



NOVAworks Workforce Board
September 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: C. Berdiansky, G. Biggs, D. Bini, R. Brunson, C. Chien, D. Dorsey, R. Foust, L. Lambert, N. Leonor, J. Lind, A. Manwani, M. Nemits, S. Porter, and A. Switky

ABSENT: J. Cohen and K. Vartan

ALSO PRESENT: M. Sessions, C. Bernhardt, J. Badiei, J. Cheyer, G. Pham, and E. Stanly of NOVAworks staff, and consultant Kevin Perkey

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chairperson A. Switky called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

2. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no public announcements.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

It was moved by J. Lind, seconded by R. Foust, and carried by voice vote to approve the consent agenda as submitted. For this meeting, agenda items included meeting agenda and July 23, 2025, meeting minutes.

4. **PLANNING SESSION**

4A. A Look Back at Last Year's Retreat Priorities and Progress

4B. Update on Federal Landscape

4C. Shifts in Program Design – The Economy, The Employer

Evolving Model of Service Delivery

Employer Training Strategy

Telling NOVAworks Story

Following an icebreaker exercise where members identified their “superpower” unknown to others, the planning session commenced. A handout was distributed as background for the program, https://novaworks.org/documents/attachments/NOVAworksBoardPlanningSessionMaterials2025_9.pdf. NOVAworks staff presented on the organization's landscape and trends that may impact its future. To view the presentation, click here, https://novaworks.org/documents/attachments/NOVAworksBoardPlanningSessionPresentation2025_9.pdf. Highlights of the discussion included but were not limited to:

- Federal funding is being distributed but is uncertain. It is already impacting NOVAworks partners at EDD, DOR, adult education, and community colleges. It's unclear how the new agreement between the departments of Education and Labor will affect local operations. Workforce Pell Grant offers new opportunities for partnership with the community colleges. At the state level, the director is participating in a Workforce Strategy Group identifying approaches for addressing future challenges and attended a meeting with the Lt. Governor; there are changes in higher education through the CA Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program (SB638) and the Master Plan for Higher Education to better address today's student needs and alignment with workforce development; and CWA hired a new director who was a former local Board director.

- At last year's retreat, the Board identified three priorities that would shape its work this year: developing and executing sector strategies that include the manufacturing and healthcare sectors; telling the NOVAworks story more often and better to a broader audience; and expanding access to services across the service area, specifically in San Mateo County. This past year, NOVAworks has achieved significant accomplishments in these areas.
- NOVAworks has launched a new website and refreshed the brand for both NOVAworks and the Foundation Launch Lab. In addition, new collateral materials have been developed for services, community presentations, and for information and advocacy. Social media presence has been expanded to include frequent postings and success stories about NOVAworks.
- NOVAworks has taken a leadership role in sector engagement in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors. In the manufacturing sector, NOVAworks is partnering with Western Digital for apprenticeship support, incumbent worker upskilling, and veteran hiring pipelines. With support from the State Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) grant, NOVAworks is also partnering with Mission College and De Anza College to promote employer engagement for training participants in mechatronics and industrial automation. In the healthcare sector, a November 5 convening of eight healthcare leaders will provide guidance on influencing federal investment in healthcare talent development. Lightcast will conduct a labor market analysis to inform convening.
- To better serve NOVAworks customers, the service delivery model has been updated to focus on customers residing within its service area; appointments are scheduled up to two weeks in advance (up from two days) to improve planning for customers and staff; appointment times are extended to 45 minutes (up from 30 minutes) for a more in-depth experience; and in-person orientations are now offered, with enrollment following a commitment from customers. NOVAworks is also expanding its reach in San Mateo County through CONNECTION sites in partnership with community partners. A total of 22 sites has been identified, with an initial launch of 6-8 sites.
- Following the presentations, Board members were asked the following questions: How will you leverage your networks to increase employer engagement?, How will you help elevate NOVAworks' voice and brand as a regional leader?, and How will you support our signature initiatives to ensure they deliver real, funded outcomes?. Responses included but were not limited to:
 - Utilize a sector-based model where staff are assigned a specific sector and develop relationships with employers within these sectors. Emerging sectors should be pursued with Advanced Air Mobility, pharmaceuticals/biopharma manufacturing, data center construction, and telecommunications and water and sewer infrastructure. It will be important to stay connected to the chip industry, as the industry is expected to make a comeback.
 - Approach talent acquisition managers and investors/entrepreneurs who want to get connected to decision-makers. Host wine and speed networking.
 - Reshape the legislative letters to elevate the NOVAworks brand. NOVAworks is pursuing short podcasts with Board members and will reach out to other members in the future. Collaborate with community colleges on legislative trips to the Capitol. NOVAworks could be invited to attend visits/events that are convened by member organizations. Collaboration is important and could occur across Board member organizations.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.