



Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

Provider Capacity Committee Meeting

Minutes

January 14, 2024

2:00pm – 3:00pm

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 826 3266 4774

Passcode: 622964

Members Present:

Jeff White, Katie Wolf Whaley, Todd Coffey, Shelly Durbin, Cathy Anderson, Amanda Hutchison, Melanie Lybarger, Zac Sappenfield, and Lisa Carrico.

Staff Present:

Nanci Howard KYOVR Administrator and Anu Kumari, Administrative Specialist Senior.

Members Absent:

Staci Cain, Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, Annette Jett, Lori Norton, and Ron O'Hair, KYOVR CRP/SE Branch Manager.

Welcome:

Administrator, Nanci Howard and chair, Jeff White welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was reviewed by all participants.

Project NEON Update:

KYOVR Administrator Nanci Howard provided an update on Project NEON, the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network.

Technical Assistance Grant:

Received in 2022 from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Past Support:

Used 100 hours of assistance in 2022 to support the Employment First Council.

Rate Revamp Efforts:

In 2023, received 300 hours to focus on improving Supported Employment rates.

2024 Assistance:

Applied for 300 hours, received 200 hours for continued improvements.

Expert Collaboration:

Working with Karen Lee and Michael Dalto on customized employment, supported employment, and benefits planning.

Upcoming Project NEON Call:

Scheduled for January 23rd at 10:00 AM, Nanci encouraged participation.

Recognition of Contributions:

Acknowledged efforts from Katie Wolf Whaley, Jeff White, and other council members.

Call to Action:

Emphasized the importance of participation in Project NEON to support employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Review of New Provider Recruitment/ Provider Expansion Efforts:

Chair, Jeff White discussed efforts to recruit and expand new providers. A recruitment email was sent to 405 waiver provider agency contacts, and he confirmed that most attendees had received it. He highlighted a positive response from an established employment agency that expressed interest in expanding to underserved areas, should other agencies consider assistance by sharing office space. Jeff elaborated on the initial feedback to the service expansion outreach, noting that some existing providers may seek stronger ties with OVR, the challenge remains in identifying new and additional employment providers across the state. While the initial suggestion was unexpected, case management agencies sharing office space with providers to establish employment services in underserved areas may be worth further exploration. He expressed optimism about the expansion opportunity, describing it as the most promising initiative he has seen in his career. Jeff offered his assistance to anyone needing help contacting potential partners and emphasized the importance of providing clear and actionable information to enable providers to make informed business decisions. He concluded his report with a sense of hope for a productive follow-up period based on the positive responses received.

Discussion of How We Might Proceed from Here:

Increase Funding and Resources:

Chair Jeff White led a discussion on expanding supported employment services.

Alignment with Existing Efforts:

He shared a list of actions that align with work by the Employment First Council, OVR, and DDID.

Funding and Resources:

A key suggestion was to increase funding and resources for these services.

Waiver Improvements:

Jeff provided an update on efforts to enhance the (I) waiver, aiming for implementation by July 1, 2025.

Private Partnerships & Technology:

While there are some limitations, efforts are underway to secure more funding, add waiver slots, and strengthen waiver operations.

Enhance Workforce Training:

Chair Jeff White emphasized the importance of expanding workforce training.

SETP Staff Expansion:

The Supported Employment Training Project (SETP) is growing, with Katie Wolf Whaley playing a key role.

Quality Assistance at DDID:

Efforts are being made to improve quality assistance at DDID.

Training Improvements:

While formal credentialing is not yet available, SETP is working to enhance customized employment training.

New Trainer:

Zac Sappenfield, a new SETP training facilitator, has relevant certifications and experience in customized employment.

Upcoming Project NEON Meeting:

Katie Wolf Whaley will attend a meeting on January 23, 2025, with Karen Lee to discuss customized employment.

Online Training Development:

Continuing the collaboration with Trisha Parkins -Jones from Utah could create an alternative to the current full Mark Gold and Associates certification.

Enhance Workforce Outreach:

Chair, Jeff White led a conversation on expanding employer outreach efforts.

Ongoing Initiatives:

He acknowledged the work of the Employer Education and Engagement Committee and the Advocacy and Education Committee.

FAQ Document:

A new FAQ document was created to ask employers if they would consider hiring individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Encouraging Employer Engagement:

It was noted that simply asking this question, as UPS did, could prompt employers to consider hiring individuals with disabilities.

Building Business Networks:

Todd Coffey suggested using Greater Louisville Inc. and local Chambers of Commerce to connect with more companies.

Easy Access to Resources:

Katie Wolf Whaley emphasized the need to make employer resources easily accessible.

Strategic Plan Inclusion:

Jeff White mentioned that the DDID strategic plan includes hiring individuals with disabilities.

Leverage Technology:

- Chair, Jeff White began the focuses on the difficulties in connecting individuals with disabilities to employment opportunities and explores potential solutions.
- He addressed the crucial question raised by Katie 'how to find individuals with disabilities who want to work'?
- Jeff suggested leveraging technology like online job portals and virtual training programs, acknowledging limitations in developing such platforms in-house.
- An alternative could include creating a system to directly connect job seekers with employers.

Strengthen Community Collaboration:

Chair, Jeff White stressed the need for better cooperation with state agencies and improving services in underserved areas.

Employment Funding Issues:

Discussed difficulties in using Medicaid and OVR funds due to a lack of service providers.

Proposed Solution:

Suggested using waiver funding when OVR services are unavailable, in a particular area even though the consumer may be eligible to receive them.

Provider Expansion:

Sought feedback from Melanie Lyberger on encouraging providers to work in underserved areas.

Using Person Directed Services (PDS):

Discussed PDS as an option when no other services are available but raised concerns about quality and oversight.

Expand Service Offerings:

The conversation shifted to the broader issue of quality control and oversight.

Expanding PDS Services:

Melanie suggested a mentoring program to support individuals using PDS.

Oversight Concerns:

Jeff White and Lisa Carrico questioned whether developing PDS services was worthwhile compared to expanding CRPs.

Balancing Demand & Quality:

Acknowledged some individuals want PDS for employment, but quality oversight remains a concern.

Future Steps:

DAIL involvement will be necessary to finalize decisions on PDS and CRP expansion.

Access for State Guardianship Individuals:

Jeff White emphasized the need for better resources and outreach efforts to support individuals under State Guardianship.

Advocate for Policy Change:

Chair, Jeff White discussed ongoing opportunities for policy change.

- Opportunity to do more with the 14(c) on a Federal Level.
- APSE advocacy efforts to provide input to decision makers to the 14(c) issue.
- He said 14(c) Certificates noted minimal impact in Kentucky due to existing salary structures since Covid.
- Movement on waiver regulations to ensure it is more attuned to Employment First.
- He stated he hopes to use NEON hours to assist individuals who are at the high end of eligibility spectrum that may need assistance to maintain eligibility of Medicaid through a restructuring of the Medicaid Buy-in.

Promote Awareness:

Chair, Jeff White emphasized the Advocacy and Education's committee's role in raising awareness and utilizing success stories to showcase the capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Monitor and Evaluate Programs:

Chair, Jeff White emphasized the need for improved data collection systems to track the success of employment programs.

Challenges in Data Accuracy:

Katie Wolf Whaley noted issues with overlapping systems and different definitions of employment services.

Underreporting Issues:

Jeff highlighted gaps in reporting, where actual job placements were higher than recorded data.

Better Data Sharing:

Suggested improving OVR and waiver program data sharing to track employment outcomes more accurately.

Exploring New Data Methods:

Proposed contacting KY/Stats regarding web platforms to improve data collection.

Employer Feedback Loops:

Amanda Hutchison stressed the need for actionable feedback, not just surface-level responses.

Right Metrics for Tracking:

Katie Wolf Whaley called for better data collection beyond general census numbers.

Strategic Planning for Data Systems:

Jeff White recommended careful planning before investing in a statewide data system.

Using Existing VR Data:

Todd Coffey suggested leveraging VR data on candidates, employment status, and provider availability.

Data Challenges & Solutions:

Jeff White commented that reformatting OVR and Medicaid data with expert help.

Identifying Job Seekers:

Todd Coffey emphasized the need to track the progress of the 15,000-17,000 job-seeking candidates statewide.

Starting with Key Data:

Lisa Carrico suggested focusing on supported employment data and waiting lists first.

Defining Data Needs:

Katie Wolf Whaley stressed aligning data collection with employment metrics.

Data Collection Support:

Nanci Howard offered to obtain needed data if given a list of specific questions.

Next Steps:

Todd Coffey will help Jeff White formulate the right questions to guide data collection efforts.

Employment First Council's Advocacy & Ed. Nanci Howard, OVR Administrator Committee – FAQ Document Provider Section Review:

KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard stated that the Council's Advocacy and Education Committee developed a top five FAQ document based on input from self-advocates with disabilities and service providers. A [Google Doc](#) shared via email, is open for committee review and for feedback. Nanci explained how the document was created during the January 10th, 2025, full council meeting and shared the next steps. These include getting approval from the full council and then presenting it through cabinet communications. The goal is to create a document branded under "Employment First". She encouraged anyone with questions or suggestions to reach out to her or Amanda Owen, the committee chair.

2025 Annual Report Recommendations:

KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard, stated that she will maintain a running list of recommendations from various committees throughout the year and standing agenda item will be added to track progress toward the annual report's goals. Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, suggested highlighting the Support and Employment Training Project's hiring of four new full-time staff members to provide technical assistance to providers across the Commonwealth state. Katie also recommended including the Advocacy and Education Committee, Amanda Owen's presentation on the role of providers and Employment First in the annual report, potentially as a collaborative effort from the committee.

Public Comments:

No Public Comment addressed.

Adjournment

Chair, Jeff White and Administrator, Nanci Howard thanked everyone for their contributions and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting:

Date: April 17, 2025

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Administrator: Nanci Howard

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Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes
April 8th, 2025
2:00pm – 3:00pm
Zoom

Members Present:

Jeff White, Katie Wolf Whaley, Shelly Durbin, Amanda Hutchison, Zac Sappenfield, Annette Jett, Lisa Carrico, Stephanie Miller, Melissa Marvel, and Ron O'Hair.

Staff Present:

Nanci Howard KYOVR Administrator and Anu Kumari, KYOVR Administrative Specialist Senior.

Members Absent:

Staci Cain, Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, Lori Norton, Cathy Anderson, Melanie Lybarger, and Todd Coffey

Welcome:

Chair, Jeff White welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was reviewed by all participants.

Impact of New Rate Structure

Since the implementation of the new KYOVR rate structure on October 1, 2024, the agency has seen an influx of around 20 provider applicants.

The Supported Employment Training Project (SETP) reported a few new agencies, both waiver and non-waiver, that have completed training program.

It was identified there is a lengthy certification process to provide waiver services that delays impact of efforts to expand provider capacity.

An observation was made that there has been a general increase in individuals returning to or seeking employment services, often as a means of supplementing income due to reduced work hours or job losses in other sectors, such as the retail industry.

Service requests involving individuals looking for second jobs to compensate for decrease in primary employment hours were identified as a potential underestimated strain on provider capacity.

It was reported there are seasonal employment opportunities at Churchill Downs, which had offered approximately 8–10 part-time food service positions with the potential to lead to longer-term employment.

Order of Selection

Staff provided a brief overview of “Order of Selection”, updated committee members on the reasoning for its future implementation, and was directed to the agency [website](#) for more information.

Committee members discussed the impact of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation’s Order of Selection (OOS).

There was a call for clarity regarding eligibility categories and the potential impact on their agency’s ability to onboard new providers.

Clarification was provided regarding waiver funding and vocational rehabilitation funding:

It was mentioned that if VR funding was unavailable, providers who are certified to provide waiver services could still have those services funded through the waiver even if the individual was on a vocational rehabilitation waitlist.

Additionally, those who qualify for state general funds support through the regional comprehensive care centers and the Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities may access support with documentation of the unavailability of vocational rehabilitation funding.

Last, the need to explore alternative sources of funding for those lacking other options was discussed:

Among the identified possibilities were:

- The use of funds deposited in Able accounts; and,
- In some cases, the use of supported employment expense as an impairment-related work expense or a subsidy/special condition.

There needs to be additional exploration of this topic.

1. Would there be a way for an emergency, expedited process to speed individuals through from Vocational Rehabilitation into Medicaid waiver status?
 - a. A process to accomplish this task is in place as part of our standard practice.
 - i. Before individuals can access the following sources of funding a coordination of employment service funding form must be submitted, and a determination of the appropriate funding stream must be made:
 1. Supports for Community Living Waiver,
 2. Michelle P Waiver,
 3. Acquired Brain Injury Waiver – Acute,
 4. Acquired Brain Injury Waiver- Long-term Care,
 5. State General Funds,
 6. The proposed RISE Initiative.
 - b. The process is designed for rapid response and includes the identification and integration of wrap-around services designed to improve the likelihood of a successful employment outcome.
2. From a provider level, could there be an expedited route to become a Medicaid provider if you are already a Vocational Rehabilitation provider?
 - a. If the agency is already certified to supply other waiver services, Supported Employment may be added to the provider's service menu in a fairly rapid span of time by:
 - i. The agency working with their DDID Quality Assistant to revise their policies and procedures to include Supported Employment, and
 - ii. Ensuring staff providing supported employment services meet both the general human resources and training requirements, as well as successfully completing the training conducted by the Supported Employment Training Project at UK-HDI.
 - b. If the agency does not hold certification to provide waiver services it's leadership must complete a lengthier process that includes:
 - i. Successful implementation of all the general requirements necessary to obtain waiver certification, and
 - ii. Successful completion of the training conducted by the Supported Employment Training Project at UK-HDI.
3. In the interim, can providers still provide Pre-ETS and Pre-Voc. Services?
 - a. Providers can continue to provide services through pre-ETS, as they are not included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Order of Selection does not apply to assessments or other services that are not part of the IPE.

It was clarified that, while an imbalance between available funding and the demand for services is part of the reason for Order of Selection, in this case the definitions of Category 1 and Category 2 both containing person's having the "most significant disability" also creates a discrepancy that must be resolved in order to proceed.

Concerns were heard regarding the impact Order of Selection would have on the provider community as well as Kentuckians with disabilities. It was stressed plans could still be development, only not signed, and referrals made until the waitlists are opened up as funding becomes available. There is no current timeframe for reconciliation of the definition discrepancy.

It was also clarified that CRP's can certainly still apply to become a vendor during the Order of Selection process.

Supported Employment Training Project (SETP) Expansion

It was reported that SETP staff are in the process of gathering information to assist provider agencies with new and revised Supported Employment processes/policies being developed. It was also reported there have been one-on-one conversations between providers and SETP staff covering a wide array of topics. Questions, such as, "can people be approved to be vendors during this period of Order of Selection, even if they cannot become authorized until after Order of Selection is done?". A webinar series from SETP staff, Zachery Sappenfield, offers education regarding the "nuts and bolts" of Supported Employment.

It was announced that SETP staff have started a book club and encouraged others to join.

Project NEON and Medicaid Buy-In

A meeting with Subject Matter Experts was held prior to the Provider Capacity meeting regarding Kentucky's Medicaid Buy-In. The Medicaid buy-in aims to extend coverage to individuals earning above the standard eligibility threshold through premium payments.

2025 Annual Report Recommendations

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Nanci Howard, requested input on recommendations to be included in the 2025 Annual Report. The following was referenced:

- Northeast Kentucky Workforce Development Conference in Morehead, KY.
 - Featured participation from members of the Human Development Institute (HDI) and focused on enhancing provider services for businesses. The conference highlighted successful collaborations between employers and service providers as a model for improving employment outcomes.

Public Comments:

No Public Comment addressed.

Adjournment:

Chair, Jeff White thanked everyone for their contributions and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting:

Date: July 8th, 2025

Time: 2:00pm to 3:00pm

Administrator: Nanci Howard

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Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes
July 8th, 2025
2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)

Attendees:

Jeff White, Katie Wolf Whaley, Shelly Durbin, Amanda Hutchison, Zac Sappenfield, Annette Jett, Lisa Carrico, Stephanie Miller, Melissa Marvel, Cathy Anderson, Amanda Owen, Todd Coffey and Ron O'Hair.

Staff Attendees:

Nanci Howard, Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, and Anu Kumari Kentucky, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrative Specialist Senior.

Members Absent:

Staci Cain, Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, and Lori Norton.

Guests Present:

David Wheeler, BH/DID Program Manager at the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

Welcome:

Employment First Committee Chair, Jeff White welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was reviewed by all participants.

Exploration of Potential Funding Sources and Training

David Wheeler, BH/DID Program Manager at the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, provided an overview of State General Funds in response to ongoing concerns about limited provider funding.

He explained that State General Funds are *not* an entitlement program or an open-access funding source. Instead, these funds serve as a limited “personal development fund” Comprehensive Care Centers can invest in persons having no alternative funding options. Utilization of State General Funds carries the expectation that the investment will increase the individual independence and reduce future needs for assistance.

Mr. Wheeler noted that these funds are allocated to community mental health centers statewide to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities following high school. Covered services include - Case management / Day training / adult workshops / Supported employment / Personal assistance / Crisis prevention and intervention / Access and Referral.

Mr. Wheeler concluded by opening the floor for questions and discussion. The committee proceeded to discuss additional concerns and considerations related to funding access and sustainability.

Discussion of Current Path for Initiation of Services

It was discussed the importance of providers identifying as employment service providers and diversifying funding sources to ensure sustainability. To support this effort, a future webinar or training was proposed to help providers explore and understand alternative funding opportunities. Potential funding sources highlights:

Becoming an Office of Vocational Rehabilitation vendor

- Offer services such as Supported Employment, Customized Employment, or Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and direct on-the-job training programs
- Accessing programs through America’s Job Centers’ under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), such as on-the-job training or wage subsidies.

Obtain certification as a 1915(C)–waiver provider

An overview was provided of Kentucky’s four 1915(c) waivers that include supported employment services, with emphasis on the Michelle P. and SCL waivers as the most widely used. Limited funding has led to increased waiver-based requests for employment services. Case managers are more

familiar with waiver processes, making it easier and faster to initiate services through waivers. Providers were encouraged to view waivers as a strategic funding option. It was also confirmed that OVR is still accepting vendor applications."

Become a RISE provider (1915(I) waiver)

An overview was shared on Kentucky's RISE initiative, a 1915(I) Medicaid waiver that supports individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders. The RISE waiver focuses on Recovery, Independence, Support, and Engagement, aiming to prevent homelessness and institutionalization through community-based supports.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Individuals age 18 or older
- Enrolled in Kentucky Medicaid
- Primary diagnosis of serious mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorder
- Demonstrated functional impairments requiring assistance in two or more key areas

iRISE Services Include:

- Supervised residential care
- In-home independent living support
- Housing support
- Supported employment (IPS model)
- Supported education
- Transportation (limited to services identified in the individual's RISE plan of care)
- Medication management
- Assistive technology
- Planned respite
- Case management

RISE provides extended support for employment services through the IPS (Individual Placement and Support) model, addressing a service gap for individuals with behavioral health needs.

Provider Enrollment:

- RISE provider enrollment began on July 1st.2025
- Providers requires waiver certification process, similar to SCL procedures
- Participant enrollment is anticipated to begin in late 2024

A one-page information sheet with a link to full enrollment instructions will be shared following the meeting

Become an employment network (Ticket to Work)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) participates in the Ticket to Work program and serves as an employment provider. This program offers payments beyond typical VR services, allowing providers to support individuals after funding ends. Donna Osborne coordinates this effort. While there are several employment networks operating within Kentucky, many appear to conduct services online or from outside the state. Although recruitment of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) as employment networks has been limited due to the program's complexity, it was suggested Ticket to Work remains a valuable alternative funding source for employment service providers.

Develop a relationship with local school districts

- Engage in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
- Provide Supported or Customized Employment services to transition-age youth.
- Progress with *Project SEARCH* and other school-to-work partnerships was noted as additional avenues for collaboration and funding for supported employment and employment service agencies.

Apply for funding through Special Ad Valorem

It was discussed the existence of '*Special Ad Valore Tax Districts*' in Kentucky, specifically in northern counties Boone, Kenton, and Campbell.

- Kentucky statutes (KRS) 210.480 authorize counties or regions to impose a special ad valorem tax of up to \$0.04 per \$100 of assessed value to support mental health or intellectual disability services, if local funding is insufficient.
- This tax district was established through efforts led by providers, who successfully placed it on the ballot. It was noted supporting such initiatives could be beneficial if pursued by local groups.

Seek funding through grants and philanthropy

It was discussed that funding has previously been secured through organizations such as United Way / Private Foundations / Corporate Sponsorship. Program-specific sponsorships as a promising opportunity for providers to diversify their funding streams.

Develop a fee schedule for Private Pay services

Discussion was held regarding establishing fee schedules for private pay services with the following points

- Ensure services are not advertised at a lower rate than the current "Medicaid" rate.

- Private pay services can be supplemented with other private funds making the actual out-of-pocket expense for families lower than the Medicaid rate.
- For some parents of a young adult ineligible for publicly funded services, private pay could be very attractive.
- Employment Service expenditures do meet the definition of a qualified Able Account expenditure.

Seek direct payment from employers

- Establish a reputation as a reliable source of labor in a tight employment market it may well be worth the employer's investment.
- Such investments may qualify as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The expense could be offset by existing tax incentives.
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Disabled Access Credit
- Barrier Removal Tax Deduction (in specific applicable cases)

Initiate your own fund development opportunities

- Conduct direct appeal to individuals.
- Direct appeal to clubs and organizations.
- Establish giving clubs or donor circles tied to contribution levels.
- Promote planned Giving Instruments.
- Organize Special Events.

Discussion regarding Medicaid Buy-In

It was discussed the challenges with Kentucky's Medicaid Buy-In program were highlighted, noting it was non-functional at the time. Efforts are underway to gather information and assistance from Tennessee and other states to explore alternative approaches.

Recap of project NEON Work

An update was provided regarding the Project NEON initiative, noted that efforts are currently underway.

Additional Discussion:

It was suggested that the Employment First Council host a webinar to assist agencies in exploring alternative fundraising strategies. Representatives from Down Syndrome Louisville and Zoom Group offered to share their insights and experiences. The webinar would showcase examples from both large and small agencies, highlighting diverse fundraising approaches. Additionally, a recent CRPs quarterly bulletin featuring ideas such as online challenges and auctions was offered to the committee for further consideration.

2025 Annual Report Recommendations

It was recommended to highlight the Employment First Council's initiative to develop a webinar or training designed to help agencies understand and establish alternative funding sources.

Action Items

- The Provider Capacity Committee will research the development of training regarding how to access alternative funding sources.
- KYOVR Administrator Nanci Howard will coordinate and reschedule the next committee meeting.

Public Comment:

No public comment addressed.

Adjournment:

Chair, Jeff White thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

- Date: September 09th, 2025
- Time: 2:00pm to 3:00pm (EST)

Nanci Howard
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Provider Capacity Committee

Minutes
September 9th, 2025
2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)

Attendees:

Jeff White, Zac Sappenfield, Lisa Carrico, Stephanie Miller, Cathy Anderson, Amanda Owen, Todd Coffey, and Ron O'Hair.

Staff Attendees:

Nanci Howard, Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, and Anu Kumari, Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Administrative Specialist Senior.

Members Absent:

Staci Cain, Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, Annette Jett, Katie Wolf Whaley, Shelly Durbin, Melissa Marvel, Todd Coffey, Amanda Hutchison, and Lori Norton.

Welcome:

Employment First Committee Chair, Jeff White welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was reviewed by all participants.

Exploration of Potential Funding Sources and Training:

Employment First Committee Chair Jeff White emphasized the need to improve provider awareness of available funding for employment services. Training geared towards providers was discussed among the committee and specifics of the training are still in review. The webinar may be offered as a single webinar or a series of two to three sessions with earliest timeframe projected for October 2025 or November 2025, pending accessibility.

All webinars will be recorded and made available on the Employment First page for later viewing.

Key Highlights:

Becoming an Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Vendor-CRP Branch, OVR

The Committee noted the need to gather more information on supported employment operations both through providers and directly through Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR), along with the involvement of WIOA's America's Job Centers Program. Ron O'Hair will assist in collecting this information for a provider training series.

Obtain Certificate as a 1915 (C) Wavier Provider

Lisa Elstun, from the Department of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities' (DDID) Provider Development Team, has agreed to prepare materials and present on how to become a 1915(c) certified waiver provider. Her presentation will cover the full certification process, including guidance for providers already certified under the waiver on adding supported employment if not currently approved.

Seeking Funding through State General Funds

It was highlighted that David Wheeler provided an overview at the last committee meeting, and either he or a regional liaison from the DDID Community Supports Team will participate in the webinar to cover this topic in greater detail.

Become a I-RISE Provider

It was noted that becoming an I-RISE employment provider requires Individual Placement Supports (IPS) certification, though funding for new IPS providers

may be limited. Other I-RISE services under the I Waiver remain available to support employment, and providers are prepared to deliver them. A representative from the I-RISE team, coordinated through the Department for Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities – Behavioral Health, will present on these services during the webinar.

Become an employment network (Ticket to Work)

Donna Osburn, KYOVR Staff, has agreed to provide information and participate in developing partnerships with local school districts, including projects and related initiatives. Contact has also been made with Veronica Dale, also KYOVR staff, to contribute information as well.

Develop a relationship with local school districts

- a) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- b) Supported/Customized employment
- c) Project search or other school-to-work partnership

Applying for funding through Special AD Valorem (Mental Health/ intellectual disabilities) Tax Districts.

The Committee is exploring funding through special ad valorem tax districts in Kenton, Campbell, and Boone Counties. These districts levy taxes to support services for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Seek funding through grants and philanthropy- United Way/Private Foundation/Corporate Sponsorship

The Committee is currently exploring potential funding opportunities through Ransom Philanthropy. While specific contacts have not yet been identified, the Committee is aware of organizations in Northern Kentucky that are receiving significant support from United Way and will be reaching out to them for guidance and potential connections.

The Committee encourages members to share any additional leads or connections that may support this effort.

Develop a fee schedule for private pay service

It was highlighted that Down Syndrome Louisville has experience supporting families whose members are not on Medicaid but still need long-term or monitored supports. They have indicated this approach is feasible.

Utilizing Able Account to fund employment Services

The Committee is exploring the use of ABLE accounts to fund employment services, an approach that has been successful in other states. ABLE accounts allow families to contribute up to \$19,000 annually for eligible expenses, including supported employment. If an agency has a private pay fee schedule, services could be funded directly through these accounts.

Building strong Employer Relationship

The Committee is focusing on building stronger employer relationships. In some states, employers directly pay providers to recruit talent on their behalf. Kitty Zachary with Coalition Forward will share information on employer partnerships and Zoom Group will provide examples of their work with UPS, among others.

Initiate your own fund development opportunity

The Committee is exploring opportunities for organizations to establish their own funding development programs. Down Syndrome Louisville provides a strong model through giving campaigns, and Amanda Owen, Advocacy and Education Committee Chair and Founder/Executive Director of Puzzle Pieces, will be invited to share her expertise in hosting successful special events.

Committee Question and Answer

Are we still under Order of Selection?

Answer: Yes.

How is this process expected to proceed?

Answer: It will be evaluated at the end of October or the beginning of November after the close of the federal fiscal year. At that point, the agency will determine whether individuals can begin being pulled from the waiting list.

Did RSA accept the priority definitions?

Answer: Yes, RSA has accepted the priority definitions.

How many people are currently on the waiting list?

As of August 27, 2025, there were approximately 2,710 individuals on the waiting list.

Will services at will be available soon?

No. Services will not be available freely for some time. The rate of pulling from the waitlist will depend on the fiscal picture at the end of October/November.

What should providers share with families if misinformation is being circulated?

Answer: The official source is the agency's [website](#). Any information shared must align with what is published there.

Can Pre-ETS still be accessed while under order of selection?

Answer: Yes. Pre-ETS can be provided under "potentially eligible" status without requiring a full eligibility determination or plan.

If students have waiver funding, can they still access supported employment?

Answer: Yes. Waiver funding can be used immediately for supported employment if the person is a waiver member and ready to pursue employment. Families often drive the decision of readiness, particularly for minors.

Memorandum of Understanding for Supported Employment

Committee Chair, Jeff White, mentioned that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in the works between the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the Department of Medicaid Services (DMS), and the Division of Adult Guardianship within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

As funds are available, time-limited Supported Employment services can be provided, including person-centered job selection, under the following conditions:

Person-centered Job Selection when:

- It is documented that the services are unavailable utilizing OVR funding; or
- Until the Participant makes a timely application for OVR Services and is determined to be eligible

Job Development, when:

- It is documented that the services are unavailable utilizing OVR funding.
- Until the participant makes a timely application for OVR Services and an individual plan for employment is developed.

Outcome Measurement and Career Advancement

- Agencies will jointly track and report
- Number of individuals achieving Competitive Integrated Employment
- Duration of employment sustained
- Use and continuity of services
- Engage in annual review and quality improvement activities.

Discussion regarding Medicaid Buy-In

Discussion was held regarding Kentucky's Medicaid Buy-In program and barriers related to Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level and Medicaid eligibility.

Efforts are ongoing to pursue structural changes to address these limitations.

Recap of Project NEON work

It was discussed that, due to time constraints, the Project NEON initiative could not be completed this year despite initial planning and data gathering with subject matter expert Michael Dalto. If the initiative continues next year, efforts will need to focus on ensuring the Medicaid Buy-In is properly structured and recognized as a qualifying form of Medicaid for waiver participation. Significant progress has been made in the area of Customized Employment, with KYOVR staff, council members, and subject matter experts from Project NEON reporting positive outcomes.

2025 Annual Report Recommendations

KYOVR Administrator Nanci Howard provided an overview of ongoing Annual Report activities, noting that work is actively underway. She stated that a draft will be presented to the Employment First Executive Committee this Friday, with the full Council expected to receive a draft for review in October. Ms. Howard emphasized that the report would highlight the activities and contributions of all committee members and expressed her appreciation for their continued support in its preparation.

Additional Discussion:

Employment First Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, shared with committee members a [link](#) to the "*Modifications to the Regulations Implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended; Extension of Comment Period*". The public comment period will conclude on September 17, 2025."

Public Comment:

No public comment addressed.

Adjournment:

Chair Jeff White thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: November 11, 2025

Time: 2:00pm to 3:00pm (EST)

Administrator: Nanci Howard

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Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

Employment First Council Provider Capacity Committee Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2025
2:00pm – 3:00pm (EST)
Zoom
Meeting ID: 828 8151 1983

Members Present

Committee Chair, Jeff White, Zac Sappenfield, Lisa Carrico, Cathy Anderson, and Amanda Hutchinson

Members Absent

Cora McNabb, Leslie Hoffmann, Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, Shelly Durbin, Melissa Marvel, Lori Norton, and Stephanie Miller

Staff Present

Ron O’Hair, Nanci Howard, and Anu Kumari

Staff Absent

None

Guest(s) Present

None

Welcome | Agenda Review

Employment First Committee Chair Jeff White welcomed attendees. The agenda was reviewed and acknowledged by all participants.

Update on Annual Report

The annual report has been submitted and is progressing through the review and approval process.

Update on Potential Funding Sources Webinars

The committee discussed the development of a two-part webinar series intended to support providers in expanding their funding base.

Purpose of the Webinars

To educate providers on the existence of practical, actionable ways to expand employment service revenue across multiple funding sources in an effort to inform and provide a path to obtain additional information.

Webinar, Part One: Expanding Service Fee Income

The committee reviewed multiple strategies for enhancing service-related revenue.

Becoming an Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Vendor

- To educate providers on the OVR vendor approval process as well as services beyond traditional supported employment that could provide increased income potential.

Obtaining Certification as a Waiver Provider

- To assist providers with the waiver certification process and ensure they understand the path to waiver certification as well as the other potential income producing opportunities certification might make available.

Utilizing State General Funds

- To educate providers how to pursue the use of state general funds as a source of employment service funding for those with no other options.

Supporting Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Services

- To educate providers on the use of alternative funding streams to support IPS services, potentially including i-RISE.

Ticket to Work Revenue

- Highlight the availability of Ticket to Work milestones that remain after the OVR service delivery mandate has been met and services closed; and providing basic information on how to access those milestone payments.

Building Relationships with Local School Districts

- Veronica Dale will present information regarding potential opportunities to partner with school districts to enhance early employment exposure and improve transition outcomes for youth.

Developing Private-Pay Fee Schedules

- A discussion of the opportunity to establish and promote private-pay models to support individuals not having access to alternative funding sources, in a manner that does not violate Medicaid requirements.

Use of ABLE/STABLE Accounts

- Carolyn Wheeler will present information regarding how ABLE funds may be used legitimately to pay for employment supports; and lead a discussion on the role provider agencies/CRP's could play in sharing appropriate information with consumers and their families.

Webinar, Part Two: Expanding Income through Fund Development Strategies

A second webinar will address broader fund development strategies for organizations seeking to expand philanthropic revenue.

Potential Topics include:

- Community fundraising events.
- Recurring donation programs.
- Working with private foundations.
- Grant-writing approaches and capacity development.
- Long-term planned giving (wills and/or trusts).
- Consideration that nonprofit status may be required for some activities.

Participation for part two may be a smaller segment.

Webinar Target Duration:

- Part One: approximately 1½ hours
- Part Two: likely shorter, depending on content and speakers

Communications and Approval Process:

The Administrator will consult with the OVR Leadership:

- Confirm the correct and approved PowerPoint template for the webinars

- Verify the process for submitting materials for approval

Our goal is to work with segment presenters and the Provider Capacity Committee to finalize the content of the slide deck for the Part I webinar, and identify an appropriate date for the event, by early December.

Upcoming Waiver Employment Survey

To establish a baseline in preparation for potential participation in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a statewide provider employment survey is proposed.

Key Data Points to Be Collected:

- Consumer initials
- Waiver type
- Work status:
 - *Not interested in work.*
 - *Wants to work.*
 - *Receiving supported employment to find a job.*
- Average weekly hours and wages will be collected across four categories:
 - *Workshop/day training (piece-rate converted to estimated hourly rate).*
 - *Group or enclave work.*
 - *Employment without funded employment supports.*
 - *Supported employment through either (OVR/waiver-funded).*

A working age definition of 14 to 67 was proposed, aligning with Kentucky labor law and Social Security criteria.

SELN Membership Discussion

An overview of DDID/Behavioral Health's interest in pursuing membership in SELN was discussed.

Key Points:

- SELN is a national initiative under the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services; approximately 28 states participate.
- Benefits of membership include:
 - A standardized national data collection protocol.
 - Access to cross-state employment comparisons.

- Technical assistance and shared strategies to improve employment outcomes.
- Ability to include partner agencies such as:
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (HDI)
 - CCDD
 - Protection & Advocacy

Funding

DDID has identified potential funding to support Kentucky’s participation and partner agencies would not incur additional costs.

Kentucky Transportation Policy

The committee discussed Kentucky’s transportation policy:

- Saturday transportation for day training is eligible for Medicaid non-emergency transportation.
- Saturday transportation for supported employment is not eligible.

The committee agreed that this inconsistency should be addressed in the next statewide transportation planning cycle.

2026 Meeting Dates

The committee agreed to convene twice between quarterly Council meetings. The Council Administrator will schedule 2026 meeting dates on behalf of the committee.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Employment First Committee Chair Jeff White thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting

2026 dates TBD (to be determined)