

# INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

## Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2024 Interim

July 31, 2024

### Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment was held on July 31, 2024, at 9:00 AM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Josh Branscum, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### Present were:

Members: Representative Josh Branscum Co-Chair; Senator Max Wise Co-Chair; Senators Gary Boswell, Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Jason Howell, Reginald Thomas, Phillip Wheeler, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Shane Baker, Jared Bauman, Steve Bratcher, Josh Calloway, Adrielle Camuel, Robert Duvall, Daniel Elliott, Al Gentry, Peyton Griffiee, Thomas Huff, Kevin Jackson, Kim King, Nima Kulkarni, Phillip Pratt, Scott Sharp, and Timmy Truett.

Guests: Jamie Link, Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet; Beth A. Brinly, Deputy Secretary, Education and Labor Cabinet; Jordan Jones, Executive Director of Legislative Affairs, Education and Labor Cabinet

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Austin Johnson, and Sasche Allen.

### Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from June 20, 2024, meeting was made by Chairman Wise, seconded by Senator Boswell, and approved by voice vote.

### Update from Education and Labor Cabinet

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan along with the Department of Workforce Development's workforce outlook, services, and programs were discussed. The Workforce Innovation Board identified four key areas that the WIOA State Plan should address which included employer engagement, workforce participation, education attainment, and resource alignment. Plans submitted by all states were approved in May 2024. The plan is a joint effort amongst the Department, public organizations, private organizations, community-based organizations, and employers. The Department's workforce outlook shows new business locations and expansions, almost \$32 billion in private investments, and more than 54,000 new jobs created. Services were provided to

almost 96,000 individuals through adult education, dislocated worker, youth and young adult, Wagner Peyser, and vocational rehabilitation participants in the current fiscal year. Youth services along with services offered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office of Adult Education, Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Service, Career Development Office/Kentucky Career Centers, and the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board were discussed. Additionally, updates were given on the Digital Equity Strategic Plan and a new resource called Ready for Industry. The Office of Broadband Development's Digital Equity Strategic Plan was approved for \$1.1 Billion in April 2024, by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Ready for Industry program will provide courses to achieve industry-based certification for high school, post-secondary, and industry learners.

Answering a question from Representative Bauman, Deputy Secretary Brinly confirmed that the Department of Workforce Development offers reentry services with a systemic approach through various partnerships.

Replying to a question from Representative Sharp, the Deputy Secretary gave additional details about refugee resettlement programs. She said she would follow up with specific funding information.

Addressing Representative Calloway, Deputy Secretary Brinly discussed employment programs available through collaborations with labor unions and the Department of Corrections to those incarcerated. Answering a follow up question, she spoke about specific restrictions for youth services mandated by WIOA which are accessible to individuals 18 to 24 years of age. Community based organizations and health services providers aid in providing mental health supports.

Responding to Representative King, Deputy Secretary Brinly stated she would follow up about transportation assistance provided through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Answering a question from Senator Wilson, the Deputy Secretary highlighted the Department's veteran recruiting and working with the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet to market the Commonwealth to veterans across the country.

Replying to Senator Howell, Deputy Secretary Brinly discussed the Department's apprenticeship services and how programs are established with employers. Answering a follow up question, she said the Department works with all workforce partners to streamline programs and services.

Addressing Senator Thomas, the Deputy Secretary said federal law stipulates that the Department can only serve youth ages 18 to 24 with the federal youth funds. However, additional state funding was approved in the 2024 Session for local workforce boards,

which could be utilized for youth under 18. Secretary Link also discussed the Everybody Counts initiative.

Responding to Representative Duvall, the Deputy Secretary suggested the General Assembly work with professional licensing boards to restructure relicensing procedures for immigrants and other groups reentering the workforce.

Answering questions from Representative Kulkarni, Deputy Secretary Brinly emphasized the importance of state and local partnerships and discussed realigning programs and measuring success as a result of reorganization of the Cabinet. Secretary Link reiterated the federal limitations on marketing available workforce resources.

Replying to Chairman Wise, Secretary Link said the Department has not been in contact with Transit Authority of River City (TARC) about transportation solutions but will reach out to the Louisville public transportation provider. Deputy Secretary Brinly stated public-private partnerships are essential in attempting to address workforce barriers. Answering a follow up question, she said one of the groups served by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is individuals with substance abuse disorders.

Addressing Senator Funke Frommeyer, Deputy Secretary Brinly welcomed suggestions for improvements to the Kentucky Career Center's career services, virtual assessments, and other programming.

Responding to Senator Boswell, Deputy Secretary Brinly stated the Department applies for federal discretionary grants and opportunities with primarily the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Commerce for programming that aligns with the employment needs and resources of the Commonwealth.

Answering questions from Senator Wheeler, the Deputy Secretary spoke about collaborations with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, and other partners for substance abuse disorders. Secretary Link said that while there are countless workforce initiatives across the state, all have a common goal.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.