



Andy Beshear
Governor

Jaime Link
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

Employer Education and Engagement Committee **Minutes**

February 14, 2024
1:00pm – 2:00pm EST
Zoom
Meeting ID: 863 9806 2295

Members Present: Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer, Rebecca Wilson and Todd Coffey

Members Absent: Jessica Beaven, Zach Morgan and Dawn Gardner

Staff Present: Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Administrator, Nanci Howard, KYOVR Administrative Specialist, Pepper Caudill, KYOVR Manager, Deana Wilson-Kimbler and KYOVR Assistant Director, Kristen Beach

Guest(s) Present: KYOVR Staff, Betty Whittaker, RETAIN Kentucky, Kimberly Wickert, Lexington VA Medical Center, Sharelle Williams and Employment First Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review:

Administrator, Nanci Howard welcomed everyone to the meeting and screen shared the [agenda](#) with the group before turning the meeting over to Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer. Introductions were held for all attended. Nanci also provided an update of Project NEON for the group.

RETAIN Kentucky Partnership:

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer gave a recap of the three topics of interest for the Lunch N' Learn Series that the committee had previously committed to launch through partnering with RETAIN Kentucky. RETAIN Kentucky, Kimberly Wickert gave a recap of her recommendations pertaining to the three topics. The [Employer Seminar Series 2024 Recharge Recommendations](#) pdf that Kimberly had sent in a prior email was shared with the group in the chat. KYOVR Manager, Deana Wilson-Kimbler gave a recap of her plans for the topic that she will be spearheading for the series. It was decided that Merry, Deana and Kimberly would meet at a separate time to further discuss this matter. There was discussion held regarding the topic "Employment First and Competitive Integrated Employment", which is one of the three topics of interest in the partnership with RETAIN Kentucky. Guest, Katie Wolf Whaley stated she would send to Merry an HDI video depicting people with disabilities speaking, which Merry could use as part of the Lunch N' Learn Series partnership with RETAIN Kentucky. There was discussion held regarding the definition of competitive integrated employment and how it pertains to employers and the Council. It was decided that the target date of launching the first topic of the lunch N' Learn Series, through partnering with RETAIN Kentucky, would be April 2024. It was

Page 1 of 2

further decided that the committee would finalize any further details of this launch at their next meeting date in March 2024. Merry requested that committee members who are able, to attend the RETAIN Kentucky webinar in March 2024 in preparation for the Lunch N' Learn Series launch in April 2024. She indicated that an emailed invitation for this event would come directly from Kimberly Wickert.

New Ideas & the Strategic Plan:

Discussion was held regarding lack of cohesion amongst similarly tasked groups. The [Strategic Plan](#) was screen shared for the group and was also shared in the group chat. The Committee discussed the goals listed therein and discussed the potential for collaboration with other coalitions and how to make it successful.

Future areas of focus:

- It was decided that Merry, Deana and Kimberly would meet at a separate time to further discuss the topic of the Lunch N' Learn Series matter.
- Guest, Katie Wolf Whaley stated she would send to Merry an HDI video depicting people with disabilities speaking, which Merry could use as part of the Lunch N' Learn Series partnership with RETAIN Kentucky.
- It was decided that the target date of launching the first topic of the lunch N' Learn Series, through partnering with RETAIN Kentucky, would be April 2024. It was further decided that the committee would finalize any further details of this launch at their next meeting date in March 2024.
- Merry requested that committee members who are able, to attend the RETAIN Kentucky webinar in March 2024 in preparation for the Lunch N' Learn Series launch in April 2024. She indicated that an emailed invitation for this event would come directly from Kimberly Wickert.

Next Meeting Date:

Employer Education & Engagement Committee:

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024

1:00pm – 2:00pm EST

[Zoom Link](#)

Employment First Council:

Friday, April 12th, 2024

1:00pm – 3:00pm EST

Hybrid Format

Location: TBD

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

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