



**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Jaime Link**  
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

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## **Chairs** **Minutes**

February 22, 2023  
02:00pm – 03:00pm  
Zoom  
Meeting ID:

**Members Present:** Merry Reid Sheffer, Amanda Owen, Jeff White, Katie Wolf Whaley, Frank Huffman, Jessica Beaven

**Members Absent: None**

**Staff Present:** Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Administrator, Nanci Howard

**Staff Absent: None**

**Special Guest(s) Present: None**

### **Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review:**

KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the gathering as being, to touch base with each other on what each subcommittee is working on as well as an understanding of what is expected in the annual report. She went on to say that she wanted to get a clear understanding of any collaborations that may be taking place between the subcommittees as that seems to be a common theme. She then opened the meeting up to the members to further discuss anything needing to be addressed in this meeting.

### **Chair Report:**

Advocacy & Education Chair, Amanda Owen began by explaining that her subcommittee is working towards development of a power point that could be used at conferences, as a presentation/education tool. She went on to say that they would also like to explore the development of an “app” that would allow employers, parents, or educators to access all resource facets and easily collaborate. Amanda stated that she believes the subcommittee would like to collaborate with Transportation. She also explained that she wants to be unified in the language that she is using to describe the Employment First mission.

Transition Co-Chair, Frank Huffman began by explaining that his subcommittee is working towards condensing Transition Toolkit information into a single page and/or a Facebook group, for ease of access, interpretation and shareability. Chair, Jessica Beaven went on to explain this further.

Provider Capacity Chair, Jeff White began by explaining that the subcommittee has determined there are funding barriers for consumers that have significant disabilities, and they would like to collaborate

with all subcommittees to incentivize the Transition Services for School Districts. He went on to explain that he has realized the complexity of Kentucky's employment system. He mentioned noticing a "cobweb curve" aspect to Kentucky's employment system. He would like to collaborate with other subcommittees to "simplify the structure" to make it more understandable. He gave an example of the contradictory ideas amongst families that include consumer(s) with disability(ies). He believes that the complexity of the employment structure, "intimidates families" and consumers struggle to understand benefits of employment for persons with disabilities.

Employer Education & Engagement Chair, Merry Reid Sheffer began by explaining that the subcommittee is focusing on developing a "Lunch & Learn Series". She went on to give details of the brainstormed ideas that the subcommittee has come up with for the Series. She mentioned a potential collaboration regarding Transition. Merry welcomed any collaboration from all other subcommittees.

There was discussion between Amanda Owen and Merry Reid Sheffer regarding topics that the Owensboro Coalition had covered in previous discussions with local employers. Amanda offered to collaborate with Merry on a certificate program that can be modeled from the Owensboro Coalition's plan. Amanda went on to explain in further detail the video series that the Owensboro Coalition is working to create and reiterated that she would be happy to collaborate with other subcommittee members on this idea. Jeff White added that his department is already providing a Lunch & Learn Series each month and he offered for other subcommittee members to join in. Bylaws (Ad hoc) Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley gave a brief example of struggles that UPS has with maintaining employees who were receiving benefits. She mentioned that it could be an informative addition to Merry's Lunch & Learn Series to include resources that employers could be aware of to increase retention among employees. There was further information shared and discussed amongst chair members regarding the employee retention matter and collaborating with each other to be able to create a single source/space where all the information surrounding disability could be housed for ease of access and use.

Bylaws (Ad hoc) Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley began by agreeing with the "app" idea as well as the need for a single platform source to house all the information/education/tools related to disability. She went on to explain that the Bylaws (Ad hoc) subcommittee is presently in drafting stages. She gave details regarding the Bylaws drafting process and stated that she would aim to include things that were discussed during this meeting. KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard stated that Cabinet Legal Dondra Meredith will be providing guidance to the Bylaws (Ad hoc) subcommittee. There was discussion held regarding the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment.

KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard directed focus to the end of year reporting due dates and there was discussion amongst Chair members to determine schedule of meetings. Provider Capacity Chair, Jeff White stated that he would be updating the "tax benefits" information and then providing that to Nanci so that she may distribute it amongst Chair members. Bylaws (Ad hoc) Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley mentioned that she would work on gathering the "talking points" document that was used by Employment First Council, in the first round, so that it may be reviewed, during the next chairs meeting. There was discussion regarding what should be appropriately shared with consumers regarding advocacy. Nancy Howard requested any materials desiring to be shared with the Employment First Council, be sent to her so that she may prepare it for the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. She thanked the attendees, and the meeting was ended.

**Future areas of focus:**

- "Talking Points" for Employment First Council
- Collaboration amongst subcommittees

**Action Items: NONE**

**Public Comment: NONE**

**Next Meeting Date:**

Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
2:00pm – 3:00pm  
Hybrid Format  
Location: TBD

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