

KENTUCKIANAWORKS PROGRAM OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, August 21, 2020

8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

Zoom online meeting

Members Present: Caitlin Blair, Christy Ralston, Jenny Lampton, Jessie Schook, Lisa Thompson (proxy for Sadiqa Reynolds), Mike Hesketh, Patricia Williams, Valorie Hughes

Staff: Michael Gritton, Cindy Read, Aleece Smith, Angella Wilson, Bailey Preston, Chris Locke, Elizabeth Davis-Terhune, Laura Paulen, Lori Hiser, Mary Rosenthal, Patrick Garvey, Rider Rodriguez, Regina Phillips, Sarah Ehresman, Tobin Williamson

Guests/Contractors: Angela Wells-Verreb, Demitra Suazo, Eric Hicks, Jennifer Welch, Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Lynn Rippy, Marsha Berry, Regan Wann, Renee Walters, Sara Dodeci

Welcome and Introductions – Christy Ralston

Ms. Ralston welcomed new Committee Member Jessie Schook of Greater Louisville, Inc. Ms. Ralston also congratulated Committee Member Ms. Williams for her new role at Wesley House.

Review & Approve Minutes from May 22, 2020 Meeting – Christy Ralston

A motion to approve was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Williams. It passed 5-0, with Ms. Schook, Ms. Lampton, and Ms. Hughes abstaining since they were not present in May.

Presentation: Program Videos & Marketing – Patrick Garvey & Bailey Preston

Mr. Garvey and Ms. Preston presented an overview of what the communications team does, followed by videos highlighting various KentuckianaWorks programs. Ms. Ralston asked where the videos would be published so they could be shared; Mr. Garvey said they will be posted on social media and YouTube channels. Staff would also send the Committee links to the videos.

Targeted Occupations: Labor Market Intelligence Report – Sarah Ehresman

Ms. Ehresman pointed out the tractor trailer driver in one of the videos the communications team shared. He was able to get CDL training because his occupation is on the Target Occupations List, which is developed by using labor market data. The Committee approved the criteria for occupations to get on the list in June of last year. Ms. Ehresman looks at entry-level wages (25% of at least 200% of the federal poverty line, which is \$12.27/hour this year), 500 projected job openings in the next ten years, job growth not due to replacement, and a few other criteria listed in the memo. Positions that require more than a Bachelor's degree, supervisory experience, or five years or more of work experience are excluded. It is always possible to add or remove occupations based on feedback from employers or KCC staff. This year is a bit different because the data does not yet reflect the impact of COVID-19; for example, meeting, convention, & event planners stands out as one occupation category that might need to be adjusted. Phlebotomists and nursing assistant are two changes from last year, following feedback from the healthcare careers collaborative. There was also a lengthy discussion about pharmacy technicians.

Ms. Ehresman thus presented two options to the Committee: 1) approve the new list, or 2) maintain last year's list to get better labor market data. If approved, a discussion about how we are going to use employer feedback and what kind of timeframe would be needed. Ms. Ralston agreed feedback from employers is appropriate, and agreed a schedule should be figured out. Ms. Schook asked about repercussions if the current list was maintained as is; specifically, are there occupations where demand has completely fallen off due to the COVID-19 pandemic? Would KentuckianaWorks be promoting careers that do not have relevance right now? Ms. Ehresman listed business administration, sheet metal, and iron/steel as examples. Notable additions include pharmacy technicians and aircraft service technicians. Ms. Wilson cited an updated ITA report that could be found inside the packet. The included graph shows which ITAs have been most popular by sector, pointing out business is smaller, whereas CDL is #1 followed by healthcare.

Mr. Hesketh asked if the two options were mutually exclusive, or if the Committee could approve the list and revisit in January. Ms. Ehresman said that was certainly an option. Ms. Williams agreed that was a great idea. Mr. Hesketh thus made a motion based on a third option: approve the current Targeted Occupations List, but revisit it in January after we have been able to review more updated COVID information. This was seconded by Ms. Williams. It passed 8-0.

Staff Recommendation: Approve Contract Renewal with YouthBuild Louisville for the Operation of SummerWorks – *Chris Locke*

The SummerWorks program year begins in October. The COVID-19 pandemic came four months into this year, pivoting to online in March. Unlike a lot of cities, Louisville was able to keep moving forward. This year's program had 1,700 young people registered, with 753 direct placements (278 sponsored) and 475 private placements. Overall, some 3,000 young people worked with one of our champion employers. 59 private sector employers had signed on initially, but this number fell back to about 40 due to COVID. There were 60 different work sites. Thanks to a late fundraising push led by Mayor Fischer, there were last-minute donations of \$800,000 from the One Louisville Fund and \$500,000 from the James Graham Brown Foundation. This funding helped the SummerWorks Tech Academy get developed in less than two weeks. This new program gave young people exposure to tech pathways, with a cash incentive for different levels. 268 young people earned at least \$15 or more. We also had the TechBoss program led by Alisia McClain, where 40 young people were divided into online teams and developed entrepreneurial and design skills while being exposed to high-level tech insiders and experts.

Mr. Hesketh asked if there was a way to keep track of SummerWorks participants to see their results. Ms. Rippy said yes, they are being tracked and as they go back to school, we will see which ones still need work experiences moving through the school year. Mr. Hesketh said this was fantastic to learn, because he often hears from employers that training does not always transition into jobs. Ms. Ralston applauded the combination of YouthBuild and Mr. Locke for their work with the JCPS Academies and skills-based training. Healthcare employers are blessed because more students of diverse backgrounds are now tracking for healthcare career fields than ever before.

A motion to approve the renewal of the YouthBuild contract was made by Ms. Thompson, seconded by Ms. Williams. It passed unanimously.

Staff Recommendation: Approve Issuing a Request for Proposals for New Online Platform to Manage Internships – Regina Phillips

KentuckianaWorks is always looking for new ways to connect youth with work-based learning opportunities (such as internships, field trips, and part-time/full-time jobs). We oversee a lot of youth programming. Ms. Phillips works with the Academies of Louisville, alongside new Committee member Ms. Schook. What is now evident is a need for a better way to expand access and engagement for young people with work-based learning opportunities. Nashville and Indianapolis use app-based digital platforms to help youth find opportunities in their community. We are not trying to find an app to replace something an employer already has in place; we are looking for an app that will pull from existing jobs for next year. SummerWorks, KYCC, Reimage, and the Academies could all benefit. This ask is to approve an RFP in September for such a platform. We have already had some demos, and we feel like this would be a big win to develop a regional talent development system, including/especially the outlying counties.

Ms. Schook mentioned student desire to align Pathways experiences with work-based learning experiences. It is not scalable as it exists right now; there would be some human oversight, but with 17,000 students in the JCPS Academies, much less in the counties, there has to be some kind of system. Ms. Phillips said in the platforms KentuckianaWorks staff have looked at, young people are able to locate opportunities by industry or by location. She emphasized not trying to take away the role of intermediaries (counselors and YouthBuild will still help with matching), this will just expand student opportunities. Mr. Hesketh loved the input about Shelby County and was thrilled with what is being done, adding “what kid wants to watch a video of old guys talking when they live on their phones?” Ms. Ralston was also partial to leveraging tech with student populations; as a mother of a high school student, she knows they spend most of their time on their phones and thus applauds the way KentuckianaWorks is moving.

A motion to consider the RFP was made by Mr. Hesketh, seconded by Ms. Lampton. Passed 8-0.

Executive Director’s Report: – Michael Gritton

Mr. Gritton started by saying he got the job in August 2002, and it is really heartening to see the depth of the talent on the KentuckianaWorks team, partners, and contractors. He gave a special shout out to SummerWorks team. The whole program was up in the air in April, and a lot of cities were not able pull it off; but in Louisville, Mr. Locke, Ms. Rippey, and others scrambled to make it happen. Mr. Luerman was handed the hot potato of the SummerWorks Tech Academy and built it from scratch in less than ten days; there will be more numbers on that program after it finishes in September, but it looks like participants earned a cumulative \$200,000 or more. Miracles were worked and we are really grateful. Also a shout out to Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. McClain for Tech Boss, where kids were divided into teams and developed entrepreneurship.

Next he circled back to what Ms. Phillips and Ms. Schook discussed. KentuckianaWorks is moving to deepen the commitment of the Board and staff to leading career pathway efforts. WIOA says the Board shall lead regional efforts to build out career pathways. WIOA gives us three funding streams: two for adults, one for youth. Yet when Congress talks about youth, they mean kids who are not in school. He is trying to figure out if we have some flexible non-federal money to pay for the platform (i.e. SummerWorks, but that’s only Jefferson Co.). Fundraising may be needed at some point, but we are trying to keep it within WIOA as much as possible.

There are major changes happening at the state, and it remains to be seen if it will be good. It was a major loss when Deputy Secretary Josh Benton left Frankfort recently. KentuckianaWorks had worked with him for years, and he was a fantastic partner for workforce development. What we need at the state level is someone who sees their role as the support center for where the action is, out in the field. Mr. Benton took on challenges that had often been ignored (e.g., data systems). He was also willing to spend governor's discretionary funding to help our programs. We do not have a commitment for that beyond June of next year now. We managed to get him to help us get money for Code Louisville, which is now 50% city, 50% state funded. The big question mark will not be answered until we figure out who takes his place. Also: UI moved out of the Workforce Cabinet into the Labor Cabinet. There is also an impact on Wagner-Peyser: Mr. Benton had been trying to get more local control of career centers for years, but now, they have been moved over to the Labor Cabinet. Essentially half of workforce is in the Education Cabinet, half is in the Labor Cabinet, and there is just a lot of uncertainty right now where previously we had a very certain and solid ally in Mr. Benton. Mr. Gritton encouraged the Committee Members to keep their Frankfort contacts knowledgeable of the work KentuckianaWorks is doing.

The Board is taking a look at what more they can do to address racial equity. KentuckianaWorks leadership has a meeting today with Urban League staff, and are trying to setup a meeting with Anthony Smith. There is also a sub-committee looking at our strategic plan; their suggestion was to have a longer planning session in light of racial injustice protests and COVID-19 impacts.

Next was an update on youth funding. We have two KYCCs: Louisville's is run by Ms. Welch and JCPS, and the regional one is run by Ms. Walters and Goodwill. Mayor Fischer asked Metro Council for additional money to expand the Louisville KYCC; unfortunately, the Council did not agree. They have been trying to figure out how to distribute the money. It looks like they will give it to another city department and then call for RFPs. We will have to bid to expand KYCC.

Regarding remote operations, kudos to the contractors for making it work. Currently, there is no plan for KentuckianaWorks staff to work in an office anytime soon and there are no plans to re-open our retail career centers. Contractors are doing everything they can to serve people remotely, and the numbers are good, but we must be missing some people that do not have means to meet online. We continue to monitor the situation. KCAC just this week started doing individual in-person appointments with customers, so they are the canary in the coal mine for us.

Lastly, the state received some federal money for dislocated workers, and the state wanted to spend it on employing people doing work related to COVID-19. The non-profit Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) works in 25+ cities across the country, including Louisville, on getting people recently released from prison into employment via soft skills prep, behavior modification, and adjusting back into society. CEO is now running a crew working with the Dare to Care Food Bank from these funds, and will get a second crew going once we get more expected funding later. Mr. Hesketh expressed interest in connecting his company with CEO.

Ms. Read reminded everyone to look at the different program reports in the packet. Everyone transitioned so quickly to offering high-quality virtual services, and safety remains paramount.

Ms. Ralston wished everyone a restful and safe weekend. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.