

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2024 Interim

August 28, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 3rd meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children was held on August 28, 2024, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Danny Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Samara Heavrin Co-Chair; Senator Danny Carroll Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, Greg Elkins, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Stephen Meredith, and Lindsey Tichenor; Representatives Shane Baker, Mike Clines, Jennifer Decker, Stephanie Dietz, Daniel Elliott, Felicia Rouborn, Josie Raymond, Steve Riley, Rachel Roarx, Sarah Stalker, Lisa Willner, and Nick Wilson.

Guests: Cora McNabb, Executive Director, Department of Workforce Development, Education & Labor Cabinet; Nanci Howard, Vocational Rehab Administrator II, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Workforce Development, Education & Labor Cabinet; Katie Wolf-Whaley, Chair, Employment First Council; Annette Jett, Chief Executive Officer, Kentucky Association of Community Rehabilitation Providers (KACRP); Brandi Hitzelberger, Parent, Advocate; Gena Boyle, Deputy Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services; Misty Sammons, Director, Division of Administration & Financial Management, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services; Mary Carpenter, Executive Advisor, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services

LRC Staff: Samir Nasir, Ben Payne, Logan Bush, and DJ Burns.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the July 30, 2024, minutes was made by Senator Raque Adams, seconded by Representative Heavrin, and approved by a voice vote.

Discussion of Employment Programs for Individuals with Special Needs

Katie Wolf-Whaley, Chair, Employment First Council, discussed the Employment First Council including background information, services offered to individuals with disabilities, and statistics on individuals with disabilities who are employed.

Cora McNabb, Executive Director, Department of Workforce Development, Education & Labor Cabinet, discussed programs and services offered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) including eligibility requirements, pre-employment transition services, supported employment, and Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Carroll, Ms. McNabb stated that the rate increases for services offered will hopefully increase the number of vendors available for these services. To ensure the rates are raised correctly, the process has taken a few years to be implemented. Consultants will be available to meet with providers to go over questions or concerns pertaining to the rate increases. Ms. McNabb could not speak to why the budget was changed for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and embedded into the Education and Labor Cabinet budget. She stated no federal funding has been sent back to the Federal Government, but some have been reallocated for other programs or services.

Annette Jett, Chief Executive Officer, Kentucky Association of Community Rehabilitation Providers (KACRP), discussed background information on KACRP and key concerns KACRP has with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Brandi Hitzelberger, Parent, Advocate, discussed support service providers (SSP) and complications that arose when looking for a SSP for her son.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Roarx, Ms. McNabb stated that she could not speak to income limits pertaining to the Michelle P. Waiver for Medicaid. Victoria Elridge, Commissioner, Department for Aging and Independent Living, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, stated that the STABLE account is setup to allow waiver recipients to keep services.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Carroll, Ms. McNabb stated that OVR is committed to working with providers to ensure services are provided. Scenarios have been run with the new and old fee structure and sent to providers. Ms. McNabb stated that Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are monitored by coordinators that check on the providers throughout the school districts to ensure the proper paperwork and invoices.

Half-Year Block Grant Status Reports - TANF, SSBG, CSBG, & CCDF

Gena Boyle, Deputy Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed an overview of the five federal block grants through the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS). Misty Sammons, Director, Division of Administration & Financial Management, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, discussed allocation and spending information on the five federal block grants administered through DCBS.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Carroll, Ms. Sammons stated that all the funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant is currently obligated and around 1200 families receive kinship care through that funding. She stated that TANF funds are fully budgeted and cannot support any other programs at this time.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Heavrin, Ms. Sammons stated that in order to add a new program into TANF funding, one program would have to be cut as all the funding is exhausted. The programs that are funded through TANF are statutorily mandated and overseen through the program coordinator and budget offices at DCBS. Deputy Commissioner Boyle stated that a presentation is submitted to LRC for the preliminary submission of the state plan for block grants. Ms. Sammons stated that when new laws are passed with new programs, funding is attached to those bills.

In response to questions and comments from Representative Roarx, Ms. Sammons stated that block grant funding is allocated based on population by the federal government.

In response to questions and comments from Senator Elkins, Ms. Sammons stated that she could not answer which programs to cut from the current TANF block grant funding to make way for new programs.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

The following referred administrative regulations were on the agenda for consideration.

910 KAR 001:270 Proposed - Hart-Supported Living grant program.

The administrative regulation above has been reviewed by the committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.