



Program Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

via Google Meet

- Members Present:** Mike Hesketh, Christine Tarquinio, Jenny Lampton, Patricia Williams
- Staff:** Michael Gritton, Alicia Pardo, Chris Locke, Angella Wilson, Bailey Preston, Evelyn Woock, Patrick Garvey, Aleece Smith, Jaime Disney, Dana Moorner, Brian Luerman, Bryan Griffin, Sarah Ehresman, Stacy Roderick
- Contractors/Guests:** Kimberly Boyd-Lane, Yvonne Jones, Renee Walters, Eric Hicks, Ashley Janicki, Sara Dodeci, Rodney Cross, Martha Stephenson, Yvonne Jones, Ray Mansfield, Rena Sharpe, Kimberly Harrison, Steve James

Welcome and Greetings– Chairman *Mike Hesketh*

Chairman Hesketh was delighted to welcome the Program Oversight Committee, staff, and guests to the meeting.

Vote Needed: Review & Approve Minutes from November Meeting 2023 Minutes – *Mike Hesketh*

A motion to approve the November minutes was made by Patricia Williams and seconded by Jenny Lampton. The motion passed without opposition.

Vote Needed: Review and Approve the Contract for Moving and Furniture for Move to New Goodwill Opportunity Center in West Louisville – *Angella Wilson*

Angella stated that due to the previous relationship between KentuckianaWorks and the RCF Group in 2022. They became the preferred vendor for the furniture and design services for both the Kentucky Career Center and Power of Work programs that will move to the New West Louisville Goodwill Opportunity Campus. The RCF Group is a nationally certified minority business enterprise company that provides furniture and design services in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Louisville.

In addition, Angella noted that the RCF Group is also the preferred vendor for Goodwill which strengthens the decision for the selection. To date, the contract amount for the Kentucky Career Center is \$62,000 paid by WIOA funds, and the contract amount for the Power of Work Program is \$17,000 paid by TANF and SNAP funds. For the contract with the RCF Group, the Board's approval is required to decide to contract with a sole-source provider. Additionally, KentuckianaWorks requests a do-not-exceed amount of \$100,000 to continue services without repeating the non-compete process within the year.

A motion to approve the contract with the RCF Group for moving to the New Goodwill Opportunity Center in West Louisville was made by Christine Tarquinio and seconded by Jenny Lampton. The motion passed unanimously.

Quick Introduction: How are our Programs Doing Six Months into the Program Year? – *Michael Gritton*

Michael reminded the committee members of his time as a member as a proxy for Mayor Dave Armstrong, and he concluded that having a summary at the halfway point of the program year would be beneficial to the members instead of many pages of program and metric updates. The top headline is

that all the programs are on track and doing well with no major concerns from KentuckianaWorks. He mentioned the work with the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) that was granted funding by the city through the American Rescue Plan, and the work that Rena Sharpe and Martha Stevenson from Goodwill with the young adults program at The Spot. Even though they have not met the metrics, KentuckianaWorks is confident with the amount of increased foot traffic, they will meet those metrics by the end of the program year.

Michael talked about the low foot traffic numbers from the centers in Bullitt, Shelby, and Henry counties mentioned at the Board meeting in November. He pointed out that the Equus regional team is striving to find customers to serve in the libraries and other places to meet those metrics. Lastly, Michael mentioned the work that Brian Luerman has overseen with Code: You (Code Louisville and Code Kentucky) for quite some time. Due to the notable slowdowns, Brian compiled a memo for the committee to review. Before handing it over to Brian, he opened the floor for discussion.

Chairman Mike Hesketh mentioned that in the summary that was given to the committee, the amount of participants using the services for mental and behavioral health has increased. Michael concurred and mentioned the contract with the city's Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods was designed to expand mental and behavioral health services at The Spot.

Deeper Dive: Hiring Challenges for Code Louisville and Code Kentucky – Brian Luerman

Brian Luerman gave a brief overview of the economy and how it has affected the job placements for the graduates of the coding programs. For the past four quarters, Code Louisville and Code Kentucky have been at a historically low with the previous year not being much better. Brian presented the memo with metrics to the committee displaying quarterly placements all the way to 2018.

Brian stated that even though the economy is a large factor, other factors may be at play as well. Code Louisville and Code Kentucky have revised the curriculum to a new style that anticipated increased completion rates. However, the switch may have had some short-term impact as the traditional model for the previous 5 or so years. Additionally, for a period of nearly 2 years through June '23, Equus' Business Services Team employed and managed the only dedicated employer-facing position for the program. This role was turned over more than once and was vacant for several periods as well. We now have a dedicated staff person in this role who is employed directly by the Code Louisville program.

In conclusion, Brian talked about the growing number of articles about the overabundance or 'nontraditional' job seekers in the tech industry. It has gained a reputation for being a high-paying industry that does not require a degree. Brian pointed out that Code Louisville has capitalized on this trend, however, it has led to many competitive programs and free resources that have increased numbers of people looking for the same jobs. Christine Tarquinio asked if there is something the committee can do to help on this issue. Brian encouraged the committee to promote the Code Louisville and Code Kentucky graduates to employers. They have also orchestrated events for graduates to connect with various employers, and so the more employers there are at these events, the increase chances for the graduates to gain employment.

Vote Needed: Staff Recommendation to Allow Goodwill to Partner Directly with the State on two "Welfare to Work" Programs, rather than Partnering with KentuckianaWorks to do so – Michael Gritton

Michael stated that KentuckianaWorks was invited by the Kentucky Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS) to take over the programmatic leadership of the “welfare to work” part of TANF services in 2007 across our 7-county region. At that time, we conducted an RFP, selected Goodwill of Kentucky as the contractor, and began delivering the services known as the Power of Work. In 2010, DCBS required a to bid to continue providing TANF services rather than just extending the contract, and KentuckianaWorks entered a partnership with Goodwill. In 2019, DCBS offered KentuckianaWorks and Goodwill the chance to take on the workforce-related work of the SNAP (“Food Stamps”) program, which has a total budget of \$183,500. DCBS has now reached out to offer KentuckianaWorks and Goodwill a chance to renew the contract for another 2-year cycle for both the TANF and SNAP work.

Michael highlighted that the partnership between KentuckianaWorks and Goodwill has been very fruitful over the past 18 years. The Power of Work program has helped 250-400 people a year get off welfare and into a real job. Since 2007, this partnership has helped upwards of 5,000 people get off TANF and into a real job. The staff recommended that KentuckianaWorks exit the “Welfare to Work” efforts funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) allowing Goodwill of Kentucky to run them directly. Rena Sharpe reaffirmed this choice with Goodwill’s CEO, Amy Luttrell, and thanked Michael for his insight and innovation with this possibility.

A motion to approve option 1 to notify DCBS to withdraw partnership with Goodwill to provide TANF and SNAP employment services, and allow Goodwill to take over these contracts alone was made by Christine Tarquinio and seconded by Jenny Lampton. The motion was approved.

Deeper Dive: Services to Refugees and Immigrants, and a New Grant that Allows Us to Do More for this Population and the Employers they Work for – Aleece Smith

Aleece introduced the new program to service refugees and immigrants. The primary purpose of the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s (ORR) Refugee Employer Engagement Program (REEP) grant is to support workplace-based training for eligible employees in English language proficiency and professional skills needed for job performance and career advancement.

In May 2023, KentuckianaWorks supported a grant application led by Jewish Family Career Services (JFCS) that would fund KentuckianaWorks to take on work specifically focused on the local refugee population. KentuckianaWorks’ letter of support submitted with the application described how staff would develop service relationships with employers each year of the grant to support their ability to make language and occupational training for ORR-eligible employees accessible. In October of 2023, JFCS notified staff that our application had been selected and, in early December, KentuckianaWorks and JFCS finalized a Memorandum of Understanding clarifying KentuckianaWorks’ responsibilities under the grant.

Aleece pointed out to the committee that the JFCS staff will provide KentuckianaWorks staff with training and technical assistance on eligibility determination and career laddering with refugees and provide ongoing consultation and support. A memo was provided to the committee explaining the direct role of having a staff member who would be closely involved in with the refugee community to execute most of the REEP grant activities. She mentioned that this project will be entering its second quarter without having a staff member which is a moderate concern in meeting the first year metrics.

Rena Sharpe highlighted the possibility of an opportunity for Goodwill to work with KentuckianaWorks and Jewish Family Career Services for expansion on this program. She noted that Goodwill does some work with Jewish involving senior programs in Louisville, and so this would be a great introduction for expanding the services with the refugees and immigrants. Aleece thanked Rena for the insight and will keep the opportunity in mind for further conversation. In closing, she stated that the posting of this position has been closed and KentuckianaWorks is looking into several strong candidates. She opened the floor for questions and conversation.

Wrap-up and Next Steps – Mike Hesketh and *Michael Gritton*

Michael updated the committee that Evelyn Woock has now taken the position of Senior Program Manager for youth and young adult services, and he congratulated her for continued work on the team and will be hearing more from her on young adult services over time. Michael mentioned that they are still in active conversation with the state legislature about potential funding to each of the ten workforce boards, and part of the ask is to be able to serve high school seniors. Lastly, the House of Representatives passed unanimously a reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). The new law would require boards to spend 50% of their funding to adults and dislocated workers on job training.

Adjourn - *Mike Hesketh*

Chairman Hesketh thanked everyone for participating, and highlighted that Patricia Williams was recognized as one of the most admired CEOs in the community. The Program Oversight Committee will be meeting on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 9 a.m. With there being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.