

**Kentucky Employment First Council**

500 Mero Street, 1st 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

Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes

June 16, 2026

2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)

Zoom

Meeting ID: 849 2541 6136

Members' Present

Employment First Committee Chair Shelly Durbin, Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley, Susan Brown, Alisha Clark, Stephanie Miller, Zac Sappenfield, Lisa Carrico, and Amanda Hutchinson

Members' Absent

Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, Joann Wells, Jeff White and Lori Norton

Staff Present

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

Welcome | Agenda Review

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

Update on Project NEON

In the absence of Employment First Council Vice Chair Jeff White, an update was provided regarding Project NEON. Committee were informed that discussions are underway to

address challenges states are experiencing with entering required information into the NEON data portal. Additional updates will be provided at a future committee meeting.

Coordination of Funding Process

An update was provided regarding the Coordination of Funding process. Members were informed that a small number of individuals have begun rising to the top of the OVR waiting list and that efforts are underway to establish a process for transitioning funding responsibility from waiver services to OVR services.

Committee members were reminded that OVR should be notified when Person-Centered Teams are contacted regarding funding transitions to help ensure a seamless transition of services. Members also discussed the continued use of waiver funding for expedited initial employment services while individuals remain on the OVR waiting list.

A committee member asked whether individuals had begun transitioning from waiver-funded services to OVR-funded services. In response, members were informed that several individuals have risen to the top of the OVR waiting list and that OVR is working to establish a process for transitioning funding responsibility as services become available.

Committee members reported positive experiences with the new Coordination of Funding form. Members noted that the revised process appears more streamlined and easier for providers to complete and shared that several individuals have successfully progressed through the process and are doing well in employment services.

Order of Selection Waitlist Update

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) staff provided an update on the Order of Selection waitlist. Members were informed that there have been no significant changes since the previous meeting and that OVR continues to serve individuals from the waitlist in the order applications are received. Staff noted that individuals continue to be selected from the waitlist and transitioned into services.

Staff also reported that OVR's new case management system is scheduled to go live in July. Although staff have completed training, a temporary adjustment period is expected as the system is implemented. As a result, delays in service authorizations, case processing, and other administrative activities may occur during the transition.

Committee members acknowledged the anticipated implementation challenges and expressed appreciation for the continued progress being made in moving individuals from the waitlist into services.

Training Innovation Project (TIP) Learn at Lunch Series Opportunities:

The committee discussed ongoing training opportunities available through the [Training Innovation Project \(TIP\)](#) series. Members highlighted recent and upcoming webinars.

Members were informed that the next TIP Master Class [Setting the Record Straight About Hiring and Retaining Disabled Workers: Debunking Myths A TIP Master Class](#) is scheduled for June 24 and will be presented by Dr. Phillip Rumrill.

Additionally, members were informed that a TIP Community of Practice is expected to launch in August. Community of Practice will provide opportunities for participants to engage in discussions, share experiences, and collaborate on strategies related to employment services and provider practices.

Committee members were encouraged to explore upcoming TIP events and participate in future training opportunities.

Provider Webinar Update

The committee provided an update on the provider webinar. It was reported that the webinar presentation is in the final stages of preparation, with only a small amount of content still pending. Once all presentation materials are finalized, the PowerPoint slides will be submitted through the OVR Outreach mailbox for review by Communications. The review process is expected to take approximately four to five weeks.

Members expressed optimism that the webinar will be finalized and ready for release by October and noted that it will provide valuable information for providers.

2026 Employment First Council Annual Report Recommendations

The committee discussed planning for the 2026 Employment First Council Annual Report recommendations, which is due December 1, 2026. Members were informed that the Executive Committee will meet in July, August, and September to compile committee activities, accomplishments, and recommendations for inclusion in the report.

The 2026 Employment First Council Annual Report recommendations will remain a standing agenda item for future committee meetings. Members were encouraged to identify and share significant activities, outcomes, and recommendations throughout the year to support development of the final report.

Additional Announcements

- The committee was informed that a [New Autism Informed Employer video](#) was posted on June 16, 2026.
- The committee members were also reminded that the next Employment First Council Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for July 10, 2026, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM ET at the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Room 136 CE, 1st Floor, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

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

Next meeting

July 28, 2026
2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)