



**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Jamie Link**  
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

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## **Employer Education and Engagement Committee** **Minutes**

July 10, 2024  
1:00pm – 2:00pm  
Zoom  
Meeting ID: 819 3105 9171

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

**Members Absent:** Dawn Gardner and Jessica Beaven

**Staff Present:** Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Administrator, Nanci Howard, KYOVR Manager, KYOVR Staff Assistant, Betty Whittaker, and KYOVR Assistant Director of Field Services, Kristen Beach

**Staff Absent:** KYOVR Employer Services Branch Manager, Deana Wilson-Kimble

**Guest(s) Present:** KYRETAIN, Kimberly Wickert, Employment First Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley

**Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review:**

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer, welcomed committee members and reviewed the agenda.

**Update on RETAIN Lunch N' Learn Series:**

Merry Reid Sheffer provided an update on the Lunch and Learn Series in collaboration with the Kentucky Employment Council. She stated there will be another webinar hosted on **Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. She stated, KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard, sent out the information via email. Below are the details.

- Title: Innovative Supports for Autistic Workers
- Presenter: Bev Harp
- Date: July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Time: 12:00pm – 12:45pm
- Register: <https://bit.ly/4bIGQNw>

Merry-Reid encouraged committee members to share with their networks and their employer partners. She also directed committee members to utilize social media posts and share them with their connections. She continued to speak on the August session that will be conducted by Sherry

Glenn, who is a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist with Brown-Foreman. Merry-Reid explained Sherry had collaborated with Edge Employment in the past and provided some background information about her to the members.

Merry-Reid then challenged committee members to bring one topic or one presenter name to the next meeting so that KYRETAIN can have a running list of topics/presenters for the series. Merry-Reid suggested the topics and presenters be preferably employers.

KYRETAIN staff, Kimberly Wickert, shared information from surveys received from the in-person employer lunch n' learn series that was held in June and Norton Healthcare in Louisville. Feedback from the survey indicated the in-person event was well received. She stated she would like to see an in-person series held quarterly. She said she hopes to see one schedule by the end of the year but is unsure. She announced the September Lunch N' Learn Series information.

- Title: Employment for People with Disabilities with Justice Involved Backgrounds.
- Presenter: Dr. Chelsea Braymer
- Date: TBD (week of September 25<sup>th</sup>, three potential dates)
- Time: 12:00pm – 12:45pm

Kimberly Wickert continued by stating this presentation is presented nationally. She stated she welcomes input from the committee members on topics and presenters. She concluded by informing committee members of [KYRETAIN's media website](#). She stated members could inform employers the webinar would be feature on the media site so they could refer others. Chair, Merry-Reid said she enjoyed the in-person event and encouraged members to think about asking employers if they would be interested in an in-person event or virtual.

#### **“Enhancing Employer Engagement” Webinar Series Update:**

Chair, Merry-Reid Sheffer, provided the update regarding the “Enhancing Employer Engagement” webinar series with Subject Matter Expert, Steve Blanks. She said the first part of series was completed in June. She provided her positive feedback and explained there seemed to be plenty of engagement from the participants. She announced part two would be held on July 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to Noon. She said this information has been shared on the Edge Employment Facebook page. The recording and PowerPoint for part one of the series is posted on the Employment First [webpage](#). Chair of the full Council, Katie Wolf Whaley, stated there were 150+ people to register for the series and about 85+ were live and the evaluations were positive. Part three will be held on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Lastly, Merry-Reid announced there would be an Employment First Council meeting held on Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm. She asked the committee if they had questions or thoughts to assist with her report to the full council.

KYOVR/KYRETAIN staff, Betty Whittaker announced there are [blogs](#) posted on the KYRETAIN website regarding employment. Administrator, Nanci Howard, will ask staff to post the link to the blog page on the Employment First website.

Katie Wolf Whaley announced the Kentucky APSE Conference will be held in Lexington, KY on September 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She stated an agenda is being finalized but that if the committee members knew of employers who would like to present to let her know. She stated the conference is geared towards, providers, employment specialists and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Various topics were discussed regarding the Coalition for Workforce Diversity and Pre-ETS.

Committee member, Todd Coffey, announced there has been a new staff member come aboard at the Coalition for Workforce Diversity. Her information was shared by Kimberly Wickert, via chat through the Coalition's July Newsletter. It stated, *"I would like to introduce you to Susan Brown, the Coalition's new Outreach Coordinator. Susan has worked with people with disabilities for many years in a variety of roles, directly and administratively. She enjoys connecting people to resources and solving problems. She understands how transformative the right connections can be, both for the individual and the company. Susan will be assisting us as we bring four new Coalitions on board throughout the state this year. Please give Susan a warm welcome when you see her as she will be spending most of her time in our office the first few months."*

Merry-Reid asked for an update on the Chamber of Commerce position at the Governor's Office for appointment. Administrator, Nanci Howard said there has been no movement as of today and we are still waiting awaiting word from the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions.

**Next Meeting Date:**

**Employer Education & Engagement Committee:**

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

1:00pm – 2:00pm EST

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 863 9806 2295

Passcode: 757737

**Employment First Council:**

Friday, July 12, 2024

1:00pm – 3:00pm EST

[Zoom Link](#)

Hybrid Format

**Location:** Transportation Cabinet  
200 Mero Street  
Conference Room C107  
Frankfort, KY 40622

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