

# Kentucky Work Ready Communities

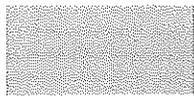
## APPLICATION

1	Name of County	Woodford		
2	High School Graduation Rate (most recent state NCLB reporting)	88.35%	List Source/Method: i.e. summer 2011 AFGR method	Summer 2011 AFGR method
	Would you like to include high schools that are not in the traditionally reported graduation rate shown above?	no		
	If so, please enter revised graduation rate here. Please <b>attach</b> a list of schools included and your calculations.	n/a		
3	Educational Attainment Rate (ages 18-64)	33.80%	(Source: US Census, most recent American Community Survey five-year estimates)	
4	Community Commitment	(check off)	Name of Organization	
	Economic Development Elected Official(s)	X	Woodford County Economic Development Authority	
	Education Workforce Development Business and Industry	x	Woodford County Fiscal Court and City of Versailles	
		x	Woodford County Public Schools	
		x	Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board	
		x	Woodford County Chamber of Commerce	
<b>Attach</b> meeting minutes and meeting attendance sheets showing these signatures. Letters of Commitment from various organizations are helpful as well.				
5	Percentage of Households with Broadband Internet Access Available	92%	(Source: broadband.gov)	
	Rural or Urban County	rural		
6	Are you including narrative(s) for supplemental criteria for GED or	n/a	<b>(Attach</b> optional narratives and list sources and calculations)	

# Kentucky Work Ready Communities

## APPLICATION

Occupational  
Credential  
Attainment?



7 Your Contact  
Information  
(primary contact for  
your county  
application)

name	phone	email	address
Tami Vater	(859) 873-5122	tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com	190 North Main Street  Versailles, KY 40383



**WOODFORD COUNTY**  
Chamber of Commerce

190 North Main Street  
Versailles KY 40383  
859.873.5122 phone 1.877.817.6585 fax

[woodfordcountyinfo.com](http://woodfordcountyinfo.com)  
[chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

November 28, 2011

Kentucky Work Ready Community Steering Committee  
Kentucky Workforce Investment Board  
500 Mero Street  
Capital Plaza Tower, Third Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Work Ready Community Steering Committee:

The Woodford County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of its collaborating partners, respectfully submits an application and support documentation which demonstrates our desire to be certified as a Kentucky Work Ready Community.

Woodford County has worked very hard over the past two and half months to become very familiar with the Work Ready Community initiative and develop a concise work plan to address our local workforce needs. The collaborative group includes representatives from our local school, governing officials, economic development, business and industry. We've attached a list of the stakeholders who have committed to be active representatives for our local Work Ready program as it continues to move forward.

In addition to our application, you will find meeting notes with those attendees listed (in lieu of signature sheets) which clearly demonstrates commitment to the local initiative and its work plan. In the future, we will commit to documenting more clearly, with the use of attendance signature sheets, of those who participate in meetings.

You will clearly see in our application and with its supporting documents, we are a community driven program with the purpose of engaging and empowering our local businesses, industries and job seekers excelling them to best of their abilities thus improving their quality of life. We ask your approval to recognize Woodford County as a Kentucky Work Ready Community.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future regarding our certification and if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tami'.

Tami Vater, KCMSM, EDFP, ATC, CTA  
Executive Director  
Woodford County Chamber of Commerce  
190 N. Main Street  
Versailles, KY 40383  
[tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

## **Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment**

Woodford County's Work Ready Committee will assist and work collaboratively with local educational resources, government agencies, businesses and industries assessing current and future workforce skills and training needs in Woodford County;

encourage Woodford County's workforce to complete a minimum education certificate (GED or high school diploma) and a skills assessment test (such as Work Keys<sup>i</sup> and National Career Readiness Certificate<sup>ii</sup>);

and research and support opportunities for financial incentives to offset the cost of education and skills assessment training and/or testing. The completion of testing is to evidentially demonstrate to potential employers current workplace skills levels that can be used as a predictor of qualified employability.

The Committee will educate and inform current local officials and governing agencies, community organizations and businesses about resources available for creating an employable, qualified workforce. In so doing the Committee will:

1. Develop a printed fact sheet that demonstrates available resources for training and assessments for current and future workforce.
2. Make presentations to Midway and Versailles city councils and Woodford County Fiscal Court to inform them of the "Work Read Communities" initiative and the recent committee activities.
3. Make presentations to other governing agencies and community organizations to educate them on available resources for training and assessment of current and future workforce in Woodford County.
4. Engage local media contacts to promote "work ready" skills training and testing programs to increase public awareness of these services available to Woodford County residents.

Over a three year period, the Committee will be able to demonstrate successful completion of the NCRC of no less than 15 percent<sup>iii</sup> of Woodford County's current available workforce, ages 18-64. The Committee will:

1. Provide local businesses and industries with the one-page fact sheet that demonstrates potential educational and financial resources available for training/testing of the current and future workforce. The Woodford County Chamber of Commerce and Economic

## Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment (continued)

Development Authority will utilize the fact sheet and present it to local businesses and industries as they meet with them during one-on-one visits and make it available through electronic media communications, web sites and other communication sources that may be accessible.

2. Contact local businesses and industries to encourage them to allow current and future employees to complete the NCRC.
3. Research financial resources that can be utilized to offset any out-of-pocket costs for the completion of a GED certification (if needed), the NCRC and/or an appropriate work skills test.
4. Provide technical support resources to Woodford County's citizens and/or workforce who wish to complete their GED and/or take the Work Keys and NCRC tests. *(Potential resources may include the Central Kentucky Career Centers, Bluegrass Area Development District, Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, Woodford County Schools, higher education facilities and others who may provide support to local communities and those who wish to become or improve their employable skills.)*

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<sup>i</sup> Kentucky Department of Education

<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/administrative+resources/testing+and+reporting+/district+support/act+inc+assessments/workkeys.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://ncrc.ky.gov/FAQ.aspx>

<sup>iii</sup> Workforce Kentucky

<http://www.workforcekentucky.ky.gov/cgi/databrowsing/localAreaProfileQSResults.asp?selectedarea=WOODFORD+COUNTY&selectedindex=120&menuChoice=localAreaPro&state=true&geogArea=21>



WOODFORD COUNTY  
Chamber of Commerce

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**WORKFORCE READY COMMITTEE**

**August 31, 2011**

Attending: Ken Kerkhoff (City Council member), Brad McLeann (Chairman, Economic Development Authority), Bradlee Burtner (BGADD), Jennifer Compton (BGADD), Gerald Dotson (Fiscal Court Magistrate), Judge Executive John Coyle, Gary Finnell (retired industry), Scott Hawkins (Woodford County Schools), Daryl Smith (BGWIB), Tami Vater (Chamber of Commerce)

Chamber of Commerce Director, Tami Vater, thanked everyone for attending this meeting. Introductions were given for those in attendance. She explained the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the "Work Ready Community" application and intend to have a standing committee in place to address workforce issues in Woodford County.

Bradlee Burtner and Jennifer Compton, Bluegrass Area Development District representatives, shared with the group the Work Ready Community application process and how Woodford County can be recognized for their efforts. They referred to page 7 of the application noting the criteria for application.

The group discussed the county's current involvement in programs relative to the application criteria. Brad McLean, chairman of the Woodford County Economic Development Authority noted they are meeting with local businesses and industries at which time workforce needs may be discussed. Scott Hawkins, Superintendent of Woodford County Schools, noted they have several programs in place that would address the criteria listed in the application.

Discussion took place regarding potential members that may need to be included in future meetings of this committee. The committee identified potential programs taking place in Woodford County that may meet the requirements of the application.

It was determined by those in attendance for this group to continue meeting with the Chamber of Commerce the facilitating agency for the application process. The Chamber will work with the Bluegrass Area Development District to complete the application process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned and will meet again on September 19, 2011 at 2 p.m. Vater will invite additional participants to include Midway College, KCTCS, industry representatives and others of interest.

## Bradlee Burtner

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**From:** Tami Vater-Woodford Co Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
[tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2011 12:23 PM  
**To:** John "Bear" Coyle - Woodford Co Judge Executive; 'Fred Siegelman'; Tom Bozarth - Mayor City of Midway; Scott Hawkins - Woodford County Schools; Tim Burcham - KCTCS; Mark Manuel; brad mclean; kathy.hogg@woodfordcountyschools.us; Gilliam, Sharon; John Soper; ron.harris@sylvania.com; judy.dube@sylvania.com; Ken Kerkhoff; Fletcher, Francis S. - Faculty; Chair Business Mgmt; DanRoller48@aol.com; srenshaw@ws-construction.com  
**Cc:** bburtner@bgadd.org; Jennifer Compton; Daryl Smith  
**Subject:** woodford work ready committee  
**Attachments:** Colonels2College-Henderson example.pdf; HendersonCommCollege-scholarshipC2C.pdf

Woodford County has recently been notified of its eligibility to become a certified "Work Ready" community. The Chamber of Commerce has created a workforce ready committee and would like for you to become involved, if you haven't done so already. Key stakeholders met a few weeks ago with representatives from the Bluegrass Area Development District to explain to us what this means and how we may obtain this certification. Moving forward we would like to have a standing committee with you as a key participant to help us continue to succeed and meet the goals as set by the application process

Our objectives:

1. We need to determine if we are having the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) being given or taken by Woodford County students and citizens. If not, how can we establish a process to encourage this and assist with funding to complete the NCRC process.
2. Do we have a "soft skills" training program being used by school system, adult education and by our colleges. If we do, we need to compile the resources and document successes.
3. Can we establish a program that co-exists within the high school creating a certification process and award recognition on graduation certificate for those who complete a minimum set of standards.
4. Can we encourage KCTCS/BCTCS to create a scholarship program for those who attain that award recognition?

Please bring with you statistical information about your programs and enrollment of Woodford County students (if applicable). Additionally, if you can share success rates that would be very helpful as well.

An example of the program I would like for us to consider as a model for Woodford County is one that is in place in Henderson called "Colonels to College" where high schools students are recognized for meeting the criteria and also eligible for scholarship funding through Henderson Community College. I've attached an example of their program for your review.

We would like to ask you to join us on Monday, September 19 at 10 a.m. at the Woodford Chamber office, 190 N Main Street, Versailles as we discuss the application process further and develop our plan of action so we may apply for the recognition in mid-October.

If you cannot attend, please let me know. I look forward to seeing each of you on Monday.

Tami Vater, Executive Director, KCMSM, EDFP, ATC  
Woodford County Chamber of Commerce & Tourist Commission  
190 North Main Street  
Versailles KY 40383  
(859) 873-5122 office  
(502) 598-6745 mobile  
(877) 817-6585 fax  
E-mail: [tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

Facebook – Woodford County Chamber of Commerce  
Twitter – WCChamber, WCTourism  
Web site – [woodfordcountyinfo.com](http://woodfordcountyinfo.com)

## Bradlee Burtner

---

**From:** Tami Vater-Woodford Co Chamber of Commerce & Tourism  
[tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2011 2:46 PM  
**To:** John "Bear" Coyle - Woodford Co Judge Executive; 'Fred Siegelman'; Tom Bozarth - Mayor City of Midway; Scott Hawkins - Woodford County Schools; Tim Burcham - KCTCS; Mark Manuel; brad mclean; kathy.hogg@woodfordcountyschools.us; Gilliam, Sharon; John Soper; ron.harris@sylvania.com; judy.dube@sylvania.com; Ken Kerkhoff; Fletcher, Francis S. - Faculty; Chair Business Mgmt; DanRoller48@aol.com; srenshaw@ws-construction.com; Lynn Johnson; Jones, Sonny; jcmoroja@yahoo.com; john.e.soper@morganstanleymithbarney.com  
**Cc:** bburtner@bgadd.org; Jennifer Compton; Daryl Smith  
**Subject:** woodford work ready committee update from today meeting

Thanks for everyone who was able to make it for today's meeting. Great conversation and ideas around the room. To recap and next steps....

Attending – Sonny Jones, Gerald Dotson, John Coyle, Scott Hawkins, Gary Finnell, Ken Kerkhoff, Mark Manuel, Bradlee Burtner, Jennifer Compton, Frank Fletcher, Tami Vater.

Today we reviewed the criteria for the application process and our current success rates in each category. The only category we need to improve is the “soft skills measurement” and determine a three-year plan for our “work ready” community.

Scott Hawkins reported that the Woodford County Schools systems is involved in the state initiative for “college and career readiness” which requires the county to have a 75% rating by 2015 – they are currently at 50% and have a good program in place to accomplish this goal. He also reported there are more than 100 students participating in a tech school environment where there is some level of work skills certification (ie. welding, nursing, etc.)

Midway College, Frank Fletcher, reported that they have a 4-year leadership program where they collaborate 2 days a year with a select group of high school students following them from their freshman to senior years.

Mark Manuel, KCTCS, reported they work closely with businesses to help with their workforce education needs. He can moderately give us a number on how many Woodford County citizens have originated from our county.

The group reviewed the Henderson, Kentucky Colonels 2 College program. The consensus was they liked the concept but unsure about the criteria qualifications (may need to be more lenient for the attainment).

The group questioned if we knew what our local industries need or have expectations – it was noted there was an invitation extended to some industry representatives. It was noted that Osram does have an active education/workforce development program.

It was reported that Woodford County has no record of any one taking the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) test. Discussion took place regarding how we can resource opportunities to encourage testing. Funding needs were discussed. Potential to work with local industries to provide a select group to take the test to determine where we are on a scale of proficiency. In addition, test a select group of high schools; adults who are returning into the workforce and currently unemployed.

In conclusion, the following two priorities have been identified and will be included as part of the application process for our “plan” of action as a “work ready” community.

1. Support the Woodford County School Systems in its technical school career path program identifying and recognizing those students for their completion of the program. Possibly develop a certificate recognition at graduation or a seal to be placed on their diploma.
2. Communicate and collaborate with local industries to education, encourage and promote the technical career program that is currently in our school system and its potential for future employees.

Other suggestions included:

1. Determining if there are resources that could potential support and fund a scholarship program.
2. Host an event that encourages our industry and business HR representatives to attend and share with them our workforce resources. Also use as an assessment opportunity to gauge their current and future needs for workforce skills training.

Next meeting – October 6 at 2 p.m. Meeting location to be determined. (Need a bigger space—what a great problem to have!). Prior to the meeting Jennifer Compton will communicate directly with Scott Hawkins regarding the technical career path program. Tami will work with Jennifer and Bradlee to complete a draft of the application. It will be sent via e-mail prior to the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting for review.

Once the draft has been completed, a presentation will be made to both city councils and fiscal court to inform them of our project status. Additionally, Tami noted she is communicating with the Woodford Sun to keep them up to date on the process. (Note—received a follow up call from paper after today’s meeting to get a progress update.)

If I have missed anything, please feel free to add to the notes. See you in

Tami Vater, Executive Director, KCMSM, EDFP, ATC  
Woodford County Chamber of Commerce & Tourist Commission  
190 North Main Street  
Versailles KY 40383  
(859) 873-5122 office  
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E-mail: [tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

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WOODFORD COUNTY  
Chamber of Commerce

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**WORKFORCE READY COMMITTEE**

**October 6, 2011 Meeting Notes**

Attending: Ken Kerkhoff, Bradlee Burtner, Brad McLean, Sonny Jones, Judge Executive John Coyle, Sharon Gilliam, Scott Hawkins, Tami Vater

Tami Vater, Chamber Executive Director welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were provided as there were new attendees.

Notes from the September 19, 2011 meeting were provided and briefly reviewed.

Scott Hawkins, Superintendent of Woodford County Public Schools provided a quick overview of the Danville/Boyle County program that was discussed at the last meeting. He mentioned that their program was not in operation but still in the planning process.

He shared that the Woodford County School College to Career Readiness program continues to do well. They are currently at 55% with a goal of 75% by 2015. Other programs in place include Skills USA, a technical school certification. Woodford County also has an ACT prep program for junior level students using an IPAD application. This "app" is also being made available to 100+ students who haven't meant benchmarks to assist them in achieving a better score. In addition, there is a KOSA certification and in the future hope to expand it to include nursing, family consumer sciences, business. Some needs include funding resources noting the cost of the Prep Me program is \$30,000+ however reaching one-third of students (about 400) and Work Keys assistance.

There continues to focus around the topic of communicating more effectively with local businesses to share our "work ready" resources at the high school level and post-secondary.

Bradlee Burtner with the Bluegrass Area Development provided an update on the application processing noting there was confusing in the application date. Our application will be due in December for approval. He noted that we need to focus on two areas of the application:

1. NCRC (National Career Readiness Certification) - we need to raise our level of NCRC participant testing to 15% of the current Woodford County workforce. At this time, we do not have knowledge of this test being completed by any Woodford County employee. Ken Kerkhoff has agreed to work with Tami Vater, Chamber Executive Director to complete a plan of action which would include marketing and have a draft complete by Friday, October 21.

2. Soft skills measurement - we can use the College/Career Readiness program and its successes to meet this requirement.

Brad McLean, Chairman of the Woodford County Economic Development Authority, and Sonny Jones, EDA board member, noted they were continuing to meeting with local businesses and will support information regarding the programs we've discussed today.

Discussion took place regarding the desire to recognize high school students who meet or excel test scores set through the various programs Mr. Hawkins discussed early. It was suggested to provide them with a certificate of recognition as an on-going activity.

It was clearly noted that there is a strong need for financial assistance to cover the cost of testing resources such as the Prep Me, Work Keys program, NCRS and other skills testing programs in Woodford County.

Another idea included the potential to work with local court officers to develop a "diversion" program where assistance could be provided to obtain a skills and/or minimum education (GED) certification.

In conclusion, the task to be completed before the next meeting was to have a draft statement for item #1 as mentioned by Bradlee Burtner by October 21. This draft would then be provided to the BGADD to include in our Work Ready Community application. Once the application process is complete, we will make presentations to the various city and council legislative officials.

Next meeting date has been set for Thursday, November 3 at 2 p.m. to be held in the Community Room at the Woodford Chamber of Commerce office, 190 North Main Street, Versailles.

Meeting adjourned.



WOODFORD COUNTY  
Chamber of Commerce

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**WORKFORCE READY COMMITTEE**

**November 3, 2011**

Attending: Ken Kerkhoff (City Council member), Sonny Jones (Economic Development Authority), Bradlee Burtner (BGADD), Gerald Dotson (Fiscal Court Magistrate), Judge Executive John Coyle, Scott Hawkins (Woodford County Schools), Tammy Bramlett (Woodford County Adult Education), Tami Vater (Chamber of Commerce)

Chamber of Commerce Director, Tami Vater, thanked everyone for attending this meeting. Introductions were provided.

Vater presented the draft marketing plan as well as the EDA's Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E)'s plan. After review, the group accepted the draft marketing plan to be included in the Work Ready Application.

Bradlee Burtner noted he has reviewed the application, the draft marketing plan and has noted four items that still need to be addressed to include:

1. How to make presentation of the package for application.
2. Should the graduation rate be based as a 2010 or 2011 numbers?
3. August 31, 2011 meeting notes need to be provided.
4. Need a narrative of how the county plans to address increasing the "education attainment" rate over a five year period. (Vater, Kerkhoff)

Burtner also noted he is confirming the submission date for the application. The group indicated they would like to have the final application ready for submission no later than December 1.

The group discussed its marketing plan and the first steps. Vater, Jones and Kerkhoff will begin developing a draft of the one-page "fact" sheet for Woodford County.

The plan will be presented to the public at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Chamber breakfast event. All representatives from both city councils and fiscal court will be invited.

Burtner will inform Vater of the January meeting date when the application will be presented for approval. The group will be invited to offer their support for the application at that time.

No further business was discussed, the meeting concluded.



**WOODFORD COUNTY**  
Chamber of Commerce

190 North Main Street  
Versailles KY 40383  
859.873.5122 phone 1.877.817.6585 fax

[woodfordcountyinfo.com](http://woodfordcountyinfo.com)  
[chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

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## WOODFORD COUNTY'S WORK READY COMMITTEE

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Tami Vater, Executive Director	Woodford Co. Chamber of Commerce 190 N. Main St, Versailles KY 40383	859.873.5122 <a href="mailto:tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com">tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com</a>
Brad McLean, Chairman	Woodford Co. Economic Development 103 N Main St, Ste. 4, Versailles KY 40383	859.351.5366 <a href="mailto:thmclean5@yahoo.com">thmclean5@yahoo.com</a>
John Coyle, Judge Executive	Woodford County Government 103 N Main St, Versailles KY 40383	859.873.4139 <a href="mailto:jcoyle@woodfordcountyky.org">jcoyle@woodfordcountyky.org</a>
Gerald Dotson, County Magistrate	260 Montgomery Avenue Versailles KY 40383	859.396.5815 <a href="mailto:gerald53@windstream.net">gerald53@windstream.net</a>
Gary Finnell, retired industry	833 Mildred St Versailles KY 40383	859.621.2971 no email
Scott Hawkins, Superintendent	Woodford County Public Schools 330 Pisgah Pk, Versailles KY 40383	859.879.4600 <a href="mailto:scott.hawkins@woodford.kyschools.us">scott.hawkins@woodford.kyschools.us</a>
Daryl Smith, Chairman	Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board 699 Perimeter Dr, Lexington, KY 40517	859.221.5535 <a href="mailto:daryl.smith@leg-ku.com">daryl.smith@leg-ku.com</a>
Tammy Bramlett, Director	Woodford County Adult Education 229 S Main St, Versailles	859.873.2421 x.2228 <a href="mailto:tammy.bramlett@woodford.kyschools.us">tammy.bramlett@woodford.kyschools.us</a>
Sonny Jones, EDA Board Member	204 Breckenridge Lane Versailles, KY 40383	859.338.3270 <a href="mailto:sonny.jones@anthem.com">sonny.jones@anthem.com</a>
Ken Kerkhoff, City Council Member	Versailles City Council/City of Versailles 225 S Stourbridge Rd, Versailles KY 40383	859.433.5966 <a href="mailto:K.Kerkhoff@Live.com">K.Kerkhoff@Live.com</a>
Mark Manuel, Vice President Workforce & Institutional Dev.	Bluegrass Community & Technical College 164 Opportunity Way, N-121, Lexington KY 40511	859.509.9689 <a href="mailto:mark.manuel@kctcs.edu">mark.manuel@kctcs.edu</a>
Frank Fletcher, Business Mgmt Faculty Member	Midway College Stephens St, Midway, KY 40324	859.846.5330 <a href="mailto:ffletcher@midway.edu">ffletcher@midway.edu</a>
Jennifer Compton WIA Associate Director	Bluegrass Area Development District 699 Perimeter Dr, Lexington, KY 40517	859.269.8021 <a href="mailto:jcompton@bgadd.org">jcompton@bgadd.org</a>
Bradlee Burtner WIA Business Services Manager	Bluegrass Area Development District 699 Perimeter Dr, Lexington, KY 40517	859.269.8021 <a href="mailto:bburtner@bgadd.org">bburtner@bgadd.org</a>

**Woodford County Economic Development Authority  
103 South Main Street  
Woodford County Courthouse - Suite 204  
Versailles, KY 40383**

The Woodford County Economic Development Authority offers its commitment to the Kentucky Work Ready Program for the City and Woodford County as a whole. Furthermore, we commit to actively participate in the program, support its efforts and promoting its value to our local businesses and constituents.

The Woodford County EDA will demonstrate its commitment as follows:

Appointing a representative to participate and attend planning committee meetings;

Actively support the program plan and accept the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential in our hiring and/or promotions processes to local businesses;

And, offer guidance and advice to the committee members to assure our goals and objectives are clearly defined and measured successfully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad McLean', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad McLean  
Chairman, Woodford County EDA



## WOODFORD COUNTY FISCAL COURT

FAX: 859-873-0196

103 South Main  
Woodford County Courthouse  
Versailles, Kentucky 40383

Phone: 859-873-5701

November 23, 2011

The Woodford County Fiscal Court respectfully offers its commitment to the Kentucky Work Ready Program for Woodford County. Furthermore, we commit to actively participate in the program, support its efforts and promoting its value to our local businesses and constituents.

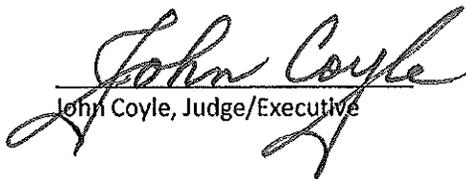
The Woodford County Fiscal Court will demonstrate its commitment as follows:

Appointing a representative to participate and attend planning committee meetings;

Actively support the program plan and accept the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential in our hiring and/or promotions processes to local businesses;

And, offer guidance and advice to the committee members to assure our goals and objectives are clearly defined and measured successfully.

Sincerely,

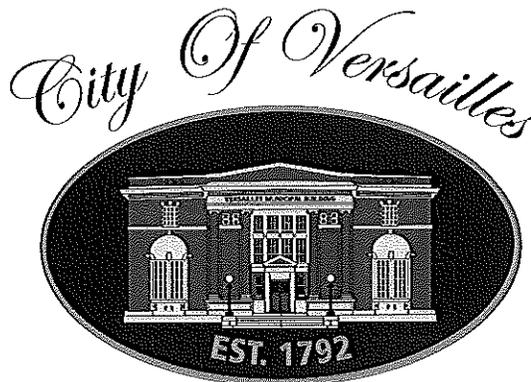
  
John Coyle, Judge/Executive

  
Kentucky  
UNRIVALLED BEAUTY

Fred Siegelman  
Mayor  
(859) 873-4581

Allison B. White  
Clerk/Treasurer  
(859) 873-5436

Bruce Southworth  
Public Works Director  
(859) 873-2245



"A Renaissance Kentucky City"

William K. Moore  
City Attorney  
(859) 873-6207

John F. Wilhoit  
Police Chief  
(859) 873-3126

Frankie Shuck  
Fire Chief  
(859) 873-5829

November 28, 2011

Tami Vater, Executive Director  
Woodford County Chamber of Commerce  
190 N. Main Street  
Versailles, KY 40383

Re: Kentucky Work Ready Program

Dear Ms. Vater:

The City of Versailles respectfully offers its commitment to the Kentucky Work Ready Program for Woodford County. Furthermore, we commit to actively participate in the program, support its efforts and promoting its value to our local businesses and constituents.

The City of Versailles will demonstrate its commitment as follows:

Appointing a representative to participate and attend planning committee meetings;

Actively support the program plan and accept the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential in our hiring and/or promotions processes to local businesses;

And, offer guidance and advice to the committee members to assure our goals and objectives are clearly defined and measured successfully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Siegelman", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Fred Siegelman, Mayor



196 South Main Street, P.O. Box 625, Versailles, Kentucky 40383  
(859) 873-5969 Facsimile



November 28, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Woodford County Public Schools offer its commitment to the Kentucky Work Ready Program for the City and Woodford County as a whole. Furthermore, we commit to actively participating in the program, supporting its efforts and promoting its value to our local businesses and constituents.

Woodford County Public Schools will demonstrate its commitment as follows:

Appoint a representative to participate and attend planning committee meetings;

Actively support the program plan and accept the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential in our hiring and/or promotions processes to local businesses;

And, offer guidance and advice to the committee members to assure our goals and objectives are clearly defined and measured successfully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Scott Hawkins".

D. Scott Hawkins  
Superintendent

**BOARD MEMBERS**

AMBROSE WILSON IV, *Chair* • DEBBY EDELEN, *Vice Chair*

MARGIE CLEVELAND • BHERRI SPRINGATE • PAUL B. STAHLER

*EQUAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES*

# Bluegrass Area Development District



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November 28, 2011

Dear Work Ready Community Steering Committee:

Please consider this letter documentation of our commitment to the Kentucky Work Ready Community program for Woodford County. The Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board commits to participate in the program, support the program, and work to spread the word and to gain participation from others in the Woodford County community.

In addition to the above, we are willing to participate by:

- Sending a representative to the Woodford County Work Ready Community committee meetings
- Attending periodic community meetings to discuss the program with others, and
- Continuing to promote the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential

**Organization:** Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board

**Key Contact Name:** Daryl Smith

**Key Contact Title:** Chair

**Key Contact Phone Number:** (859) 221-5535

**Key Contact Email Address:** daryl.smith@lge-ku.com

**Address:** Bluegrass Area Development District

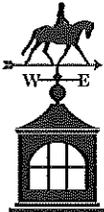
699 Perimeter Drive

**City:** Lexington

**County:** Fayette/Woodford

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daryl Smith", is written over a horizontal line.



WOODFORD COUNTY  
Chamber of Commerce

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190 North Main Street  
Versailles KY 40383  
859.873.5122 phone 1.877.817.6585 fax

[woodfordcountyinfo.com](http://woodfordcountyinfo.com)  
[chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:chamber@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

November 29, 2011

Kentucky Work Ready Communities Steering Committee  
Kentucky Workforce Investment Board  
500 Mero Street, Capital Plaza Tower, Third Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Work Ready Communities Steering Committee:

The Woodford County Chamber of Commerce is strongly committed to the Kentucky Work Ready Community program for Woodford County. The Chamber of Commerce commits to continue as an active participant in the program, support the program, and work to gain participation from others in the Woodford County community.

In addition to the above, we are willing to demonstrate support by:

- Attending the Woodford County Work Ready Community committee meetings;
- Participating in periodic community meetings to discuss the program with others, and
- Continuing to promote the National Career Readiness Certificate as a valid work readiness credential.

The Chamber makes a commitment to be the facilitating organization for the community-based group to assure Woodford County's Work Ready Committee meets its objectives and successes demonstrated.

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in such a great program as the Kentucky Work Ready Communities initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tami".

Tami Vater, KCMSM, EDFP, ATC, CTA  
Executive Director  
Woodford County Chamber of Commerce  
190 N. Main Street  
Versailles, KY 40383  
[tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com](mailto:tamiv@woodfordcountyinfo.com)

## **Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment**

Woodford County's Work Ready Committee will assist and work collaboratively with local educational resources, government agencies, businesses and industries assessing current and future workforce skills and training needs in Woodford County;

encourage Woodford County's workforce to complete a minimum education certificate (GED or high school diploma) and a skills assessment test (such as Work Keys<sup>i</sup> and National Career Readiness Certificate<sup>ii</sup>);

and research and support opportunities for financial incentives to offset the cost of education and skills assessment training and/or testing. The completion of testing is to evidentially demonstrate to potential employers current workplace skills levels that can be used as a predictor of qualified employability.

The Committee will educate and inform current local officials and governing agencies, community organizations and businesses about resources available for creating an employable, qualified workforce. In so doing the Committee will:

1. Develop a printed fact sheet that demonstrates available resources for training and assessments for current and future workforce.
2. Make presentations to Midway and Versailles city councils and Woodford County Fiscal Court to inform them of the "Work Read Communities" initiative and the recent committee activities.
3. Make presentations to other governing agencies and community organizations to educate them on available resources for training and assessment of current and future workforce in Woodford County.
4. Engage local media contacts to promote "work ready" skills training and testing programs to increase public awareness of these services available to Woodford County residents.

Over a three year period, the Committee will be able to demonstrate successful completion of the NCRC of no less than 15 percent<sup>iii</sup> of Woodford County's current available workforce, ages 18-64. The Committee will:

1. Provide local businesses and industries with the one-page fact sheet that demonstrates potential educational and financial resources available for training/testing of the current and future workforce. The Woodford County Chamber of Commerce and Economic

## Narrative 2: National Career Readiness Certificate Attainment (continued)

Development Authority will utilize the fact sheet and present it to local businesses and industries as they meet with them during one-on-one visits and make it available through electronic media communications, web sites and other communication sources that may be accessible.

2. Contact local businesses and industries to encourage them to allow current and future employees to complete the NCRC.
3. Research financial resources that can be utilized to offset any out-of-pocket costs for the completion of a GED certification (if needed), the NCRC and/or an appropriate work skills test.
4. Provide technical support resources to Woodford County's citizens and/or workforce who wish to complete their GED and/or take the Work Keys and NCRC tests. *(Potential resources may include the Central Kentucky Career Centers, Bluegrass Area Development District, Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, Woodford County Schools, higher education facilities and others who may provide support to local communities and those who wish to become or improve their employable skills.)*

---

<sup>i</sup> Kentucky Department of Education

<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/administrative+resources/testing+and+reporting+/district+support/act+inc+assessments/workkeys.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://ncrc.ky.gov/FAQ.aspx>

<sup>iii</sup> Workforce Kentucky

<http://www.workforcekentucky.ky.gov/cgi/databrowsing/localAreaProfileQSResults.asp?selectedarea=WOODFORD+COUNTY&selectedindex=120&menuChoice=localAreaPro&state=true&geogArea=21>

### **Narrative 3: Educational Attainment**

Woodford County ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in Kentucky for adults 25 year of age and older with some college or an associate degree (33.8%). In the past 10 years, Woodford County has continued to increase its level of educational attainment. According to information from the Kentucky State Data Center, it has increased by nearly 6 percent since 2000.

Woodford County's objective is to increase the county's post-secondary education attainment rate for two-year degree programs for adults 18 years of age and older by six percent over the next five years from 33% to 39%.

To accomplish this Woodford County will:

1. Work collaboratively with its post-secondary education institutions to encourage local citizens to improve their quality of life through higher-education attainment providing them with local resources and technical support.
2. Support the Commonwealth's initiative "Stronger By Degrees".
3. Continue to promote college readiness standards to high school aged youth supporting the iPad application "Prep Me".
4. Recognize high school aged youth for reaching scholastic achievements above and beyond benchmark standards.
5. Elevate teacher excellence and performance by supporting the Woodford County school system in providing high quality professional development resources and training.
6. Support the Woodford County Chamber of Commerce's partnership with the Kentucky Chamber Foundation by encouraging annual enrollment into the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Institute for School Principals and recognizing local principals for their participation.
7. Support the Woodford County Library's participation in the "Destination College Savings" program, a nationwide collaborative summer library program to encourage children to continue reading throughout the summer sponsored by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.

Policy Objective 7 of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education's Stronger by Degrees is to *increase educational attainment and quality of life in Kentucky communities through regional stewardship, public service, and community outreach.*

### **Narrative 3: Educational Attainment (continued)**

On November 17, 2011 a meeting was held in Woodford County to report to American Association of University women (AAUW) members and guests about the many opportunities for young women in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. This is an example of Woodford County creating awareness about possibilities for educational attainment. Woodford County will continue to embrace this initiative and other similar initiatives as it strives to raise the post-secondary education attainment rate for two-year degree programs over the next five years.

## **Narrative 5: Soft Skills Program**

The Woodford County Public School system is involved in a state initiative for “college and career readiness” which requires the county to have a 75% rating by 2015. The school system is currently at 55% and is striving to improve on this. More than 100 students are participating in a tech school environment where there is some level of work skills certification (welding, nursing, etc.)

To identify students as college and career ready, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) has approved indicators of readiness that include students meeting: (1) the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education’s Systemwide Benchmarks on the ACT in Reading, English, and Mathematics; or (2) the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education’s College Placement Test Benchmarks; or (3) career academic and technical benchmarks.

To be college ready, students must meet benchmarks on one of the following: ACT, COMPASS, or KYOTE.

To be career ready, students must meet benchmarks for one requirement in a Career Academic area and one requirement in a Career Technical area. Career Academic areas include the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and the ACT Work Keys (Applied Math, Locating Information, and Reading for Information). Career Technical areas include the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment (KOSSA) and Industry Certificates.

To be both college and career ready, students must meet at least one benchmark from each area – the ACT, COMPASS, or KYOTE to be college ready and the KOSSA or Industry Certificates to be career ready.

The College/Career Readiness Rate (CCRR) is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates who have successfully met an indicator or readiness for college/career with the total number of graduates. The indicators of readiness include student performance on the ACT, completion of college placement tests or attainment of Career-Ready Academic and Career-Ready Technical benchmarks. The KBE approved a half-point bonus to be added to the report for students who are considered both college and career ready.

Midway College has a four year leadership program where they collaborate with a select group of high school students following them from their freshman to senior years. KCTCS works closely with businesses in Woodford County to help with their workforce education needs. Specifically, KCTCS has a “Work To Learn” program that places individuals in a working environment while allowing them to continue their education.

## **Narrative 5: Soft Skills Program (continued)**

The Work Ready Communities Committee will provide support and guidance as needed to the Woodford County Schools and their students recognizing benchmarks achieved through completion of study components, soft skills and work ethics training. The Committee will:

- Promote Woodford County Schools' programs to local businesses and industries encouraging partnerships with students who wish to utilize an accelerated or technical training base program to become employed within a skilled trade.
- Continue to support the Woodford County Schools' "Prep Me" program and research potential funding sources to support this program and increase its exposure to students grades 9-12.
- Promote and support a certificate of recognition for those students who have achieved or excelled above designated benchmarks promoting improved work skills ethics and leadership.
- Increase awareness with local public schools teachers and counselors that work skills training programs are a viable option to those who wish not to attend college.

Woodford County Adult Education provides basic skills preparation in an educational and employment foundational skills targeted instructional process. Workplace Essential Skills (WES) are provided in either generic career or functionally contexted curricula. And, computer, employability, and work-related soft skills instruction are provided with Kentucky Adult Education approved academic instruction.

An assortment of skills is taught as part of Woodford County Adult Education's Job Readiness Activity (JRA) classes. Classes typically begin on the first Monday of the month and meet Monday-Thursday for a total of 16 days for each month-long session. A list of skills taught in the JRA classes is below:

- Computer skills – Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher
- Matching Skills and Jobs
- Applying for Jobs – Paper/Pen and On-line
- Resumes, Cover Letters and References
- Math and Language Skills
- Interviewing – Mock Interview
- Workplace Safety
- On-line Job Searches
- Time Management
- Self-Esteem
- Stress Management
- Customer Satisfaction
- Dress for Success
- Problem Solving

### **Narrative 5: Soft Skills Program (continued)**

- Developing Teamwork
- Makeover Day – Mary Kay Representative (free)
- Communicating with Supervisors/Co-workers
- Speakers – Employability Skills, Workplace Expectations (including work behavior and attitudes)

The Woodford County Work Ready Communities Committee supports and endorses the soft skills programs offered by the Woodford County Public School system, Woodford County Adult Education, KCTCS, and Midway College. The Committee recognizes that the programs:

- Provide evidence of employer engagement in the development process, including representation of the county's most prolific businesses and industries.
- Provide evidence that employers recognize achievement of work ethic or soft skills credential in their hiring/advancement processes.
- Include measurable goals for annual improvement in the raw number and percentage of workforce credentialed.
- Include a strategy to assure employers of the sustainability of the programs.
- Address the following topical areas: attendance and punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking.

The Committee will continue to create public awareness of the soft skills programs offered in Woodford County and promote the participants and graduates of the programs to local employers.



## WORKFORCE - WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE PREPARING FOR TOMORROW.

The Work Ready Communities Initiative aims to make Woodford County a better place to work by creating an educated, employable workforce capable of competing in today's challenging economy. Through a broad collaboration of resources, the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Authority, elected officials, professional educators and Workforce Investment Board advocate to educate, engage and empower its businesses and citizens to have the knowledge and resources to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For the job seeker, the program offers resources and services to those who want a higher education. As a central clearing house for higher educational learning, citizens can receive a broad spectrum of services and technical assistance to assist them in improving their knowledge to be competitive in today's global economy.

For business, the program offers resources and services to those who wish to employ a skilled and educated workforce. Through the development of resources, testing modules and training consortiums, and incentives, the program assists businesses in discovering solutions for their employment needs.

For More Information

859.873.5122

### FOR BUSINESS

- Pre-employment testing
- Application screening
- Customized training
- On the job training
- Job posting and recruitment
- Labor market information
- Specialized benefits & resources
- Tax credits & incentives
- Low interest loan programs
- Mobile Career Center
- National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)

### FOR JOB SEEKERS

- Adult basic education & testing
- Certificate & degree programs
- Skills training
- Resume assistance
- Accelerated learning
- Job search & referral
- Customized job placement
- Computer training courses
- Interview preparation
- Job readiness skills
- NCRC testing

# Woodford County's Work Ready Community



Work collaboratively with educational resources, government, business and industry to identify issues and develop solutions creating an educated, employable workforce.

# Our Team



## What Can We Offer?

- Advocacy
- Skills training & assessment
- Incentives
- Loan & Grants
- Business retention
- Professional development
- Job readiness
- Pre-Employment testing
- Application screening
- Job placement assistance
- NCRC testing & certification
- Leadership development
- Work ethics
- Team building
- Critical thinking
- Customized training
- Specialized training modules
- Consortiums
- Recognition and promotion
- Career preparation
- College preparation
- Accelerated learning



# Application Requirements & Goals



## Demonstration of Community Commitment

1. Economic Development Authority members
2. Elected Officials from city/county govt.
3. Education - Public Schools, Adult Ed, KCTCS, Midway College, Library
4. BG WIB members & BGADD staff
5. Chamber of Commerce Director & business mbrs

## Soft Skills Measurement

- Leadership Woodford (high school)
- Midway College Leadership (high school)
- JRA (training for job skills, work ethics)
- Adult Ed (training & certification, skills)
- EDA to facilitate one-on-one visits (BRE) to encourage NCRC testing current/potential
- Work closely with Central Kentucky Career Center using their programs & assessments, certifications to coordinate with local business/industry
- Educate and engage Chamber members about resources available for soft skills training
- Work closely with school teachers, counselors to continue speaking opportunities with students demonstrating importance of work ethics

Increase our GED rate by 20% (2305 do not have GED)

# Our Plan



Educate and inform our local officials and governing agencies, community organizations and business/industry about workforce resources and training.



- A. Fact sheet for general promotion – job seekers and businesses.
- EDA one-on-one visits; discuss NCRC testing, soft skills training
  - Chamber – emails, social networking, business workshops, etc.
- B. Presentation to local governments
- Member representatives provide updates at all meetings
- C. Communications, Marketing, Social Media to provide updates, available resources, and successes

# Our Plan



**Over a three year period, demonstrate successful completion of the NCRC of no less than 15 percent of Woodford County's current available workforce ages 18-64.**

- A. Distribute info sheet and visit one on one to provide information on resources and training available (contact no less than 300 businesses by June 1, 2012 through one-on-visits and communication resources).
- B. Partner with current business and industry to engage no less than 100 current employees to complete the NCRC test (prior to Oct. 1, 2012)
- C. Partner with current business and industry to allow no less than 100 prospective employees take the NCRC test. (prior to Oct. 1, 2012)
- D. Engage city and county government officials, EDA and Chamber to fund the cost of testing these 200 individuals (est. \$7,500).
- E. Engage city and county government officials, EDA, Chamber, and business partners to fund the cost of NCRC testing at a 50/50 value (est. \$30,000 over a three year period)

# Our Plan



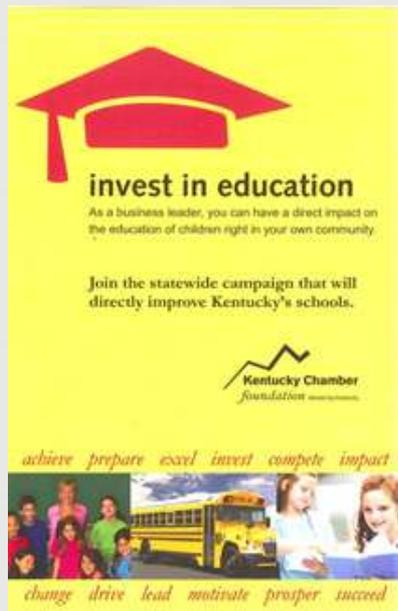
**Become the local resource for business, industry, job seekers and employees wishing to expand their educational knowledge and skills training to become more competitive in today's local economy.**

- A. Develop a one-stop Web site that provides links, resources, and assistance to anyone wishing to seek more information (by June 1, 2012)
- B. Identify a central location for assessments, certifications and specialized training.
- C. Communications plan promoting programs, successes, and resources (ie. articles, poster & brochures, social networking, workshops, etc.)

# Our Plan



Support our local schools, guidance counselors, adult education programs and students through resource development, funding, recognition, professional development training, soft skills and work ethics training.



- A. Work collaboratively with school counselors, teachers and youth programs to encourage a program that teaches positive work ethics, leadership, team building, critical thinking. (reach no less than 500 youth over a three year period) (speakers, pamphlets, 4-H, youth groups, etc.)
- B. Recognize programs and individuals which reinforce progress towards defined goals and benchmarks.
- C. Develop a resource guide demonstrating resources and training available through traditional and non-traditional programs (reach out to no less than 5,000 residents in Woodford County). (Web & print copy)
- D. Continue as a foundation partner with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's "invest in education" and Kentucky Leadership Institute for School Principals.



# What Are We Doing?



- ❧ Develop funding resources to offset cost of testing for the NCRS and specialized skills training courses for expanding business/industry needs.
- ❧ Continue to assess and track successes and monitor programs to assure they meet local business/industry needs.



- ❧ Become the community's one-stop resource for business/industry and job seekers as their solutions for training, assessment, testing, etc.

# Some examples of our progress.



**Invest in education**

As a parent leader, you can have a direct impact on the future of our children right in your own community.

A statewide campaign that will improve Kentucky's schools.

**Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**  
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**WORKFORCE - WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

**DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE PREPARING FOR TOMORROW.**

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For the 2007 employer, the program offers incentives and services to those who want to employ a higher education, or a college training focus. Through the development of resources, training models and creation of formal agreements of services, the program seeks to assist in improving their knowledge to be competitive in today's global economy.

For business, the program offers incentives and services to those who want to employ a higher education, or a college training focus. Through the development of resources, training models and creation of formal agreements of services, the program seeks to assist in improving their knowledge to be competitive in today's global economy.

**For More Information**  
859-873-3122

**KCTCS KENTUCKY COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM**

**WORKFORCI SOLUTION!**  
CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYEE TRAINING

**KCTCS Workforce Solutions**

KCTCS is a Kentucky provider of workforce education. Dedicated to programs and services that address the needs of employers and the workforce, we are committed to providing customized training solutions for our clients.

**What We Do**

- Provide a wide range of workforce education and training services
- Develop a wide range of workforce education and training services
- Provide a wide range of workforce education and training services
- Provide a wide range of workforce education and training services
- Provide a wide range of workforce education and training services

**Workforce Results**

Our clients receive a wide range of workforce education and training services. Our programs are designed to meet the needs of employers and the workforce. We are committed to providing customized training solutions for our clients.

**Customized Training**

Our clients receive a wide range of workforce education and training services. Our programs are designed to meet the needs of employers and the workforce. We are committed to providing customized training solutions for our clients.

**Prepare for your GED**

You do not have to prepare for college or technical school and want to refresh your skills, we offer:

- **FREE** assessment that help you discover your strengths
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**Prepare for college**

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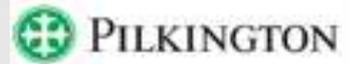
- **FREE** assessments that help you discover your strengths
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**Upgrade your skills**

Sometimes the only thing that stands between you and the job you want is better math and reading skills. Make sure you are prepared.

- **FREE** assessments that help you discover your strengths
- **FREE**, confidential morning and evening classes
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# Summit Workshop



## Summit focuses on gaining community work-ready status



DR. JOHN HAYEK, senior vice president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, said that \$42 million more for Woodford County, every year, likely awaits if Kentucky can improve its education over 20 years, to match the nationwide average. (Photo by Stephen Burnett)

BY STEPHEN BURNETT  
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

If contributors at a workforce-development summit held Friday, Dec. 2, get their wish, Woodford will be the first Kentucky county to be certified by the state as a work-ready community.

But how to attain that status, and why to support the effort, and what benefits the area may receive, was the summit's focus. It was hosted by the Woodford County Chamber of Commerce, but the effort is due to many different community groups and leaders coming together to seek the work-ready certification, said chamber executive director Tami Vatter before the conference.

"Our first meeting (between local organizers) was August thirty-first, and we've had a core group of people using the guidelines of the work-ready communities application," she said. "We have representatives from the county Economic Development Authority (EDA),

the chamber, business and industry, city council. ... Everybody's been very supportive and very committed to being at every meeting we've had scheduled. We're really excited about the momentum."

Many of those same people attended the Friday summit for the breakfast and two-hour event at Kentucky Community and Technical College System headquarters.

The first speaker was Tom West, executive director of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB). That agency has set up several criteria Woodford seeks to fulfill to be state-certified as a work-ready community — a prospect attractive to employers and workers, West said.

"This is not just an application for certification," to be put on a county's economic development Web site, West said. That public ranking will be part of the effort and will make a county more appealing, he added. But "it's really a framework to drive change ... on the local level," he said.

Already Woodford has filed its application with the agency. But "we're not stopping at an application," Vatter added.

West recognized that Woodford had been the first Kentucky county to submit its application. "So give yourself a hand," he said. But he added that other Kentucky counties are striving for the same, and qualifications do not, and cannot, come simply from being a Kentucky county. "The bar is high on these things," he said. "If we don't set the bar high, then it's meaningless."

### How to become work-ready

The work-ready certification concept began with KWIB putting together a new plan over nine months. It had nine goals, West said: to align education with workforce development, align economic development with the same, simplify existing unemployment and hiring systems, and make a system better focused on customers. Those include people who enter unemployment offices, and the businesses who in a sense are seeking a product at the process's end, he said.

West acknowledged that some of KWIB's ideas have been controversial. But ultimately they are about changing a culture. "We wanted a system that was demand-driven, that was business-led, and was solutions-based," he said. "Their job is not to sell somebody a program or to fit them into the program. Their job is to develop a solution to that by using those programs."

One step is to change the branding of "the unemployment office," he said. That involves not only making new logos and marketing, but working with state career centers to break down barriers and promote cooperation. In that, both potential employees and potential employers would benefit, West explained. Employers, for example, often spend at least \$15,000 to hire an employee, a needless expense if the employee proves not to be a good match.

To be certified, a Kentucky county — only counties or combinations of counties can qualify, West said — must meet at least six criteria.

- Having certain high school graduation rates. "You've got to meet a state goal," he said.
- Promoting more potential employees taking and passing a test to gain a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), available at local career-placement centers.
- Demonstrating commitment, showing that everyone supports the local effort. "This, to me, is what is really going to drive that change — the people in this room," West said.

• Encouraging area residents to have higher education, at least an associate's degree.

• Developing "soft skills." West said. These include work ethics such as arriving on time, being properly dressed, and knowing how to communicate, lead, and work on a team. "These are the things that cause that turnover," if employees lack them, he went on. So a certified work-ready community must have a program to train people, West said.

• Ensuring area residents not only have Internet access, but are digitally literate.

All those standards are based on what businesses say they need from an area's workforce, and didn't originate only from a group of government

bureaucrats sitting in a room, West added.

### Becoming work-ready: jobs

Later, Vatter summarized what Woodford had already done so far.

Previously, the chamber director has said that the county has already met some qualifications, such as having more than 90 percent of Woodford houses that have Internet access, with more available at the community library. But in the county, about 14 percent of people don't have a high-school diploma — something that area leaders must continue addressing, Vatter said.

The community must also address the workplace ethics. Vatter said one company she knows had recently interviewed about 600 people, and were only able to employ about a dozen because of the interview subjects' use of drugs, or lack of skill sets, or simply failure to show up for work on time. Unemployment rates may be high in a still-struggling economy, Vatter added, but in some cases, businesses simply aren't able to hire people because they don't qualify.

Finding qualified applicants, and qualifying other applicants to match them with employers, is a goal of Central Kentucky Career Centers, said Kevin Moore, a business specialist with the chain. It covers 17 counties, with offices in Danville, Georgetown, Lexington, Richmond, Winchester, and Frankfort, the last of which serves Woodford, Moore said. They also administer the NCRC tests that help employees get an edge, which covers topics such as reading for information, use of mathematics, and locating information — all vital to any sort of job, he added.

### Becoming work-ready: education

Equally vital is to begin teaching workplace skills to students at earlier ages, said Woodford County Schools Superintendent Scott Hawkins. By the year 2018, 80 percent of all jobs needed by graduates will require at least a two-year degree, Hawkins said. But increasingly, students will also compete not only with other Americans, but with people from other nations. That will include China, he said, which by 2016 will be the world's largest English-speaking country.

"When I went to school and you all went to school, we kind of knew what it was going to look like when we got out," Hawkins said. "We could see it. Right now, we can't see that. ... So our focus has to transform, into (asking) 'what skills are necessary for kids to

be successful?'"

One solution is very simple: reading to your child, aloud, at least three times a week. Studies show that children who grow up that way will far outlast their peers on exams, he said.

As for Woodford's schools, they haven't been doing as well as leaders would like, Hawkins continued. About 55 percent of Woodford County High School students are considered college-ready, based on their ACT scores. Meanwhile, 38 percent of Woodford students must take remedial courses, and that rate is not acceptable and requires more work, he said.

Adding technology to Woodford's schools, such as the schools' recent project to give every high school student a new iPad, will help with promoting literacy and knowledge, Hawkins added.

Earlier, Dr. John Hayek, senior vice president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, outlined potential rewards of changes to Kentucky schools. If the state can increase its educational attainment to match the national average, over 20 years, the state's residents would gain a total of about \$140 billion more of personal income, he said. That equals about \$7 billion a year, he added, and for a community of Woodford's size, specifically \$42 million more.

In the last 10 years, Kentucky has already been making many changes to promote college education and higher graduation rates, Hayek said. But the state has been paying for much of that education, and that is not a sustainable path, especially given tuition increases, he added.

### Becoming work-ready: other local changes

Toward the end, Brad McLean, chair of the county's EDA, summarized what that board has been doing to promote economic development in the area.

EDA has reopened communications with state officials, and recently implemented a specific business retention and expansion program, McLean said. Already that has been paying off, such as helping one local industry — auto-glass manufacturer Pilkington Global — seek expansion and jobs, and one development — the Versailles Commons on Lexington Road — get started. The Commons project, he added, should begin building by March and could later bring a hotel.

More local businesses are considering expansions, and may be heartened if Woodford's application to be certified work-ready is approved, McLean said.

Finally, Vatter closed with responses to a few questions, one of whom asked about how the area can better retain its youth and attract others. Promoting a sense of community pride is essential to that goal, along with ensuring better-paying job opportunities are here, Vatter said. "Woodford County is improving upon that," she added, and cited the county's Felling Springs Recreation Arts and Recreation Center, the area's community sports programs, and the community theater.

Promoting the state work-ready certification is a collaborative project shared by all manner of community leaders and businesses, Vatter reiterated. "Everybody wants the same thing — we want a better quality of life for Woodford County," she said before the conference. "This is moving probably a lot faster than I had expected. There's energy there."

Woodford's application should go before a board of review next month, then before

a main board in February, Vatter said at the conference. By

March, local organizers will know more.



# What We Want to Do



- ❧ Creating funding resources (grants, scholarships, assistance funding)
- ❧ Be accountable
- ❧ Develop good performance models with data collection for reporting and benchmarking
- ❧ Promote incentives and resources in our community
- ❧ Create efficiencies amongst resources
- ❧ Develop innovative solutions for business/industry
- ❧ Encourage opportunities for higher education (both traditional and non-traditional) and preparation

# We're making a difference!



- ❧ For the first time we are all working collaboratively towards one common goal with one voice.
- ❧ Forced to recognize where we need to make improvements to better serve our business/industry.
- ❧ Collectively resourcing funds to make a positive impact towards an educated workforce.
- ❧ Meeting regularly to assess, analyze and communicate progress.