



**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Jaime Link**  
Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary

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## **Transition Committee** **Minutes**

September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
10:00am – 11:00am  
Zoom  
Meeting ID: 871 9714 4658

**Members Present:** Chair, Jessica Beaven, Co-Chair, Frankie Huffman (joined meeting after minutes were approved), Diana Merzweiler, Tal Curry, and Johnny Callebs

**Members Absent:** Todd Coffey, Gretta Hylton, and Larry Taylor

**Staff Present:** Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Administrator, Nanci Howard, KYOVR Administrative Specialist, Pepper Caudill, KYOVR Transition Services Branch Manager, Veronica Dale, KYOVR Assistant Director of Field Services, Jonathan White

**Staff Absent: None**

**Guest(s) Present:** Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) Pre-ETS Coordinator, Audra Shutt, Katie Wolf Whaley, David Benson, Aleka Hawes (joined meeting at 10:20 am), Employment First Council Member, Annette Jett

### **Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review:**

Administrator, Nanci Howard welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded the committee that they would need to approve Minutes from the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 and June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meetings. She then turned the meeting over to Chair, Jessica Beaven. **Chair, Jessica Beaven again welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for a motion to approve the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, and June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, minutes. Member, Johnny Callebs made the motion to approve the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, and June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, minutes. Member, Tal Curry provided a second to the motion. A vote was taken, and Chair, Jessica Beaven, member, Diana Merzweiler, member, Tal Curry, and member, Johnny Callebs, were in favor. There was no opposition, therefore the motion passed unanimously.** Administrative Specialist, Pepper Caudill requested that members announce their first and last names, when speaking or making motions so that the minutes could accurately reflect who was speaking. Jessica Beaven confirmed with Pepper Caudill that there were no additional administrative tasks to be voted on and continued the meeting.

### **Chair Report:**

Chair, Jessica Beaven stated that there would be guest speakers from the Kentucky Career Center

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(KCC) that would provide useful information on their Transition process and requested that everyone give a brief introduction of themselves for the guests. Jessica Beaven shared a personal experience related to the successful transition process of her own employee and mentioned that she would be talking more about the upcoming Inclusive Workforce Event towards the end of the meeting. She then asked David Benson to share his experiences or knowledge with the group.

**Guest Speaker(s):**

KCC guest speaker, David Benson began by briefly explaining the day-to-day processes of the Kentucky Career Center and how it partners with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to assist consumers in securing employment. Chair, Jessica Beaven asked David if he could share any struggles, he has experienced in the transition process and he expressed that transportation issues and rural area matters are negative impactors in the process. David explained how his team evaluates consumers goals and interests to ensure they are placed in roles where they would be most successful. He also stated that his team works with the consumer to ensure they are informed throughout the process. Member, Johnny Calles began discussions of the lack of provider services throughout the state, especially in rural areas. David agreed that this is a problem and mentioned that this causes consumers to be placed on waiting lists in which they may become discouraged and runs the risk of overloading providers, resulting in burnout. Johnny asked if there was any idea of how many counties do not have providers and Staff Support, Veronica Dale stated that in her team's research, they found that approximately 18 counties do not currently have provider services. Guest and Employment First Council Member, Annette Jett began discussions of providers in David's area not being supported employment providers and asked where students are going after Pre-ETS services are finished. David stated that his team attempts to transition these students to CRP providers and job placement services. He says that his team focuses on working with the students before they transition out of high school, however if they miss that opportunity then the team will work with them later when they cycle back through the process. He stated the team's focus is to work with the students early so that they have a seamless transition from school to work. Veronica Dale gave a scenario of a transition student with a part time job, where supported employment has backed out and asked Annette to answer, what does the student do for the rest of the time and what happens to that student. Employment First Council Member, Anette Jett stated "there is a lot of big issues in transition... because it's not just around employment, [there are] a lot of different things that need to be in place to support families." She went on to express, "I think that is really important, but there are going to be a lot of [students] that do not even understand what plan status means at their junior year. They don't even know that. So, I don't think that that should be a barrier to them getting services prior to that if they are potentially eligible." To her point, Annette shared a personal example with the committee and explained the struggles she has seen from other families regarding transition. She explained there is a disconnect and said, "we're doing really good but not all the pieces are matching up...". Veronica Dale responded that she was looking for the employment component and inferred that Annette answered her question. There was further discussion amongst the group regarding adult day treatment for the students/consumers once they graduate and begin working but are on a reduced hour schedule. There is a wait list for these services that consists of approximately 12,000 consumers that do not have waivers or financial ability to self-pay. Member, Diana Merzweiler stated she would like to see the Council make recommendations to the legislators to make budget adjustments to allow the waiver resources to be available so that the wait lists are shorter. There was also discussion of consumers' misconception of how employment will impact their government benefit checks.

Chair, Jessica Beaven began discussions of a Transitional Toolkit that was created by the previous Council and requested that this committee review that document together and make updates and distribute that information to schools or similar organizations. Administrator, Nanci Howard gave a

brief historical overview of the Transition Toolkit and recommended that the committee use that as a starting point for their work. Jessica asked that Nanci share the Transition Toolkit with the committee members. Guest Collaborator, Audra Shutt stated that the Committee should aim to align the Toolkit language with the language used by schools to maintain consistency in translation and understanding of the materials. Member, Frank Huffman stated that he would like to see the Council educate State Legislators on what is Employment First. KCC guest speaker, David Benson stated that he agreed with Frank and would like to see the “success” of a program gauged from more than “just the bottom line”.

KCC guest speaker, Aleka Hawes stated that in her role as a Talent Development Specialist, she visits various schools and speaks to students about resume building, job search, interview skills and money management skills. She went on to explain that through her program, a business can hire a qualifying consumer and the program would pay half of that employee’s wages for up to six months to help get them professional on the job training to help with transition into the workforce. Aleka explained that her program works with the Workforce Solutions program.

**Future areas of focus:**

- Member, Frank Huffman requested that Administrator, Nanci Howard call him after adjournment, to go over the first half of the meeting that he missed.
- Chair, Jessica Beaven began discussions of a Transitional Toolkit that was created by the previous Council and requested that this committee review that document together and make updates and distribute that information to schools or similar organizations.
- Jessica asked that Nanci share the Transition Toolkit with the committee members.
- Frank Huffman requested that the information for the Workforce Summit be sent to him so that he could join the waiting list, as the event is sold out at this time.
- Guest, Katie Wolf Whaley shared a PDF titled “How a paycheck can work with a government check”, in the group chat, during the meeting. This document has been uploaded to the Employment First Dropbox, for convenient access.

**Action Items: None**

**Public Comment: None**

**Adjournment:**

**Chair, Jessica Beaven called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member, Tal Curry made the motion to adjourn the meeting. A second was provided by member, Johnny Callebs and a vote was taken. Chair, Jessica Beaven, Co-Chair, Frankie Huffman, member, Diana Merzweiler, member, Tal Curry, and member, Johnny Callebs, were in favor and there was no opposition therefore the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.**

**Next Meeting Date:**

Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
1:00pm – 3:00pm  
Hybrid Format  
Location: 500 Mero Street  
1st Floor (Hearing Room)  
Frankfort, KY. 40601

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