



# Kentucky Education and Workforce Collaborative Meeting

Meeting Minutes for 06.29.23

Hybrid Meeting - 1:30-3:30 p.m. ET

Optional In-Person Networking - 1 p.m. ET

Website Link: [https://kwib.ky.gov/PublishingImages/Collab\\_062923/Collab\\_062923.mp4](https://kwib.ky.gov/PublishingImages/Collab_062923/Collab_062923.mp4)

## Call Meeting to Order – 1:32 p.m. ET

Beth Brinly, Chair and Deputy Secretary of Education and Labor Cabinet, welcomed everyone.

Entity Name	Contact in Attendance
Governor Andy Beshear – Secretary John Hicks	Secretary John Hicks
Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet	Deputy Secretary Beth Brinly (Chair)
Kentucky Cabinet of Economic Development – Deputy Commissioner Kristina Slattery	Proxy Kristina Slattery, representing Secretary Jeff Noel
Department of Workforce Development	Deputy Commissioner Michelle Dejohn
Kentucky Department of Education	Proxy Dr. Beth Hargis, Leslie Slaughter
Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services	
Kentucky Justice & Public Safety	Proxy Deputy Secretary Keith Jackson
Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board	Kim Menke, KWIB Chair
Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education	Proxy Dr. Lee Nimocks, Leslie Slaughter
Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education Conference of Presidents (representing the Presidents) - Dr. Bob Jackson	n/a
Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs - BG Steven Bullard / Dallas Kratzer	Proxy Dallas Kratzer
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce	Proxy LaKisha Miller
Kentucky Housing Corporation	n/a
Chief Local Elected Official (representing the LEOs through KACo)	n/a
Local Board Director (representing the 10)	Michael Gritton
State Director of the Kentucky National Federation of Independent Business - Tom Underwood	n/a
Kentucky Human Development Institute (HDI) of University of KY	n/a
Job Corps Director (representing the 7)	Amanda Curry
Kentucky Community and Technical College Systems	Dr. Larry Ferguson

**Present Online:** Aaron Poynter, Amanda Corry, Amy Luttrell, Beth Hargis, Bridget Back, Captioner Jenny Janes, Chris Wooldridge, Cindy Massie, Correy Eimer, Dallas Kratzer, Heidi Margulis, James Iacocca, James Link, Jared Roberts, Joe Paul, Johnny Collett, Judge Orbrey Gritton, Kathy Sheppard, Kim Humphrey, Kimberly Grasberger, Lance Mann, Larry Ferguson, Lee Nimocks, LTADD, Marnie Mountjoy, Marsha Wells, Mary Ann Medlock, Myra Wilson, Paula Payne, Renea Waggoner, Sarah Butler, Sarah Ortkiese, Sean Campbell, Steve Bullard, Tad Long, Tiffanie Reeves, Tim Campbell, Tina Brogli, Tom Thompson, Zach Morgan

**Present In-Person:** Secretary John Hicks, Deputy Secretary Beth Brinly, Deputy Commissioner Michelle DeJohn, Tom Sholar, Derek Poor, Claire Arnold, Brian Selmeski, Sarah Stoll, Deputy Secretary Keith Jackson, Commissioner Whitney Allen, Molly Bode, Bret Bemis, Michael Gritton, Kim Menke, Debbie Dennison, Elishah Taylor

### **Welcome and Introduction**

**Beth Brinly, Chair and Deputy Secretary of Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC)** expressed her appreciation for each partner and explained the focus of the meeting, which is Transitioning Veterans and Families. She walked through the agenda and discussion goals for the meeting.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** shared that she and **Debbie Dennison**, Deputy Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) will be sharing information regarding the Department of Labor, Education and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) Vision 2030 summit, held in Washington DC in May.

### **Vision 2030 Overview / Discussion**

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** shared an overview of information received at the Vision 2030 Summit held in Washington DC in May. Four (4) pillars of focus per the DOL / ETA includes: 1. Focusing on the Future of Work; 2. Building and maintaining sectoral partnerships across the workforce ecosystem; 3. Working to provide a better care economy; and 4. Including an equity lens in building out community success, to ensure we are working to lift those left behind and underrepresented populations in good jobs and careers. She asked Debbie Dennison, Deputy Executive Director, KWIB, to speak to the strategies behind the initiatives.

**Debbie Dennison** shared strategies discussed to actualize the above pillars include: local areas braiding funding among grants and other fiduciary avenues available; scaling best practices; increasing work to identify and align support services for major disruptors of quality of life; we must all continue to reduce barriers; we must maintain a pulse on ever-changing sector strategies and growing economy and make sure career pathways are aligned and finally, but not least, we must all make sure we are working to introduce our youth to career and college pathways early and often in their childhood. We all must take ownership of these initiatives and collaborate with each other to make these focuses reality. Debbie turned it back to Deputy Secretary who asked for questions or comments. There were no additional questions or comments.

### **Education and Workforce Collaborative Updates**

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** gave an update about *Jobs on Day One*. On July 12<sup>th</sup> a team will be visiting a corrections institution. Also participating are trade unions that are interested in hiring individuals that are immediately coming out of prisons or jails. The goal, also aligning with the *Jobs on Day One* initiative, is to strengthen prerelease training and programs, so they have the skills needed to perform job duties for available positions. The *Jobs on Day One* Initiative is anchored in the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Office of Adult Education (OAE) where the pilot Putting Kentuckians First Initiative now lives. Putting Kentuckians First Initiative focuses on jail locations and justice-served populations leaving incarceration and providing them a team-based case management. Aaron Poynter, Director of Re-entry within the OAE, is leading this effort and he is also in the New Leadership Kentucky class.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** asked Dr. Beth Hargis to give an update about the Work-based Learning ecosystem workgroup. Beth Hargis shared a recent survey that was sent to different businesses to explain what types of work-based learning they might have, and to whom they are providing these services. One goal is to create a definition for work-based learning that can be used among partners for understanding, and to piece resources and available information together for use by employers, students, educators and others in the ecosystem to make it easier to upskill, train, provide credentials for Kentucky's workforce. Debbie Dennison added that if anyone would like to be a part of the work group to reach out to her. LaKisha Miller asked that Laurie Mays and Dorian Moe be added to this initiative.

### **Discussion Topic: Supports and Resources for Veterans, Transitioning Military, and their Families in Kentucky**

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** shared the importance of communities in Kentucky aligning resources and intentionally focusing on attracting and retaining the above populations.

She identified three (3) ways in which a community could prepare to be either Military Friendly, Military Ready or Military Engaged. Examples include: an employer attending a job fair for military personnel and their families; an employer providing a culture that fosters acceptance and affirming the skills military personnel bring; an employer intentionally focusing on retention efforts for military and veteran personnel to ensure they are thriving and have ample opportunities within policies, and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. She pointed to the pre-read materials provided and began with identified questions.

She inquired to the participants: How would customers of current programs describe the services and supports for veterans, transitioning military, and their families?

**Paula Payne** is a manager at Fort Knox, and she explained the challenges of putting years of service into a two-page resumes. Currently, members are focusing on a skill and making that the theme of the resume. It is important for employers to have a conversation with service members about their past and current service (Guard activity, for example). **Deputy Secretary Brinly** commented that knowing this information should change how they interview veterans, military personnel and their spouses.

**LaKisha Miller, Executive Director** at Kentucky Chamber expressed that the Chamber is embracing this population. They are working to get information together to make it easier for businesses to hire from this talent pool. Zach Morgan from the Chamber is the lead on this work at the Chamber.

**Dallas Kratzer, Sr. Fellow** with the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), mentioned a veteran resource group called [Soldier for Life \(SFL\)](#) and added the link to their website in the chat. This group helps employers set up veteran resource group that can connect veterans in their work area. Deputy Secretary Brinly thanked Dallas Kratzer for providing this information. She noted that sometimes it is just the wording can be an obstacle. *Veteran resource group and employers resource groups are the same thing.*

**Sarah Stoll** from Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) had 15 years of service before her work with KLC. In her position she helps veterans build their resumes. She had a graduate school professor state that *"if the chief justice of the supreme court system can have a one-page resume so can you"*. In the military are services and skills and certifications are listed. When interviewing military, and veteran personnel, Sarah asks veterans to describe their skills in civilian "speak" like she does not know anything about the military. She added that our military is not used to wearing civilian clothes. They are used to putting on the same uniform each day. She just wanted the group to be aware of the things our military is not used to doing which can sometimes be an additional barrier.

**Brian Selmeski, Associate Vice President** for Academics at Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) hosted the Veterans Summit, co-hosted by KWIB and the OAE last year. He shared that he served fifteen (15) years as a civilian administrator. He shared an alternate perspective and thinks it would be best to reset our vision of veterans. All veterans have not served twenty plus (20+) years. The business model for the Marine Corps, for example is one and done. The majority of Marines have served four (4) years. It is not the same for all services, but employers need to stop thinking that all or most veterans are in their late 30s. These students are looking to receive a credential that their military counterparts already have. They can help these students achieve this by looking at what they have done in the military which is called their joint service transcript. A second group are students that want to change career paths. This career change can be done through credit for prior learning. Each higher education institutions can do this. This is something that KCTCS has highlighted in their strategic plan as a priority.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** thanked Brian Selmeski for sharing. She noted that when it comes to attracting military personnel, their families are the greatest factor on where they settle down. **Michael Gritton** Executive Director of KentuckianaWorks lifted the need to coordinate resources for employers, to be able match jobs for the military personnel.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** agreed that options can be overwhelming and we need to simplify the resources and services so each military person can choose the services based on their needs.

**Kim Menke**, Director for Toyota Manufacturing North America, provided an employer's perspective. He shared that it is not only how to point the military personnel but where can employers find them to hire them. He indicated that this is a key, and missing opportunity. He shared that Toyota has engaged and tried different programs to connect with them before they are discharged. From his perspective, if they have a military background they should go to the top of the list for the interview. Toyota has created a way to match their military skillsets to manufacturing activities. Toyota is a large corporation and can do this because they have so many military personnel in their Human Resources (HR) department.

**Michel Gritton** agreed that it is challenging to match service men and women to employers.

**Commissioner Whitney Allen** of the Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs (KDVA) pointed out that every military base has a transition section on base. A key might be to engage with age groups starting at 21 years old. He also suggested to market intentionally to military personnel inside and outside of Kentucky. This comes down to a strategic plan: marketing, recruiting, business involvement, and incentives. Kentucky is a military state with multiple bases (Forts).

**Molly Bode**, Executive Director at Veterans Accelerated Licensure Occupational Recruitment (VALOR), explained that KY Valor is a grant funded program that is recruiting inside and outside of Kentucky. This is a new program to the state of Kentucky funded by the 2022 General Assembly. They are the liaison that connects folks to jobs, accelerated pathways, they work with employers directly and others like Derek (Derek Poor of West Kentucky Local Area Development District) that represent a particular region. Bret is a recruiter and he is at Fort Knox a minimum of once a week. They are both travelling and recruiting nationally. They want to provide the direct hand off to schools and employers. KY VALOR is brand-new, and they would like to partner and connect people.

**Commissioner Whitney Allen** recommended that KY VALOR program be introduced across State workforce entities and to employers / companies. KY Valor needs to be introduced to hiring managers, and management so they know their faces and build a relationship of trust to *build the pipeline of military personnel* to employers in need of talent.

**Bret Bemis**, Military Recruiter at KY VALOR. Was in the Army for 22 years and wanted to bring his family back home to Kentucky. He shared that veterans are all different ages. The groups of people he talks to each week are people that live near Fort Knox, people from Kentucky coming back home and people that did not have Kentucky on their radar. He noted that they start talking to veterans as early as, 24 months out from being discharged. Bret shared a personal example of how hard it is for military families to adjust when settling down in most areas in Kentucky, as they are small towns with long-standing relationships. It can be *difficult for a military family to move in and fit in*.

**Molly Bode** brought up that their website will be completed in the upcoming months. At this moment they are case managing each person by hand. They are building a custom portal free to employers and service members to sign up to see in real time each person that has been recruited. This will help people be able to apply for jobs around the state. Deputy Secretary Beth Brinly thanked Molly for the information and called on Tom next then Dallas.

**Tom Sholar** Business Liaison at West Kentucky Workforce Board pointed out that KY VALOR makes relationships. He explained how important it is to create relationships not just with veterans but also with their families. He praised the efforts of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Derek Poor does the recruiting for them. The key is relationships and getting the information needed from the companies to veterans for job security. **Derek Pool**, Veterans Transition Liaison at West Kentucky Workforce Board suggested that they look at *healthcare packages* that jobs offer. He gave an example about his personal life and how he accepted or declined certain jobs due to healthcare packages. Derek believed that it would be a great idea to bring companies to the Forts to meet with the transitioning veterans. The key is to build the relationship and meet them where they are.

**Commissioner Whitney Allen** added that Derek and Molly recruit, coach, teach, and mentor both employers and the military personnel. When he was in the military, they had to coach each other and the companies. Tom Sholar added that it is not just coaching the military but coaching and educating their spouses and the employer / industry. In years

past if the military had one bad experience they would not return. So, they have worked to build that bridge back with the military.

**Dallas Kratzer** provided information on **Task Force WELCOME** helps transitioning members and employers through their transition time which is usually the last 12 months of service. The key is to use a program called DOD **SkillBridge** to gain that employment. He is encouraged that Secretary Link, Education and Labor Cabinet, is looking into this and will be providing next steps from Dallas Kratzer and Jason Hutchinson. **Deputy Secretary Brinly** explained that other states are doing career coaching in the last two (2) years of service.

Deputy Secretary asked the group, “what is the one thing we can move forward on and make an impact with for the veteran population?”

**Steve Bullard, Brigadier General**, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs (KCMA) applauded the Kentucky Chamber for the work they are doing with educating employers. *He suggested tracking the efforts in the state.* He also applauded Dallas Kratzer and Secretary Link as they progress in their project. Brigadier General (BG) suggested that they need champions to get the message out to sell this information to our veterans and their families.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** thanked BG Bullard for his perspective and echoed that the anchor for the Education and Workforce Collaborative (Collaborative) board is to centralizing efforts and maximize their resources. **Commissioner Allen** explained that they need to create a recruitment strategy that every company and business can use and go out to recruit veterans. **Deputy Secretary Brinly** shared that there has been some work done with the digital equity project to identify transitioning military. They use this information to pinpoint areas where veterans are for recruitment. She asked participants for their perspective.

**Kim Menke** thinks having a repository for job opportunities for veterans across Kentucky might be an important initiative. Making resources available to allow military personnel to return to civilian activity in a community is critical. **Deputy Secretary Brinly** shared the work of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) mandated Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSF), where individuals are working with employers. They receive a list each week of people separating from the military where they are engaging and, in some cases, relocating. This is data currently coming into the local Kentucky Career Center offices.

**Commissioner Allen** stated that the Department of Defense (DOD) is creating a system that will send an electronic notice where the veteran chooses where they want to relocate. If they use this list, they can use tourism to send marketing pieces out on why people should live in Kentucky and what benefits they might receive.

**Sarah Stoll** recommended that our engagement begin prior to the 12-24 month period and added that most retiring veterans know within 3-4 years when they are going to retire. Once they get into the Transition Assistance Program (TAPs) where they are focused on getting their medical and other appointments completed to complete the process, they are not worried about getting a job, but on getting *things done to get out of the military successfully.* **Deputy Secretary Brinly** added that their duties may not be in the United States and a virtual platform is important.

**Deputy Secretary** lifted that she would recommend someone that is familiar with this population convene further work group meetings to discuss ideas as far as the attraction and recruitment plan looking at the 24 months out strategy in. The convening partner would be asked to bring back updates and strategies to the Collaborative on how they would like to move forward. If anyone is interested in being apart of the strategy group that builds the concept to let Debbie Dennison know. The KWIB Staff will facilitate pulling together the workgroup ideas and lift for recommendation to the whole group in the coming weeks.

**Commissioner Whitney Allen** volunteered to be the convener for the strategic group. Deputy Secretary Brinly again stated that if anyone wanted to be in the group to put it in the chat in they were virtual or to give Debbie Dennison their card after the meeting.

She expressed her appreciation of the knowledge, expertise, personal experience, and passion on doing this work and doing it right. She thanked everyone. **Deputy Secretary Brinly** asked Debbie to give an update about the state plan. She expressed how critical it is to have all the partners involved. She expressed how they will have a working session on providing feedback on the plan.

**Debbie Dennison** shared one of the functions of the state workforce board is preparing a 4-year plan of aligning strategies of any of the partners in the workforce ecosystem. The KWIB Board is at the State level and working with local workforce areas to understand their needs and lift up their ideas as Kentucky moves forward to engage more people in participating in the workforce. Using the Governor-approved Strategic Plan as our north star, we will review our programs over the last four years and seek to innovate towards new initiatives in the State Plan. The KWIB committees have been reviewing the goals and objectives of the current plan to make sure all of the principles are sound and that they are still valid for our Commonwealth. She added that in the next three to four months they will be meeting with the local areas in their communities having discussions with their supporters and stakeholders. It is important to have everyone's voices involved. The State Plan is anticipated to be due in March 2024 to the Department of Labor (DOL).

**Deputy Secretary Brinly added** that at the next meeting will be a working session where breakout groups will convene and share different perspectives of importance with the whole group. She thanked Debbie for the update. The next Collaborative meeting will be October 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm EST.

Derek Pool asked to share one last piece of information and referred participants to a program called [EAGLEWERX](#). He asked everyone to review it and to look into the new program that can help veterans.

**Deputy Secretary Brinly** thanked everyone for the great discussion. She did not find the need to ask the other listed questions in the agenda because during the discussion they touched on them. Anyone that is interested in being a part of this work group initiative, please email [Debbie Dennison](#) or commit in the chat. Deputy Secretary Brinly thanked acting military and veterans for their service.

The recording of the Collaborative Meeting is available on the [Schedule of Meetings page](#) of KWIB's website.

**Adjournment – 2:56 p.m. ET**