

COMMITTEE OF BLIND VENDORS
QUARTERLY MEETING

January 22, 2026

Roll Call:

Attendance was taken, a quorum determined, and the meeting called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair Lynn Florence. The invocation was provided by Cramer Schneider.

Members Present:

Lynn Florence, Chair, Todd Stephens, Vice Chair, Todd Freeman, Katherine Gore, Jerry Grimes, Brad Holland, Buster Mayne, Derrick Kromenacker and Cramer Schneider

Staff Present:

Corey Marcum, KBE Director, Jason Wathen, KBE Assistant Director, Madeleine Ancona, KBE Administrative Assistant, Stuart Boggs and Aaron Christy, Vending Coordinators, Shelby Glisson, Repair Tech

Guests:

Dondra Meredith, Chris Stave, Charles Dorsey, Sean Dorsey, Larry Hall, Chris Miller, Steven Miller, Angela Stevens.

Approval of Minutes

Todd Stephens made a motion to approve the November 22, 2025 meeting minutes which were previously distributed for review. Todd Freeman seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

KAMC

Chris Stav presented an overview of the Kentucky Council of Automatic Merchandising (KAMC), highlighting its membership, benefits, and recent initiatives. He explained that new operators can join for free in their first year, with ongoing membership costing \$100 per branch or \$100 annually for single-employee companies. Chris also discussed KAMC's upcoming annual meeting, planned for July 23-24 at Belterra, which will include operator training, networking opportunities, and supplier interface.

Todd Stephens expressed interest in joining KAMC and shared his success with micro-markets at IRS Gateway, which have generated significant revenue growth since implementation. Lynn then provided updates on Sodexo's new incentives, including rebates starting at the first case and a cap on Coke price increases of 6.9% through 2030, as well as a new local and direct program launching in April.

KBE Director Report – Corey Marcum

KBE closed FFY 25 in a very good position and up in most areas from the same period in 24. With a 13% increase in total sales. This made it even more positive when the military contracts remained flat.

In November KBE hosted a successful Blind Youth Entrepreneurship Summit with up to 22 blind youth from across the state. This was a three-day event held in Louisville and funded by OVR's Pre Employment Transition program. This event will be hosted again in 2026. More information will come out as it becomes available. Corey was pleased that multiple student's expressed interest in the blind vending program and future events like this. Kentucky has also been showcased nationally for this program,

receiving recognition from the National Federation for the Blind and the National Association of Blind Merchants.

On December 23, 2025 the Secretary of Education granted the Army's request for a waiver to the Randolph Sheppard Act for Army troop dining, stating this move was in the best interest of the country. This means blind vendors will no longer have priority in operating food service on Army facilities and could affect 3 locations in Kentucky with a total of 6 vendors. Corey emphasized that not only does this affect vendors but also the state, as these contracts generate a large portion of the state's set aside. On a national level this will be devastating, impacting 37 blind vendors in multiple states. This waiver is currently only limited to the Army. The advocacy groups are looking for options.

Chair Report – Lynn Florence

Ms. Florence began her portion of the meeting by thanking members for their continued service. She began to discuss the current issues in Randolph-Sheppard and the military waiver that has been put out.

Lynn discussed the threat to military dining contracts, with 37 vendors across 22 locations potentially affected, and encouraged vendors to donate to a legal fund. Dondra Meredith requested more information to be sent to her regarding the NABM legal fund donations. Ms. Meredith also provided legal explanations regarding the waiver and the current process happening with filing a lawsuit.

Old Business

Policy Review

The group discussed the status of policy and procedure manuals, with Todd Stephens explaining that Kentucky's complex regulatory environment means the process could take several years, including

state legislature review. Dondra clarified that while RSA approval is required, the rules do not need legislative approval and can be filed at any time, with a 30-day public comment period followed by review by the Administrative Regulation Review Committee. Corey Marcum stated that he is waiting to send the regulations to legal for review until after an RSA meeting that is coming up in two weeks. The committee agreed to have the manual ready for RSA review by August 2026, targeting a January 2027 submission.

The committee then began to discuss criteria for candidate interviews for new positions and the potential adoption of Hawaii's promotion and transfer policy for Kentucky. Corey reported that four new candidates are ready to be interviewed in February, while Todd and Lynn expressed concerns about the current interview process, agreeing that interviews should be a requirement for upward mobility.

The group discussed the need to develop guidelines for these interviews, with Brad Holland suggesting they should assess candidates' ability to manage the business and navigate transportation. Lynn requested the Training Committee and the Upward Mobility Committee work together in creating an interview process for the upward mobility vendor selection, with Dondra clarifying that while interviews weren't explicitly prohibited in the regulations, they would need to be part of a broader review of business practices. The committees agreed to develop criteria for interviews, with Buster making a motion to proceed and Todd Stephens seconding the motion.

Public Comments:

Todd Freeman raised concerns about protecting vending machines from tampering by placing strongly worded signage on the machines, Dondra advised that any signage would need KBE

approval since the machines are owned by the state. Madeleine Ancona offered a reminder that any signage needs agency approval, and it is an audit task for their site visits.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date will be April 23, 2026.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Todd Stephens made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Todd Freeman. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.