

WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2024 Interim

October 16, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fifth meeting of the Workforce Attraction and Retention Task Force was held on October 16, 2024, at 3:00 PM in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Max Wise, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Representative Robert Duvall, Co-Chair; Senators Greg Elkins, Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Jason Howell, and Robin L. Webb; and Representatives Josh Branscum, Matthew Koch, Michael Sarge Pollock, and Ashley Tackett Laferty.

Guests: Ted Abernathy, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership; Kat Saunders, Partner and Head of Strategy and Leadership, Economic Leadership; Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer & Director of Regional Engagement, Commerce Lexington; Christine Tarquinio, VP, Talent, Workforce, and Brand Strategies, Greater Louisville Inc.; Shelby Somervell, VP, Government Affairs & Communications, Greater Louisville Inc.; Chad Mills, Director, Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council; and Dustin Reinstedler, President, Kentucky State AFL-CIO.

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Austin Johnson, Jasmine Williams, Wendy Craig, and Sasche Allen.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2024, meeting was made by Representative Pollock, seconded by Senator Elkins, and approved by voice vote.

Talent Wars - Workforce Competition Has Intensified

Ted Abernathy, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership, provided an overview of Economic Leadership. The organization provides statewide and regional competitive strategies; locational analysis; corporate communications; and trendspotting and strategy. Despite challenges, Kentucky ranks in the top five for the cost of business and the formation of new businesses. State labor force and employment data has been flat since 2010 which can negatively impact future growth. Mr. Abernathy discussed population growth and projected changes. He said the solution is to grow the economy and the labor force. Four ways to grow the labor force: more children becoming adults than people retiring; adults reentering the workforce; utilizing more immigrant workers; and having more workers

moving into the state than out. Mr. Abernathy detailed approaches used by other states to grow their workforce, including Michigan's programs to attract new and former residents, Florida's online workforce attraction, and Ohio's online workforce portal. He discussed benefits of implementing statewide talent attraction programs.

Greater LEX Talent Campaign

Andi Johnson, Chief Policy Officer & Director of Regional Engagement, Commerce Lexington, presented Commerce Lexington's regional competitiveness plan as a part of the Greater LEX Talent Campaign focusing on talent attraction marketing. In the past, Commerce Lexington has partnered with economic and tourism leaders in a nine-county region on collaborative efforts and programs for job recruitment, public policy, and leadership development. The regional competitiveness plan includes collaboration with Economic Leadership, Development Counsellors International, and more than 45 business, higher education, local government, and economic partners. The organization also engaged internal stakeholders, convened focus groups, held workshops, organized stakeholder meetings, and hosted leadership advisory meetings. The plan's goals include increasing regional jobs, wages, and gross domestic product growth rates to the national average; growing the regional labor force through the attraction and retention of young professionals; attracting state and federal funding; and advocating for policy improvements to support the plan. Private sector businesses and regional governments have funded this effort with target areas of advanced manufacturing; healthcare; life and biological science; software, information technology, and agriculture technology; business and professional services; logistics; and global headquarters. Commerce Lexington will be measuring the campaign's success by monitoring online activity with an annual goal of 1500 new professionals to the region.

Answering a question from Chairman Wise, Ms. Johnson stated representatives from states such as Missouri and Texas have visited Lexington with expectations of replicating Commerce Lexington's campaign. In response to a follow up question, she discussed alumni of state colleges and universities choosing to leave the state upon graduation.

*Please note, speakers from Commerce Lexington and Greater Louisville Inc. testified jointly with two separate presentations.

Live in Lou!

Christine Tarquinio, VP, Talent, Workforce, and Brand Strategies, Greater Louisville Inc., stated Live in Lou was developed by Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI) as a talent attraction campaign after data displayed Louisville's population growth below the national average and other major cities across country. Polling showed those aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 54, chose to move to other states for: availability of good jobs and business opportunities, ability to make a difference, and suitability of raising children. These results prompted GLI

to develop Live in Lou. This talent outreach approach includes brand development, outreach to employers, collection of workforce and relocation resources, targeted university outreach, extending the talent pipelines, and targeted talent attraction campaigns. Talent attraction campaigns were discussed including outreach targeted towards nursing and radiology professionals. Additionally, the Live in Lou website, social media campaigns, the City Champs brand ambassador program, workforce ecosystem hubs, and the Finding You in Lou leadership and professional development program for college students were discussed.

Answering a question from Chairman Wise, Ms. Tarquinio explained the collaboration between GLI and the Louisville Downtown Partnership, a Louisville based nonprofit economic development organization, to mitigate the closure of numerous downtown Louisville businesses. These closures, however, have spurred exposure to other parts of the city and surrounding counties.

Responding to Senator Funke Frommeyer, Ms. Johnson stated Commerce Lexington plans to recreate GLI's Live in Lou approach including partnerships with state colleges and universities. She also discussed the approach being developed on a statewide level and the steps her organization took to develop the talent attraction campaign with an emphasis on a regional approach. Ms. Tarquinio commented on regional and state marketing. Shelby Somervell, VP, Government Affairs & Communications, Greater Louisville Inc., discussed other organizations across the state that have developed similar talent attraction initiatives.

Addressing a question from Representative Pollock, Ms. Johnson spoke about the state's business climate, ability to attract new businesses, and obtaining a skilled workforce. Ms. Tarquinio referenced JobsOhio, a state authorized nonprofit organization that uses state and private resources for economic development and talent attraction in Ohio.

In response to a follow up question from Senator Funke Frommeyer, Ms. Tarquinio and Ms. Johnson spoke about partnerships with state colleges and universities to address retention of graduates.

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The Role of Apprenticeship Programs in Attracting and Retaining Kentucky Workers

Chad Mills, Director, Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council, and Dustin Reinstedler, President, Kentucky State AFL-CIO, detailed their professional experience in the building, construction, and manufacturing trades and discussed benefits of apprenticeship programs. The Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council represents 14 crafts and 55 labor unions, all of which have their own apprenticeship programs, with 50

training facilities that use an earn and learn approach. Training is provided and paid for by each labor union with no cost to the apprentice, the state, or taxpayers. At the end of 2023, the state had 6,335 total registered apprentices, of which 4,627 were building trades apprentices, an increase of 12 percent since 2019. Apprenticeship programs produce highly trained skilled workers with higher wages and more benefits compared to non-union counterparts. Mr. Mills stated he believes apprenticeships programs offer a solution to workforce shortages while utilizing state-based contractors to provide high quality workmanship. He also highlighted a new apprenticeship program being developed for teaching and education administration. Mr. Reinstedler discussed expanding apprenticeships to industries outside the 14 crafts currently represented and publicly funded projects that must be reconstructed due to poor craftsmanship completed by out of state contractors.

Representative Koch made remarks about eliminating the stigma surrounding technical and vocational education as an alternative to a traditional four-year college education.

Answering a question from Senator Funke Frommeyer, Mr. Mills discussed presenting the idea of apprenticeship programs to K-12 students, and Mr. Reinstedler highlighted the Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) program, which is a business and industry driven program designed to create a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training. In response to a follow up question, Mr. Mills spoke about varying retirement benefits including defined benefit and defined contribution pensions.

Responding to Representative Tackett Laferty, Mr. Reinstedler discussed the process of applying for an apprenticeship program, and both speakers expressed the need for advertising and marketing apprenticeship programs. Answering a follow up question, Mr. Mills described apprenticeship opportunities for prior coal miners, individuals in recovery, incarcerated populations, and veterans.

Senator Webb made remarks about her experience as an apprentice and discussed the benefits of apprenticeship programs.

Senator Elkins made remarks about eliminating the stigma surrounding apprenticeship programs and technical education. In response to a question, Mr. Mills discussed workforce retention and working with legislative leadership to develop policies such as a hybrid prevailing wage model.

Representative Pollock discussed having passion and pride in earning income and being a skilled worker along with being a responsible employee. Mr. Reinstedler commented that employers with an active apprenticeship program play a major role by providing guidance, training, and income for apprentices.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM.