



Kentucky Employment First Council

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Jamie Link

Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

Employment First Council Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes

February 10, 2026

2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)

Zoom

Meeting ID: 849 2541 6136

Members Present

Committee Chair Shelly Durbin, Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley, Vice Chair Jeff White, Zac Sappenfield, Lisa Carrico, Cora McNabb, Cathy Anderson, Susan Brown, Stephanie Miller, Melissa Marvel, Alisha Clark, Karen Maciag, Joann Wells, and Amanda Hutchinson

Members Absent

Leslie Hoffmann and Lori Norton

Staff Present

Ron O’Hair, Eric Barth, Nanci Howard, and Anu Kumari

Welcome | Introduction | Agenda Review

Employment First Committee Chair Shelly Durbin welcomed attendees. Introductions were held. The agenda was reviewed and acknowledged by all participants.

Update on the Employment First Council 2025 Annual Report

The committee received an update on the Employment First Council 2025 Annual Report. The report was submitted prior to the December 1 deadline to the Legislative Research Commission (LRC), the Cabinet Secretary, and the Governor’s Office and was approved on December 29. The report is available on the Employment First [website](#).

The report highlighted key accomplishments from the past year, including progress related to provider initiatives and Priority Area 3. Planning for the next Annual Report cycle was expected to begin in the fall.

Update on Webinar Series

The committee received an update on the webinar series. The webinar is intended to provide information to providers on practical strategies to expand employment services and revenue across multiple funding sources.

The following topic areas were discussed for inclusion in the webinar series:

- Becoming an Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Vendor
- Obtain Certification as a 1915 (C) Waiver Provider
- Seek Funding through State General Funds
- Becoming an I-RISE provider
- Alternative Funding Opportunity for ISP
- Become an employment network (Ticket to Work)
- Develop a relationship with local school districts
- Develop a fee Schedule for private pay services
- Utilizing ABLE accounts to fund employment services

Draft slides have been developed for each topic area and are being reviewed and refined. Accessibility requirements will be addressed prior to scheduling the webinar.

Upcoming Waiver Employment Survey

The committee received an update on the Waiver Employment Survey. The survey was distributed to case managers to collect data on employment status, hours worked, and service utilization among waiver participants. Survey data will support workforce planning, initiate provider capacity discussions, and assist with future system planning efforts.

Key timeline updates included:

- Survey responses were requested by February 20.
- Preliminary data review is anticipated in mid-March.

The survey is expected to support baseline data development in preparation for Kentucky's participation in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). The committee discussed the importance of participation across disability populations, including Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) providers.

SELN Membership Discussion

The committee received an update on Kentucky's upcoming participation in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). Kentucky is expected to become a participating member beginning July 1, 2026.

SELN participation will support ongoing tracking of employment outcomes, including employment status, hours worked, and wages earned by individuals with disabilities. It was noted that Kentucky does not currently have a strong ongoing system for collecting and tracking this data. SELN participation will support data-informed decision-making, system planning, and continuous improvement efforts related to employment services.

Participation will also provide opportunities to collaborate with other participating states, share best practices, and address common barriers to employment.

Kentucky Project NEON Proposal Update

The committee received an update on the Kentucky Project NEON proposal.

- The proposal was submitted on January 30, 2026.
- Notification of award status is expected on February 20.
- The proposal requested approximately 700 hours of technical assistance support annually for three years.
- Technical assistance would support efforts related to data collection and analysis, provider capacity development, and expansion of employment services across disability populations.

If awarded, technical assistance would support data collection improvements, provider capacity development, improve the Medicaid Buy-In program, and further propel the expansion of customized employment services. Strong cross-agency collaboration was noted.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Employment First Committee Chair Shelly Durbin thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting

Tuesday, March 24th, 2026

2:00pm – 3:00pm