



Kentucky Employment First Council

500 Mero Street, 4th Floor NE

Frankfort, KY 40601

Toll Free: (800) 372-7172

Direct: (502) 782-3421

Email: Nanci.Howard@ky.gov

Andy Beshear

Governor

Jamie Link

Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

Employment First Council Executive Committee Minutes

March 21, 2024

3:00pm – 4:00pm (EST)

Zoom

Meeting ID: 897 5416 6949

Members Present

Merry Reid Sheffer, Amanda Owen, Jeff White, Katie Wolf Whaley, and Diana Merzweiler

Members Absent

Jessica Beaven, Frank Huffman and Morgan Turner

Staff Present

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Administrator, Nanci Howard and Administrative Specialist, Pepper Caudill

Staff Absent

N/A

Guest(s) Present

N/A

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by briefly explaining the agenda before turning the meeting over to Administrator, Nanci Howard for an update of Project NEON.

Project NEON Update

Administrator, Nanci Howard provided a brief update of Project NEON. She explained that Kentucky was awarded 300 hours in which ten hours will be used for committee support through Subject Matter Experts. She also explained that the awarded hours would specifically focus on customized employment, provider capacity, rate restructuring and things of that nature.

Provider Capacity Report

Chair, Jeff White stated that he is recruiting additional support members to the committee. The committee is working to develop a Capacity of Kentucky Supported Employment Services Map (waiver providers) which will help to visually capture where there are sufficient services, marginal services, or critical need of services. There was discussion amongst the group regarding the Map, the data used to create it and how it could be useful to providers. Additional statistical data was screen shared with the group and explained regarding the incentivization of potential income available to providers. It was discussed that the data shared with the group is in alignment with Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan. There were no action items needing to be brought to the Council for a vote at the next quarterly meeting in April.

Public Policy Report

Chair, Diana Merzweiler stated that the committee is working to review state policies and make recommendations to better align them with federal guidance. The committee will be moving forward on an action item at the next quarterly meeting in April. The action item consists of a recommendation of committee contributed, tailored language intended to better align the State's definition of Competitive Integrated Employment with the Federal definition.

Advocacy and Education Report

Chair, Amanda Owen stated that the committee is working to finalize development a power point presentation and email templates to target specific audiences regarding available resources to be shared. There was discussion of the committee working with other committee's members to solicit additional resources, to aid in the development of the resources list that this committee is working on. There was discussion that this could be accomplished by asking council members to drop resource links, that are missing from the Employment First website page, into the meeting chat at the next quarterly meeting in April. There were no action items needing to be brought to the Council for a vote at the next quarterly meeting in April.

Employer Education and Engagement Report

Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer stated that the committee has partnered with RETAIN Kentucky and is scheduled to launch their first webinar on April 23rd, 2024, from 12:00 – 12:45pm EST. She explained the webinar would cover navigating employer responsibilities under ADA Title One and would be presented by Barry Whaley and Pam Williamson. Merry shared the registration link in the chat and asked that members feel free to share it with their respective affiliates. Merry explained that she was scheduled to meet with Dina Wilson-Kimbler the following day to begin planning the next webinar. There were no action items needing to be brought to the Council for a vote at the next quarterly meeting in April.

Transition Report

Chair, Jessica Beaven and Co-Chair, Frank Huffman were not in attendance of the meeting however Administrative Specialist, Pepper Caudill shared in the chat, an email received from Jessica Beaven which read; "We will meet next week to discuss the best way to market awareness for transition opportunities. Booking speakers from KCTCS, businesses, etc. to share success stories of transitional services. Jess ". There were no action items needing to be brought to the Council for a vote at the next quarterly meeting in April.

Additional Discussion

There was discussion regarding the requirement of the Education & Labor Cabinet to review and approve all documents approved by the Council, prior to being disseminated. The meeting was informally ended.

Future Areas of Focus

Administrator, Nanci Howard provided a brief update of Project NEON. She explained that Kentucky was awarded 300 hours in which ten hours will be used for committee support through Subject Matter Experts. She also explained that the awarded hours would specifically focus on customized employment, provider capacity, rate restructuring and things of that nature.

Action Items

Chair, Diana Merzweiler stated that the committee is working to review state policies and make recommendations to better align them with federal guidance. The committee will be moving forward on an action item at the next quarterly meeting in April. The action item consists of a recommendation of committee contributed, tailored language intended to better align the State's definition of Competitive Integrated Employment with the Federal definition.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Executive Committee Date

Thursday, June 20th, 2024 – 3:00pm – 4:00pm (EST)

Quarterly Council Meeting Date

Friday, April 12, 2025 – 1:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)