

**Program Oversight Committee Meeting**  
**Friday, September 18, 2020**  
**8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Zoom online meeting**

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

**Staff:** Angella Wilson, Bailey Preston, Brian Luerman, Cindy Read, Elizabeth Davis-Terhune, Lori Hiser, Laura Paulen, Mary Rosenthal, Rider Rodriguez, Sarah Ehresman, Tobin Williamson

**Guests/Contractors:** Angela Wells-Vereb, Birgit Zepf, Bryan Warren, Eric Hicks, Jackie McGhee-Rutledge, Jacqueline Weinberger, Jennifer Welch, Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Marsha Berry, Regan Wann, Renee Walters, Sara Dodeci, Zakiyyah Raymore

**Welcome and Introductions – Christy Ralston**

Ms. Ralston gave kudos to Mr. Williamson for the well-run meetings, whether with the POC or elsewhere. She hoped everyone is having a good start to the fall season.

Ms. Ralston welcomed Sabeen Nasim and Bryan Warren from the Louisville Office of Globalization as guests at the meeting today. Mr. Williamson welcomed fellow guests Jackie McGhee-Rutledge and Jacqueline Weinberger from the Center for Employment Opportunities.

**Review & Approve Minutes from August 21, 2020 meeting – Christy Ralston**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Lampton and seconded by Ms. Schook. It passed without opposition.

**LMI Report: the Louisville Immigrant Population – Sarah Ehresman**

Ms. Ehresman presented a snapshot of Louisville's immigrant population. The city's foreign-born population has grown exponentially in recent decades and now accounts for about 5.4% of the city's population. Immigrants are an important driver of Louisville's population growth; in fact, without immigrants, the city would have lost population in 2018-19. 41% come from Latin America, 31% from Asia, 13% from Africa, and 12% from Europe. On another note, Kentucky ranked fifth in the nation in the number of refugee arrivals in FY2019 compared to other states, with Louisville being by far the largest resettlement center. The majority of the region's immigrant population – a majority of whom are in their prime working years – lives in Jefferson County, with a large number in Shelby County, as well. Most of Jefferson County's immigrants live in the South End, Newburg, and Buechel neighborhoods. Some of the key industries where immigrants are employed include manufacturing, leisure & hospitality, and construction.

Ms. Ralston asked if this presentation would be made available after the meeting; Ms. Ehresman said yes. Ms. Schook asked if there was data concerning how many immigrants have credentials from their country of origin; Ms. Ehresman said people are allowed to self-select and the Census

data does not provide this information. Ms. Ralston said this was definitely something seen in healthcare (i.e., cross-credentials), and accurate data is critical in decision-making for businesses.

Mr. Warren stated Ms. Nasim had another meeting, so unfortunately she could not be on here. He is concerned about potential lag in tracking education and career backgrounds among the immigrant community. What the Office of Globalization is trying to do is make a more determined effort to ask residents and engage in those conversations. He was also concerned about the impact of federal immigration and refugee policy changes on long-term growth. Ms. Ehresman agreed completely, citing the impact of international students especially.

Ms. Ralston said there was a call for our business partners to work with local refugee resettlement agencies, and intentionally develop some cross-walk resources and attainable goals regarding language proficiency and similar programs. Norton, for example, has a certified bilingual interpreter fully hired on their team. Ms. Schook mentioned the importance of technology access, internet/device connectivity, and digital inclusion for the immigrant community; Ms. Ehresman said JCPS might have additional data on this issue. Ms. Williams pointed out 90% of her clients at Wesley House are immigrants, and digital inclusion is definitely a concern for them. Wesley House has been working with the city to get them computers and digital training. Mr. Warren suggested ESL training for specific industries. Mr. Hesketh said large companies do a great job with integrating immigrants, but small companies often struggle. He just left a meeting with 70 small manufacturing companies who would be delighted to learn more and support, but they do not know how to get involved. Mr. Williamson suggested the three job developers available from Kentucky Refugee Ministries. Ms. Read mentioned a focus group with immigrants in manufacturing being held on October 7<sup>th</sup>, in coordination with the Metro Office for Globalization and a number of other community partners and employers. Ms. Schook referenced a GLI workforce connections event series from last year, and that GLI would be happy to host a similar event on this topic sometime after the focus group.

**Presentation: Project Welcome Back – *Regan Wann and Birgit Zepf***

Ms. Wann said KentuckianaWorks staff had multiple conversations last year about English-language learners. Specifically, there were concerns we might not be bridging the gap as well as we could; where could we step up? There were some very clear gaps where KentuckianaWorks saw we could improve. This led to an addition of a new position, filled by Ms. Zepf, to lead Project Welcome Back. Ms. Zepf had taught with KentuckianaWorks through adult education, and we brought her in full-time as this project's coordinator and assess the system.

Ms. Zepf gave a presentation on Project Welcome Back. She has doing an assessment of services provided to refugees and immigrants at Kentucky Career Centers, starting with two cohorts of ESL Health Training classes in February – June 2020. The official research (an internal survey sent to MOU partners, and an external anonymous survey sent to 78 community partner representatives) started in June, with assessment, evaluation, and action completed in September. Two more rounds of research are expected. The main internal results were that there were limited community partner relationship awareness, and referral numbers were limited. MOU partners felt moderately well-prepared to serve ELL clients, but there was an overwhelming request for more training. There was also a request to increase awareness of more technical short-term programs. The external results complements this; community partners lacked awareness of KCC services.

The top-rated challenges for KCC staff included language & communication skills, cross-cultural communication, and inexperience/lack of translation systems. Other feedback included the gap for refugees after they have been here for five years and start to lose access to resettlement services, requests for more short-term training, more interpretation services, employer advocacy, and more consistent partnership communications. KCC's next steps include developing new strategies, looking at which partner suggestions to pursue, coordinating workshops, and compiling training specifically for ELL populations, and beginning to research MOU partner training content. Ms. Wann said the project is based on limited-time funding from JPMorgan Chase. Ms. Zepf said the digital divide issue came up repeatedly, almost every conversation. Ms. Ralston asked if the presentation could be shared, to which Ms. Zepf said "of course, 100%." Ms. Wann said the data is available in three reports, ranging from one page to the entire product.

Ms. Ralston said one of the silver linings of the pandemic has been a renewed energy and passion and intentionality for caring about everyone in the community. She does not wish for another pandemic, but appreciates the work being done in spite of the current situation. Mr. Hesketh wished more people had the advantages the POC has of seeing these presentations.

**Presentation: Dare to Care Project – Angella Wilson and Jackie McGhee-Rutledge**

Earlier this year, KentuckianaWorks and the Center for Employment Opportunities ("CEO"), a national justice-involved employment organization, co-authored a grant proposal to access National Dislocated Worker Grant funds, COVID-19 disaster relief funds from the U.S. Department of Labor. Ms. Wilson recognized Mr. Williamson and CEO leadership as co-authors of this proposal. The two organizations recognized the opportunity to serve the region's justice-involved population. Ms. McGhee-Rutledge is the Louisville site director for CEO and the lead project manager for the Dare to Care initiative. Her expertise in workforce development, along with her work history in Louisville, have been great benefits to us in seamless startup of operations. She is also a former KentuckianaWorks employee with knowledge of our operations!

Ms. McGhee-Rutledge gave a presentation that provided an update on the work the project has been doing since it started on July 6. She started by saying it was nice to be part of the meeting today, recognizing a few familiar old faces. She also acknowledged Ms. Weinberger, who was also on the call today. The Center for Employment is a national non-profit that has been around for about twenty-five years. CEO provides immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services to individuals who recently returned home from incarceration. The national footprint consists of 30 sites in 11 states around the country, with future expansion plans. There is a great need for the services CEO provides; the U.S. is home to 5% of the world's total population, but 25% of the world's prisoners. CEO operates on a four-step model: 1) job-readiness training; 2) transitional employment; 3) job coaching and placement; and 4) retention services for one year. Data shows the evidence and impact that our programs are effective. All CEO participants are eligible to be employed temporarily on our work crews for public sector partners, with the goal of obtaining permanent employment at quality jobs. Since launching in Louisville in August 2019, we have had 170 people hired into transitional jobs in CEO employees and 77 permanent job placements with an average wage of \$13.77/hour. CEO launched the Dare to Care food bank project on Fern Valley Road in July; this is the KentuckianaWorks project funded by the NDWG dollars. Our crew is supporting food distribution and sanitizing efforts. The COVID-19 impact has been significant, but we are well-

positioned to continue our work through FY21. Our program is based on restorative justice. Ms. McGhee-Rutledge went over some of the specific requirements for enrollment into the program. If POC members are interested, they can contact ReferralsLouisville@ceoworks.org.

Ms. Wilson clarified the Dare to Care project that started in July 2020 is the specific project we are working on with CEO. She said Mr. Williamson is the glue between KentuckianaWorks, CEO, and the state at this point. We are waiting on additional expected funding that will allow us to expand the program even more. The attached program reports contain the first monthly report we have been tracking; future reports will include updates from CEO, as well. We have to a contract with them for the first program year, running through June 30, 2021.

### **Deputy Director's Report – Cindy Read**

Mr. Gritton was on vacation today, so Ms. Read filled in for him this meeting. The first topic was to note there was a lot going on at the state level with the agencies KentuckianaWorks report to, primarily the state's Cabinet of Education & Workforce. Elements such as unemployment insurance, Wagner-Peyser, trade, and WIOA have been separated from the cabinet; UI issues have really swamped the state, and a lot of things that were in the Education & Workforce cabinet have recently been moved to Labor. That was enough to say for now; regardless of what happens, just know KentuckianaWorks staff will keep plowing forward and doing the work.

KentuckianaWorks had a large meeting with state Education officials yesterday, and another one with Labor officials today. The POC might be interested – the state has listened to us complain about KEE Suite for years. Josh Benton, who left a post as Deputy Secretary a few months ago, was working very hard to get a replacement. The process slowed a bit when he left, but the state announced yesterday an RFP would be going out in a few weeks. The state also acknowledged the performance data is bad. Ms. Disney on the KentuckianaWorks team has been tasked with going through all that data. The state previously invited us to sit in on some demos with partners they are considering. In the meantime, we have another data system we have used forever called ClientTrack. There are some grants we have that you cannot put into the state system (KeeSuite). ClientTrack is getting old and having issues of its own, and we cannot continue with that, either. KentuckianaWorks has been looking at some new options, an effort led by Mr. Rodriguez. We decided to proceed with Launchpad, a Salesforce platform product that is much more intuitive than ClientTrack. That system transition is on track to be completed by the end of the year.

Next topic: KentuckianaWorks was initially in Mayor Fischer's budget to get \$1m for Disconnected Youth to add to the KYCC. The Mayor's proposal went to Metro Council, but they reduced the funding and decided to issue an RFP for other organizations to apply for instead. We still have not heard when that RFP will be publicized and/or when we can apply; we certainly plan to apply! We think there will be a \$300k limit per agency. We are always wanting to add more resources into youth programs, especially as federal funding has been going down.

KentuckianaWorks submitted an application this week for a \$100k grant from Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence for behavioral health services programs. In our conversations with Metro Council, we were drowning them in data that we clean up and scrub up; but, they said "you've got data, but is what you are doing making a difference?" Our data is more short-term. Ms. Ehresman and the LMI team did a great long-term SummerWorks data report in partnering with

KentuckyStats. With Ms. Ehresman hopefully about to add another person to her LMI team, we will pay KY Stats for an additional component and do a match-pair analysis and report on long-term results for other programs besides just SummerWorks. We will know more in November. We are doing research on a behavioral health program. We have lots of trauma-informed care training already, but we want to go deeper in integrating it into all of our programs.

Ms. Read wanted to mention the racial equity efforts being done by KentuckianaWorks. The Board has been taking the issue very seriously. It is in our values statement, but we want to do more than just put words on paper. We are tapping the expertise of our partners and other folks in our world to get input. We do not want to just talk about it forever; we hope to have something to share with the Board next week. We have an internal team working on some things already. Broadly where KentuckianaWorks is right now: we are using the “A Path Forward” document as a starting point for working with programming partners; there are lots of ways to do this in the workforce arena. We will focus on looking at equity of results and having an accountability dashboard for both our Board and our community. We also have some very action-orientated folks on our staff, like Ms. Wilson, Ms. Ehresman, and Ms. Smith. They have recorded two community conversations episodes already.

Lastly: back in March, KentuckianaWorks’ Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Novak took a job at UofL. Her deputy Lori Hiser filled in as interim CFO. She got the full-time gig in July! Ms. Read was not sure if this had been announced to the POC yet, so she just wanted to congratulate and welcome Ms. Hiser. When her replacement as deputy is hired, that will make her life a lot easier!

### **Adjourn**

Ms. Ralston thanked everyone for all for the amazing work and information. The next POC meeting is scheduled for November 2020, and it will likely still be virtual. Until then, stay safe and keep the faith, and take good care of yourselves.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Hesketh. It passed and the meeting adjourned at 9:58am.