

**ATLANTA REGIONAL WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD NEXTGEN COMMITTEE**

May 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Ms. Autumn Andrews
Mr. Robert Hughes
Mr. Chris Moder
Ms. Viva Pitter
Ms. Kristy Smith – Vice-Chair

Members Absent

Mr. Jamal Jessie – Chair
Ms. Ciara Dunn
Ms. Norma Marquez
Ms. Jennifer Houston

Guests

Ms. Debbie Anglin – HEARTS
Ms. Sonia Carruthers – Cherokee Focus

ARC Staff

Ms. Candice Coppin - NextGen Program	Ms. Marsharee O'Connor - NextGen Program
	Ms. Brittney Oquendo - NextGen Program

The meeting was held at the Atlanta Regional Commission

Ms. Kristy Smith called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

- A. The NextGen Committee (NGC) continues to operate paperless, except for meetings held outside of ARC office. For copies of the information discussed during the meeting, visit the ARC website <https://atlantaregional.org/workforce-economy/boards-and-committees/youth-committee/>, under *Meeting Archives* or send a request to ARC Staff Ms. Marsharee O'Connor via email at MO'Connor@atlantaregional.org.
- B. Ms. Kristy Smith solicited any public comments
- C. There were two actions taken at this meeting
- D. NextGen Director, Ms. Marsharee O'Connor presented the updates to the NextGen Program.

NEXTGEN COMMITTEE ACTION REQUIRED:

- 1. Mr. Robert Hughes made the following motion:

MOTION: To approve the meeting minutes from February 12, 2026.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Chris Moder and unanimously approved.

- 2. Ms. Autumn Andrews made the following motion:

MOTION: To confirm Ms. Vivia Pitter Membership to the NextGen Committee member).

The motion was seconded by Mr. Chris Moder and unanimously approved.

NEXTGEN PROGRAM PERFORMANCE, PLANNING, AND SERVICES:

- A. **NextGen Program Funding and Performance Update** – Ms. Kristy Smith introduced Ms. Marsharee, who provided PY25 funding updates. PY25 program funding totals \$1,400,000 and has been fully allocated. There is no ITA funding available, and WEX funding has been exceeded. For PY26, the county fair share report has not yet been received from the state; an estimate has been provided, but the final budget has not been issued. Ms. Brittney Oquendo and Ms. Candice Coppin reported on Customer Performance tracking and NGSP Goal Sheet monitoring for third quarter data.
- B. **Special Projects Update** – Ms. Smith introduced Ms. Coppin to present updates on the Pathways to Digital Economy (PADE) initiative, a pilot program awarded \$200,000 through Google. The program uses licenses under the Grow with Google platform to establish an IT career pathway. The initiative currently has twenty-two participants, with a second cohort expected to begin soon.

Ms. O'Connor outlined plans for the PADE Employer Lunch-N-Learn event. The program will develop a youth talent pool through credential training and

employer engagement, featuring a youth talent showcase and highlighting credentials earned by participants. Placement efforts will include both WEX placement and long-term placement opportunities. Employers will be invited to attend and speak about the qualities that make a strong employee within their organizations. Work readiness support will include mock interviewing, professional headshots, and related preparation. The initiative also includes a Youth Ambassadors component, with Employer Lunch-N-Learn sessions planned in each county. A list of employers to invite will be compiled. Sessions are scheduled for July in Gwinnett, Douglas, Henry, Rockdale, Fayette, and Clayton counties. The project is currently working with WIOA participants only.

- C. **NextGen Program Status Updates & Activities** – Ms. Smith asks that NGSPs give updates about their programs, services, and operations.

NEXTGEN COMMITTEE PLANNING ACTIVITIES:

Taskforce Updates – No Updates

- Program Oversight & Guidance Taskforce
- Strategic Planning Taskforce
- Economic Development Taskforce
- Resource Leveraging Taskforce

OTHER DISCUSSIONS:

NextGen Committee Planning Activities –

Discussion of the NextGen "Youth" Committee Strategic Plan (as of 2/2/26)

The strategic plan outlines key objectives, action items, critical success factors, risks, and timelines across four foundational pillars: Program Oversight and Guidance, Strategic Planning, Economic Development, and Resource Leverage. The plan's goal is to develop a robust workforce development system that connects education with employment, cultivating skilled individuals for a competitive job market.

CY 2026 NextGen Committee (NGC) Meeting Schedule & Location –

- August 20, 2026 – Atlanta Regional Commission
- November 12, 2026 – Atlanta Regional Commission

Next Board Meeting Date – The Atlanta Regional Workforce Development Board (ARWDB) will meet in-person at The Atlanta Regional Commission August 12, 2026.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 1:56PM