



Kentucky Employment First Council

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Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

Employment First Council Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2026

3:00pm – 4:00pm (EST)

Zoom

Meeting ID: 846 2844 7176

Members' Present

Employment First Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, Vice-Chair, Jeff White, Amanda Owen, Shelly Durbin, and Tal Curry

Members' Absent

Legislative Liaison, Andrew Johnson and Merry Reid Sheffer

Staff Present

KYOVR Administrative Specialist Senior, Anu Kumari

Welcome

Employment First Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley welcomed attendees. The agenda was reviewed and acknowledged by all.

Finalized Agenda for October 9 Full Council Meeting

The Executive Committee reviewed the draft agenda and finalized the agenda for the October 9, 2026, Employment First Council Quarterly Meeting.

Key agenda items include:

- **2026 Project NEON Update and Next Steps:** Council Vice Chair Jeff White will provide an overview of Year One activities and next steps, with Project NEON workgroup leads providing updates on their respective areas of focus.
- **Priority versus Mandate: Deciphering Kentucky's Evolving Employment Landscape:** The presentation will focus on clearly explaining the distinction between Employment First and Medicaid work requirements.
- **KYOVR Order of Selection and New Case Management Updates:** Updates will be provided on the Order of Selection and the New Case Management System, including current waitlist releases and implementation progress.
- **Annual Report Update:** The Annual Report draft is being finalized and will be circulated electronically for review and feedback prior to the October Full Council meeting. The Employment First Council will be asked to consider a motion to approve the Annual Report for submission to the Cabinet.

Following review of the draft agenda, the committee confirmed these items for inclusion on the October 9, 2026, Full Council meeting agenda.

Additional Discussion

The Executive Committee discussed future planning for Council committees, including using time in December to review committee focus areas, establish goals and priorities, and strengthen committee engagement in preparation for 2027.

Action Item

- Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley will finalize and circulate the Annual Report Draft and provide the completed report for inclusion in the Full Council meeting materials.
- Follow-up will occur with Lori Norton, Carolyn Wheeler, Donna Osborne, and other appropriate Project NEON workgroup leads regarding their participation in the October 9, 2026, Full Council presentation.
- Jeff White will notify Crystal Adams regarding the planned *Priority versus Mandate: Deciphering Kentucky's Evolving Employment Landscape* presentation so that the Medicaid representative can be informed in advance.

- Committee chairs will prepare brief updates on current committee activities and anticipated priorities for 2027.
- The Executive Committee will plan to discuss committee focus areas, goal-setting, and priorities in December in preparation for 2027.

Adjournment

Employment First Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

Date: December 17, 2026

Time: 3:00 p.m.- 4:00 pm EST