

**The Economic Alliance**  
**Board Meeting**  
April 22, 2026  
Via Zoom

**Attending Board Members:**

Maria Lassila, 1st Chairman, Tourism Rep. Omak Chamber	Patrick Law, Methow Valley #1, Twisp Works
Anthony Popelier, 1st Vice Chair Reman & Reload, North Co. #2	Monica Garza Acevedo, WorkSource, At-Large #3
Kurt Danison, Secretary, City Rep. #1, City Planner	Crystal Gage, Confluence Heath, Central Co. Area #1
Andy Bertapalle, At-Large #1, Chief Admin Mid Valley Hosp	Rocklyn Culp, Town of Winthrop, Planner

**Absent Board Members:**

Sarah Jo Lightner, Methow Arts, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair., Arts Comm Rep	Rikki Whipple, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #1, NNDF
Nick Timm, County Commissioners Rep., Rep. #1, Treasurer	Cindy Simpson, Finance Rep, WA Federal Bank
Anna Dalbey, Past Chairman, So. Co. #2, Keller Williams Realty	Steve Quick, Central #2 Okanogan School Super
Jord Wilson, South County #1, City of Pateros	Beth Strohane, Applied Bldg Infor, At-Large #4
Jordan Ruiz, NNDF, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2	Cal Goolsby, WVC, At Large #A2
Lanie Johns, Ok Co Commissioners Rep., Ck of the Brd Co Rep #2	Lisa Bauer, City Rep., City of Okanogan
Brent Timm, Tonasket Chamber & TranGO Vacant, North Co. #1	William Marchand, CCT Planning
Vacant - At Large #5	Vacant -CTFC Representative

**Guests/Staff:**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director, Economic Alliance	Mason Duke, E. Dev. Specialist, Economic Alliance
Leonel Marcial, Business Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance	Carolyn Davis, Project Assistant, Economic Alliance
Breanna Sollender, Comm/Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance	

Maria Lassila, Chairman called the meeting to order and asked everyone to sign into the chat to introduce themselves.

Agenda: No conflicts with the agenda items and no changes to the agenda.

Consent Agenda: Minutes from March 25, 2026, were emailed out and financials as of April 16, 2026, were sent. Kurt Danison made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and the financials as of April 16, 2026, as presented. Rocklyn Culp seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

**Motions**

North Valley #1 Vacant Position: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the new Executive Director of Twisp Works, John Brown, would be taking Patrick Law's position on the Economic Alliance Board. Since he was unable to attend today's meeting, we will wait to seat him until the next meeting. Patrick Law will be working as a contractor with TwispWorks to help keep their Investment Network going. He will also be exploring ideas to start a business.

**Reports**

Executive Director Report: (see attachment #1) Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported on April's activities. There is a lot going on with the county and she was able to attend several meetings with the county commissioners. She will be doing some research for them. The county has signed the CDBG contract with the Loomis Fire District. She and Mason Duke will be attending the district's meeting on Monday evening to get all their paperwork signed and sent back to the county.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the ADO Network met and learned that the network has received a \$150,000 reduction in ADO funds from the Department of Commerce. She also met with the Rural

Roundtable Group in the process of developing a state-wide economic development strategic plan. There are four subgroups, Rural, regional, Urban and tribal. They discussed that the language used be consistent when defining “rural”.

She sent out information to local businesses regarding the Evergreen Manufacturing Grant and have had two who are interested in pursuing this funding source. She also met with the new Executive Director of TwispWorks and shared information. She will be attending the grand opening of the new dental clinic at Family Health Clinic. They have expanded their services and now have an 18-chair dental facility.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach scheduled an appointment with the county commissioners on July 27 to decide how much funding will be available to award to projects. The prioritization process will open on August 26, 2026, for funding for 2027.

She also met with the State Treasurer at the Omak City Hall and talked with him about not sweeping accounts, specifically ones that provide funding for infrastructure projects.

Business Education/Outreach: Mason Duke reported that he has been working with some businesses that are looking at hiring employees. He held a class at the Tonasket Senior Center on Cyber Security. Will also have another Start Simple class on Thursday. The Financial Literacy workshop will be held via zoom on May 12 from 10 – noon. This will be a discussion on cash flow, credit use, and how to finance a business.

Leonel Marcial reported that we are in very interesting times and businesses are struggling with higher prices. He also attended several chamber meetings and will attend the next SBDC conference in Spokane.

Breanna Sollender reported she was a little late in getting the April newsletter out but did finish it up and sent it out. She is now working on May’s newsletter. If anyone has any news or info, please let her know. She has also been attending the Omak Chamber meetings and sharing information at their monthly meetings. She is still working on the Board member’s Bios.

The Financial Literacy class will be held in May and one in June, this is a partnership with Business Impact NW. A lot of people come to us not realizing how their personal spending and credit score would affect looking for funding to start a business. There will also be credit counselors to help those that attend the class get on track to repair their credit.

## **Discussion**

Board Member Recruitment: No updates.

Port District: No updates.

Arts in Education and Career & Technical Education: The committee did meet last week and discussed the Gear Up program, the CTE program in Tonasket and the challenges the schools are faced with. They will meet again on the third Thursday at noon, if anyone wants to attend, reach out to Roni for the zoom link.

Broadband – Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the next meeting is scheduled for June 26 and they are going to start doing quarterly meeting instead of monthly. We have been seeing a lot of connections happening and there will be a Broad Band “lighting” ceremony to celebrate this success.

### **Contract/Grant Updates 2026**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Economic Alliance submitted the WEDFA grant last month but haven't heard back from them yet. Still don't have a signed contract with SBDC.

### **Other Business/News/Member Updates**

Those in attendance provided updates about what is happening in their communities or from their organizations.

Meeting adjourned, 12:00 p.m.

**Next meeting is scheduled for May 27, at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Davis

Roni Holder-Diefenbach Executive Director





## **ECONOMIC ALLIANCE Executive Director Report**

### **April 2026**

April has been a month of time spent compiling our quarterly reports for all our contracts. On one hand it is great that we now have diversified our funding to include so many different programs and services, but on the other, it means more number crunching and compiling of data that each of these programs require. I am not complaining, as many organizations like ours are scrambling to find funding and laying staff off, and we are happy to not be in that position at this time.

This month I have also had the opportunity to sit in on several BOCC meetings. There is a lot going on in the county, and I am happy that the Economic Alliance is being asked to be at the table as things are moving forward to assist in anyway that we can. We are currently moving forward with the CDBG process for the Loomis Fire District and County Staff and I have met with the CDBG team to talk about the next steps moving forward. We will assist the Loomis Fire District get ready to meet all the requirements that come along with being a subrecipient for this contract, as they don't have the capacity to do so.

The ADO network has met twice this month to discuss the 152,000 cut that came down through this year's budget that will impact us starting July 2026. At this time the Department of Commerce is trying to work out a way that we fill the funding gap providing added services that they can pay us that ties back to the new strategic plan that they did receive new funding for in this years budget. If that occurs, then we will see now budget hit which will be a good thing for the Economic Alliance moving forward.

As stated at the last EA Board meeting, Mason and I finished up the WEDFA grant and submitted it at the end of March with collaboration with Twisp Works, Methow Arts and Business Impact NW in the amount of 80k. We should know by mid-May whether or not we will receive this grant.

I have reached out to all the cities within the existing Opportunity Zone areas, to ask whether or not they are interested in reapplying in the OZ 2.0 application that is now open. I have only heard back from Misty at the City of Brewster who is interested in Pursuing this. We will work with PRWA to submit an application. The DOC'S Evergreen Manufacturing Grant is also open, and we reached out to several businesses and organizations in the county and we have 2 who are interested in pursuing this grant. We will work with them as the ADO is required to submit the applications to the DOC. PRWA will also assist us in this application.

Our contract with PRWA is in progress, they have reached out to all our Infrastructure projects that were prioritized in the last cycle to determine their need for assistance. We have also resent the information out to all the chambers and organizations in the hope that they would share the SBA disaster declaration that not only businesses were eligible for, but also homeowners, nonprofits and others who were impacted by the flooding. PRWA is available to assist these individuals through our USDA grant apply for these programs.

I met with the new Twisp Works Director, spoke at the FHC Dental Clinic Grand Opening and attended several other meetings so far this month representing the Economic Alliance.

Community Economic Revitalization Board  
Washington Economic Development Association

Partners for Rural Washington  
CCT& Okanogan County BAT