



Andy Beshear
Governor

Jamie Link
Education & Labor Cabinet Secretary

Public Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes

August 15, 2024

9:00am – 10:00am

Zoom

Meeting ID: 859 4707 5457

Passcode: 654000

Attendees:

Nanci Howard (Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator)
Diana Merzweiler (Chair)
Katie Wolf Whaley (Council Chair Member)
Jeff White (Council Member)
Holly Hendricks (Vocational Rehabilitation Director of Field Services)
Allison Johnson (Council Member)
Andrew Johnson (Council Member)
Anu Kumari (Administrative Specialist Senior)

Members Absent:

Cora McNabb (Council Member)
Luv Tesha Robertson (Additional Member)
Amy Luttrell (Council Member)
Leslie Hoffman (Council Member)
Gretta Hylton (Council Member)

Welcome

Administrator, Nanci Howard, welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a brief update on the Project NEON (National Expansion on Employment Opportunities Network).

Neon Project Update

- Administrator Nanci Howard provided an update on the Neon Project and mentioned the Employment First Council's third part of the webinar series, "Enhancing Employer Engagement", presented by Subject Matter Expert, Steve Blanks will occur the same day, August 15th, 2024, and will begin promptly at 10:00am Nanci Howard stated she would send the registration link to those interested if they have not already registered.
- Nanci Howard provided registration links and recordings for previous parts I and II are available on the Employment First section of the website.

Introductions/Announcements

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

Legislative Liaison Update

- Administrator, Nanci Howard announced the committee's recommendation to align the state definition of competitive integrated employment (CIE) with the federal definition is making progress. Ms. Howard stated that on August 6th, Jorden Jones, Executive Director of Legislative Services for the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, contacted her via email asking for a short explanation on the definition of CIE and why changes were requested. A brief two-sentence description was submitted and approved by the legislative liaison and KYOVR Executive Director Cora McNabb.
- Chair of the Council and committee member, Katie Wolf Whaley, asked to view the description.

Medicaid Policy Update

- Committee Member, Jeff White provided an update on Medicaid CMS policy changes and public comments on waiver application changes focusing on rate structure changes.
- Changes include definitions for competitive employment and restructuring regulations for adult day training and supported employment. SCL. And Michelle P. for carrier development and submitted regulation for supported employment.
- It was recommended by the committee that a draft letter be written to Medicaid expressing support for rate increases and to encourage them to finalize their rate setting.
- Council chair, Katie Wolf Whaley will draft a letter commending Medicaid for the rate increases and encouraging finalization.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Policy Review

- Discussion was held regarding VR policy review.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director, Holly Hendricks informed the committee that the agency consistently updates and reviews policy daily and agreed to provide regular updates on VR policies in future meetings.

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Policy Review

- Committee Member, Allison Johnson provided insight on the review process for special education guidance documents.
- The committee discussed the importance of focusing on the "Guidance for Individual Education Program (IEP) Transition Services" document.
- The committee discussed the importance of ensuring Employment First priorities are included in these guidance documents.
- The committee discussed about Transition 360 curriculum and how it can be relevant to Employment First.
- Allison Johnson stated she will share any proposed changes with the committee for review.
- Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley suggested reviewing Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) policies and guidance documents to identify any areas that may need changes to align with the Employment First mission.

State Advisory Council Update:

- Chair, Diana Merzweiler suggested inviting fellow council member, David Allgood, a member of the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Council, to provide an update on their work during a future full council meeting.

1915(I) Waiver Update:

- Committee Member, Jeff White provided an update on the 1915(I)-waiver application to CMS, which includes services for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders.
- The waiver aims to extend funding for IPS supported employment and supported education.
- The target implementation date is January 1, 2025, pending CMS approval.

2023 Policy Review

- The committee discussed other key policies that might be crucial for Employment First mission.
- Committee Member, Jeff White mentioned the need for changes in the payment structure for long-term employment supports.

Remote Service Delivery:

- Council Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley asked if there are any standards or guidelines for remote service delivery. In response to her question, committee member, Jeff White, mentioned the use of assistive technology devices and the need for safety considerations. The need for standardized expectations for remote service delivery was discussed.

Public Comments and Additional Discussion

- The committee emphasized the importance of collaboration and aligning efforts across different groups to facilitate faster change.
- The committee agreed to have the Executive Committee review the draft letter for Medicaid with a deadline of September 19, 2024.

Agenda Items for next meeting

- Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director, Holly Hendricks will provide regular updates on VR policy changes, and provide feedback on potential changes.
- Council chair, Katie Wolf Whaley will draft a letter commending Medicaid for the rate increases and encouraging finalization.
- Council Member, Jeff White will continue to update the committee on Medicaid policy changes and on the progression of the 1915(I) Medicaid waiver application and provide support as needed.
- Council Member, Allison Johnson will share information to KDE staff in regard to IEP guidance document changes.

Adjournment

- Chair, Diana Merzweiler thanked everyone for their contribution and adjourned the meeting with a reminder of the next meeting date.

Highlights

- Introduction of new staff member Anu Kumari.
- Progress update on resources project NEON and Medicaid policy.
- Detailed Kentucky Departments of Education discussion updates.
- Medicaid letter review with a deadline for Executive Committee review the draft.
- Next meeting scheduled for November 21, 2024.

Next Meeting:

- **Date: November 21, 2024**
- **Time: 9:00 am to 10:00 am**

Public Policy Committee Meeting

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500 Mero Street • 4th Floor NE • Frankfort, KY • 40601

Toll-Free: (800) 372 - 7172 • Direct: (502) 782-3421 • Email: Nanci.Howard@ky.gov

