

Zoom: kwib.ky.gov/PublishingImages/WRC_062123/WRC_062123.mp4

Call to Order

Lori Ulrich, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. ET.

Committee Members Present:

Lori Ulrich - CHAIR	X	Kristina Slattery	X
Jeremy Faulkner	X	Amy Neal	X
Cody Davidson		Jon Sowards	
Moochie Hart	X	Myra Wilson	X
Rolando Thacker	X	Mark Hohmann	
Robert Boone		Correy Eimer	X
Jacob McAndrews	X	Tonika East	X

Others in attendance: Sam Keathley, Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, Elishah Taylor

Welcome and Overview

Lori Ulrich, Chairperson, and Manager at Fleming-Mason Energy, welcomed and thanked the committee for attending the meeting today and for being available. She provided an overview of the agenda.

Revamp Overview / Timeline

Lori stated that the timeline for the “Rebirth” of this effort is about 9 months. Next steps will include speaking with local stakeholders. The plan includes holding three (3) regional meetings in the East, Central and Western parts of the state. The outline of the timeline and plan proposal is provided in the meeting packet. Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, KWIB, noted that we are on track with the initially proposed timeline.

Economic Development Focus Group and Regional Workforce area discussion

Lori provided an overview of discussions held with members of the state KY Association for Economic Development (KAED) and the regional, Southeast Economic Development Council (SEDC). There is interest in looking at economic development, and thus workforce development through a regional lens. She stated that when people look at Kentucky they are looking at driving distance and driving patterns. The challenge that some or most people have is transportation, affordable housing, broadband, childcare and flexibilities from the companies that are hiring. Lori noted that data review is critical and so is workforce participation. She asked for discussion around the information provided. **Alisher** stated that data around the above barriers is being reviewed is important to economic developers because this is what employers view as being *talent-ready*.

Lori asked the group what are some of the thoughts they have looking over the packet? **Kristina Slattery, Commissioner**, Cabinet for Economic Development, stated that there were no listed action items or advice given on what is needed to make *Work Ready Communities* better. **Correy Eimer, Workforce Director**, Northern Kentucky Workforce Development Area, agreed with the concept that workforce participation discussions should be had at a regional level, instead of county by county. Kristina Slattery agreed that it should not be by each county anymore. Discussion was had around providing a template for branding of the program and consistency across the state. Should this committee look at standardizing the process?

Kristina Slattery agreed that plugging into an already established conversation and aligning local and regional area efforts is needed. **Dr. Tonika East, Director**, Office of Adult Education mentioned that she is hearing consistency and messaging as key themes here that may be of focus for this committee.

Lori Ulrich asked the group if it would be their role to define what is needed to create consistency. Then do they talk to the boards to manage it. She reminded the group that some counties do *Work Ready Communities* on their own and some counties do not have the resources, so the local boards help them. She explored recommendations that local workforce boards possibly run these programs as they are having conversations with the stakeholders involved with the economic development plans. She challenged the group to explore additional ideas of how to bubble up county info into regional discussions.

Alisher Burikhanov suggested that there should be a hub and that this idea can be brought up during the three visits. Kristina Slattery explained that it is beneficial to move from a county approach to a regional approach, but some local areas will not want an assigned “project”. **Lori Ulrich** reminded the group that in the past some areas chose not to participate because the county did not see value in the work behind process.

Jacob McAndrews, Talent Pipeline Manager, KY Chamber Foundation explained that they should not just think about the outcomes, but think of the process that is required in the three-year process including the check-ins. **Correy Eimer** suggested that they focus less on the metrics and more on the partnerships. He knows that this is not measurable, but it is meaningful. **Jacob McAndrews** further suggested that showing improvement might be by growing percentage based off of where each area currently is on a given criterion. Let the outcome be more about do you see progress in your area.

Dr. Tonika East also suggested a tiered system approach to build upon. Kristina Slattery commented that the “in-progress” category functions as a tiered approach. The difference is areas that are “in-progress” get stuck in that title and they are working the hardest. Based on that comment Lori Ulrich suggested that they need to look at the process they have in place.

Kristina Slattery suggested the need for a “carrot” to prompt participation in the process. There should be a benefit. **Moochie Hart, Manager** Cumberlands Regional Healthcare (business), agreed. She stated that a regional approach sounds good, but once they hit their goal and receive the “carrot” smaller counties will think the bigger county next to them will receive the benefits (dollars from the state).

Jeremy Faulkner, Director of Business Services / Outreach, TENCO Workforce Development area, explained that the issues they have is once the sign goes up the area feels like they are done which is not the case. ***The prize is the process*** not the sign or the “carrot” at the end. This program is not the achievement. ***He asked how they showcase the process.***

Kristina Slattery shared KDPI program monies as an example of an effort that results in being awarded money as the end. This opportunity pushes counties to work together to receive the grant money. **Jeremy Faulkner** agreed that it is a great program and that Work Ready Communities is a continued collaboration and discussion as workforce needs change.

Lori Ulrich asked what is going to drive counties or regional areas to grow their businesses and industries locally? **Jeremy Faulkner** suggested continuing to promote the importance of the Work Ready Communities program to grow communities. He suggested that this program may have to look at other barometers going forward like affordable living, transportation and more.

Alisher Burikhanov reminded the group that if this program sunsets that the issues they are discussing will still be there. He asked the group how do they help? He went over the listed stake holders provided in the meeting packet and the untapped talent that could be used and should be used in the workforce like the disabled population, veterans population, and re-entry population. He noted that there are programs in place to support these populations. He asked if they need to add anyone to the table to help plan this revamp and to participate? The group suggested that ***principals, the faith community and local elected officials need to be added to the table.*** They do not need to lead the discussion, but they need to be present for participation.

Location Recommendation (East, Central, West)

Lori Ulrich asked Alisher to discuss the purpose of the upcoming visits. Alisher explained that these visits are to *reimagine* the process, workforce and content for a post pandemic workforce. He suggested that they get a one-page explanation together to distribute to stakeholders to begin the conversation. Lori Ulrich referred to the map in the meeting packet and asked the group to think of 3 possible locations across the state. The group suggested that they use Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) facilities since they are placed everywhere around the state. Gateway Community College was suggested since they can hold up to 100 people in a conference room. Lori stated that they would like to start having these meetings over the next three to four months.

Alisher asked the group if anyone would volunteer to be a champion in an area. Tonika East volunteered. Lori and Alisher explained that for each meeting there will be a virtual option, but they noted that an in-person presence has a better collaboration outcome. **Kristina Slattery** asked if there were any existing and upcoming events to add the Work Ready Communities discussion. Alisher shared that there are state plan meetings coming with up with all ten (10) local workforce development area stakeholders. Kristina lifted that discussions around Work Ready Communities wait until after the state plan completion as the effort would need to align with the state plan. Another option might be to have the discussion during these ten meetings.

Myra Wilson added to be mindful of the stakeholder's time as they are volunteers. Alisher explained that they could work some questions into the state plan meeting, but they should start the discussion with the current Work Ready Community Champions. He suggested scheduling a zoom meeting with them and ask what is working, what is not working, and a list of challenges. We can also bring up this discussion at an upcoming WIB Chair roundtable meeting for feedback.

The group agreed that this would be a good idea since they have put in the work and they value the work that they have put in. Lori agreed to begin conversations with the current Work Ready Work Ready-In-Process Communities. Myra Wilson stated that she will do whatever is needed and that it may be beneficial for all Workforce Directors to do so as well

Action Notes

Alisher Burikhanov gave a summary of the action items as follows:

- Bring the Work Ready Communities revamp into the State Plan discussions; 10 local visits that have been scheduled. No separate visits will occur across the three regions as originally suggested.
- Schedule a virtual roundtable with existing WRC stakeholders to get their feedback

Lori Ulrich then opened the floor to final comments and questions. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their help, and guidance.

Alisher Burikhanov expressed that they would see everyone in October for the next meeting to review findings.

Adjournment

Lori Ulrich, Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m. ET.