



FY21 MINUTES
NORTHERN KENTUCKY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
MEETING | Tuesday, November 10, 2020 | 8:30 am
Via Zoom

Chairperson Dana Dobbs called the meeting to order at 8:33 am.

Tara Johnson-Noem took attendance for the meeting. Business and Overall Attendance Quorums were achieved.

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS PRESENT	GUESTS
John Baines	Michelle Tyson	Ellen Bates, The Brighton Center
Chris Bateman	Alecia Webb-Edgington	Correy Eimer, The Brighton Center
Vicki Berling		Eric Owsley, The Brighton Center
Nick Birkenhauer		Leisa Mulcahy, NKY Chamber/GROW NKY
Michelle Cestaric		
Dana Dobbs		
Gina Douthat		
Sherra Dunlap		
Dr. Fernando Figueroa	MEMBERS ABSENT	
Dave Fleischer	Catrena Bowman-Thomas	
Janet Harrah	Brian Bozeman	STAFF
Ryan Henson	Kevin Bonhaus	Tara Johnson-Noem
Lisa Morris	Brent Cooper	Katie Jo Kirkpatrick
Sybil Murphy	Chad Day	David Klokner
Jamie Parsons	Kristie Henry	Liberty Kordish
Danita Pickett	Jamie Johnson	Connie Madden
Randy Poe	Dean McKay	Melissa Patchell
Kimberly Rossetti	Dr. Francis O’Hara	Tonia Slone
Connie Schnell	Rhonda Whitaker-Hurtt	
Dave Schroeder		
Carissa Schutzman	LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS	
Robert Stafford		
Shannon Starkey-Taylor		
Jarrod Tiemeier		

SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF MEMBERS

No one self-identified as having a potential conflict of interest with agenda topics.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Michelle Tyson made a motion to approve the September 8, 2020 minutes, Connie Schnell seconded the motion. All voted aye, the prior meeting minutes were approved.

ACCOUNTABILITY/TRANSPARENCY

Program/Youth Committee

Jamie Parsons - Update on the committee meeting held October 13, 2020:

- A summary was provided of the steps taken to evaluate the RFPs submitted to “Deliver Workforce Services to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth; to Provide Business Services to Employers; and to Serve as a One-Stop Operator in the Kentucky Career Center Network in the Northern Kentucky Local Workforce Area - Beginning January 1, 2021.” The Brighton Center was selected for recommendation to the full Board.
- Chairperson Dana Dobbs extended thanks to Jamie Parsons and the P/Y Committee for all the work that went into reviewing the proposals and commented that she was pleased with the questions and the conversations among the committee members and with the three organizations submitting proposals.

Action Item

Michelle Cestaric made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Program/Youth Committee to name The Brighton Center as the new operator and direct services provider (One-Stop Operator), along with a recommendation that WIB staff be allowed to negotiate the contract and final budget. Dave Schroeder seconded the motion. All voted aye, with the exception of Alecia Webb-Edgington who abstained from voting as she was a sub for another entity. The motion passed.

Business Services Committee

Dave Fleischer - Update on the committee meeting held October 21, 2020:

- The Employer Resource Guide was officially made available online. All were encouraged to take a look at the guide which is part of the involvement of the Workforce Partner Roundtable and is a great resource for employers.
- We are continuing our conversation with the BSC and the Roundtable to understand the certification process for getting our in-demand credentials noted by KDE. There is work going on regionally concerning this topic and BSC is looking to insure we have a solid, proactive process to get in-demand credentials added to the KDE and to obtain state approval for them. BSC will discuss this more in their next meeting scheduled for December 9, 2020.

Action Items

KCC Certification of Access Points – The certification is a process that must occur as part of Federal WIOA requirements and State requirements. The career center locations are categorized into three types:

- Comprehensive Center: In Northern Kentucky, we have one Comprehensive Center which is the Covington location. We have a number of partners involved, and the entire gamut of products and services are available at this location.
- Affiliate Sites: There would be at least one partner in place at an affiliate site in addition to WIOA-funded staff.
- Access Points: An Access Point would have materials on site, and only one partner organization staff onsite most of the time. Perhaps WIOA members visit on a less frequent basis.
- It was also noted that all the supporting materials regarding this topic and the two locations under consideration were included in the meeting packet sent to the Board.

The Kenton County Library – Erlanger Branch is under consideration as an Access Point. This location underwent a thorough review of their capabilities with respect to serving job seekers, and this facility met the requirements on the certification checklist to qualify as an Access Point.

Motion to certify the Kenton County Library – Erlanger Branch as a KCC Access Point was made by Dr. Carissa Schutzman and seconded by Vicki Berling. All voted aye, with the exception of Dave Schroeder who abstained due to his affiliation with the Kenton County Library. The motion passed.

CVG Career Center – Is under consideration as an Access Point. This location is a tad different in that we do have WIOA/Brighton Center Staff onsite full-time; in fact, we are the only WIOA partner onsite at that location. CVG Career Center was re-opened in 2019 and we have seen substantial numbers through serving approximately 70 employers at this site. This location met the requirements on the certification checklist to qualify as an Access Point.

Motion to certify the CVG Career Center as a KCC Access Point was made by John Baines and seconded by Randy Poe. All voted aye. The motion passed.

Membership & Board Operating Committee

John Baines – Update on the committee meeting held October 27, 2020:

We continue to work with the Bylaws to be certain they are supportive of our mission and that we eliminate areas where we have lack of clarity and/or confusing language. There is nothing specific to report at this time; however, we continue to work toward having the Bylaws state clearly how we are to operate.

Action Item – Approve re-nomination of Dr. Carissa Schutzman to the Board

Dr. Schutzman is seeking to re-join the Board under a new employer. This change in employment did not result in a change to any ratio of our required membership. Her nomination form was included in the meeting packet.

Motion to approve nomination of Dr. Carissa Schutzman to the Board was made by Dr. Fernando Figueroa and seconded by Shannon Starkey-Taylor. All voted aye. The motion passed.

Member Spotlight

Dave Schroeder of the Kenton County Library provided an interesting and entertaining pictorial profile of his education, work history, accomplishments, and his love of history, genealogy, and travel. Our next Member Spotlight will be Vicki Berling of the Enzweiler Institute.

Executive Committee

Dana Dobbs – Update on the committee meeting held October 28, 2020

- We are working to fill our slate of officers on the Executive Committee, so anyone having interest in serving in a leadership role, please contact John Baines.
- We would like to have a number of Board Members working with the Executive Committee to put together our Strategic Plan. This project will begin in January 2021 and communications will be forthcoming on the process, meeting dates, etc. Our thought is the more people we have joined in the conversations around our strategic planning, the better. The plan devised through this process will ultimately be presented to the full Board. Please contact Tara Johnson-Noem or Dana Dobbs to express interest in working on the Strategic Plan.

PROGRAMMING

Activity Updates

Director's Report – Tara Johnson-Noem

WIOA Annual Report

- Included in the meeting packet is an overview of the WIOA Annual Report from last fiscal year which was put together by the Career Center staff and spearheaded by Ellen Bates. The report highlights each of our WIOA areas and how the COVID response was a part of that work. Board members were encouraged to review the report and Tara offered thanks to Ellen and the staff for the all the work that went into preparing the report.

In-Person Services at the Career Centers

- The Covington location re-opened to in-person services on November 2, 2020. A local Channel 9 news team was on location during the re-opening and aired their coverage, which was positive, during their newscast. There is staff now available at the career center, and while we are hoping to re-open the resource room, there is Wi-Fi available in the parking lot at this location thanks to the Covington Connect program.

- There were no issues with anyone currently experiencing unemployment insurance issues. Prior to the re-opening, we focused on and adjusted our narrative to say from a WIOA standpoint, here are the services that we can offer to clients. Even though we want to get the resource rooms open as we know not everyone is able to take advantage of virtual services offered, we do direct them to the libraries, and we are working on Wi-Fi in the parking lots. We are able to provide career services. We know that unemployment insurance continues to be a challenge, but here is how we can help people get back into the workforce. We believe that narrative was heard and was successful. And, for those people that need UI help, we are at least able to say here is the National Dislocated Workers Grant to help bridge the time until a former employer can hire you back and here are the virtual services offered throughout our community.

2020 Calendar Year Review

- In December, Tara will celebrate her one-year anniversary as Director. Thinking back over the year, she is working on a review of activities during calendar year 2020. The review will include highlights that occurred, partnerships that we have been able to strengthen, and outreach that we have been able to accomplish. This review will go out to the Board during December. She extended her thanks for the opportunity to serve as Director. And, extended thanks to the WIB and KCC, who despite some major challenges, continue to work with all our partners across the region.

Fiscal KPI – Liberty Kordish

- This report, which was included in the meeting packet, is as of September 30, 2020, which is 25% our fiscal year. We still have some projected figures on the report due to our October 2020 allocations not yet being received. However, have been advised they are coming soon. Expenditures are in line with projections. Committee was advised that questions regarding anything in the Fiscal KPI report could be directed to Tara Johnson-Noem.

Programmatic KPI – David Klockner

- This report, which was included in the meeting packet, is as of September 30, 2020. However, due to a lag in Kentucky's unemployment statistics being available, the unemployment figures are as of August 31, 2020.
- As of October, we will return to the Programmatic KPI format we had last year which also included a 3-page analytical KPI. This format will provide a historical view of KPI figures.
- Job Postings are exceeding what they were this time last year. This is partially due to COVID and the resulting dips and spikes in employment and unemployment.
- Employer Outreach portion of the report indicates that services at the Career Center are very much on point. Even through COVID, we exceeded figures for last year in all the sectors except Construction & Trades and IT. Noted that many of the Construction & Trades jobs are "word of mouth" which poses difficulty in obtaining analytical data. October KPI will contain a breakdown of virtual and in-person services.
- Interviews and Job Placements are on par with expectations for this time of year and Customer Satisfaction ratings are looking good.
- Labor Market Information indicates that overall, we are faring better than other parts of Kentucky and the country.
- Outcomes of WIOA Participants exceed goals in all categories except Youth. This is due to issues with unreliability of KEE Suite youth figures. We did receive a hold harmless letter from the State in which it was stated that we will not be held accountable for any goals not met due to KEE Suite not reporting properly.
- Dana Dobbs requested that for the Committee's next meeting, Youth performance figures from Brighton Center be presented as a separate page that is not part of our KPI Report which reports State figures.

Development Activity – Tara Johnson-Noem

- The WIB and the KCC will be a part of a new federal grant from SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). St. Elizabeth, the primary recipient, received this grant through the Journey Recovery Center. The grant is aimed at connecting those individuals in recovery due to substance abuse disorder to the workforce community, so we can aid them in succeeding in their recovery through their also being in the job support system. Tonia Slone will be leading up the connectivity and will be the liaison. Life Learning Center is another critical partner and the work Alecia has been doing with the Kenton County

Justice Center will be an important aspect of our efforts. Even though we are a small part of the grant, we are excited to be included. We will work with individuals coming from the justice system, the recovery system, and/or from workforce to help them receive the support they need.

- The Covington Capital Campaign was fund raising that was required to support those Covington Career Center partners moving from the former location to the new building on Madison Avenue. After a full review of all the finances, it was determined that no additional fund raising is required and that our obligation in this regard will end as of December 31, 2020. This means we can now focus our fund-raising efforts on new ways to support our community and workforce.

Career Center Operator and Direct Services Reports – Correy Eimer and Ellen Bates

Correy Eimer – Reviewed the “Operator” portion of the printed Update in the meeting packet

- Restoring of In-Person Services: At this point, we have one week and one day of activity since the re-opening. In an effort to keep everyone safe, a triage area was set up prior to the re-opening. Figures for our first week are good. There were 334 individuals served, approximately two-thirds of which were individuals calling in via phone. There were 51 walk-ups between our Florence and Covington locations. Approximately 15% of the walk-ups were job seekers who, if not for in-person services, we might not have otherwise reached, and the balance was individuals experiencing UI challenges. Although we could not address UI issues, we were able to provide them with information on services available throughout the community.
- Employer Services and the Employer Resource Guide: Employer Satisfaction Rate is up 10 points to 96%. And, the Employer Resource Guide is complete and available online to regional employers.
- Carroll County Career Center: A thank you was extended to the Carroll County Community Development Corporation for their generous contribution of \$5,000 to help support occupancy costs. This means that location will be able to remain open at least through fiscal year 2021.
- Carissa Schutzman asked if there were any concerns by the staff regarding meeting face-to-face and whether there was anything the Board could do under the current circumstances. Correy reviewed the safeguards in place at the locations, said everyone seems comfortable in terms of their health and safety, and expressed thanks for the team effort among the partners. Carissa expressed appreciation and thanks to all involved.

Ellen Bates – Reviewed the “Direct Workforce Services” portion of the printed Update in the meeting packet

- National Dislocated Worker Grant: Registered 11 customers and have placed 6 with non-profit partners.
- Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate: Certificate classes have resumed through Trades to Success and Glass Class through the Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission. There was an 80% success rate through Trades to Success cohort and 100% success rate through Glass Class cohort.
- Campbell County Detention Center: Connected the CCDC with the Radisson in Covington about their hiring needs. This resulted in 10 job offers and 3 hires.
- Hiring Events: Aristech Surfaces made 11 job offers from the drive-thru hiring event in Florence, a Healthcare Career Fair was held virtually in September with 15 regional employers and 60 attendees, and an Advanced Manufacturing job fair will be held November 18. We are looking forward to holding additional sector specific job fairs for industries we know are hiring now.
- Youth Focused Efforts: Facilitated several youth focused workshops with more than 50 attendees participating. Workshop topics included writing resumes and SMART Goals. WIOA Information Session was held to engage youth in the City Heights community and get them connected to the workforce and address their special needs.

Facilitated Discussion on the State of Hiring in Northern Kentucky

Tara Johnson-Noem

Provided Board members an opportunity to weigh in on hiring, what is being experienced in their own companies, other committees on which they serve, through their community engagement, etc.

Michelle Cestaric

- There are lots of jobs available. Staffmark has more than 900 open jobs.
- Pay rates have increased and are a lot more competitive than in the past. Average temporary placement pay rates have increased from \$12.85/hour to almost \$15.00/hour. Rates for unskilled light industrial positions are running between \$14-\$16/hour. Some premier clients are edging up to the \$17-\$18/hour range to be more competitive.
- Some employers are referring to these increased pay rates as “pandemic pay” and have hopes to dial back once things settle down. However, these employers are being educated on the possibility of “mass exodus” by employees should their pay rate be reduced.
- She has direct hire positions available that start at \$18/hour, but her agency is struggling to fill these positions.
- There has been an increase in “false” applications which may be due to the requirement to apply for employment to keep UI benefits. Also, some people had to figure out what their “new normal” is because of COVID. That “new normal” may have meant that one parent remained home or, one parent making ends meet based upon whatever assistance they could get, so these individuals are not actively seeking employment.
- Anticipates the supply and demand and wage rate increase will be the barometer for what we see moving forward.

Jamie Parsons

- Staff demand continues. From approximately 85,000 applications per year, they hire approximately 1,000 people. This year they are on track to hire approximately 1,600 people due in part to positions available at the new cancer center.
- As of 1/1/2020, their minimum pay rate increased to \$15/hour. This has been challenging since a substantial portion of their funding comes from Medicaid and Medicare. Once this funding has been established, it does not increase because we raised our minimum pay rate.
- St. Elizabeth has not had any layoffs, but there are a lot of healthcare systems across the U.S. that have had to do so. Things are much different in other regions.

Lisa Morris

- Her firm is continuing to hire; however, hiring has slowed a bit.
- Their retention rate has decreased so turnover rate is higher. There has been no general increase in wages.
- Noted that she is seeing fewer “Now Hiring” signs in front of some workplaces such as Walmart, Kroger, and fast-food places.

John Baines

- As occurred in 2008-2009, some employers he works with are using the current situation as an opportunity to let go of “C” players.
- Employers are looking to fill critical positions and not finding that easy.
- Lot of talent available at higher level positions, so really qualified people, not currently working, are looking for mid-level management and higher positions. There is a glut on the other spectrum of the market that we typically do not see.

Michelle Cestaric noted there seems to be two populations that need opposite assistance. The light industrial/unskilled where we need to help employers get connected to them. And there are the displaced professionals for which there are not volume opportunities. Perhaps part of our strategic plan should be looking at these two populations and how do we move some of that work forward. She is also seeing a lot of creative strategies being used to engage and retain employees.

Tara Johnson-Noem noted:

- Getting retention ideas out to employers would be very helpful.
- If any member has seen specific ways of connecting with job seekers, particularly in areas that have high volume or lots of openings, would like to hear about those. We will also continue to look at best practices from across the country.

- Would like to receive feedback about the time we just spent talking among ourselves and any ideas you have on how to have our virtual Board meetings be more interactive.
- Brent Cooper was called into another meeting, so he was not able to join us today. However, he did want us to know about an annual celebration to be held later this week. A link to the event is in the chat.
- Leisa Mulcahy placed a link in the chat for any company interested in having a SWAT meeting to discuss your workforce needs.

Preview of Economic Outlook

Janet Harrah

We are going to have “dueling” narratives, that is, we will hear narratives about people who are really struggling through the pandemic and we will have stories about lots of economic growth. And both will be true.

ADJOURNMENT – Chairperson Dana Dobbs adjourned the meeting at 9:59 am.

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 12, 2021