Committee: Workforce Participation and Sustainability

(Strategic Plan: Goal #3)



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Connected Workgroups:

- 1. Training and Communication
- 2. Opportunity Youth/Young Adults
- 3. Veterans & Transitioning Servicemembers

GOAL #3: Increase Kentucky's workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians

3a: Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals.

3b: Mitigate disincentives to work and explore ways to incentivize workforce participation for individuals currently receiving social services benefits in order to support their transition to sustainable employment.

3c: Embed programs serving specific populations across cabinets to promote workforce participation. Examples of priority populations include veterans, individuals with disabilities, re-entrants from the corrections system, individuals in recovery from substance abuse, young adults transitioning out of foster care and others.

3d: Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers.

3e: Develop and Pursue strategies that increase the number of Kentuckians, work-ready and free from the influence of substance abuse.

Successful Deliverables:

- 1. A significant increase in the statewide labor force participation rate, with Kentucky's labor force participation surpassing that of neighboring states
- Elimination of as many precipitating factors as possible that cause workers to become discouraged and stop looking for work
- A consistent focus on assisting those with barriers to employment, including correctional
 populations, individuals in foster care, individuals who have substance abuse issues and disabled
 individuals
- 4. Increased demand from employers to hire from priority populations, and those with barriers to employment
- 5. Established career coaching and guided assistance for youth in foster care prior to transitioning out of the system
- 6. Established systems to work with later-career individuals to support re-entry into the workforce through re-training and upskilling
- 7. Improved health statistics for Kentucky with established metrics for Healthy and Work Ready Communities initiatives

Workgroup Goals

In the short term, we will:

- Develop a common level of understanding regarding the unique experiences of each priority population (individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, foster care, drug addicted, etc.) using the Work Matters Task Force
- Eliminate (as much as possible) disincentives to work (i.e., benefit cliff issues) that exist in public programs and policies
- Promote employer awareness of incentives to employ individuals with barriers to employment
- Apply best practices in identifying, addressing, and remediating drug abuse inside and outside of the workplace
- Establish a system where correctional facilities can access workforce system resources for exiting offenders
- Establish a partnership among Medicaid managed care providers and system resources to better serve populations in education, career, and health areas.

In the near term, we will:

- Educate the employer community on the benefits of hiring individuals with barriers to employment, including longer retention and equal performance to those without barriers
- Establish employer resource networks to increase worker placement and retention
- Work with treatment providers and the recovery community to design policy and programs that harness the rehabilitative power of work for individuals impacted directly and indirectly by substance abuse
- Provide wrap-around services to further support customers on the road to self-sufficiency
- Integrate essential skills training and work placement services into drug rehabilitation and juvenile justice rehabilitation programs (regardless of conviction or circumstance)

In the long term, we plan to:

- Lower the overall cost to hire and organizational risk to the employers to hire individuals who have barriers to employment
- Gauge impacts on workforce participation within all and especially affected priority populations and revise the theory of change practices