



Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Education & Labor Cabinet Secretary

Employer Education and Engagement Committee Meeting

Minutes

October 9, 2024
1:00pm – 2:00pm

[Meeting Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 863 9806 2295
Passcode: 757737

Council Members Present

Merry Reid Sheffer, Committee Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, Council Chair, Becky Wilson, Todd Coffey

Members Absent

Dawn Gardner and Jessica Beaven

Staff Present

Nanci Howard Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Betty Whittaker, KYOVR Staff Assistant, Kristen Beach, KYOVR Assistant Director of Field Services, Anu Kumari, Administrative Specialist Senior

Additional Committee Members

Kimberly Wickert, KY RETAIN

Welcome/Announcements

Chair Merry Reid Sheffer, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was reviewed by all participants. No additional announcements.

➤ **Updates on KY RETAIN/Employment First Council Employer Seminar Series Upcoming Events**

KY RETAIN, Kimberly Wickert provided an update on the upcoming KY RETAIN/Employment First Council Employer Seminar Series. She stated for the National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Employment First Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, would be providing a presentation entitled, “Ways Employers Can Engage, Include and Amplify Workers in the Recruitment and Retention Process.” Kimberly said Katie will be share how to elevate the workforce through the contributions of people with disabilities. The webinar will take place, October 16, 2024, from 12:00pm to 12:45pm [LINK](#) and will address questions about language use in the workplace. Kimberly continued to announce the November topic for the forum, which will focus on respectful language regarding people with disabilities. This presentation will be provided by Bev Harp and Laura Butler and scheduled for November 12, 2024, from 12:00pm to 12:45pm. [Link](#) The duo will share insights on how to use disability language respectfully in the session entitled, To “With” or Not to “With”: Answering all your questions about respectful language and disability. Kimberly shared she attended a similar session at the recent APSE Annual Conference, which was held on September 9, 2024, to September 10, 2024, in Lexington, KY, which was well-received, indicating strong interest among employers.

Registration and Attendance:

Kimberly Wickert shared with the committee there were 107 registrations with approximately 60 attendees at the September Employer Seminars Series and informed them that there are reminders are sent out the day before the webinar begins to encourage attendance. Kimberly then stated she reviews comments and questions from attendees to prepare presenters ahead of time as well.

SHRM CEUs:

- Kimberly Wickert discussed the process for obtaining SHRM CEUs for events, which could enhance participation from HR professionals. She explained the process of obtaining SHRM certification, which involved an online application demonstrating a year of experience in specific skill and knowledge areas.
- Kimberly Wickert reminded committee members, she working to the potentially pursue of CRC CEUs, with Susie Edwards’ OVR team, noting that it may require more effort due to recent changes in the CRCC process.
- Kristen Beach clarified that approval for CRCs is granted per individual seminar rather than by the presentation provided and this process requires submitting presentation topics and supporting materials for approval based on those specific topics, particularly for ethics-related sessions.

Future Ideas and Referrals:

- The committee discussed potential speakers and topics for the Employer Seminar Series:

- Merry Reid Sheffer suggested Bill Tanini, Christian bookstore owner about participating in a future webinar as well as mentioning the Educational Director for visually impaired preschool services as potential speakers for future discussions.
 - A suggestion was made for a session focused on how parents of elementary-age children with disabilities can access services, addressing a gap in knowledge among this demographic.
 - Becky Wilson highlighted an email about volunteers for an upcoming event in November is referenced, indicating a potential opportunity for information dissemination.
- The committee members expressed interest in exploring more referrals and ideas for speakers to enrich the series.

Annual Report Update:

Chair Merry Reid Sheffer asked to Administrator, Nanci Howard if has everything needed for the annual report. Ms. Howard replied that she has received the necessary data and is working on incorporating SHRM credits and thanked everyone who provided data for the annual report.

Employer Needs and Feedback:

- Chair Merry Reid Sheffer emphasized the importance of understanding employer needs and trends and addressed noted a growing curiosity among employers regarding invisible disabilities and how to support affected employees.
- Todd Coffee suggested need for feedback from employers regarding their roadblocks and needs is emphasized, suggesting that surveys could be beneficial.
- The committee discussed the importance of reframing employer perspectives, especially when they are in crisis and focused solely on filling positions.

Coalition and Resource Sharing:

- Kimberly Wickert proposed inviting Kitty Zachary and Susan Brown to present about the Northern Kentucky coalition and its expansion efforts as resource of employer.
- The committee members discussed the potential to leverage partnerships with local chambers of commerce to enhance recruitment efforts and share resources.

Resource Spotlight:

- The mention of an initiative regarding a disability hiring academy is said to be planned for 2025. Fellow Council member and Advocacy and Education Chair, Amanda Owen is involved in the planning committee.
- The committee discussed the importance of highlighting resources and initiatives during presentations to provide valuable information to employers.

- Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer expressed a desire to gather more information on employer services to share with attendees, emphasizing the importance of clarity in communication.

Action Items:

- Kimberly Wickert will follow up on the feasibility of pursuing CRC CEUs for upcoming events.
- Committee members are encouraged to brainstorm additional topics and speakers for future meetings.
- A survey will be prepared for the next meeting to prioritize employer needs and gather insights.

Adjournment:

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer and Administrator, Nanci Howard thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting with a reminder of the next meeting date.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will focus on shaping plans for new initiatives and projects for the upcoming year, with an emphasis on addressing employer needs.

- **Date: November 13,2024**
- **Time: 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm**

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[Meeting Zoom Link](#)

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Administrator: Nanci Howard

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