



Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

Employer Education and Engagement Committee

Minutes
August 13th, 2025
1:00pm – 2:00pm (EST)

Council Members Present:

Committee Chair, Merry Reid-Sheffer, Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, Rebecca “Becky” Wilson, Zachary Sappenfield, and Amanda Hutchinson

Council Members Absent:

Dawn Gardner, Jessica Beaven, and Todd Coffey

Committee Members Absent:

Aaron Poynter and Melissa Marvel

Staff Present:

Nanci Howard, Kristen Beach, and Deana Wilson-Kimble

Staff Absent:

Anu Kumari Betty Whittaker

Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley announced she has joined the TEAMKY Virtual Job Fair workgroup for veterans, their families and employers. She will send the informational flyer to the committee.

Innovative Supports for Autistic Workers (ISAW) Update/Discussion

Committee Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer provided a recap of the June meeting for those absent. She said Bev Harp from the Innovation Supports for Autistic Workers (ISAW) provided a presentation to the committee in June regarding a conversational training for employers about hiring individuals with Autism and the benefits. The idea is to make the training and material more interactive. Conversation was held regarding how the Employer Education and Engagement Committee could assist with ISAW. Merry continued by reminding the committee of their partnership with KYRETAIN and their Employer Seminar Series. Staff from the KYRETAIN project has provided the committee with their listserv to use to promote the ISAW training as well as posting on social media sites and webpages. The idea is to also use SurveyMonkey to survey attendees who attend the ISAW presentations and to investigate for potential future topics and collect ongoing data. It was suggested the trainings occur every quarter. UKHDI will assist with the platform.

Committee Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer also mentioned inviting Kitty Jones from the Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, Callie Miracle and Laurie Mays from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Kitty Zachery and Susan Brown from the Louisville Coalition for Workforce Diversity, Amanda Owen from the Owensboro Coalition, and Bev Harp to the next committee meeting in September.

2025 Annual Report Recommendations

Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Nanci Howard, provided the committee with a timeline of the completion of the annual report.

- Mid-July – Preparation and planning for annual report.
- Early August – Brainstorming Session with EC.
- Early September – Touch base with EC on progress.
- Late September – Complete report draft.
- September 30th – Send draft report with meeting materials to full council.
- October 10th - Present to the full council for review and potential motion to approve.
- October 13th – move through appropriate Cabinet channels for review and/or edits.
- December 1st – on the Governor's desk!

Items to include in the annual report:

- Presentation given at the TASH Conference in Louisville on Employment First by Merry Reid Sheffer will be included in the annual report.
- The TEAMKENTUCKY Virtual Job Fair workgroup.

Additional Discussion:

Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, mentioned an upcoming training for providers on how to speak to and engage with employers. The training will allow providers to gain the knowledge and language to interact with employers effectively.

A Job Development and Networking in-person training will be held at the McDowell Center in Louisville on Wednesday, August 27th. Two sessions will be offered at the following times:

9:00–11:00 AM

1:00–3:00 PM

The training will count for 2 hours of CEUs. If committee members are interested, they must rsvp by August 25th.

Committee Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer announced that Mattingly Edge has a new Executive Director.

No further discussion was held.

Public Comment

No public comment addressed.

Adjournment

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: September 10th, 2025

Time: 1:00pm to 2:00pm

Administrator: Nanci Howard

500 Mero Street • 4th Floor NE • Frankfort, KY • 40601

Toll-Free: (800) 372 - 7172 • Direct: (502) 782-3421 • Email: Nanci.Howard@ky.gov

Created by: Anu Kumari, Administrative Specialist Senior

Education and Labor Cabinet, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

500 Mero Street • 4th Floor NE • Frankfort, KY • 40601

Direct: (502) 782-1409 • Email: anukumari@ky.gov