

**Program Oversight Committee Meeting**  
**Friday, January 22, 2021**  
**9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present:** Caitlin Blair, Christine Tarquinio, Jenny Lampton, Lisa Thompson, Mike Hesketh, Patricia Williams

**Staff:** 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, Rider Rodriguez, Sarah Ehresman, Stacy Roderick, Tobin Williamson

**Contractors/Guests:** Angela Wells-Vereb, Ashley Janicki, Christy Ralston, Deb Giordano, Demitra Suazo, Jackie McGhee-Rutledge, Jennifer Welch, Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Linda Witt, Regan Wann, Sara Dodeci, Sharon Duke (proxy for Marsha Berry)

**Recognition of Outgoing Chair (Christy Ralston) and Introduction of New Chair, Vice Chair, and New Committee Member – Cindy Read**

Ms. Read acknowledged Ms. Ralston had accepted a new job that was forcing her to leave the Committee, and thanked her for the wonderful work she has done with KentuckianaWorks. Ms. Ralston described her new role with Norton’s system education team, in charge of the Center for Allied Health Education and Development. She said she was excited to build, establish, and scale resources for infrastructure in allied health and technical training & education. Ms. Read gave kudos to Ms. Ralston for always going above and beyond, such as the thorough work she did with the healthcare careers collaborative; Ms. Read told her “you have a talent for workforce.”

With Ms. Ralston leaving, Mr. Hesketh has agreed to take over the Committee Chair position, and Ms. Blair has agreed to become Vice Chair. Finally, Ms. Tarquinio was introduced as the new POC representative from Greater Louisville, Inc. (GLI), replacing Jessie Schook after she took a new role with KCTCS last month.

**Vote: Review & Approve Minutes from the November 13, 2020 Meeting – Mike Hesketh**

A motion to approve the November minutes was made by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Lampton. The minutes were approved without opposition.

**Mid-Year Program Review – Cindy Read**

Mr. Hesketh stated it was remarkable what the service providers have been able to achieve in light of the chaotic COVID environment; yet to sustain a high-level performance might be hard to do. The hope for this meeting was to take a deep dive into program performance. Ms. Read acknowledged that everyone is struggling, as the COVID-19 pandemic has changed things and continues to impact our lives almost a year on. This was the background for several meetings with service providers recently. We are likely to be in this mode until the fall at least, so we need to make those adjustment. For a while, we provided operations reports showing what was going

on in the system; we quit doing that, though, because it was just another burden on the program team, and they needed that time to continue adjusting to the pandemic.

KentuckianaWorks staff and contractors have had some tough conversations. On the KentuckianaWorks side, if we feel a program is struggling, we provide technical assistance, but we may put the program on corrective action, which is a little more formal than just a conversation. If a program is running a little behind any given month in meeting its goals, that is not a big concern; if it continues month after month, it is. For example, JCPS Adult Education was put on corrective action. They had a number of issues – key staffing changes, the KEE Suite time suck burden, etc. We acknowledge that. To their credit, JCPS Adult Ed worked on a plan, they got fully staffed, they are working very hard, and they are now on pace to meet their goal; they are no longer on corrective action! That is a good thing. KentuckianaWorks also informed Equus (adult program) they will be placed on corrective action. We fully expect them to figure this out and get out of it, and we are with them 100% to figure out. This time last year, they had already placed 716 people into employment (79% of their goal halfway through the year last year; clearly, they know how to do this). The pandemic has thrown things off, and KEE Suite does not help, and somehow now they are just not getting connected as much now; now that number is in the low 100s. We know the pandemic is there, but we cannot just accept that; Equus is very much on board with us in getting it figured out. With all that being said, Ms. Read had sent out an email to some folks asking what works? What has surprised you? She then opened the meeting up for discussion on these questions.

Ms. Witt responded on behalf of the SummerWorks team. Last summer was a particular challenge, since there is onboarding all summer long. They know they were very fortunate in that they had only one person (out of all participants, staff, etc.) who got COVID, remarkable since they were on the front lines each day. They were also able to support employers if there was any kind of COVID exposure on the job. Some job coaches had to be virtual; flexibility is the key. As for what surprised them most: Employers would provide COVID plans, but they were not very detailed, and the employers would not really talk with youth participants about the COVID plans much; there was not much of a written policy (which the SummerWorks team wanted to provide to parents). The team is moving forward with creative ways to be virtual again this summer. Ms. Read added that she was very proud of what SummerWorks and YouthBuild were able to pull off, such as the SummerWorks Tech Academy. She talked about how Mr. Locke was able to present to the National Youth Employment Coalition about Louisville's success, when many other larger cities had to cancel their summer jobs programs last year. Ms. Witt had one other thing to mention: there were fifteen young women doing a documentary about the community and being engaged in SummerWorks; watch for it to premier within the a week or so.

Ms. Thompson shared a few reflections from KentuckianaBuilds / the Urban League. Going into the COVID pandemic, "it's tough to start a race when you don't know what the end of it is." One of the League's challenges is they like being around each other, which can be dangerous in the COVID era. It can tough to build collegiality and make connections in virtual settings. She also said normal stressors have happened – staff turnover, etc. – but that means training new staff members in this environment, which is very different. The pandemic has caused us to look at what is valuable, true, right, and strong. KentuckianaBuilds got the training platform online quickly, but this pandemic is brutal: fatigue, challenges, dangers of shifting and retaining value,

etc. The League is aggressively connecting staff and participants to other programs to help with mental states. She acknowledged a stigma about not being happy all the time, and said it is okay to be stoic, to be down; not everything is all happy all the time. Childcare, housing, transportation, and technology remain significant challenges. Finally, after talking to employer partners, questions remain about civil rights, fairness, and justice; who are the employers who get it? Nobody is perfect, but now is the time to look at that infrastructure and make changes.

Mr. Hesketh said most employers are struggling how to figure out how to do things differently in terms of DEI; they are committed to making changes, they just might not know how. He told the service providers we are all in this together, and said if there was anything employers needed to do differently, do not hesitate to reach out.

### **Technology Update: Six-month Report on New Technology Policies – *Mary Rosenthal***

Mr. Hesketh said the POC acknowledged technology was one of the most significant challenges in the pandemic, and took steps to address that. Ms. Rosenthal was here to provide an update.

Ms. Rosenthal mentioned that technology was added as an allowable cost within programs for training and/or work-based learning, as allowed by the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). For example, adult career centers, youth career centers, and KentuckianaBuilds were able to purchase computers for individuals. In addition, they ran loaner laptop programs and were able to reimburse for internet use. Power of Works programs (SNAP/TNF), Code Louisville, and Tech Louisville provided laptops, and the latter two experimented with loaner Wi-Fi hotspots. Each program director was surveyed about their experiences from July 1 up through November. Ms. Rosenthal said it was worth noting there was some variation with which folks could access the programs, partly because laptop availability was challenging. Additionally, some programs require approval from their funding agencies beyond the KentuckianaWorks Board. The results showed that some folks started with loaner laptops while they waited on their supportive services laptops. 62 customers were able to participate in the policy, and 100% of those customers have either met their goal or on track to meet their goal. 96% of the laptops are in used now or have been returned; only two laptops have been lost. Programs staff feedback indicates the program has helped immensely; several students have said they would not have been able to participate in the programs without the technology support. The majority of loaner laptops were for participants working on their GED. Arranging pick-up of loaned equipment has occasionally been difficult. Three customer success stories were shared in the meeting packet that described how the new technology access has allowed them participate successfully in KentuckianaWorks programs. So, what comes next? One challenge will be exploring options for internet access; for example, participants experiencing housing insecurity might not be able to set up an account in their name. Another challenge is being able to scale and manage data plans around Wi-Fi hotspots. Finally, there will be a year-end review this summer; this initial data was a snapshot in time.

Ms. Lampton thought this new program was a gamechanger, and she commended Ms. Rosenthal and the team for getting it done. To see so many people who would not have been able to participate without the support is important, it is a great service KentuckianaWorks provides. Ms. Rosenthal gave kudos to the program staff. Mr. Hesketh echoed these praises, saying it was a great success story and a remarkable accomplishment.

## **Staff Recommendation: To Approve the Release of RFPs for Young Adult Programs –**

*Laura Paulen*

For background, Ms. Paulen explained that the Kentucky Youth Career Center provides career services 1) authorized by WIOA for 18-24 out of school youth; 2) through Reimage for court-involved youth aged 16-24; and 3) through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, a new-ish program (est. 2019) which targets young adults 18-24 experiencing homelessness. JCPS Adult and Continuing Education currently holds the contract for all of these services. These contracts have to be competitively bid out every five years. The scope of work has expanded and changed over the years. A final piece of context: KentuckianaWorks has realized a need to provide more enhanced mental and behavioral health services in-house to better support program participants toward successful outcomes, as revealed in survey results from a 2017 study of Louisville's disconnected youth commissioned by the Coalition Supporting Young Adults.

So, with all that in context, what is KentuckianaWorks looking to get through this RFP?

Regarding categories of services, there is a shifting focus of program services to align with the evidence-based, changing realities. Three categories of need are outlined in the memo (interested parties can bid for one of these categories or multiple categories, with consortiums encouraged):

- Work-based learning (job shadows and internships), training, post-secondary education
  - WIOA law requires 20% of youth funds to be spent on work-based learning
  - This category includes young people experiencing homelessness
- Young people involved with the criminal justice system, which target two age ranges:
  - 16-18 years old – get students through school through high school graduation
  - 18-24 years old – traditional training/employment, plus addressing legal issues
- Mental and Behavioral Health
  - For participants with significant trauma burdens that impact their abilities / goals

The foundation of all services will remain strong case management / coaching and referrals, and KentuckianaWorks continues to offer supportive services (transportation, books, incentives). A procurement scheduled was outlined on the fourth page of Ms. Paulen's memo to the committee. The RFP is expected to be issued in about a month's time. Ms. Paulen opened it up for questions.

Ms. Lampton asked if there were any stipulations on in-house support for mental health staffing credentials (e.g., requiring a Licensed Clinical Social Worker). Ms. Paulen said yes, KentuckianaWorks is looking for specialized expertise and would be hoping for LCSWs or clinical psychologists. She noted this would be a different position from normal case managers.

Ms. Thompson told Ms. Paulen she appreciated the efforts. Ms. Thompson counted at least two or three different data systems, and was wondering about the complexity of collaboration that will deliver this. She also asked about funding tables for federal resources; for example, it was amazing Ms. Paulen had been able to synergize HUD and the DOL. Ms. Paulen acknowledged sharing data systems were an issue (there would be two: KEE Suite for the Department of Labor, plus the KentuckianaWorks internal database, LaunchPad). Ms. Paulen said the housing program would also have an additional reporting burden (e.g., HIS, HUD's database), and Reimage (FHI360) also has a system. Regarding the second question, Ms. Paulen stated most funding is on the same timeframe, but indeed, some funding is not; the re-entry grants started on the federal fiscal year. Ms. Paulen said there were a lot of puzzle pieces to put together. Ms. Read said JCPS (the current provider) manages all this, and this is pretty much the same thing occurring now.

The committee voted on Ms. Paulen's recommendation to issue an RFP not to exceed total funding for services amount of \$1,155,000. A motion to approve this recommendation was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Lampton. The motion was approved without opposition.

**Staff Recommendation: To Approve Release of Request for Proposals for System-wide Business Services Contract – Rider Rodriguez**

Mr. Rodriguez shared that this proposal would be a big change to how KentuckianaWorks has done business services in the past. Traditionally, there has been a job development approach as opposed to services to businesses (though WIOA establishes businesses as clients of the workforce system). As KentuckianaWorks has done it, the various programs have their own particular incentives and specific leadership structures. Staff have endeavored to create a cross-functional business services team, but this still remains a bit clunky, with different demands being placed on individuals. The system has been working as designed; this proposal seeks to change that design. The proposal would pool funding from different programs based on a cost allocation model, with the aim of unifying/simplifying cross-coordination. This type of model has not been seen a lot, though it is taking hold a little bit (e.g., Seattle/King County, Central Pennsylvania, Oakland). The sizing is different, but there is a similar basic principle: consolidating business services into one contract. KentuckianaWorks is, therefore, requesting additional funds to do additional services, and are confident in their staff's ability to do this. With that being said, Mr. Rodriguez presented two options to the Committee:

- Option #1: Issue an RFP for an amount not to exceed \$700,000 for delivery of comprehensive employer services in the KentuckianaWorks region
  - Option #1 is the recommendation of Mr. Rodriguez
- Option #2: Not issue an RFP, but rather continue business as usual while endeavoring to more closely coordinate services across programs and providers.

Ms. Blair said this concept made a lot of sense to her and wondered why it is not a more common practice. Mr. Rodriguez said his guess was that HR services are generally program-oriented, organized by program source rather than by functionality.

Ms. Thompson asked if the employer services data maintained in the system would be the portfolio for KentuckianaWorks programs. Mr. Rodriguez said not exclusively; it would be a key component, but KentuckianaWorks seeks to nurture a larger workforce system. If there are other partners doing other things (programs, clients served, etc.), he sees this function helping to serve them. Based on conversations he has had with Mr. Gritton, Mr. Rodriguez feels like Mr. Gritton is aligned with that, as well. This new model could be a function that serves not just the programs of KentuckianaWorks, but serves partner organizations, too.

Mr. Hesketh sought clarity if the RFP was one year for \$700,000; Mr. Rodriguez clarified the contract would be renewable terms for five years. Mr. Hesketh then asked about \$500,000 already spent, what happens there, would it be drawn back from the service providers? Mr. Rodriguez said yes, it would be drawn back from providers for next contract year. Contractors would be notified, and KentuckianaWorks has already alerted providers about this possible change. Mr. Rodriguez hoped this would simplify the issue for the providers, as well. Feedback so far has been good. People want to see it in action, but he has not heard anything negative.

A motion to approve the recommendation (for Option #1) was made by Ms. Lampton and seconded by Ms. Williams. The motion was approved, with an abstention from Ms. Thompson.

**Director's Report** - *Michael Gritton / Cindy Read*

Mr. Gritton had to attend another meeting, so Ms. Read gave provided a report on his behalf.

KentuckianaWorks was recently notified by the state they had received funds from the Governor's Discretionary Fund for Code Louisville (\$200,000) and KentuckianaBuilds (\$250,000). The state has also been engaged in discussions with KentuckianaWorks about interest moving the Code Louisville program statewide.

Mr. Gritton has been working with Mayor Fischer (who is the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors) to advocate for increased federal WIOA funding, and he is hoping to mobilize some lobbying on this issue. KentuckianaWorks just got predictions for next year's funding – WIOA is projecting a 10% decrease overall.

Regarding the racial equity agenda, Mr. Gritton has been working with labor unions to increase apprenticeship acceptance for African-American applicants (for electricians, carpenters, etc.). KentuckianaWorks has been disappointed with recent trends, so Mr. Gritton has been working to reverse those. Mr. Gritton has had some very good conversations recently, pulling in the Urban League with KentuckianaBuilds, various labor union officials, etc., and it is hoped that KentuckianaWorks may possibly end up with a pre-apprenticeship program for some key fields by either getting new funding or diverting existing funding.

Ms. Read said the KentuckianaBuilds contract comes up for bid later this year, and the RFP schedules will be staggered so bidders can have time to apply for them. She told the Committee members to be ready to be asked to serve on RFP panels! If any member is interested in serving on the youth, business services, or builds panels, just read out to Ms. Read.

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 A.M.