



**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Jamie Link**  
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

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## Public Policy Committee

Minutes  
March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
9:00am – 10:00am

### Attendees:

Katie Wolf Whaley, Council Chair, Jeff White, Amy Luttrell, and Justin Jeter

### Staff Attendees:

Nanci Howard, KYOVR Administrator, Holly Hendricks, KYOVR Division Director, Betty Whittaker, KYOVR Staff Assistant, and Anu Kumari, KYOVR Administrative Specialist Senior

### Members Absent:

Diana Merzweiler, Cora McNabb, Gretta Hylton/Proxy, Luv Tesha Robertson, and Allison Johnson

### Welcome/Announcement:

In the absence of Committee Chair, Diana Merzweiler Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Project NEON Update:

- KYOVR Staff Assistant, Betty Whittaker, shared a Project NEON update. She is working in partnership with nationally renowned Subject Matter

Experts (SMEs), Karen Lee, Tricia Jones-Parkin and Michale Dalto, to discuss the project's allotted 200 hours. Two milestones were highlighted.

## **Build capacity to provide Customized Employment in Kentucky:**

- Create a customized employment process.
- Review the current CIE process used by vocational rehabilitation.
- Create a Fidelity tools.
- Review current CIE training provided by Human Development Institute.
- Create a rate system to support customized employment services, training and outcomes.

## **Create the capacity to increase SSDI and SSI benefits support for OVR:**

- Customize and deliver basic training on SSDI and SSI work incentives for OVR.
- Research and advise OVR and other Kentucky partners on how to improve Kentucky's Medicaid Buy- In program. Work with national experts: Annette Shea – Expert on Buy-In programs. Hours provided by Robbie Barbieri – Tennessee-based non-profit advocate.
- Customize and deliver “Why on earth should I work my way off SSDI?”
- Customize and deliver training on Kentucky state specific benefits for benefits planners.

## **Coordination Efforts:**

- Ron O'Hair, KYOVR Supported Employment/CRP Branch Manager will work with Karen Lee and Tricia Jones Parkin.
- Donna Osburn, KYOVR Administrator will handle the SSI and SSDI work with Michael Dalto.

## **CIE Definition Legislation Update:**

- KYOVR Administrator, Nanci Howard provided an update on the competitive integrated employment definition. She reported there are no new developments or movement.

## Kentucky Department of Education

### Educator Training Modules/IEP Document Review

In the absence of KDE staff, Allison Johnson, Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley provide an update.

- **Transition Document** – Have been shared but have not yet been reviewed. There has been input around employment in the creation of the modules.
- **IEP Document Review:** A workgroup has been formed who include, Sara Tinker, Johnny Collett, Katie Wolf Whaley and Tal Curry to identify improvements for the IEP guidance document and association Transition documents.

### Benefit Cliff/Medicaid Discussion

- Council Member Amy Luttrell provided an update on Medicaid Buy-In & Legislative action. She stated that Michael Dalto is helping develop a proposal to improve Kentucky's Medicaid Buy-In program to encourage work participation.
- The proposal will be ready to share prior to the 2026 legislative session in Kentucky.
- KYOVR Staff Assistant, Betty Whittaker advised Amy Luttrell to collaborate with Robbie Barbieri. Council Member, Amy Luttrell responded that her colleague Adam Haley is already involved.
- Council Member, Jeff White raised concerns about how the Medicaid Buy-In might affect work requirements and also highlighted concerns about Medicaid and Vocational Rehabilitation funding due to the federal budget uncertainty.
- Council Member, Amy Luttrell agreed and requested to be notified of any urgent matters.

### Additional Discussion:

- Committee Member, Justin Jeter highlighted McGarvey's bill, the "Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Reporting Act," which aims to increase self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- He also mentioned Senate Bill 178 and Senate Bill 202, along with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation restructuring, Senate Bill 103 on OVR payments for CRPs, and changes to HB 9 and HB 695 on Managed Care Organizations (MCO).
- Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley shared with the committee that the Council's Executive Committee met to discuss a letter of support for a grant application. This grant, if awarded, will assist in improving the Vocational Rehabilitation Self-Employment process. Katie announced the Executive Committee approved the letter of support.

## 2025 Annual Report Recommendations:

- Council Chair Katie Wolf Whaley provided updates on the behalf of committee, noting that most of the recommendations are still in progress.

## Public Comment:

No public comment addressed.

## Adjournment:

Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting.

## Next Meeting:

Date: April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Time: 9:00 am to 10:00 am

Administrator: Nanci Howard

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