

163.475 Legislative findings and provisions relating to transition of operation of Kentucky Industries for the Blind.

- (1) The General Assembly finds that the provision of industrial evaluation, training, and employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired is a valuable and necessary component of vocational rehabilitation services. The Office for the Blind has sole responsibility for and the obligation to operate and manage a Division of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind. This facility has struggled to meet these mandates but, faced with declining available state revenues, expects a continual diminishment to a submarginal operation with respect to providing viable long-term employment opportunities that are self-sustaining and sufficiently diversified for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
- (2) The General Assembly finds that increased flexibility in contract negotiation, purchasing, and hiring will enhance the competitiveness of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind, resulting in additional production contracts thereby guaranteeing continued and expanded jobs and other opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This flexibility and competitiveness can be achieved through the operation of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind by a nonprofit corporation, the members of which have expertise in management skills and background pertaining to sound business practices and rehabilitation philosophy.
- (3) The General Assembly finds that a transition period from state division to a nonprofit operation is necessary to ensure the success and continuation of the important functions of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind. Therefore, the General Assembly shall continue to support the Division of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind through appropriations to the Office for the Blind for six (6) years in order to eliminate eventually the necessity for annual state appropriations. The Office for the Blind shall monitor and safeguard the expenditure of those public moneys for the use and benefit of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind and citizens who are blind and visually impaired in the Commonwealth.
- (4) The General Assembly finds that the continued employment of current employees of the Division of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind is a necessary and important outcome. The Office for the Blind shall ensure through contractual provisions that the nonprofit corporation it contracts with pursuant to KRS 163.480(2) offers employment to every employee of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind at the time the nonprofit corporation assumes total responsibility for the operation of the workshop. The Office for the Blind shall maximize the retirement benefits for each current employee of the Division of Kentucky Industries for the Blind at the time the office contracts for total operation by the nonprofit corporation through the parted employer provisions of KRS 61.510 to 61.705.
- (5) The General Assembly finds that at the time the Kentucky Industries for the Blind is operated totally by the nonprofit corporation, the Office for the Blind shall have the authority to convey ownership of the workshop to any nonprofit corporation with which it contracts pursuant to KRS 163.480(2) without financial consideration, including real and personal property, inventory of materials, and stores for resale. The instrument of conveyance to such nonprofit corporation shall provide that the

real property and production equipment conveyed, or sufficient remuneration therefor, shall revert to the state at any time the nonprofit corporation or its successor shall cease operating the Kentucky Industries for the Blind for the benefit of individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Effective: July 12, 2006

History: Amended 2006 Ky. Acts ch. 211, sec. 94, effective July 12, 2006. -- Created 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 126, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1994.