



Andy Beshear  
Governor

Jamie Link  
Education & Labor Cabinet Secretary

## **Employer Education and Engagement Committee** **Meeting**

### **Minutes**

August 14, 2024

1:00pm – 02:00pm

Zoom

Meeting ID: 863 9806 2295

Passcode: 757737

#### **Attendees:**

Nanci Howard (Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator)  
Merry Reid Sheffer (Chair)  
Katie Wolf Whaley (Council Chair Member)  
Kimberly Wickert (Council Member)  
Melissa Marvel (Vocational Rehabilitation Director of Field Services)  
Deana Wilson Kimbler (KYOVR Employer Services Branch Manager)  
Steve Blanks (Project NEON Subject Matter Expert)  
Susan Brown (Staff Support)  
Betty Whittaker (KYOVR Staff Assistance)  
Todd Coffey (Staff Support)

#### **Members Absent:**

Kristen Beach (Assistant Director of Field Services)  
Dawn Gardner (Staff Member)  
Jessica Beaven (Council Member)  
Rebecca Wilson (Council Member)

## **Welcome**

Administrator, Nanci Howard, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **Introductions/Announcements**

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer welcomed everyone. Introductions were held. The agenda was reviewed by all participants. Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer Announced that Becky Wilson had left her position, but she would continue to serve on the council until her successor was appointed.

## **RETAIN Lunch N Learn Series Update**

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer Stated that she not able to be attained 08-13-2024 The Retain Lunch and Learn series Webinar. Council member, Kimberly Wickert provided an update on Retain Lunch and Learn series; she mentioned that Sherry Glen from Brown Forman gave a presentation and received positive feedback.

which had a good turnout with 65 attendees out of 105 registered. The next webinar is scheduled for September 25th, and the topic will be individuals with disabilities and criminal justice involvement. In October, Katie Wolf Whaley will be the subject matter expert and discuss employment first webinar. Council Member, Kimberly Wickert stated there upcoming lunch and learn sessions will cover topics such as employment for individuals with criminal justice involvement and employment first. she is working on becoming a SHRM recertification provider to attract more HR professionals and CEOs to the sessions.

Staff Assistance, Betty Whittaker also provide update on RETAIN Lunch and Learn series and she provided an update on recent webinar, and she mentioned that Sherry Glen is doing unremarkable work and hot point was benefits, benefits related videos presentation and related question and answer.

Chair Merry Reid Sheffer Explained RETAIN works for Employment Talent after Injuries and illnesses network. She mentioned that Employer Education and engagement partnership with RETAIN.

## **Suggestion for Future Lunch and Learn Topics Update**

KYOVR Employer Services Branch Manager Deana Wilson Kimbler were discussed with Committee members potential speakers and topics for future webinars. Ideas included a benefits analyst to discussed how employment impacts social security benefits, an employer who promotes mental health and well-being in the workplace, KYOVR Staff Assistance, Betty Whittaker mention that on Kentucky's new marijuana laws and their impact on employers. The committee also mentioned the possibility of inviting speakers from the committee will explore connections with organizations such as the Southeast ADA Center and Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer said that the Kentucky Re-entry Program and the Greater Louisville Inc. mental health resources list and Mental

health provider Grants Humana Foundation. Council Member, Kimberly Wickert Said she will check, if she has connection with them. Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer encouraged participants to share the registration link for future Lunch and Learn sessions.

### **Kentucky Inclusive Workforce Summit:**

Council Member, Kimberly Wickert stated that RETAIN has limited scholarships available for employers to attend the Kentucky Inclusive Workforce Summit on September 30<sup>th</sup> will be held at Lexington Kentucky.

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer was encouraged to share the information with employers who may benefit from attending.

### **Neon Project Update**

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer provided update on the NEON project and mentioned that the Employment First Council's third part of the webinar series, "Enhancing Employer Engagement", presented by Subject Matter expert (SME), Steve Blanks will occur the August 15th, 2024, from the Seeking Employment, Equality and Community (SEEC) organization.

Chair Merry Reid Sheffer apricated Katie Wolf Whaley, Deana Wilson Kimbler and Nanci Howard, Breakout room leaders were identified, and additional volunteers were sought. She provided instructions for breakout room discussions were discussed, focusing on negotiating with employers based on interests. The topic of engaging with employees with criminal justice involvement was mentioned as a potential future of Lunch and Learn topic.

### **Other Announcement:**

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer discussed her recent visit of Representative Morgan and Assistant Secretary Taryn Williams, who met with various organizations to discussed employment barriers and the value of hiring individuals with disabilities brings to workforce.

Council Chair member, Katie Wolf Whaley highlighted the upcoming Kentucky Conference on September 9th and 10th, 2024 at Lexington, KY featuring a variety of topics. Katie Wolf Whaley provided a [Link](#) for registration and more information. Katie Stated Project NEON will sponsor the opening Keynote Speaker at the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) as well as provide a session during the conference. The SME who will present is Tricia Jones Parkin.

### **Action Items:**

- Council Member, Kimberly Wickert to gather information on becoming a SHRM recertification provider and reach out to the Kentucky Chamber for assistance if needed.
- KYOVR Employer Services Branch Manager, Deana Wilson Kimbler to inquire about potential speakers from the targeted services branch and share recommendations with the group.
- Council Chair Member, Katie Wolf Whaley reach out to the woman at the Southeast ADA Center who focuses on mental health and employment for potential employer recommendations.
- Administrator, Nanci Howard to follow up with Becky Wilson regarding her continued membership on the council.
- Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer send an email to breakout room leaders with instructions for tomorrow's webinar.
- Katie Wolf Whaley to share the registration link for the Kentucky Conference and remind attendees about the event.

### **Adjournment:**

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

### **Next Meeting:**

- **Date: September 11, 2024**
- **Time: 1:00 pm to 02:00 pm**

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**500 Mero Street • 4<sup>th</sup> Floor NE • Frankfort, KY • 40601**

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

