



WCCY MINUTES

Wakulla County Coalition for Youth

Date | time 08/06/2025 12:30 pm-1:30 p.m. | *Meeting called to order by* Rebecca Sahar

In Attendance

Karen Zak, Jennifer Phillips, Bonnie Wertenberger, Lottie Roy, Rebecca Sahar, Lisa Sherry, Olivia Piazza, Rachel Pienta, Tammy Boone, Novella Franklin, Stacey Bian, Melonie Hendry, Melanie Sanders, Debbie Saenz, Josh Lawhon, Samantha Kennedy, Amanda Madden, Kaizsa Threatt, Caden Gruebel, Amanda Gruebel, Angela Hicks, Peggy Sullivan, Tracy Melin, Simeon Nelson, Liz Neighbors, Tammy Boone, Yolanda Carlson, Erika Jackson

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from June 2025 Meeting – Josh Lawhon and Novella Franklin Approved

Agenda Items/Presentation

1. Karen Zak on Drug-Free Communities Grant:

- End of year 2 reporting is due August 15th for activities during August 2024 – July 2025. Year 3 activities begin August 1, 2025. Year 2 numbers and report will be available at the September 2025 meeting.
- New social norms campaign for Year 3 will feature “Truman the Turtle” encouraging students to be “TRU” to themselves like Truman and make healthy choices by abstaining from substances.
- WCCY will have a table at the FRESH Back to School event on 8/9/25 from 9 AM – 2 PM. There will be free food, haircuts, school physicals, clothes, and school supplies/backpacks.

2. Karen Zak on Fundraising Committee:

- Meeting was held on 7/2/25 and there was discussion about the possibility of having a county-wide volunteer recognition luncheon, however more volunteers are needed to make the event happen.

3. Jennifer Phillips on Bylaws Committee:

- Revisions to the bylaws are still not complete but should be soon.

County Report

Josh Lawhon: No county updates currently.

Sheriff Report

Lt. Tom Mallon/Chase Savary were not in attendance.

School District Report

Simeon Nelson: All school volunteers now must be Level 2 screened with the District at the cost of the volunteers which is \$80. “All Pro Dad” is a new program being implemented in elementary schools for “father figures” of students.

Treasurer Report

Regina McQueen was not in attendance.

Partner Reports

Jennifer Phillips (North Florida Learning Center): Offering K–12 academic tutoring and test prep (SAT, ACT, GRE, GED, ASVAB, etc.); Accepts Step Up for Students funding (UA and homeschool approved); Newly approved for the PEP program

Samantha Kennedy (Wakulla County Extension): Certified instructor for: QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention program and food safety (ServeSafe for food protection managers). Offers classes in healthy cooking, cottage food businesses (home-based food ventures) and youth-focused programming such as *Living on My Own* simulation which is a financial decision-making activity for youth (teaches jobs, income, family size, budgeting). Has also collaborated with 4-H this year by hosting the *Kitchen Creations* summer camp which taught cooking, recipes, measurements, knife skills, meal prep to youth.

Rebecca Sahar (Wakulla Co Public Library): Finished summer reading program with seven weeks of activities reaching 4,182 participants (children and families over multiple programs). Kids programs will resume in August with *Book Bunch* and *Book Babies* on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Preparing for fall events including the annual Open House (first Saturday in September) and the Trick-or-Treat Story Walk (participants should contact the Library Director, Linda Oaks to reserve a table). Library now has official plans for a new building, with more details to be announced soon. All kids' programs and events are posted on the library's website and Facebook page.

Caden Gruebel (Future Leaders of Wakulla/4H): A free Teen Leadership Training will be held on August 16 for current and interested youth. On August 18, 4-H will host a Volunteer Meeting and is seeking additional volunteers to support clubs, projects, and events. A Teen Leadership Summit is also planned for October 13. Over the summer, FLOW hosted a youth game night with 49 participants. The 4-H Open House will take place on August 23 at 9 a.m., featuring new programs for the upcoming year, and the community is invited to attend. For more information, contact Dr. Rachel Pienta.

Angela Hicks (Capital Area Community Action Agency): Offers programs including Head Start, utility assistance, and weatherization. In the Family Self-Sufficiency department, facilitates the *Getting Ahead* program—an incentive-based class that helps clients identify barriers to success and understand different mental models of poverty, middle class, and wealth. Currently recruiting for the Fall *Getting Ahead* class, which covers multiple counties (Leon, Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin). Participants receive a \$25 Walmart stipend each week for attending.

Tracy Melin (Big Bend AHEC): Offers monthly tobacco cessation classes at the library, health insurance navigation, and newly added KidCare assistance to help families apply directly for children's insurance. Navigators remain available for the federal marketplace, with recent Affordable Care Act changes noted. Additional programs include diabetes education, tai chi for arthritis and fall prevention, and "Bingocize," a bingo-themed exercise program popular with older adults.

Liz Neighbors (Wakulla DOH): Tobacco Prevention has an open OPS part-time position (25 hours/week) supporting Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs at Coast Charter, Wakulla Middle School, and Riversprings Middle School, with potential for a high school club in the future. The position involves facilitating monthly lunchtime meetings and is ideal for someone interested in empowering youth. Healthy Start is a home visiting program serving prenatal women and children up to age three, providing parenting education, stress management support, essential items (pack-and-play, car seats, diapers), and connections to community resources to ensure families are supported during early childhood.

Tammy Boone (Wakulla DOH): Tobacco Free Partnership Meeting is 8/21 at Wakulla Health Department.

Yolanda Carlson (NWF Health): NWF Health is the managing entity for foster care and mental health services in Circuit 2. There are 331 children in foster care across the circuit, including 15 in Wakulla County, and they encourage community members to support foster care through recruitment and other initiatives even if they cannot be foster parents. Behavioral health pocket guides are available upon request that include QR codes for resources, including Mobile Response for 24/7

mental health crises, free or low-cost services, and the TESS AI chatbot for youth support. “NWF Health Connects” serves as a growing resource hub (expanding from Pensacola to Perry, Florida) to help residents locate services across the region.

Erika Jackson (Wakulla DOH): Works as a health educator through the Compass Program which targets youth ages 10-19 and supportive adults. There were several talks being held at the library that are now cancelled, however there will be a human trafficking prevention talk at the WCPL on September 23rd at 6 PM.

Lottie Roy (LWREA): The Leon-Wakulla Retired Educators Association reports that they have been off for the summer. They note that their next meeting is at the beginning of September, the day before the next WCCY meeting. They plan to provide information next month on the fifth-grade essay contest and scholarships for the upcoming year.

Lisa Sherry/Stacey Bian (DISC Village): DISC Village shares plans to honor Recovery Month in September with several initiatives. They announced the first annual *Run for Recovery* event which is happening in Tallahassee on September 25 at Lake Ella, noting last year’s event was postponed due to Hurricane Helene. The event is accepting vendors, and flyers will be provided to share. They also plan *Nourish Recovery*, a food drive with donation boxes at local office locations and potential community partner sites. DISC Village, along with Stacey and her team, is organizing *Art for Recovery*, an opportunity for clients and community members to express themselves through various art mediums over the month. Art projects will be displayed in offices, and community members can participate during business hours. They highlight upcoming awareness efforts for International Opioid Awareness Day on August 31 and Recovery Month throughout September.

Melonie Hendry (Healthy Families Franklin/Wakulla/Gulf): offers child development education, prenatal and postnatal support, early childhood development screening up to age five, and connects families to community resources. She also leads *Tuesdays Together*, an online parent group held the first Tuesday of each month, providing a lunch-and-learn forum for parents across the three counties to discuss parenting topics and build community.

Novella Franklin (Zeta Phi Beta): No update, but if any agency needs volunteers, please contact her at: baizpresident@gmail.com

Rachel Pienta (Wakulla 4-H): Future Leaders of Wakulla (for youth ages 11-18) is meant to be the leadership umbrella for youth in the county and encourages all community partners to send their youth to represent at Future Leaders of Wakulla meetings.

Olivia Piazza (TMH/Safe Kids Big Bend Coalition): There will be an upcoming car seat checkup event in Wakulla in September (date and time TBD), offering car seat inspections and distribution of new car seats for families in need. Alarms are also available to distribute to families with pools, particularly for households with small children; the alarms detect splashes and sound an alert inside the home. Contact Olivia for more information: Olivia.Piazza@tmh.org

Kaizsa Threatt (MADD): No new updates.

Amanda Madden (Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition): Free Infant and Child CPR class will be held on August 16th from 10-12. More information and sign up is available in the link: <https://capitalareahealthystart.org/news-events/cpr-2025/>

Jennifer Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting. Liz Neighbors seconded the motion. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM.

Next Meeting

September 3, 2025 at 12:30 pm at Wakulla County Public Library & Virtually