

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 22 2026

Northland KC Organizations Show Collaboration in Workforce Development

Clay County Economic Development Council (Clay County EDC), Platte County Economic Development Council (Platte County EDC), and the Northland Workforce Development Center (NWDC) Corporation announce a strategic workforce Initiative realignment.

Kansas City, MO — In a collaborative and forward-looking decision, the Boards of the Clay County EDC, the Platte County EDC, and the NWDC Corporation are pleased to announce that, beginning with the 2026/2027 school year, the Northland Education + Business Alliance (NEBA) program will transition to be housed under the NWDC. "This transition is about building on a strong foundation and positioning NEBA for even greater impact in the years ahead," said **Christy Collins, NWDC President**. "The focus of the NWDC is on aligning education and industry in ways that create real, meaningful opportunities for all students. Bringing NEBA under the NWDC umbrella allows us to deepen those connections, expand partnerships, and ensure long-term sustainability for a program that has already made a significant difference across our region. We are excited to honor NEBA's legacy while also advancing a shared vision for a stronger, more connected workforce pipeline in the Northland."

Now in its 28th year, NEBA has long served as a vital bridge between education and industry across the Northland, fostering meaningful connections between school leaders and business partners to better align workforce readiness with regional economic needs. This strategic move reflects a shared commitment to strengthening that mission and expanding its impact. "This transition represents a natural evolution for NEBA," said **Jim Hampton, retired Executive Director of the Clay County EDC and NEBA founder**. "By aligning the program with the Northland Workforce Development Center, we are enhancing our ability to connect students, educators, and business partners in a more direct and impactful way, with a shared vision for the future workforce."

The NWDC facility, currently under development and set to open in 2027, is designed to be a regional hub for hands-on career training, workforce alignment, and industry partnership. Integrating NEBA initiatives into NWDC's strategic framework ensures even greater collaboration, visibility, and long-term sustainability for the program. "As Capital Campaign Co-Chair for NWDC and advisor to this project, hosting this program under the workforce center only makes sense. Bringing business and education together to share real-world knowledge helps our communities stay in touch with current and future skills needed in the workplace. I look forward to facilitating these workforce discussions", said **Tina Chace, Executive Director for Platte County EDC**.

"This is a strategic move rooted in vision, not ownership," said **Bruce Cramer, Clay County EDC Chair**. The Clay County EDC Board fully supports this transition because it strengthens the long-term impact of NEBA and ensures it continues to serve our region at the highest level. By aligning with the Northland Workforce Development Center, we are bringing together the right resources, leadership, and focus to build a stronger workforce pipeline for the future. This is exactly the kind of collaboration that drives real progress for our communities."

"NEBA has been a cornerstone program of the Clay County EDC for nearly three decades, and we are incredibly proud of the impact it has made," said **Mark McAuliffe, Executive Director of Clay County EDC**. As we evaluated its future, it became clear that to truly elevate its impact, we needed to think bigger than ownership and focus on outcomes."

An additional advantage to this transition is the leadership continuity and familiarity with the program. Brian Noller, who has served as a NEBA co-chair from 2018-2021, brings valuable insight and historical perspective that will support the program's continued success within NWDC. To ensure a seamless transition, the NWDC has appointed current team member Bridget Mendoza as NEBA administrator. She had previously facilitated the program during her time with the Clay County EDC, bringing both an understanding and heart to this role. Her passion for connecting educators and business leaders, along with her deep understanding of NEBA's impact, makes her a natural fit to carry the program forward within NWDC.

"NEBA has always been about intentional connection, bringing people together to create real opportunities for students. I am honored to continue this work with the NWDC, where the alignment between education and workforce is not only intentional, but truly transformational," said **Bridget Mendoza, NWDC Grants and Gift Manager**.

Each organization emphasizes that this transition is rooted in collaboration, shared vision, and a commitment to the Northland community. Stakeholders can expect continuity in programming, strong relationships, and an enhanced platform for growth as NEBA enters this next chapter.

"I believe this will be a really good move for NEBA moving forward. NEBA conversations along with support from the EDC's and the Northland Chamber have driven the creation of the NWDC facility. Having a workforce development and economic subcommittee that connects to the NWDC strategic plan makes perfect sense. NEBA will have a home for the next 50 plus years just north of 152 Highway at the new facility. **Brian Noller, NWDC Project Lead**.

NEBA will host two more meetings under the umbrella of the Clay EDC in May and June of 2026 featuring educational speakers and business speakers. NEBA currently meets at the Antioch Bible Baptist Church in Gladstone, MO. NWDC will roll out NEBA in September of 2026 and will continue to host it at the church until the new building is complete. **Each meeting has a primary sponsor that supports the cost of food and meeting prep. Meetings are free for all that attend.**

For more information about NEBA or the Northland Workforce Development Center, please contact: Bridget Mendoza; NEBA Administrator; Northland Workforce Development Center; 816-916-1089; mendozab@nwdckc.org or NWDC Lead, Brian Noller at (816) 206-8750; nollerb@nwdckc.org

To learn more about the Northland Workforce Development Center go to [Northland Workforce Development Center](#)

To learn more about the Clay County EDC go to [Clay County Economic Development Council](#)

To learn more about the Platte County EDC go to [Platte County Economic Development Council](#)