

**KentuckianaWorks Program Oversight Committee Meeting**  
**Friday, November 13, 2020**  
**8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present:** Caitlin Blair, Christy Ralston, Jenny Lampton, Jessie Schook, Michael Hesketh, Lisa Thompson, Patricia Williams, Valorie Hughes

**Staff Present:** Aleece Smith, Angella Wilson, Bailey Preston, Brian Luerman, Christopher Locke, Cindy Read, Elizabeth Davis-Terhune, Jaime Disney, Katie Elliott, Laura Paulen, Lori Hiser, Mary Rosenthal, Michael Gritton, Patrick Garvey, Regina Phillips, Rider Rodriguez, Sarah Ehresman, Stacy Roderick, Tobin Williamson

**Contractors/Guests:** Angela Wells-Vereb, Ashley Janicki, Demitra Suazo, Jennifer Welch, Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Linda Witt, Lynn Rippy, Regan Wann, Renee Walters, Sara Dodeci

**Introduction and Welcome – Christy Ralston**

Meeting attendees were introduced, with a special welcome to new staff employee Katie Elliott.

**Moment of Silence for John Vereb – Christy Ralston**

John Andrew Vereb (1968-2020), an ER nurse, passed away from COVID-19 in October 2020. He was married to Angela Wells-Vereb, Project Leader for Adult Career Services. He was also a friend and colleague of Ms. Ralston's, a father, and a U.S. Army veteran. Ms. Wells-Vereb thanked Ms. Ralston for the recognition and everyone else for the cards and well wishes.

**Review and Approve Minutes from the September 18, 2020 Meeting – Christy Ralston**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Hesketh. Ms. Hughes abstained since she missed the meeting; everyone else voted to approve.

**Staff Update: KentuckianaWorks Board Racial Equity Agenda – Cindy Read**

An overview of the Racial Equity Agenda was provided at the last POC meeting, the full proposal given to the Board of Directors at their last meeting, and then discussed in more depth at the Board Retreat at the end of October. Linking with the *A Path Forward* document, KentuckianaWorks has identified four planks of racial equity work, with an assigned staff member taking the lead in each plank. These are:

- Accountability – Ms. Sarah Ehresman
- Critical Partnerships – Mr. Christopher Locke
- Programmatic Relevance – Ms. Angella Wilson
- Shared Employer Responsibility – Ms. Aleece Smith

As far as concrete steps, Ms. Read celebrated two grants KentuckianaWorks recently received from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions: a digital divide grant for \$130,000 over 20 months, and a redesign jobs & worker resilience (job quality) grant for \$195,000 over 30 months which has employers look at their jobs and see how they might change to be more inclusive. Ms.

Read gave kudos to Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Smith for their role in getting the grants. Additionally, KentuckianaWorks has started KW Conversations with community leaders in workforce issues; the next one planned will be a panel discussion about women in technology. Finally, KentuckianaWorks is committed to accountability and equity not just in opportunity but also in results, which can be trickier to measure; that charge has gone to Ms. Ehresman!

### **Labor Market Update: Creating a Racial Equity Dashboard** – *Sarah Ehresman*

Ms. Ehresman again welcomed Ms. Elliott. KentuckianaWorks has historically funded two Labor Market Intelligence roles. The second LMI position (which has essentially been vacant for about a year and a half) might be best suited to be less focused on the economy, but rather more focused on internal statistical data. Ms. Katie Elliott has been hired on to join the KentuckianaWorks LMI team as a Senior Data Analyst; she came from Ivy Tech, has a Master's in Public Health, possesses experience in both qualitative and quantitative data, and she has already dived into working with internal KentuckianaWorks data.

Ms. Ehresman provided a walk through of a few slides she had put together. There were two big data problems she wanted to discuss. First, KentuckianaWorks has a lot of data systems that do not talk to each other: KEE Suite, ARC, KIBES, Airtable, HubSpot, Coastal Cloud, Spreadsheets, and LaunchPad. The goal is to create a central data system clearinghouse. However, though dual data entry is exhausting and time-consuming, it might also be necessary. One example of this was Compass Rose, a federal grant where the U.S. Department of Labor provided us with the data system they wanted us to use; but, who owns that data? Will they share that data? A second example was EKOS, the WIOA state system of record before KEE Suite. The state's workforce boards were not given an opportunity to access data from EKOS following its sunset; if not for dual entry, KentuckianaWorks would have NO data on its WIOA/WIA participants before 2018! The second big problem is that data systems are not always the 'system of record,' so dual entry can lead to missing and/or incomplete data.

Ms. Ehresman then discussed the Racial Equity Dashboard. Phase 1 was to create a dashboard that showed demographics of participants across all KentuckianaWorks programs from the last program year, with the goal of having it ready to present at January's POC meeting. This is not entirely new territory, as KentuckianaWorks previously received a grant that required us to report the demographics of organization (Race – 76% black, 22% white, 2% other – and Gender – 53% male, 47% female). However, there are several caveats: some programs were not included because their data was stored in a different place (e.g., Code Louisville and KCAC); there were duplicates because some results were aggregated rather than individual records; race, ethnicity, and gender were collected differently in different systems; and finally, some programs were included but still have a lot of missing data. Phase 2 of the Racial Equity Dashboard involved researching options for a data clearinghouse to determine procurement processes; this will be used to produce future dashboards at organizational and programmatic levels. As with Phase I, the goal is to have it ready by January, with the potential to issue an RFP.

Ms. Ralston said that as someone who works with workforce data, she recognizes the issues and challenges mentioned by Ms. Ehresman. Ms. Thompson also acknowledged sharing similar challenges, stating that pound for pound the Urban League may be the most measured organization in Kentucky; “never have our agencies been under more stress with less resources.”

**Staff Recommendation: To Approve the Selection Committee’s Vendor Recommendation for a Work-Based Learning Platform – Regina Phillips and Michael Gritton**

Ms. Phillips presented at the September meeting about the need for an app-based platform that would make it easier for young people to connect to various work-based learning opportunities. An RFP was released on October 1, and two very competitive proposals were put forward: one from WorkHere, one from WorkBay. A review committee had a look at the two proposals, and unanimously chose WorkBay. This particular company has a lot of experience in this area; they have worked with Nashville’s summer jobs platform, they have worked with Fortune500 companies, they are a mom-and-daughter owned company. Soft skills, occupational skills, and a resume builder are all embedded in the robust app-based WorkBay platform. It is possible to create student & employer profiles and attend virtual job fairs, which are great during the COVID-19 era. The job fairs can be specific to one employer or across a number of employers. WorkBay could be launched in about six weeks upon approval. Overall, Ms. Phillips said she was really excited to launch this platform in the community and in the region. She talked to Shelby County schools yesterday; they were also thrilled and thought it could be the answer to deliver soft skills training that is desperately needed by the Class of 2021. Mr. Gritton mentioned a couple of things for the Committee to consider. First, he referenced skin in the game; do you get the school districts to pay something? If so, it could prolong the process. KentuckianaWorks was also trying to figure out how much funds were left over from SummerWorks, and there will be more to report on that in the next 90 days. With all that in mind, Ms. Phillips and Mr. Gritton asked the Committee to approve the staff’s ability to enter into negotiations with WorkBay.

Ms. Ralston was enthusiastic about WorkBay and said this offered a huge opportunity to level playing fields; a lot of the issues she has seen involve integration, communication, technology, access, and consistency in the resources being offered, and she thought WorkBay might help with these issues. Mr. Gritton acknowledged the concern he has heard that soft skills deficiencies might occur due to the pandemic. Mr. Hesketh agreed that lots of dislocated youth aged 16-24 have been totally derailed by the pandemic, and he felt this opportunity with WorkBay would give KentuckianaWorks chance to reach them, that it could potentially be a game changer. He added that Shelby County is hoping to really set an example in the region, that the Judge Executive and Superintendent are totally on board.

Ms. Thompson was curious about some of the systems KentuckianaWorks has invested in recently, like the UniteUs. She again offered a tip of the hat to Ms. Ehresman for her tech equity report, which showcased the deep inequities to cloud access faced by people of color and low-wealth people in the city. People in Louisville lived and died based on computer labs available at libraries, the Urban League, etc., so it is essential to figure out how to keep people safe while still getting keyboards in front of them; Ms. Thompson asked how was KentuckianaWorks keeping those people and issues in mind in the RFP process given Louisville’s equity challenges. Mr. Gritton clarified the WorkBay platform is consistent with Salesforce and should be available for any device, like JCPS-provided ChromeBooks and not just smart phones. Still, he acknowledged reaching people who might not have internet access at home would be a challenge. Ms. Ralston was glad WorkBay meets youth where they are. She recognized it will not reach all of them – and KentuckianaWorks will have to continue working to mitigate those disparities – but

WorkBay will help. Reaching and engaging with these youth can be a challenge, but if this platform can help increase that engagement, it could be a huge help in bridging that chasm.

A motion to approve KentuckianaWorks entering into WorkBay negotiations was made by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Lampton. Ms. Thompson abstained, but the others voted to approve.

#### **Staff Updates – Cindy Read and Angella Wilson**

##### **- Update on COVID-19 Career Center Operations – Cindy Read**

Service delivery during a pandemic has been unprecedented. The career center staff transitioned to 100% remote services in March. They are still mostly virtual (Cedar, NIA, and Stratton Center all 100% virtual), though some are allowing for some in-person services by appointment (KYCC Louisville, KMCC, KYCC Regional, the Hope Center). Staff have still served about 1,000 customers per week on average, but outcomes for employment and training are trending far behind last year's outcomes. Staff have expressed a need to "reset" and embrace the new reality, though customers remain appreciative of the support they have received.

##### **- Review of Career Center Locations – Angella Wilson**

Ms. Wilson gave credit to the great mobile services team out in the counties. There are three types of physical career centers: 3 Adult (KCC Cedar Center, KCC NIA Center, and KMCC); 2 Youth (KYCC Louisville and KYCC Bullitt County [moving on December 10]); and 3 Adult & Youth together (KCC Bullitt County [opening soon!], KCC Shelby County, and KCC Henry County/Hope Center). It costs \$702,432 per year (2019 numbers) to run the physical career centers. There are some anticipated cost savings due to the pandemic and closure/merger of some centers recently (i.e., KHCC, TANF moving to Cedar, KYCC Shelby, KYCC Bullitt). Ms. Wilson praised Bullitt County Judge Executive Summers charging us \$1 for the new space.

##### **- Questions for the Future – Angella Wilson and Cindy Read**

Ms. Wilson clarified she was not asking for decisions today, but noted the importance of looking at the regulations for comprehensive American Job Centers (TEGL 16-16), which are defined as "a physical location where job seekers and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners (section 121(b)(1)(B) of WIOA), along with any additional partners as determined by the local WIB." According to TEGL 16-16 again, comprehensive centers must have: 1) at least one WIOA Title I staff person physically present; 2) access to training services; 3) access to employment and training activities; 4) access to programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners, including Wagner-Peyser Act employment specialist program; and 5) workforce and labor market information. Finally, it is important to note providing career services at the comprehensive center does not mean that each required partner must be directly on site at the comprehensive center.

600 West Cedar is currently the comprehensive center for KentuckianaWorks; it is a state-owned building. Partners at Cedar include WIOA (Equus staff); Wagner-Peyser (KY Career Development Office); Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (Education & Workforce Cabinet); Adult Education (Skills U); and TANF/SNAP E&T (Power of Work). Some current challenges include: 1) Cedar is known as the Unemployment Office (we want to be the employment office); 2) the state has mentioned Cedar would be the last office in the state to re-open, due to concerns with Unemployment Insurance; and 3) most Wagner-Peyser Staff have been deployed to UI, so

we do not currently have a Wagner-Peyser employee providing employment services at Cesar. With all this in mind, several questions for the future arise for the Committee to consider. Do we have too many physical locations, too few? Are the comprehensive center and other physical centers in the right places? Should we continue increasing remote services even after COVID?

Ms. Schook cited some talk she had heard about additional resources needing to be placed at public schools like Shawnee High School, and asked if there had ever been any talk about locating some of the career centers at JCPS facilities. Ms. Read said not since she had been at KentuckianaWorks; Mr. Gritton responded that back in the early 2000s, KentuckianaWorks made a big push to co-locate not at JCPS schools but at local community colleges; the organization had a presence at JCTC downtown, and the career centers in Shelby and Bullitt Counties were in their respective community college buildings. It did not work well at the time, but it has not been tried at high schools. There are some location challenges to consider; Shawnee High School, for example, is off the beaten track of transportation routes compared to the Nia Center on Broadway. There used to be a career center out at RiverPort in Southwest Louisville which the local employers loved, but that center had to be closed when funding started to shrink. There was also once a career center in eastern Jefferson County that was also closed due to shrinking funding. The Committee will be asked to consider a lot of factors – online v. virtual, location, equity, Louisville v. regional, etc. – in the coming months.

Ms. Wells-Vereb pointed out she was involved in the first career center certification back in 2015, and the Cedar Center was chosen because it was the only location where all partners were already present; Wagner-Peyser staff would not be available at the NIA Center. Ms. Read said the law does not require every partner to be on-site, though KentuckianaWorks does have some; the key is to make sure the required services are offered. Ms. Lampton liked the fact KentuckianaWorks was committed to providing services in new ways – serving more people, saving time, etc.; but again, she felt folks who do not have high levels of accessibility were the biggest concern and the biggest struggle, and stressed the importance of keeping the service locations on bus lines for people who cannot access them virtually. Ms. Ralston echoed everyone's thoughts and loved the idea of one comprehensive center, but she also thought the deployment idea was particularly exciting as it would offer the chance to go to where people are.

### **Executive Director's Report – Michael Gritton**

Mr. Gritton wanted to share two quick headlines with the Committee:

1. The Board had a great strategic planning session on Oct. 30, with almost all of the Board able to participate. He hoped to finalize the Strategic Plan in the first quarter of 2021.
2. It has been a week of mixed news for KentuckianaWorks on the Opportunity Youth front. KentuckianaWorks was thrilled in April when Mayor Fischer recommended giving KentuckianaWorks \$1,000,000 for its work with Opportunity Youth. The Metro Council did not approve that recommendation, though, and instead created an RFP process. The Metro Office for Youth Development went from one person to three. Now, KYCC is not getting *any* of the funding, but three organizations – all of whom were represented on this Zoom – will be: YouthBuild, the Louisville Urban League, and Goodwill. There remained a lot to be figured out in terms of what Metro Council has in mind, so Mr. Gritton said he would circle back to the Committee in the spring. Basically, there will be more to talk about Opportunity Youth programming and partnerships in a few months.

**Adjourn** – *Christy Ralston*

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M. Ms. Ralston encouraged all attendees to take care of themselves and those they love, to wear a mask, and to be careful, appreciative, and thoughtful.

The next POC meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2021 at 8:30 A.M.