



April 7, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, Inc. (ULOKC), I am pleased to offer our support for maintaining Oklahoma's current structure of local workforce development boards, including the Oklahoma Workforce Board (OWB) and the Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board (COWIB), as established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As a long-standing, community-based organization, ULOKC has experienced firsthand the impact and effectiveness of partnering with our local workforce board. These boards play a vital role in aligning workforce strategies with the distinct needs of our region, ensuring that programs and services are both responsive and relevant to job seekers and employers alike.

Local workforce boards serve as key conveners, fostering meaningful collaboration among community organizations, educational institutions, employers, and service providers. Through this coordinated approach, we are better equipped to support individuals, particularly those facing barriers to employment, by connecting them to quality training, career pathways, and essential supportive services that promote long-term economic stability.

We are concerned that eliminating the four local workforce development boards could have unintended consequences, including:

- Reduced responsiveness to region-specific workforce and economic needs
- Disruption of established partnerships that effectively support job seekers
- Decreased employer engagement, which is critical to aligning training with current labor market demands
- Loss of local accountability and transparency within the workforce system

Oklahoma's workforce system is most effective when it balances statewide coordination with strong local leadership and expertise. The existing structure encourages innovation, adaptability, and collaboration—key elements that drive successful outcomes under WIOA.

The Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City remains committed to working alongside COWIB and our workforce partners to strengthen pathways to economic self-sufficiency

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for the individuals and families we serve. We respectfully encourage the State to preserve the current local workforce development board structure and continue building upon the strong foundation and partnerships already in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support and for your continued dedication to strengthening Oklahoma's workforce system.

Sincerely,

Dr. Valerie Thompson, PhD, MBA
President & CEO
Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, Inc.