



Kentucky Employment First Council

Three-Year Strategic Plan

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Strategic Planning Committee

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Background

An environmental scan was conducted June – July 2023 to inform Kentucky’s Employment First Council’s strategic planning process, which included four focus groups with employers, school counselors, service providers, and students. It also included ten executive interviews with various stakeholders, including representatives from state agencies.

In addition to the qualitative data collected, an online survey was sent to approximately 950 people and was open from June 23 through July 6, 2023. There was an overall response rate of approximately 12.5 percent, with a total of 120 individuals participating in the survey. The majority (50%) of respondents were vocational rehabilitation professionals, followed by service providers (30%).

Participants were asked about the current relevant landscape and trends impacting employment for individuals with disabilities. They were also asked about Kentucky’s strengths and weaknesses that support or prohibit employment and opportunities that should be explored for persons with disabilities.

The Employment First Council reviewed and analyzed the data from each of these sources during their July 14 meeting. The Strategic Planning Committee met twice in August and used the Council’s analysis and insights to develop a draft mission, vision, and goal statements. On September 9, the Council provided feedback on those draft statements to further guide the Committee’s work. Using that guidance, the Committee met three more times to develop the following final draft strategic plan.

Vision

The following draft vision statement describes the ultimate aspiration of the Employment First Council.

People with disabilities are valued and essential members of Kentucky's workforce.

Mission

SB 104 was reviewed and used as the springboard for the following draft mission statement. The intent of the statement is to broadly describe the purpose of the Employment First Council.

The Employment First Council serves to promote competitive integrated employment as the first and primary option for persons with disabilities to help meet the talent demands of Kentucky's workforce.

Core Values

Core values will drive the decisions, actions, and behaviors of the Council.

The Employment First Council:

- Promotes competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Prioritizes the needs of Kentucky's job-seekers with disabilities and employers.
- Encourages the collaboration of job-seekers with disabilities, employers, and all other stakeholders to create an inclusive workforce.
- Values data informed decision making.
- Recognizes that preparation for employment should begin early and career development is a lifelong activity.

Goal Statements

Goal 1: In order to reduce the employment gap for individuals with disabilities and address the talent needs of employers, we will foster and elevate local, regional, and state collaborations and coalitions of stakeholders.

Goal 2: In order to encourage competitive integrated employment for job seekers with disabilities and address the workforce needs of employers, we will collaborate with partners to find, develop, and make available resources that promote employment.

Goal 3: Because systems have historically segregated people with disabilities and, as such, created disincentives to providing competitive integrated employment, we will facilitate the alignment of policies and procedures by crucial agencies in a manner that reflects the priority of competitive integrated employment per KRS 151B.211.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies & Measures

Goal 1

Goal 1: In order to reduce the employment gap for individuals with disabilities and address the talent needs of employers, we will foster and elevate local, regional, and state collaborations and coalitions of stakeholders.

Objective 1.1: Research and identify viability of replicating the existing disability coalitions.

Strategy 1.1.1: Identify existing workforce collaborations and coalitions and what makes them successful. **(Year 1)**

Strategy 1.1.2: Identify a structure for potential coalitions to ensure employer engagement (e.g., invite larger and smaller employers) and how they can access resources. **(Year 1)**

Strategy 1.1.3: Create an implementation plan for supporting the development of additional disability coalitions. **(Year 2-3)**

Strategy 1.1.4: Encourage partners to begin tracking employment numbers for people with disabilities in a consistent manner and highlight their successes. **(Year 1)**

Measure: A decision regarding the viability of replicating the existing disability coalitions and the Council's role is made by 12/31/2024.

Objective 1.2: Build momentum that begins to create an expectation of collaborations through event-based education and networking opportunities.

Strategy 1.2.1: Identify target audiences and existing events they are already attending (e.g., local SHRM groups).

Strategy 1.2.2: Explore the best educational strategies for identified groups and the event (e.g., Lunch and Learn, Podcast) and measure impact.

Strategy 1.2.3: Gather data and present a recommendation to Kentucky RETAIN on possible expansion of the Inclusive Workforce Summit, such as regional levels and in combination with job fairs.

Strategy 1.2.4: Collect and analyze data through existing partnerships (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Innovation Board) on regional and local employer needs. **(Year 1-2)**

Strategy 1.2.5: Create and implement a tracking process regarding who Employment First information is distributed to, when it was shared, and key points/actions. **(Year 1)**

Measure: Once the baseline has been established, a 10% year over year increase in participation among new partners.

Goal 2

Goal 2: In order to encourage competitive integrated employment for job seekers with disabilities and address the workforce needs of employers, the Employment First Council will collaborate with partners to find, develop, and make available resources that promote employment.

Objective 2.1: Create an accessible information warehouse to make resources and information more readily available through the Employment First Council.

Strategy 2.1.1: Identify existing information/resources and gaps in what needs to be created.
(Year 1)

Strategy 2.1.2: Identify the best platform for a common portal to host the warehouse. **(Year 1)**

Strategy 2.1.3: Develop a strategy to ensure accessibility of information.

Strategy 2.1.4: Develop a strategy for maintaining and expanding all of the information in the warehouse.

Measure: An accessible information warehouse will be available to the public by December 31, 2026.

Objective 2.2: Develop outreach initiatives to promote the information warehouse.

Strategy 2.2.1: Promote methods for consistent, easy access to the warehouse (e.g., QR code).

Strategy 2.2.2: Identify opportunities for dissemination (e.g., Special Olympics, disability fairs, conferences, colleges/universities) and track where information has been sent.

Measure: An outreach plan will be developed in conjunction with the launch of the information warehouse.

Goal 3

Goal 3: Because systems have historically segregated people with disabilities and, as such, created disincentives to providing competitive integrated employment, facilitate the alignment of policies and procedures by crucial agencies in a manner that reflects the priority of competitive integrated employment per KRS 151B.211.

Objective 3.1: Develop and implement an ongoing process to identify policy misalignments including disincentives, barriers, and competing priorities.

Strategy 3.1.1: Identify key partner organizations who should participate in an internal process review. **(Year 1)**

Strategy 3.1.2: Refine the review process. **(Year 1)**

Strategy 3.1.3: Form collaborative agency work teams to review relevant policies and processes. **(Year 1-2)**

Strategy 3.1.4: Review relevant policies and processes within identified agencies. **(Year 2)**

Measure: All identified agencies have completed a policy review.

Objective 3.2: Evaluate data and make recommendations related to any identified policy misalignments including disincentives, barriers, and competing priorities.

Strategy 3.2.1: Assign the Policy Committee to evaluate the collected data. **(Year 2-3)**

Strategy 3.2.2: Policy Committee will draft recommendations for review by the full Council. **(Year 3)**

Measure 1: The Council's recommendations will be included in the Annual Report.

Measure 2: Updated policies and procedures that align with the Employment First legislation are implemented by the majority of identified key organizations by December 31, 2026.