

Program Oversight Committee Meeting
Friday, February 19, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Caitlin Blair, Christine Tarquinio, Jenny Lampton, Lisa Thompson (proxy for Sadiqa Reynolds), Mike Hesketh, Patricia Williams, Valorie Hughes

Staff: Angella Wilson, Bailey Preston, Brian Luerman, Christopher Locke, Cindy Read, Elizabeth Davis-Terhune, Jaime Disney, Joi McAtee, Katie Elliott, Laura Paulen, Lori Hiser, Mary Rosenthal, Michael Gritton, Rider Rodriguez, Sarah Ehresman, Stacy Roderick, Tobin Williamson

Contractors/Guests: Angela Wells-Vereb, Ashley Janicki, Eric Hicks, Jackie McGhee-Rutledge, Jennifer Welch, Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Linda Witt, Martha Stephenson, Regan Wann, Sara Dodeci, Zakiyyah Raymore

Welcome and Introductions – *Mike Hesketh*

Mr. Hesketh welcomed attendees, acknowledging the winter weather the city was dealing with. All seven current Program Oversight Committee members were in attendance.

Review & Approve Minutes from the January 22, 2021 meeting – *Mike Hesketh*

A motion to approve the January meeting's minutes was made by Ms. Beard and seconded by Ms. Thompson. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Labor Market Update: Impact of the Pandemic on the Local Economy – *Sarah Ehresman*

The good news was that as of December, the Louisville region had regained more than 2/3 of the jobs lost since February. The bad news is that still leaves us in a hole of 1/3 total jobs lost (~38,000), still bigger than what happened in the 2008-09 Great Recession. Essentially, five years of job growth were wiped out last year. The loss of jobs has not been evenly distributed across sectors; Leisure & Hospitality account for more than 1/4 of all losses (+10,000), followed by Education & Health Services (which is surprising; usually those are very recession-proof). It was noteworthy that women had a higher representation of jobs lost. Her next point was how the impact of spending on goods (i.e., food, cars, appliances) was well above the pre-COVID trend (due to people spending more time at home) compared to consumer spending on services (i.e., restaurants, concerts, non-essential healthcare), which was well below pre-COVID rates. Moving on, she pointed out the seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate last year was the highest region has ever seen (by seven points), but it had since stabilized. People's employment status changes on a monthly basis, so people come in and out of the labor force regularly. In December, the unemployment rate was 5.4%. Women have fallen out of labor force more than men (with childcare facilities closing, etc.); they took a big hit in September as schools re-opened, then recovered a bit, but have since fallen again. Younger workers also took a big hit (with lots of labor/hospitality workers), and older workers were also heavily impacted (from people over 55 having health concerns and/or thinking about retirement). For younger workers, this raises questions about opportunity youth, a demographic the city has been monitoring carefully.

In conclusion, Ms. Ehresman summarized three big implications in the post-COVID economy:

1. Reallocation shock – Shifts are seen/expected in consumer spending that would alter future job demands (less business travel meaning less leisure & hospitality workers, etc.).
2. Automation forcing – Social distancing needs, unprecedented demand for e-commerce, and a constrained labor supply have accelerated rates of technological adoptions.
3. Digital demands – A more technologically-advanced workplace and increasing telepresence (e.g., work and school) have caused digital skills to become essential.

Ms. Tarquinio asked how many people were unemployed but not actively looking for work; Ms. Ehresman said the region was down about 18,000 workers compared to December 2019, though this number fluctuated on a monthly basis. Ms. Hughes asked if there were any trends for unemployment in ZIP codes; Ms. Ehresman said high-frequency data at that level is not available very often. However, these trends are strongly correlated with race and age (for example, Black women and low-wage workers have been hit hard), which roughly corresponds with available ZIP code information. Mr. Hesketh stated some manufacturing employers cannot find workers, with 500 open positions in Shelby County for example; he wondered if people just had the wrong skills, or how else to make sense of it. Ms. Ehresman clarified the data does not necessarily show the demand to fill open jobs, but rather who is actually on payroll. She cited a dissonance that workers must face on mental and physical levels when they switch careers, plus questions of if they have the needed skills and/or transportation; that sort of reallocation takes time and money. In the chat, Ms. Thompson expressed concern about real wealth loss impact in pre-retirement and career launch age groups, and said this data enabled the Urban League to forecast training needs. Ms. Wells-Vereb said many unemployed people are reluctant to go to work in current conditions.

Staff Recommendation: Request to Issue RFP for Construction Pipeline – *Angella Wilson*

Ms. Wilson began by stating how guidelines demand KentuckianaWorks release RFPs every five years. This RFP is not to exceed \$380,000, which is around its current amount. Though the RFPs are released every five years, those five years consist of renewable one-year terms. Since the inception of KentuckianaBuilds program (currently held by the Urban League), it has been co-funded by the Education & Workforce Cabinet and KentuckianaWorks using WIOA funds administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Some of the services expected in this RFP are:

- Management of the construction skills training classes;
- Great partnership opportunities with industry-related employers to facilitate placements;
- Case management for program participants;
- Compliance with WIOA and other funding regulations.

Ms. Wilson mentioned this was the third RFP presented to the Program Oversight Committee in a month, so she was sure the POC was familiar with process. KentuckianaWorks works through Metro's purchasing department. They manage the process; KentuckianaWorks writes the RFP and brings together a committee of Board members who review, score, and select the provider. She pointed out the RFP's schedule could be found on page two of the memo provided in the pre-read materials, saying there was a lot to do between now and May. Bidders would have about 30 days to review and submit their proposals. The review team will then review the proposals, perform interviews, and finally make a selection. The end goal was to bring a recommendation to the POC by May, followed by recommendation to Board at their May 27 meeting. After that, staff have five weeks to work with the chosen provider on the first renewable one-year contract.

Ms. Blair suggested that moving forward in talking about basic services, unions should be considered when creating partnerships. Ms. Wilson thanked her for the suggestion. Mr. Gritton added he was scheduled to meet with the building and construction trades council in early March, with an aim of renewing key partnerships with apprenticeship directors. He knew this was a big opportunity that KentuckianaWorks needed to take advantage of. Mr. Gritton cited how last month Ms. Thompson noted that Board Member Mr. Reynolds presented to the current class. Ms. Blair said she and Ms. Thompson had met with bricklayers in a productive meeting.

Ms. Thompson asked Mr. Gritton if she should recuse herself from the motion/vote; he and Ms. Read both encouraged her to do so, to be safe. Mr. Hesketh recognized the success LUL has had, stating they would be a tough act to follow (he did not mean to discourage others and welcomed competitive bids). He also encouraged members to join the review process if they were able.

A motion to issue the construction pipeline program RFP was made by Ms. Hughes, seconded by Ms. Lampton. There were none opposed. Ms. Thompson abstained from voting.

Director's Report – Michael Gritton

Mr. Gritton was moved up in the agenda, as he had to hop off the meeting at 10:00am due to a conflicting meeting with Kentucky's other WIB Directors. He had a few key updates to share:

- Board and Staff changes
 - Rider Rodriguez will soon be moving on to a new job. Mr. Gritton was thankful for his decade-plus of service to KentuckianaWorks, praising Mr. Rodriguez for all he has done. Mr. Gritton would report back in April about any reorganization.
 - A couple of key board members will be stepping down: Jackie Beard's last meeting will be next Thursday, and Roger Cude will be stepping off, too.
 - Mr. Gritton was in the process of getting David Hernandez from Ford appointed to the Board; he will be Tami Hatfield's replacement.
- Mayor Fischer is currently president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as of July. He has started to get USCM involved in advocating for additional federal workforce funding. Their leadership meeting was starting today, and one of their sessions will be on workforce. Sen. Murray (WA) and Rep. Scott (VA) have launched RAWA, which would put \$15m of funding into a system that normally gets \$3-4m. The system is starved for job training money, which is one reason why it has been a struggle to find people to enroll. He expects this to be an even bigger issue moving forward, with new sector demands. Mr. Gritton reminded attendees they can be influential if/when they interact with elected officials. KentuckianaWorks has started to ask the mayor to consider putting city money into the city budget to provide job training funds; Mr. Gritton used this as an example of how things that go on in Congress are not always separate from what gets done at the local level. Mr. Gritton referenced how Judge Brent hosted Senator Paul in Henry County a few months ago, and how the Judge called him in advance for guidance.

Staff Recommendation: Request to Certify the NIA Center as the Region's Comprehensive One-Stop Career Center – Cindy Read

Ms. Read said staff have been talking about this idea for a while, so she wanted to take some time to go through this proposal carefully with the committee. A map of the current career center locations was shown. Moving forward, it will be a different situation to how has been done in the

past, with increased virtual offerings. Four years ago, the Board approved having more staff/contractors out in the counties to serve jobseekers in the region. The pandemic has changed the approach to outreach. The mobile team and youth team in the counties offer widely distributed services. West Louisville is the region with by far the most enrollees. The Cedar Center is currently the comprehensive one-stop center for jobseeker and employer services with MOU partners, something the law charges workforce boards to have (examples of DOL-funded partners include YouthBuild, the Urban League, and the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation). The law requires accessibility to the services provided by the partner. In the past year, Wagner-Peyser staff have not been available at Center, due mostly to the pandemic and unemployment situation. As staff started evaluating services, they were cognizant of an estimated ten percent federal cut in funding. With scarcity comes prioritization and self-assessment. In some cases, the shift to virtual services has been working better; for example, workshops for jobseekers (while still acknowledging that virtual is not working for everyone). A lot of money is being spent on rent at Cedar, which has longstanding issues and concerns; for one, it has been well-known as the “unemployment office” rather than the “employment office.” The Board is charged with certifying the comprehensive center; the state has outlined the certification process. Cedar has been certified twice during Ms. Read’s tenure. Last year, NIA was certified as an affiliate center. After the staff chooses a location, it is sent to the Board; from there, it goes to the Kentucky Workforce & Innovation Board. It is meant to be a thoughtful, regional process, with support and guidance provided by the state. The staff recommendation is for the committee to approve the start of certifying the NIA Center as the comprehensive center. KentuckianaWorks leadership have been in discussion with state-level partners, to ensure they have been kept in the loop. The process would begin, a committee would be formed, due diligence would take place, and the official approval request would be made to the POC and to the Board by their May meetings. This move would not affect SNAP and TANF; it would only impact the WIOA staff at Cedar. In summary, Ms. Read stated her belief this move would free up a lot of funding and also better align with where KentuckianaWorks staff want the organization to be.

Ms. Lampton praised NIA for being a wonderful center, and how it has been welcoming every time she has gone there. She asked about accessibility for disabilities; specifically, did NIA have ADA approval, or would this need to be done now? Ms. Read said KentuckianaWorks had NIA certified when they became an affiliate center, but the process would be done again. Ms. Read invited Ms. Wann to discuss to certification process further. Ms. Wann said she had a contact who had done the assessment for KMCC, and Ms. Wann now had her scheduled to come assess the NIA Center, as well. KentuckianaWorks could technically use the ADA assessment done on NIA last year, but staff wanted to make sure everything was up to date with any new regulations or changes. The landlord had also been compliant and supportive. Ms. Lampton said all that sounded good to her, and that she would be happy to see the results when they become available.

Ms. Lampton agreed with the benefits of remote work and loved the virtual services, and asked if there would be a plan for more staffing at NIA or other sites in the future. Ms. Read stated KentuckianaWorks had about the same amount of square footage in both centers that are leased now (Cedar and NIA), though Cedar appears larger because of the other partners. She said staff would be evaluating everything; for example, some workers who came into the office each day pre-pandemic may shift to remote work long-term. She then discussed how three centers have been added recently through the generosity of the county judges (e.g., the Hope Center (Henry

County), the Stratton Center (Shelby County), and the Buckman Street Center (Bullitt County)). In the future, staff would likely be looking for more free or low-cost space, along with more robust virtual offerings. There is also a likelihood of looking at other parts of Jefferson County. Ms. Read said staff would raise money for upgrades or relocations if needed; but for now, to stop the bleeding of funds, this proposal seemed like the best move. All these issues will come before the committee soon, and there will be very serious analysis of space and needs in the future.

Mr. Hesketh asked Ms. Wann for her thoughts. Ms. Wann was incredibly excited, believing it presented an opportunity for partners to streamline services. She felt the fact KentuckianaWorks was expanding out with mobility and agility would better serve the whole system. Mr. Hesketh then asked what a 10% cut in federal funding could mean for KentuckianaWorks; Ms. Read and Ms. Hiser answered it would be about \$500,000. Ms. Read anticipated an interesting real estate market coming out of the pandemic. Ms. Read expected this shift from the Cedar Center to the NIA Center would save about \$70,000. Mr. Hesketh gave kudos to the KentuckianaWorks staff for recognizing money was best spent providing services rather than on superfluous rent costs.

A motion to approve the recommendation to certify the NIA Center as the comprehensive one-stop center was by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Tarquinio. There were none opposed.

Staff Update: RFP Schedule + Call for Board Participation on Committees – Cindy Read

Ms. Read provided the committee with an update on the three RFPs set to be released. Each RFP requires a selection committee to assess the bids, and she encouraged members to participate.

Ms. Read clarified that current providers are eligible to re-apply.

RFP	Date Issued	Bidders Conference	Date Due	Interviews / Scoring	POC Mtg. to Approve	Board Mtg. to Approve
Young Adult	Mar. 5	Mar. 9, 11a	Apr. 2	Apr. 9, 1p-4p	Apr. 16	Apr. 22
Business	Mar. 12	Mar. 17, 11a	Apr. 9	Apr. 14, 9a-12p	Apr. 16	Apr. 22
KY Builds	Mar. 22	Mar. 30, 1p	Apr. 23	May 5, 1p-4p	May 21	May 27

Program Report Reviews at Future Meetings – Mike Hesketh

Mr. Hesketh offered his thanks to all service providers who provide reports for each meeting, saying the POC was all about supporting them. He hoped everyone would come to the meetings prepared to give additional input and learn from presentations; he hoped that meetings are a positive experience. He asked for future reports to give an update on year-to-date performance; he acknowledged that goals would have to be adjusted in some cases, especially given the circumstances of the pandemic. He again emphasized the POC was here to help the providers.

Ms. Read mentioned she and Mr. Hesketh had discussed carving out some time in future meeting agendas to ask program-specific questions to the service providers. She encouraged all attendees to bring questions for the next meeting POC meeting, which has been scheduled for April 16th.

Adjourn

Mr. Hesketh closed by recognizing Mr. Rodriguez again for his service to KentuckianaWorks, acknowledging that Mr. Luerman will still be there to help with Code Louisville and Tech Louisville. Mr. Hesketh said he always felt comforted whenever he spoke to Mr. Rodriguez.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 A.M.