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**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Jamie Link**  
Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet

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## Provider Capacity Committee Minutes

November 12, 2024  
9:00am – 10:00am (EST)  
Zoom  
Meeting ID: 857 3674 3195

### Members Present

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Chair, Jeff White, Annette Jett, and Katie Wolf Whaley

### Members Absent

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Staci Cain, Leslie Hoffman, Todd Coffey, Lori Norton, and Cora McNabb

### Staff Present

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Ron O'Hair, Nanci Howard, and Anu Kumari

### Staff Absent

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N/A

### Guest(s) Present

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Kaitlyn Paschall, Shelly Durbin, Rachel Lanter, Stephanie Miller, and Cathy Anderson

### Welcome

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

## Introductions

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Chair, Jeff White welcomed everyone, introductions were held. The agenda was reviewed by all participants. Administrator, Nanci Howard provided an introduction of the new employee, Anu Kumari, who will assist with Employment First Council duties and correspondence.

## Project NEON Update

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Administrator, Nanci Howard, provided an update on Project NEON (National Expansion on Employment Opportunities Network).

She announced that the Project NEON application was submitted on November 6th, 2024, and requested the full 300 hours for the third consecutive year. The decision for the Core States will be announced on November 27th, 2024.

Nanci explained some of the hours from Project NEON will be allocated to focus on a new project focused on benefits planning and training. Hours will also be used to support ongoing work in customized employment and related efforts led by Staff Support, Ron O'Hair, and his team.

## IPS Provider Capacity

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Committee Chair, Jeff White, provided an update on behalf of committee member, Lori Norton, regarding the IPS Provider Capacity Map. Mr. White shared the capacity map for IPS-supported employment and highlighted the differences between IPS and traditional/customized employment capacity. He noted that IPS is expanding statewide, though some areas still lack activity. He explained that IPS capacity is influenced by available funding for provider support and training. He invited Staff Support, Ron O'Hair, and Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley to add any additional insights regarding IPS. Mr. White discussed how IPS capacity can grow as providers become more proficient, enabling trainers to support more providers over time. He mentioned that the program initially began with comprehensive care centers and has since expanded to include various agencies. Additionally, Mr. White highlighted a grant-funded initiative in the community care sector that is testing the IPS model for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Staff Support, OVR CRP/SE Branch Manager, Ron O’Hair highlighted that funding is crucial for expanding IPS capacity, as it directly affects the ability to hire staff for technical support. He notes that traditional supported employment has significantly more providers than IPS, making it challenging to provide the same level of support. Mr. O’Hair mentioned they are looking to adding another consultant position within VR to enhance support.

Council Chair, Katie wolf Whaley explained that IPS is an evidence-based model with national standards, while traditional supported employment lacks the same fidelity scale and technical support. She shared there will be additional staff to assist with the Supported Employment Training Project and that they plan to begin on November 13th and November 18th.

Jeff White mentioned that Medicaid is developing a 1915 (I) waiver, which will provide ongoing funding for IPS services, including extended services and supported education.

## **Updated Supported Employment Map Discussion**

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Chair, Jeff White, switched to the provider capacity map for traditional and customized supported employment, noting that it looks similar to previous maps. He stated there are areas in red in the map that could indicate a lack of long-term support services through wavier. Mr. White discussed the need to utilize participant-directed services in areas with no provider activity, while also addressing the challenges of ensuring adequate support for individuals needing retraining. Mr. White observed that there is sufficient demand for services in populated areas, and he expects increasing capacity due to changes in the service fee structure. He mentioned that many waiver providers are certified to provide supported employment but are not OVR vendors. His plans to encourage certified providers to explore becoming OVR vendors.

Staff Support, Ron O' Hair confirmed that they are seeing an increase in inquiries from existing providers looking to expand their services. He shared that some providers are hiring more staff due to recent rate changes. Committee member, Kaitlyn Paschall, announced that they hired three more new SE Staff support.

Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley mentioned that there are agencies in the upcoming core training series that are new to her, indicating potential growth in the provider network. She shared a Link with committee members that can assist providers with the vendor process.

## **Staffing Expansion on SETP**

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Chair, Jeff White, highlighted the upcoming training sessions scheduled for December and January with their Quality Assurance (QA) staff. He informed the committee members the training will have a heavy focus on supported employment.

Discussion was held regarding billing issues for providers. Committee member, Annette Jett, stressed the importance of involving existing providers with additional support during the transition of the new billing system as well as recruit new providers. Ron O'Hair encouraged communication about challenges current providers face. Annette had a question regarding the training for QA's, specifically whether it will be Medicaid-based, indicating interest from non-Medicaid providers. Mr. White confirmed that they can accommodate such requests and encouraged further communication to arrange training sessions.

## **Review of Ongoing Activities**

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Mr. White shared news regarding the federal definition of competitive integrated employment in upcoming waiver regulations and mentioned that this definition has been developed in collaboration with the Employment First Council's Public Policy Committee and aims to standardize expectations across various programs. He also discussed changes to case management regulations and the emphasized on supported employment as a primary option for individuals seeking work. He also highlighted that the regulation would require providers of employment services to be OVR vendors. Shelly Durbin supported the idea, emphasizing the importance of encouraging agencies to become VR vendors.

The conversation shifted to the consolidation of supported employment regulations for different waivers. Shelly Durbin expressed her excitement about the changes being made and the potential for expanding services and mention ongoing efforts to create a policy workbook to streamline the certification process for supported employment services.

Chair, Jeff White, highlighted the importance of ensuring that wraparound services are available to support employment outcomes. He mentioned plans to collaborate with local vocational rehabilitation counselors to enhance understanding of available services.

Katie Wolf Whaley inquired about the timeline for implementing the new definitions and regulations, expressing concern about potential delays. Mr. White clarified that public comment periods will be necessary before finalizing changes, with a target implementation date of July 1st, 2025. He emphasized the importance of aligning regulations with waiver amendments to ensure a cohesive approach. Katie then provided Link which includes resources for individuals with disabilities seeking employment support.

## **Action Items**

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Chair, Jeff White will conduct training for QA staff on supported employment beginning in December and January.

Staff Support, Ron O' Hair will share information with Edward Monheimer and Jacob Estep in the KYOVR Program Policy and Support Branch to discuss the vendor application process.

Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley will collaborate with the Employment First Council to improve information dissemination regarding the vendor application process.

Kaitlyn Paschall will conduct a separate conversation with Chair, Jeff White regarding the "Missouri toolkit."

## **Adjournment**

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Chair, Jeff White and Administrator, Nanci Howard thanked everyone for their contributions and adjourned the meeting with reminder of next meeting date.

## Next Meeting Dates

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Provider Capacity Committee Meeting

December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

2:00 – 3:00pm EST