



Kentucky Employment First Council

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Employment First Council

Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes

September 8, 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, Council Vice Chair Jeff White, Alisha Clark, Lisa Carrico, Zac Sappenfield, Carmen Hencock, and Amanda Hutchinson

Members' Absent

Leslie Hoffmann, Susan Brown, JoAnn Wells, and Lori Norton

Guest Present

Michael Dalto

Staff Present

Anu Kumari, Brooke McDaniel, and Eric Barth

Welcome | Agenda Review

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

Update on Project NEON and Data

The committee received an update on Project NEON as Year One approaches completion. Although Year One primarily focused on planning, several outcomes were completed. Year Two will continue work related to benefits planning and statewide employment data collection.

Benefits planning information on state programs will be adapted into learning opportunities for case managers and employment specialists. Topics may include:

- TANF
- SNAP
- Workers' Compensation
- Other state benefits affecting individuals who are working or considering employment

A comprehensive data plan is being developed to better understand employment outcomes across disability populations and funding streams in Kentucky. Most funding streams are represented, with the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Waiver remaining an outstanding area for participation.

The data collection process will include:

- A two-week collection period in the fall
- A two-week collection period in the spring
- Employment outcome information supplied by employment providers
- A focus on competitive integrated employment outcomes

Additional information on day training activities will also be collected to better understand activities occurring in day training environments.

Committee questions and answers:

Question: *A committee member asked whether the two-week data snapshot would include Michelle P., ABI, RISE, and Vocational Rehabilitation so that the primary funding sources are collecting information during the same period?*

Answer: It was explained that the intent is to use the same two-week snapshot period across the primary funding sources so the information can be analyzed consistently. It was also noted that the ABI Waiver was not yet represented in the data planning process.

Question: *A committee member asked who would input the data and how the data collection process would work?*

Answer: It was clarified that employment providers will supply the data through an electronic platform, such as REDCap or a similar system. The information will then be uploaded into the system maintained for analysis. James Kimble was identified as the person who will conduct the analysis.

Question: *A committee member asked whether the information would be collected from providers, case managers, or counselors.*

Answer: It was clarified that employment providers will supply the information.

Question: *A committee member asked whether all providers would participate in the first data collection period?*

Answer: It was explained that the first collection will begin with a smaller group of providers to test the process and system before broader implementation.

Question: *A committee member asked whether Community Support Advocate (CSA) services should also be considered as part of the funding or service sources being reviewed?*

Answer: It was noted that additional information is needed. Some agencies may be using Community Support Advocate services to support employment, and further information will be gathered to determine whether this should be added to the data initiative.

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) Update

The committee received an update on Kentucky's participation in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN).

Kentucky has access to 50 case manager training slots. The training is intended to provide a broad overview of quality employment and day services rather than step-by-step instruction.

Training details include:

- Up to 50 case manager slots
- Approximately five online lessons
- Self-paced participation
- A focus on quality employment and day services

Before moving forward, the training will be reviewed to ensure it complements other training and does not create confusion.

Work is also underway on the SELN Full State Assessment to help determine how Kentucky can best use its SELN membership. Provider capacity was identified as a likely area of focus to help ensure services meet the needs of individuals across the state.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Update

The committee received an update regarding the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

OVR's vocational rehabilitation case management system is operational, and providers have begun receiving authorizations and submitting invoices.

Additional updates included:

- OVR anticipates releasing additional individuals from the waiting list as implementation continues.
- Releases are expected in the upcoming weeks, although no specific number or timing was available.
- Approvals related to Michelle P. provider capacity and Michelle P. hours are continuing, with another recent approval received.

Members were invited to share whether they had begun receiving new OVR referrals.

Ticket to Work Presentation

Michael Dalto, Project NEON subject matter expert for the Impact of Wages work, presented information on the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program and its potential use as a supplemental funding source for employment service providers.

Ticket to Work is available to eligible individuals ages 18 through 64 who receive SSDI, SSI, or both. Individuals may use their Ticket with a participating Employment Network (EN), including a provider that becomes an EN or partners with an Administrative Employment Network.

Key points included:

- Ticket payments are based on reaching specified earnings levels rather than reimbursement for services.
- Providers may receive Ticket payments while employment services are funded through another source.

- Federal guidance allows Medicaid reimbursement and Ticket payments for the same individual because Ticket payments are outcome-based.
- The program includes Phase 1 Milestone Payments, Phase 2 Milestone Payments, and Outcome Payments.
- Benefits planning can help individuals understand how employment may affect SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, and other benefits.
- Providers may become an Employment Network or partner with an Administrative Employment Network.

Administrative Employment Networks handle much of the program's administrative work and retain a percentage of the Ticket revenue generated.

It was noted that six Administrative Employment Networks serve all 50 states. Two additional Administrative Employment Networks serve individual states but do not serve Kentucky.

A decision tree and spreadsheet are available to help providers determine whether Ticket to Work may be appropriate and estimate potential revenue. Michael Dalto offered to work individually with interested providers.

Committee questions and answers:

Question: *A committee member asked whether a provider could have an individual's Ticket to Work if that person is currently an active OVR client.*

Answer: It was clarified that a Ticket can only be assigned to one organization at a time. While an individual has an open OVR case, the Ticket is assigned to OVR and cannot also be assigned to another Employment Network.

Question: *A committee member asked how the process would work after an individual's OVR case is successfully closed?*

Answer: It was explained that once the OVR case is successfully closed, OVR releases the Ticket and it may be assigned to another Employment Network. If the successful closure occurred within the previous 18 months, the Employment Network would not qualify for Phase 1 Milestone Payments but may qualify for Phase 2 Milestone Payments and Outcome Payments if earnings requirements are met.

It was further explained that if an individual has never received OVR services, did not have a successful OVR closure, or had a successful closure more than 18 months earlier, an

Employment Network may potentially qualify for all three phases of Ticket payments if requirements are met.

A committee member noted that Ticket to Work could have significant implications for individuals on the OVR waiting list, particularly those with waiver funding.

It was explained that being determined eligible for OVR services while waiting for funding does not by itself prevent the Ticket from being used. Once the individual transitions to OVR, the Ticket would be assigned to OVR and would no longer be available to another Employment Network.

Question: *A committee member asked how many Administrative Employment Networks there are and about the availability of other Employment Networks?*

Answer: It was clarified that there are eight Administrative Employment Networks in total. Six serve all 50 states, while two serve individual states and do not serve Kentucky. There are also many other Employment Networks nationally and several in Kentucky, but none of the Kentucky Employment Networks are Administrative Employment Networks.

Interested providers were encouraged to contact Michael Dalto for assistance in determining whether Ticket to Work would be a good fit for their organization.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

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

Next meeting

October 20, 2026
2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)