

Narrative 5: Soft Skills Program:

- Provide evidence of employer engagement in the program development process, including representation of the county's most prolific businesses and industries: No less than five of the of the county's largest employers recognize and use the "Ready 4 Work "certificate. Bruss North America, one of the largest employers, strongly encourages individuals seeking employment to complete the Ready 4 Work training program and earn the Ready 4 Work Certificate. Fruit of the Loom, who is the largest manufacturing employer in the county gives preferential consideration to all applicants who have completed and been certified in the Ready 4 Work program. Another large employer like Fruit of the Loom who gives preferential consideration to applicants completing Ready 4 Work is Superior Battery. They are one of the larger battery manufacturers in the United States. Along with the above mentioned companies we are seeing smaller companies and employers recognize the local Ready 4 Work certificate at a growing rate.

The Somerset Community College (SCC) Workforce Solutions Division is dedicated to providing both soft skills and customized skills training to the businesses and industries located in Russell County.

The Office of Workforce Solutions of SCC provides short-term training, technical skills, and customized training to business and industry. Adult, community and continuing education will add to the college's mission by providing proprietary training and lifelong learning opportunities. The Office of Workforce solutions actively participates in the development of a vibrant community in the area the college serves. Workforce Solutions has provided soft skills training for Superior Battery and Branscum Construction in Russell County. Many of the SCC graduates in Machine Tool Technology have been employed by Bruss North America, Inc. in Russell County.

SCC had provided the following skills training in Russell County:

Bruss NA:

Accelerated training for Blueprint Reading (5 people for 15 clock hours) 3/30/07 to 5/11/07, Microsoft Project for Technicians (10 people for 12 clock hours) 6/08/07 to 06/29/07

Superior Battery:

Leadership (senior level) 12 people trained, 28 sessions of 2 hours each. (1/16/07 to 4/11/07.

Leadership (mid-level) 10 people trained, 23 sessions of 2 hours each. (4/17/07 to 6/07/07)

Basic Troubleshooting (electrical) trained 6 people, 22 clock hrs. (2/09/07 to 4/20/07)
Electrical Principles, trained 6 people, 42 clock hrs. (7/18/07 to 10/19/07)

Businesses and industries that desire to apply for the KY WINS program are assisted by the SCC Workforce Solutions staff in developing their application. SCC offers and has offered soft skills training in attendance/punctuality, communications, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking to industries in Russell County as well as the other Kentucky counties we serve. SCC Workforce Solutions employees continue to work with and solicit Russell County businesses and industries to take advantage of the KY WINS program to reduce their training costs and the soft skills and customized training the college offers.

- **Provide evidence that employers recognize achievement of work ethic or soft skills credential in their hiring / advancement processes:** The workplace certificates earned at the Russell County Adult Education Center are being used as a pre-requisite for hiring by one company and the others are giving preference to individuals having this certification. The company using Ready 4 Work as a pre-requisite does so by work orders placed with Office of Employment and Training. From there, applicants are referred to the Russell County Adult Education Center for the necessary training to attain the soft skills credential, a Ready 4 Work certificate. As mentioned earlier, this certification program is certainly being used by major companies in Russell County to help employers identify qualified employees. Due to the response of employers, we anticipate this program to be sustained for years to come.
- **Programs must include measurable goals for annual improvement on the raw number and percentage of workforce credentialed:** Russell County should attain or be very close to the 15% benchmark set by the state for a workforce certified with the NCRC by the end of the fiscal year. A county goal of 20% will be the next goal set. The Russell County Adult Education Center is the trainer responsible for providing the workforce of Russell County with the necessary education and record keeping to address current and future goals for the workforce of the county. The local WIA board is working with the local Board of Education testing graduating seniors from Russell County High School on an annual basis in order to grow the numbers of a certified workforce for Russell County.

The SCC Strategic Plan 2010-2016, which was discussed in Narrative Question Number Three in this application, discussed at length the college's goals, performance measures, strategies for addressing the soft skills, credentialing of both high school students and the post-secondary adult population.

SCC Strategic Goal Number 4 specifically addresses enhancing the economic and workforce development of Russell County and the Commonwealth. To achieve the fourth goal of enhancing the economic and workforce development of the Commonwealth SCC will use the following performance measures.

The percentage of first-credit workforce students, who enroll as credential seeking students, within three years will increase from 3.4 percent to 13.5 percent. The median wage of KCTCS completers earning \$2,500 or more in the second quarter after completion, indexed to the state median occupational wage will increase from 89.5 percent to 95.9%. The annual number of credentials awarded in fields with an average salary at or above the 75th percentile or into fields that are growing at a rate greater than or equal to the state average, or exceeding 100 annual job openings, will increase from 242 to 253. The strategies used to achieve these performance measures will include: 1) Accessing and monitoring regional training needs, 2) Increase faculty involvement in meeting customized needs for industry, 3) Increase enrollment in Workforce Development programs, 4) Establish SCC job placement centers, 5) Develop a systematic survey of local employment needs, and 6) Develop secure postings of student resumes on the SCC website.

The Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center continues to work with local business to provide training and certifications necessary for employment. Their goal is to meet specific needs of these businesses and construct classes that will accommodate them. The offering to secondary school students also allow the earning of many industry recognized certificates which will be reflected in the supplemental data section.

- **Plans must include a strategy to assure employers of the sustainability of the programs:** The Russell County Board of Education along with Kentucky Adult Education has continued services provided by the Russell County Adult Education Center that will remain in place. The goals of Russell County Adult Education and those of the local workforce closely parallel each other. Because of this, we see a long and productive partnership for Russell County. The measurable goals of individuals attaining NCRCs in Russell County are mutual goals held by both the workforce and employers of Russell County and the Adult Education Center in the county.

SCC and the SCC Office of Workforce Solutions work in partnership with the Russell County Industrial Authority to recruit new industries to the county.

SCC Workforce Solutions offers potential industries with information and assistance to apply for KY WINS assistance to reduce training costs. SCC can provide temporary facilities to screen and test new applicants. SCC also has industrial work bays in which a temporary assembly line or new equipment can be set up to train new employees prior to the actual opening of the manufacturing facility.

SCC has a close working relationship with the Cumberland Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) and the Lake Cumberland Area Development District, both of which are located in Russell County. SCC and the CWIB have successfully completed a number of projects which helped to attract new industry to the region and to provide a trained workforce.

One example of that successful partnership was the development of the Lineman Training Program at SCC. The effort combined the efforts of Southern Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative, Eastern Kentucky Power, CWIB, SCC and a number of county industrial development boards to create a permanent training program to create a new generation of electric power company linemen to replace an aging linemen workforce and to train these new linemen in future "Smart Grid" technology.

SCC has also worked closely with the CWIB to retrain the workforce affected by the Free Trade Agreements under the Training Adjustment Act. Hundreds of dislocated workers have used their TAA benefits to train for new careers at SCC.

- **Programs must address, at a minimum, the following topical areas:**
Attendance/punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership and critical thinking: All the topical areas listed as prerequisites; attendance/ punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership and critical thinking, are addressed in the work skills training program in Ready 4 Work. In addition to those skills, interviewing skills, resume workshops, understanding employer's expectations, and goal setting for the employee are covered. Part of the curriculum in the training for the NCRC covered in the Ready 4 Work program include reading forms and charts, workplace reading skills, and workplace math skills.