

Kentucky Employment First Council

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Andy Beshear

Governor

Jamie Link

Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

Advocacy and Education Committee

Minutes

October 1, 2025

9:00 am – 10:00 am (EST)

Zoom

Members Present

Amanda Owen, Katie Wolf Whaley, Bill Bates, Jeffery Edwards, Tracy Belfield, Morgan Turner, and Melanie Lybarger

Members Absent

Amanda Friend and David Allgood

KYOVR Staff Present

Nanci Howard, Michelle Cobb, and Anu Kumari

Welcome and Agenda Review

Employment First Advocacy and Education Committee Chair, Amanda Owen, welcomed attendees. The agenda was reviewed and acknowledged by all participants.

FAQ Document Update

The Employment First Council FAQ document is in review. Once approved, it will be posted on the Employment First website as a resource.

How do we distribute the FAQ document?

Employment First Committee Chair Amanda Owen opened the floor for discussion:

Highlights:

1. How to Utilize Resources
 - Exploring effective ways to share and implement the FAQ document and other committee resources.
2. Email Template
 - Create a Google Doc email template to send to groups, with the FAQ attached.
 - Discussion focused on strategies for spreading the message consistently.
3. Post-Finalization Use
 - How to use the finalized resource, particularly in educational settings, to share with teachers.

Committee suggestions

- It was suggested to use the finalized FAQ in educational settings, targeting teachers and school districts.
- It was also suggested that the email templates already drafted will be used to send the FAQ as a PDF to teachers, educators, and other stakeholders. QR codes will be incorporated into presentations, conference tables, and flyers for easy access.
- It was highlighted that the Employment First Employer Education and Engagement Committee is developing a series, in partnership with Innovative Support for Autistic Workers (ISAW).
 - Strategies include:
 - Sharing session dates and access information.
 - Providing recordings or resources post-session.
- The goal is to ensure a consistent message and reach a broad audience:
 - Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) can send through their listserv.
 - Kentucky Adult Transition Council (KATC) and regional co-ops to share with educators and families.
 - Creating a centralized Dropbox with links, QR codes, and templates for easy access for council use.

Conference Integration

- It was suggested that the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) upcoming conference and other educator presentations will serve as opportunities to share the FAQ and related resources.

- Flyers and QR codes will support engagement and on-the-spot access to the document.

Annual Report Recommendation

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Nanci Howard, reported that the draft Annual Report will be circulated once Employment First Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley has incorporated the committee's recommendations and data updates. The draft will be provided for content review only prior to Cabinet approval, allowing members to submit feedback before the quarterly council meeting. The report is expected to be distributed by the end of the week. The report is scheduled for submission by November 1, 2025.

Action Items

FAQ & Email Templates

- Amanda Owen will circulate draft templates (education-focused and general).
- Committee members will review and edit templates for clarity and conciseness.

Resource Access

- KYOVR Staff will process for placing FAQ / QR code materials in the Dropbox for future access.

Target Contacts & Outreach

- Committee will compile a target contact list, Kentucky Department of Education, co-ops, Kentucky Adult Transition Council, and regional interagency teams.
- The committee will explore flyer/QR code distribution for the CEC Conference and other events.

Upcoming Committee meeting schedule

- The next committee meeting will be scheduled for November 7, 2025, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am EST.

Announcement

Employment First Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley shared that [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) begins October 1, 2025. She encouraged committee members to utilize this observance as an opportunity to share information through their respective agency platforms and to remain attentive to related activities and events.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

Employment First Committee Chair Amanda Owen thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

- November 7, 2025
- 9:00 am- 10:00 am (EST)