation rate of 41.8 percent. These figures describe population size and labor-force connection but do not establish unemployment, job quality, or the reason for nonparticipation. Committee monitoring should include accessible services, benefits counseling, training participation, placement, retention, earnings, and employer engagement.

3. Veterans

The regional overview identifies 11,457 veterans ages 18 through 64. Of those veterans, 8,584 participate in the labor force, a 74.9 percent participation rate. Participation shows connection to the labor force but does not measure veteran unemployment, underemployment, job quality, or supportive-service needs. The committee should pair the baseline with veteran referrals, training, credentials, employment outcomes, retention, and identified barriers.

4. People returning from incarceration

The source reports do not provide a comparable county or regional unemployment rate for returning citizens. The statewide scan identifies identification and vital records, transportation, and housing as relevant barriers. The committee should use partner and program data such as referrals, people served, training entry, employment placement, retention, earnings, documentation assistance, and identified housing or transportation needs. These measures should be labeled as administrative or program outcomes rather than population unemployment rates.

5. People unemployed for a long time

The reports do not provide a standard county measure for residents unemployed 27 weeks or longer. A defensible local approach is to use unemployment-claim duration or participant records where available and connect those measures with service entry, training, placement, retention, and earnings. The statewide scan also connects long-term unemployment with transportation and coordinated-service barriers.

6. People with low incomes

The regional poverty rate is 15.9 percent, representing 65,834 residents. The economic overview also reports that 10.1 percent of households, or 17,173 households, receive SNAP. Poverty and SNAP participation describe financial need; neither is an unemployment rate. The committee can use the measures to examine whether transportation, childcare, training, documentation, and other employment-related costs affect service access, completion, placement, retention, or earnings.

7. People experiencing homelessness

The source reports do not provide a comparable county or regional unemployment rate for people experiencing homelessness. The statewide scan identifies transportation, identification and vital records, housing, and access to mental-health and medical resources as relevant barriers. Committee monitoring should use PIT or HMIS information where available, employment status at intake and exit, referrals,

documentation assistance, housing navigation, placement, and job retention. Partner and program counts should not be presented as population unemployment rates.

What We Know: Six Available Regional Measures

The six measures below provide evidence about different aspects of the regional workforce environment. They should be read together, but they should not be combined into a single rate or interpreted as equivalent measures.

1. Financial hardship: 15.9 percent below poverty, or 65,834 residents

This measure establishes the scale of financial hardship in the WorkLink region. It can help the committee consider whether the cost of transportation, childcare, training, documentation, or other employment-related needs may restrict access to work or services. It should be presented as a poverty measure, not an unemployment measure.

2. Youth disconnected from school and work: 2.5 percent, or 704 youth

This measure provides a focused picture of ages 16 through 19 who are disconnected from both school completion and the labor market under the definition used in the economic overview. It provides a regional outreach baseline, but it does not represent all youth who face barriers.

3. Working-age residents with disabilities: 13.2 percent, or 33,494 people

This measure describes the prevalence of disability among residents ages 18 through 64. The related labor-force participation rate is 41.8 percent, or 14,016 people. Together, the measures support committee attention to accessibility, benefits counseling, employment supports, employer engagement, and workforce outcomes.

4. Veterans participating in the labor force: 74.9 percent, or 8,584 veterans

This measure shows that 8,584 of the region's 11,457 veterans ages 18 through 64 participate in the labor force. Labor-force participation is not the same as employment or unemployment. The figure does not show job quality, underemployment, barriers, or supportive-service needs.

5. Occupied housing units without a vehicle: 5.8 percent, or 9,907 units

This measure provides regional evidence of transportation vulnerability. It is not a priority population or an unemployment rate. Lack of vehicle access can affect several priority groups by limiting job search, training attendance, access to supportive services, and employment retention.

6. Employer demand: 38,731 online job postings during the report period

The real-time intelligence report identifies substantial employer demand. Leading occupations included registered nurses, retail salespersons, retail supervisors, maintenance workers, food-service supervisors, production workers, stockers and order fillers, truck drivers, and medical and health-services managers. The posting total is a deduplicated estimate and should not be described as a count of unique current vacancies.

What the Evidence Means for PY26

The data support continued attention to barrier reduction even though the three county unemployment rates are relatively close. The committee should use the regional measures to establish context and then use program and partner information to understand service reach and outcomes for each priority group.

- Keep all seven priority groups in the committee's scope, even when a public regional measure is unavailable.
- Use the six regional measures as a baseline and supplement them with clearly defined partner and program data.
- Separate labor-market context, population need, service reach, and workforce outcomes in committee reports.
- Prioritize transportation, identification and vital records, housing navigation, coordinated referrals, and disability employment supports where local evidence supports action.

- Connect barrier-reduction work to occupations showing employer demand and to the education, licensing, skills, and physical requirements identified in job postings.

Recommended Committee Data Framework

A consistent reporting structure will allow the committee to distinguish regional conditions from program activity and participant outcomes. The following four-part framework is recommended for quarterly review.

Dashboard section	Purpose	Examples of measures
Labor-market context	Describe current county and regional conditions.	Labor force, employment, unemployment, unemployment rate, online job postings.
Population need	Describe the scale and type of barriers.	Poverty, disconnected youth, disability, veteran participation, vehicle access, PIT/HMIS, claimant duration.
Service reach	Show whether priority groups are connecting to services.	Referrals, people served, training entry, supportive services, documentation assistance, partner connections.
Workforce outcomes	Show whether services are leading to employment progress.	Credentials, placement, Q2 and Q4 retention, earnings, employment at intake and exit.

Recommended Next Steps

- Confirm the seven priority groups as the committee's continuing service lens.
- Adopt the six measures as the initial regional evidence set, while recognizing that the set does not cover every priority group.
- Identify the partner or staff owner, source, definition, geography, reporting period, and limitations for each measure.
- Add administrative or partner measures for returning citizens, long-term unemployment, and homelessness.
- Review the dashboard quarterly and record actions, referrals, partnership needs, and data gaps prompted by the findings.

Decision requested: confirm the seven priority groups, adopt the six regional measures, identify additional partner data, and establish a quarterly review and action-tracking process.

Sources and limitations: SC DEW Employment Situation and Data Trends, August 2026; JobsEQ Economic Overview for WorkLink; JobsEQ Real-Time Intelligence report; Priority Populations: A Statewide Scan of Current Services & Key Recommendations. County estimates are preliminary and not seasonally adjusted. Regional ACS indicators generally cover 2020-2024. Online postings are deduplicated estimates and are subject to revision; they should not be interpreted as unique current vacancies.

WORKLINK WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

2025-2027 Strategic Plan Modification

Agenda Item VI | Priority Populations Committee Alignment with America's Talent Strategy

Voting Item: Draft for Committee and Board Review**Purpose**

Preserve WorkLink's four adopted strategic goals while adding committee-specific objectives and actions that reflect the five pillars of America's Talent Strategy: industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, accountability, and flexibility and innovation.

Important: Items labeled "Proposed" are recommendations for review and are not presented as previously adopted commitments.

Executive Summary

The existing WorkLink strategic plan is organized around four goals: expanding and diversifying funding sources, increasing workforce participation, engaging underserved populations, and building expertise in labor market analytics. America's Talent Strategy is organized around five pillars: industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, accountability, and flexibility and innovation. The two frameworks overlap most directly in employer collaboration, barrier reduction, system navigation, outreach, labor-market data, measurable outcomes, and pilot activity.

This modification recommends using the WorkLink goals as the governing structure and incorporating America's Talent Strategy as an alignment framework for Priority Populations Committee work. This approach avoids replacing the local plan. Instead, it makes the committee's role more explicit: connect priority populations to employer-validated pathways, reduce access barriers, strengthen partner coordination, monitor outcomes, and test responsive approaches where data support action.

Priority Populations Committee Scope

- Youth who face barriers
- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Returning citizens
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Low-income individuals
- Individuals experiencing homelessness

Five-Pillar Alignment

America's Talent Strategy pillar	Priority Populations Committee application
Pillar I: Industry-Driven Strategies	Connect priority populations to employer-validated credentials, work-based learning, apprenticeships, and pathways tied to demand.
Pillar II: Worker Mobility	Reduce barriers, reconnect people to work, improve career navigation, and support advancement and self-sufficiency.
Pillar III: Integrated Systems	Improve referrals, shared intake concepts, partner coordination, and simpler access to services.
Pillar IV: Accountability	Use placement, earnings, credentials, retention, service reach, and employer-demand measures to assess results.
Pillar V: Flexibility & Innovation	Use pilots, technology, AI literacy, and rapid feedback to adapt services and training to changing needs.

Existing WorkLink Goals Retained

Goal	Existing title	Existing emphasis
Goal 1	Expand and Diversify Funding Sources	Evaluate 501(c)(3) opportunities; identify funding priorities; build donor engagement; secure funding.
Goal 2	Increase Workforce Participation	Assess barriers; enhance training; strengthen supports; improve employer collaboration; simplify navigation.
Goal 3	Engage Underserved Populations	Target outreach; tailor communication; standardize messaging.
Goal 4	Build Expertise in Labor Market Analytics	Strengthen data; use predictive analytics; communicate insights; pilot workforce programs.

Proposed Modifications by WorkLink Goal

Goal 1: Expand and Diversify Funding Sources

Alignment emphasis: direct resource development toward barrier reduction, employer-connected training, measurable outcomes, and scalable partnership models.

Objective	Proposed additions	Talent Strategy alignment
1.2 Identify Funding Priorities	Add priority-population funding criteria to the community gap analysis. Identify transportation, childcare, identification and vital records, housing navigation, accessibility, benefits counseling, digital access, and other documented barriers. Give preference to proposals tied to training completion, placement, retention, wage progression, or access to employer-validated pathways.	Pillars II, IV, V
1.3 Build Donor Engagement	Develop committee-approved impact narratives that show the connection between supportive services, pathway participation, and employment outcomes. Use only verified, privacy-appropriate program information.	Pillars II, IV
1.4 Secure Funding	Pursue grants and partnership resources that support apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, work-based learning, short-term credentials, supportive services, career navigation, AI literacy, and outcome-based pilots serving priority populations.	Pillars I, II, V

Goal 2: Increase Workforce Participation

Alignment emphasis: reconnect residents to the labor force, make pathways easier to navigate, and connect supportive services to employment and advancement.

Objective	Proposed additions	Talent Strategy alignment
2.1 Assess and Address Barriers	Use focus groups, partner feedback, and program data to identify barriers affecting the seven priority groups. Establish a recurring review of transportation, childcare, documentation, housing, behavioral-health support, accessibility, benefits cliffs, licensing, and digital access.	Pillar II
2.2 Enhance Training Programs	Prioritize employer-validated credentials, Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, internships, other work-based learning, short-term and stackable credentials, and skills-based approaches. Review whether training schedules and delivery methods are accessible to priority populations.	Pillars I, II
2.3 Strengthen Support Systems	Create a partner referral framework that links supportive services to training entry, persistence, employment placement, and retention. Include community, faith-based, disability, veteran, reentry, housing, transportation, behavioral-health, and public-assistance partners where appropriate.	Pillars II, III
2.4 Improve Employer Collaboration	Engage employers in identifying hard-to-fill roles, required skills, credentials of value, job requirements, retention barriers, and appropriate work-based learning opportunities. Encourage skills-based hiring and clear communication of workplace expectations.	Pillars I, IV

Objective	Proposed additions	Talent Strategy alignment
2.5 Simplify System Navigation	Develop plain-language navigation tools and a common referral pathway. Explore accessible digital and in-person entry points, while preserving staff-supported navigation for customers who need assistance.	Pillars II, III

Goal 3: Engage Underserved Populations

Alignment emphasis: focus outreach on the seven priority groups and connect outreach to clear pathways, supports, and outcomes.

Objective	Proposed additions	Talent Strategy alignment
3.1 Target Outreach Efforts	Use demographic, labor-market, program, and partner data to identify where priority populations are located and where service access is limited. Develop outreach partnerships through trusted community locations and organizations.	Pillars II, III
3.2 Tailor Communication Strategies	Use accessible, plain-language materials that explain services, eligibility, career pathways, credentials, supportive services, and next steps. Review communication accessibility for individuals with disabilities and customers with limited digital access.	Pillars II, III
3.3 Standardize Messaging	Create shared partner messages that explain how residents enter services, obtain referrals, connect to supportive services, and move toward employer-validated training and employment.	Pillars I, III

Goal 4: Build Expertise in Labor Market Analytics

Alignment emphasis: use localized and actionable information, measure outcomes that matter, and create faster feedback between employers, partners, training providers, and the committee.

Objective	Proposed additions	Talent Strategy alignment
4.1 Strengthen Data Capabilities	Create a Priority Populations dashboard that separates labor-market context, population need, service reach, and workforce outcomes. Include definitions, geography, reporting period, source, owner, and limitations for each measure.	Pillars II, IV
4.2 Leverage Predictive Analytics	Use available trend information to identify changing skill requirements, occupations with demand, potential displacement, and areas where training or supportive-service strategies may need adjustment. Treat projections as planning inputs rather than guarantees.	Pillars II, V
4.3 Improve Communication of Insights	Publish plain-language committee reports showing what the data mean, what the data do not show, and what actions are recommended. Include employer-demand, credential, pathway, access, and outcome information.	Pillars I, IV
4.4 Pilot Workforce Programs	Develop small, measurable pilots when data and partner capacity support action. Potential topics include transportation coordination, documentation assistance, accessible career navigation, employer-connected work-based learning, AI literacy, and rapid retraining. Define outcomes before launch.	Pillars IV, V

Proposed Priority Populations Committee Work Plan

Workstream	Committee purpose	Suggested deliverables
1. Barrier Reduction	Identify one or two barriers for focused action based on regional data and partner evidence.	Documented issue statement; partner map; action recommendation; progress update.
2. Employer-Connected Pathways	Connect priority populations to demand occupations, credentials, apprenticeships, and work-based learning.	Employer input; pathway inventory; access-gap review; referral or pilot recommendation.
3. Partner Integration	Improve referrals and reduce customer navigation burden.	Common referral guide; partner responsibilities; follow-up process; identified data gaps.
4. Data and Accountability	Track need, service reach, and outcomes without mislabeling measures.	Quarterly dashboard; data dictionary; placement, retention, credential, and earnings review.
5. Innovation and AI Readiness	Monitor changing skill needs and test accessible approaches where appropriate.	AI literacy learning activity; technology-access review; pilot concept with defined outcomes.

Recommended Measures

- Labor-market context: county labor force, employment, unemployment, unemployment rate, and employer demand.
- Population need: poverty, disconnected youth, disability, veteran labor-force participation, vehicle access, homelessness measures, long-term unemployment duration, and returning-citizen partner data.
- Service reach: referrals, people served, training entry, supportive-service use, documentation assistance, and partner connections.
- Workforce outcomes: credential attainment, employment placement, second- and fourth-quarter retention, earnings, and advancement where available.
- Employer results: hard-to-fill roles, work-based learning participation, hiring, retention, and validated credential or skill needs where available.

Governance and Review

The Priority Populations Committee should use this modification as a proposed implementation addendum to the existing WorkLink strategic plan. Adoption, ownership, reporting frequency, and resource commitments should be confirmed through the appropriate committee and board review process. Any future dashboard or pilot should include an assigned owner, source, definition, reporting period, intended decision use, and known limitation.

Proposed Review Decisions

- Confirm that the four existing WorkLink goals remain the governing strategic structure.
- Approve the five America's Talent Strategy pillars as an alignment framework for committee implementation.
- Approve, revise, or defer the proposed additions under Goals 1 through 4.
- Assign owners and reporting dates for adopted committee workstreams.
- Determine which proposed items require full Board approval or resource authorization.

Sources

1. 2025-2027 WorkLink Strategic Plan (revised): existing four goals, objectives, and key actions.
2. America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age: five strategic pillars and related workforce-system directions.

Drafting note: Proposed local actions in this modification are recommendations developed to align the two source frameworks. They are not presented as direct requirements of America's Talent Strategy or as previously adopted WorkLink commitments.

WORKLINK PRIORITY POPULATIONS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item VII | PY' 26 WorkLink

Voting Item: | Committee and Board Meeting Schedule

Committee / Board	Meetings			
Youth Committee	August 11, 2026	October 6, 2026	January 26, 2027	April 27, 2027
Priority Populations Committee	August 11, 2026	October 13, 2026	January 26, 2027	April 27, 2027
One Stop Operations Committee	August 19, 2026	October 14, 2026	January 27, 2027	April 28, 2027
Finance Committee	August 26, 2026	October 21, 2026	January 27, 2027	April 28, 2027
Workforce Development Board	September 9, 2026 *	November 4, 2026	February 24, 2027	May 26, 2027

Meeting Information

Youth Committee: Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. via Teams conference call.

Priority Populations Committee: 3:00 p.m. at the Clemson SC Works Center, Conference Room or via Teams conference call.

One Stop Operations Committee: 3:00 p.m. at the Clemson SC Works Center, Conference Room.

Finance Committee: 3:00 p.m. via Teams conference call.

Workforce Development Board: 1:00 p.m. at the Nieri Family Alumni and Visitors Center, 220 Madren Center Drive, Clemson, SC 29634. Lunch will be held at noon immediately preceding the meeting.

WorkLink Staff

Keith Keller, Business and Fiscal Services Manager | kkeller@worklinkweb.com

Windy Graham, WIOA Database Contract Manager | wgraham@worklinkweb.com

**Proposed dates and staff contacts as of August 20, 2026. Dates are subject to committee approval and final Board vote on September 9, 2026.*

An Equal Opportunity Employer / Program

Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities

For program funding details in compliance with the Stevens Amendment, please visit the Funding Opportunities page of the www.worklinkweb.com website.