

Kentucky Education and Workforce Collaborative Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 16, 2025
Meeting 1:30 pm-3:30 pm EDT

IN-PERSON - 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY: 4th floor Conference Room
Via Zoom Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Governor Andy Beshear	Governor of Kentucky	
Secretary Jeff Noel (Proxy: Brandon Combs)	Cabinet for Economic Development	X
Secretary Jamie Link	Education and Labor Cabinet	X
Secretary Steven Stack, MD (Proxy: Taban Herrington)	Cabinet for Health and Family Services	X
Secretary Keith Jackson (Proxy: Natalie Burikhanov)	Justice and Public Safety Cabinet	X
Judge Orbrey Gritton	Anderson County Judge/Executive	
Myra Wilson	Local Workforce Development Director	X
Beth Potter	Human Development Institute	
Dr. Ryan Quarles (Proxy: Jessie Schook)	Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)	X
Lori Ulrich, Chair	Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board	X
Amanda Curry	Job Corps	X
Chris Wooldridge	CPE Conference of Presidents, Murray State University	X
Commissioner Robbie Fletcher	Kentucky Department of Education	X
Brigadier General Steven Bullard (Proxy: Stacey Shane)	Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs	X
Ashli Watts (Proxy: LaKisha Miller)	Kentucky Chamber of Commerce	X
Winston Miller (Proxy: Eleri Gesler)	Kentucky Housing Corporation	X
Dr. Aaron Thompson	Council on Postsecondary Education	
Tom Underwood	Kentucky National Federation of Independent Business	

GUESTS: Peter Mattingly, Susie Edwards, Betty Whittaker, Mandela Gapala, Charlee McMain, Alyssa VanMeter, Billie Hardin, Cora McNabb, Jermaine Watkins, Judge/Executive Luke King, Sam Keathley, Commissioner Whitney Allen, Lauren Goldener, Reneau Waggoner, Sharon Poff, Sheila Clark, Tiffany Reeves, Jon Sowards, BJ Wilkerson, Anthony Hellmueller, Tammy Hyde, Deputy Commissioner Michelle DeJohn, Tom Thompson, Dr. Beth Hargis, Dallas Kratzer, Meeting Captioner

STAFF: Commissioner Mike Yoder, Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, Sara Jagers, LaChrista Ellis, Elishah Taylor

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner (Department of Workforce Development, Education and Labor Cabinet) called the meeting to order, and roll call was completed and quorum met.

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Commissioner Mike Yoder welcomed attendees and let everyone know that a copy of the State of the Workforce Funding Report would be available in the coming weeks. He then introduced the meeting's focus on talent pools, highlighting previous discussions on refugees, immigrants, formerly incarcerated individuals, and youth, and announced that this meeting's focus would be on Kentuckians with disabilities.

PRESENTATION: KENTUCKY'S OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Susie Edwards, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) began by noting her excitement that students would be sharing their experiences. She outlined OVR's mission to empower Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve independence and economic security through competitive, integrated employment. Ms. Edwards explained that vocational rehabilitation helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and advance in employment, while also assisting businesses in recruiting and accommodating employees with disabilities. She emphasized that "competitive integrated employment," as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), involves work performed full- or part-time at or above minimum wage, comparable to that of employees without disabilities in similar roles.

Ms. Edwards outlined OVR's mission to help Kentuckians with disabilities achieve independence and economic security through competitive, integrated employment and emphasized the need for collaboration across agencies and partners.

Ms. Edwards outlined OVR's key strategies for improving employment outcomes for Kentuckians with disabilities. These include expanding early intervention and workforce readiness programs for youth, strengthening education and training opportunities to close skill and attainment gaps, increasing access to jobs in rural areas through employer incentives, and investing in supportive services such as accessible transportation, housing, and mental health resources. She also addressed employer myths, noting that individuals with disabilities perform comparably to other workers. Employment, she emphasized, promotes economic contribution, reduced dependency, and improved quality of life.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Ms. Susie Edwards introduced Charlee McMain and Alyssa VanMeter, students from Henderson County High School who participated in the Pre-employment Transition Services (PreETS) program, offered through OVR. Among other services, OVR helps students with disabilities prepare for employment by providing services like career exploration, workplace readiness, self-advocacy, postsecondary training, and work-based learning.

Through OVR's PreETS program, Charlee and Alyssa spent the summer working at North Middle School's East Service Center, assisting families, organizing school supplies and uniforms, supporting community events, and helping students new to middle school transition smoothly. This experience allowed them to build workplace, customer service, life, and social skills, gain confidence and independence, and develop responsibility and teamwork. They emphasized that OVR's programs provide opportunities for students with disabilities to prove their abilities and prepare for future jobs and education.

They concluded by thanking OVR, North Middle School, and their mentors for supporting their growth and summer work experience. More information can be found in the post-meeting packet materials.

PROJECT SEARCH

Project SEARCH, highlighted by **Betty Whittaker, Staff Assistant, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**, is a high school transition program offering year-long, site-based internships that prepare students for competitive, integrated employment. The program emphasizes hands-on training, career exploration, and classroom instruction within host businesses. Since its 1996 start, Project SEARCH has grown globally to over 750 sites, serving thousands of interns annually, with 75% of graduates achieving employment. Local partnerships include multiple schools and healthcare institutions, with ongoing expansion efforts.

Students undergo assessments across various areas—food service, housekeeping, lab, pharmacy, and sterilization—to identify skills and interests. Counselors support students through employment planning meetings, rotations, and throughout the year. The ultimate goal of Project SEARCH is competitive, integrated employment. Local success examples

include students being hired by ABB Optical and Baptist Health Hardin, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in transitioning interns to paid employment.

She discussed the importance of educating employers about hiring individuals with disabilities. OVR has a dedicated branch for employer services that assists with recruiting, training, retaining, and developing employees. Staff provide guidance on accessibility, personnel support, staff development, financial incentives, on-the-job training, internships, and disability awareness. They also offer training on the Americans with Disabilities Act and technical assistance to address employer concerns and reduce stigma. Additionally, employers are informed about job retention, IRS accessibility credits, and business expense deductions related to accommodating employees with disabilities. Resources, including articles and outreach materials, are available on the OVR website for further guidance.

DISCUSSION

The presentations ended with recognition of PreETS achievements and discussion on strategies for equipping staff to advocate for this talent pool. Commissioner Yoder asked meeting participants to share how their agencies currently interact with individuals with disabilities and OVR, as well as potential future opportunities for engagement. Workforce boards highlighted the certification process, noting it is lengthy and requires dedicated staff and funding, but ultimately rewarding and scalable to support schools and individual placement services (IPS).

Questions were asked about OVR's clients, particularly the number of students served (ages 14–21) versus adults, with clarification that programs like PreETS and Project SEARCH support students, including high school seniors preparing for employment. Participants also discussed career and technical education participation and the need for data tracking and metrics.

Funding considerations were lifted, with clarification that federal dollars do not restrict the populations OVR can serve; however, employer willingness can impact opportunities, including those for individuals with criminal justice involvement. The discussion emphasized integrating services with re-entry programs for youth and adults and coordinating social supports for youth and families.

Finally, the conversation turned to outreach and workforce development, including promoting untapped talent pools, tracking skill sets and credentials, and providing relevant demographic and credentialing data to employers to support hiring decisions. Case management systems were noted as a key tool for monitoring participant outcomes and credential attainment.

FOCUS POPULATION UPDATES: JOBS ON DAY ONE

Natalie Burikhanov, Executive Director, Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services, shared that in 2025, Governor Beshear announced major growth in correctional vocational training. Twenty-six programs now operate statewide, including new courses in plumbing, construction, CDL, and Kentucky's first prison-based cosmetology school. These expansions were achieved through collaboration rather than new funding.

The Jobs on Day One initiative, launched with the Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council, trains inmates as ironworkers through a two-year apprenticeship. Forty-five have completed training, with several now employed and making upwards of \$50/hr. in wages and benefits in these apprenticeship programs. Also, a successful painters' union program for women is expanding. DOC continues to address instructor shortages and promotes openings through secondchance.ky.gov. Reentry centers now operate in all 14 state prisons, offering life-skills and job-readiness training.

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Mandela Gapala, State Employment Services Coordinator, Kentucky Office for Refugees, Catholic Charities of Louisville, stated that in 2025, Kentucky's refugee employment programs served 5,317 participants, with 3,767 securing jobs and over 2,000 entering full-time positions with benefits. The average starting wage was \$16.80 per hour, slightly lower than in 2024 due to more entry-level placements.

Major employer partners included UPS, Walmart, Perdue, and local staffing agencies. The [Catholic Charities of Louisville](#) funds approximately a dozen agencies and community organizations that provide employment, training, and integration

support, alongside schools and health clinics. Kentucky spent \$4.8 million on refugee services in FY2025 and has welcomed more than 48,000 refugees since FY2021. As FY2026 began, funding continued for agencies, schools, colleges, clinics, and nonprofits statewide.

Mr. Mandela concluded that secondary arrivals are increasing, particularly in Bowling Green and Nicholasville, as refugees move from other states seeking better opportunities. Kentucky remains a welcoming destination due to strong job availability, affordable living, and community support

PUTTING YOUNG KENTUCKIANS TO WORK

Myra Wilson, Executive Director, Cumberlands Workforce Development Board, outlined the *Putting Young Kentuckians to Work* initiative, which supports youth ages 16–24 without clearly identified career paths. Launched in August 2024 with \$20 million in biennial funding, the program offers training, career guidance, and job placement, aiming to help 4,000 young adults enter sustainable careers. By September 2025, 751 participants had secured jobs.

Programs across regions partner with employers, schools, and colleges to provide hands-on training in fields like welding, fiber optics, CDL, and healthcare. Employers report strong satisfaction, and several participants have achieved financial independence through skilled trades.

Transportation remains a barrier, but local partners assist with short-term solutions such as rideshare options and training-based stipends. The program plans to seek reauthorization next session, continue data sharing, and expand partnerships to strengthen Kentucky’s youth workforce pipeline.

STATEWIDE JOB FAIR FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL AND OTHERS

Whitney Allen, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA), provided an update on Team Kentucky’s Virtual Job Fairs. These monthly events are held on the third Wednesday of the month and include a first-hour focus on veterans and their families, followed by two hours open to all job seekers.

Commissioner Whitney Allen continued with details on the virtual job fairs. He explained that participation extends beyond veterans to include their families and other Kentuckians seeking employment. The platform is user-friendly, fully virtual, and has received support from Governor Beshear, Lt. Governor Coleman, and KET, who have promoted Kentucky jobs and encouraged job seekers to make Kentucky their home.

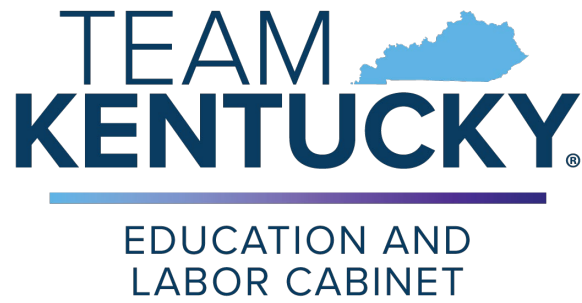
Efforts are underway to expand the program to include formerly incarcerated veterans and other individuals reentering the community, connecting them with employers and improving their employment prospects. Commissioner Allen emphasized that the initiative is collaborative, free for participants and employers, and open to all partners.

A board member highlighted the upcoming Veteran Employment Training Symposium, included in the briefing appendix, as another avenue for businesses to learn how to attract and retain veteran talent, moving from “veteran-friendly” to “veteran-ready.” The symposium, hosted by KCTCS, draws over 100 participants, including many businesses, and serves as an important resource for connecting with this workforce.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The session concluded with thanks to all attendees and partners for their updates and continued engagement.

3:01 PM ADJOURNMENT



Kentucky Education & Workforce Collaborative Board
Meeting Briefing Book

October 16, 2025

1:30 – 3:30 pm EDT

Location: 412 NC, Fourth Floor Conference Room
500 Mero St. Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

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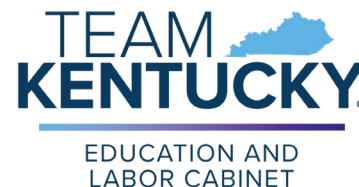


Kentucky Education and Workforce Collaborative Meeting

October 16, 2025, 1:30-3:30 pm EDT

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Kentucky Education and Workforce Collaborative

AGENDA

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Meeting 1:30pm-3:30pm EDT (1pm Networking)

IN-PERSON - 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY: 4th Floor Conference Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82296184948?pwd=luGxznpDJnZlb2FWYRLsGL847G2H5b.1>

Meeting ID: 822 9618 4948

Passcode: 859570

1:30 pm CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1:35 pm Welcome and OverviewMike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner
Department of Workforce Development
Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC)

1:40 pm Focus on Talent: Kentuckians with Disabilities..... Mike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner

1:45 pm Presentation: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation..... Susie Edwards
Deputy Executive Director
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Betty Whittaker
Staff Assistant
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Charlee McMain & Alyssa VanMeter
Henderson County High School

2:40 pm Presentation: Everybody Counts & Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).....Chris Sanders
Executive Director
Everybody Counts

2:55 pm Updates Education and Workforce Collaborative ActivitiesMike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner

- Jobs on Day One, Reentry Initiatives

Natalie Burikhanov
Executive Director
Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services

- Immigrants and Refugees

Mandela Gapala
State Employment Services Coordinator
Kentucky Office for Refugees - Catholic Charities of Louisville

- Youth Employment: Putting Young Kentuckians to Work

Myra Wilson
Executive Director
Cumberlands Workforce Development Board

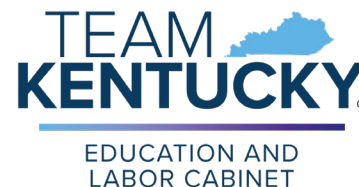
- Team Kentucky Virtual Job Fairs (Presented by KDVA)

Whittney Allen, Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs

3:25 PM CLOSING COMMENTS – UPCOMING DATESMike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner

NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 22ND, 2026 @ 500 MERO STREET, FRANKFORT, KY 40601
TEAM KENTUCKY’S VIRTUAL JOB FAIR: NOVEMBER 19TH, 2025

3:30 PM ADJOURNMENT



Kentucky Education and Workforce Collaborative Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, July 17, 2025

Meeting 1:30 pm-3:30 pm EDT

IN-PERSON - 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY: 4th floor Conference Room

Via Zoom Meeting

ATTENDEES: Brandon Combs proxy for Secretary Jeff Noel (Cabinet for Economic Development), Secretary Jamie Link (Education and Labor Cabinet), Taban Herrington proxy for Secretary Steven Stack, MD (Cabinet for Health and Family Services), Natalie Burikhanov proxy for Secretary Keith Jackson (Justice and Public Safety Cabinet), Judge Orbrey Gritton (Anderson County Judge/Executive and KACO Representative), Myra Wilson (Local Workforce Director) Johnny Collett proxy for Beth Potter (University of Kentucky Human Development Institute), Jessie Schook proxy for Dr. Ryan Quarles (Kentucky Community and Technical College System), Lori Ulrich (Chair of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board), Dr. Leslie Sizemore proxy for Dr. Aaron Thompson (Council on Postsecondary Education), Nick Haw proxy for Amanda Curry (Job Corps), Chris Wooldridge proxy for former Murray State President Jackson (CPE Conference of Presidents), Tom Thompson proxy for Commissioner Robbie Fletcher (Kentucky Department of Education), Stacey Shane proxy for Brigadier-General Steven Bullard (Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs), LaKisha Miller proxy for Ashli Watts (Kentucky Chamber of Commerce), Eleri Gesler proxy for Winston Miller (Kentucky Housing Corporation), , Mike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner (Department of Workforce Development, Education and Labor Cabinet)

GUESTS: Ashley Kelley, Becky Miller, Brigitte Green, Chelsea Conn, Correy Eimer, Erin White, Karl Fratzke, Everette Bracken, Jackie Masterson, Mary Anne Medlock, Michelle De John, Michelle Drake, Miguel A. Santiago, Peter Mattingly, Sam Keathley, Sheila Clark, Tad Long, Tiffanie Reeves, Billie Hardin, Tom Sholar

STAFF: Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, Sara Jagers, LaChrista Ellis, Elishah Taylor

1:30 pm MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mike Yoder, PhD., Commissioner (Department of Workforce Development, Education and Labor Cabinet) called the meeting to order. Attendees were pointed to meeting materials in the briefing book, and roll call was completed.

Welcome and Overview

Commissioner Mike Yoder welcomed attendees and emphasized the importance of collaboration across agencies involved in workforce and education services. He introduced the meeting's focus: Understanding the Role of the Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT) and unifying efforts and exploring how all partners can integrate more effectively into the system.

Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT) Overview

Commissioner Mike Yoder provided background on the Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT). He introduced featured speakers: **LaKisha Miller, Executive Director of the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center**, and **Jessie Schook, Vice President of Workforce and Economic Development at KCTCS**.

LaKisha Miller provided an overview of the Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT), a project in development for more than two years, dedicated to building a more collaborative, coordinated, and efficient workforce system centered on meeting employer needs.

She noted that Kentucky invests about \$1.2 billion annually in workforce efforts, yet only 15% of employers engage with the system, highlighting the need for simplification. SWATT aims to increase employer participation by aligning partners, reducing complexity, and improving service delivery.

LaKisha outlined priorities identified during a December 2024 statewide convening: increasing employer engagement, providing staff training, and integrating strategies across state, regional, and local levels. She stressed the importance of including all partner agencies in building a unified system.

Jessie Schook emphasized that the SWATT model must be built collaboratively across local, regional, and state levels—not in isolation from Frankfort. She cited the Blue Oval SK project as an example of the coordination challenges across these layers. Although initial practitioner feedback suggested the system was effective, a December employer panel revealed major gaps, especially in cross-regional coordination. This shift in perspective underscored the need to center the employer voice in system design.

Jessie also discussed recent SWATT prototype efforts, where regional teams have tested and are testing collaborative models. Key lessons include the need to involve both C-suite and front-line staff, avoid overwhelming employers with information, prioritize needs effectively, and use feedback tools to guide improvement. The goal is to launch 12–20 prototypes statewide by year’s end.

Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB), emphasized the need to move from high-level collaboration to embedded practices at the local and regional level, where services are delivered. He is leading the State and Local Integration Committee and highlighted efforts to strengthen local business service teams with support from agency partners.

Alisher stressed the importance of quality service delivery, accountability through the Department of Workforce Development’s Workforce Talent Project Managers and aligning business needs with talent pipelines. He also noted the need for professional development, stronger networking among regions, and onboarding for new workforce practitioners to support consistency and shared learning across the state.

Chris Wooldridge, Director, Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, Murray State University supported Alisher’s remarks, emphasizing the need for improved communication, partner alignment, and a “no wrong door” approach to serving businesses. He noted positive cooperation and innovative ideas emerging from ongoing collaboration.

SWATT: State and Local Integration

Alisher Burikhanov shared ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration across education, workforce, and economic development systems. There was support for moving toward a more coordinated, long-term approach to workforce development.

The SWATT model was highlighted as a key strategy for aligning regional partners and streamlining services to better meet business and talent needs. Its emphasis on coordination, early engagement, and regional flexibility was seen as essential to building a more effective workforce system.

Other efforts and tools to support talent development were mentioned, along with the need for improved connectivity across agencies. Continued integration of services and alignment at both the state and local levels will remain a focus.

Group Discussion: Collaborative Member Involvement

Commissioner Yoder and Alisher spoke about coordination between state agencies and local partners, to better align resources. They emphasized engaging local leaders, mayors, judges, and organizations like the [Kentucky League of Cities](#) and [the Kentucky Association of Counties \(KACo\)](#) to share workforce tools and address local challenges.

Judge Orbrey Gritton, Executive Judge, Anderson County, stressed the importance of growing the local workforce by attracting or expanding businesses, understanding worker pipelines, and collaborating with regional groups. He highlighted the value of being recognized as a “Work Ready Community.”

Alisher added that the Work Ready Communities – Next Generation initiative is being updated to reflect current skill gaps, among other important metrics to our state. Members will soon be asked to identify local assets and how they align with the SWATT model.

State of the Workforce Funding Report

Alisher shared the upcoming request for updated workforce investment data, focused on education, training and support services and the return on those investments.

Members will receive a template spreadsheet and is requesting Collaborative members to update with PY23 and PY24 data. Metrics such as participants served, job placements, and average wages are of focus.

Information is being collected from non-members like Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, (KHEAA), which administers various workforce-related scholarships. Requests for a reply will be in August with support available an overview of the final information will be shared on October 16, then submitted to the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board.

Team Kentucky Virtual Job Fair Launch

Everett Bracken (U.S. Army | Gulf War Veteran), Program Administrator KY Veterans Employment & Training Services Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs introduced Kentucky’s monthly Team Kentucky Virtual Job Fair, launched by the Department of Veterans Affairs to help recruit veterans and connect job seekers with employers. The event is free, with the first hour reserved for veterans and their families. Nearly 500 job seekers and 80 employers have participated so far.

The platform has statewide promotion through partnerships and support from state leaders, whose promotional videos helped boost visibility. Mr. Bracken shared a [video clip of the Governor](#) highlighting the platform during a Team Kentucky update. Each fair focuses on a different Kentucky industry, and the platform was recently extended at no additional cost. A work group launch is set for August 12, with volunteers encouraged to join.

Closing comments

Commissioner Yoder encouraged members to continue thinking about ways to integrate, unify, and collaborate, emphasizing that this is the purpose of the Education and Workforce Collaborative. He noted that Alisher would be reaching out with some upcoming requests and encouraged engagement and responsiveness.

3:01 PM Adjournment

Members were reminded to check the briefing book for upcoming meeting dates, including the next scheduled meeting on **October 16, 2025, at 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY**. *LaKisha Miller made a motion to adjourn. Johnny Collett seconded the motion*, and the meeting was adjourned.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Employers

Workforce Facts

- Kentucky has among the highest rate of people with disabilities in the nation and among the lowest rate of people with disabilities who are employed.
- With accommodations, workers with disabilities have the same productivity, attendance, reliability and overall effectiveness as nondisabled workers.
- The national labor shortage means employers need every available worker, including individuals with disabilities who are qualified to perform the essential functions of the job.

Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities

- Reduces reliance on governmental supports and contributes to the economy.
- Lessens utilization of healthcare and promotes better overall health.
- Provides financial support for the individual and their families.
- Improves quality of life factors by building self-confidence, self-reliance and social support.
- Provides opportunities for re-training, advancement, retirement contributions and travel.

Employer Services Branch

Staff in the Employer Services Branch assist businesses in hiring, developing and keeping valued employees and support businesses with placement and retention of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. These services include:

- Helping with accessibility checklists, employment services, personnel assistance, staff development, financial incentives information, on-the-job training and internships.
- Pre-Screening of applicants based on essential functions of the job; providing onsite job trainer and support services; job restructuring and work-site adjustment; accessibility survey of the work site; assistive technology devices and specialized equipment to assist with job success; and follow-up services.

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The mission of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is to empower Kentuckians with disabilities to maximize independence and economic security through competitive, integrated employment.



Consumer Services

OVR provides vocational rehabilitation services needed to reach your vocational goal.

- Assessment to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs
- Counseling and guidance
- Vocational and other training services
- Supported employment
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Personal assistance services
- Interpreter and note taking services
- Telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices
- Rehabilitation technology
- Job placement and job retention services
- Employment follow-up and post-employment services

Helpful Links:

[KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: An Overview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY_1kQZPk7E)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY_1kQZPk7E

[KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: Supported Employment](https://youtu.be/zHzGQJkyu0w)

<https://youtu.be/zHzGQJkyu0w>

[KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: Pre-Employment](https://youtu.be/FQYweZxBdC4)

[Transition Services](https://youtu.be/FQYweZxBdC4) <https://youtu.be/FQYweZxBdC4>



Employer Services

OVR assists businesses in hiring, developing and keeping valued employees. We provide an array of services at no cost.

- Prescreening of applicants based on essential job requirements
- On-site job trainer and support services
- Job restructuring/work site adjustment
- Accessibility survey of complete work site
- Assistive technology; devices and specialized equipment
- Follow-up services



Eligibility

An OVR counselor will perform an assessment to determine eligibility for services. Once eligibility is determined, the counselor's role is to provide information, resources, guidance and counseling, and choices related to an individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capacities and abilities so the individual can prepare for and enter a job.



Where We Are

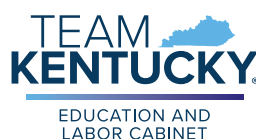
Offices are located throughout the state and an OVR counselor is assigned to every county. For more information, contact the office listed below, or visit our website at: <http://kcc.ky.gov/>

Name: Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitationwfd

Phone Number: 800-372-7172

Address: <http://kcc.ky.gov>

Email: WFD.VOCREHAB@ky.gov



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Everybody Counts



Partnering to Empower Students' Transition into Successful Careers



What is Everybody Counts?

Everybody Counts assigns full-time career coaches to high schools across Kentucky to help students develop essential skills and create personalized plans for life after graduation. This hands-on, student-centered approach encourages real-world career exploration and skill-building. Our career coaches work closely with school staff, community organizations, and employers to ensure students are confident and prepared for their next steps—whether in education, employment, or both.

In collaboration with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Everybody Counts also provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans. We partner with school districts, administrators, and teachers to deliver these services directly in high schools, based on student interest and space availability.

Why Partner with Us?

Proven, Personalized Support for Students

- Coaches provide one-on-one and group coaching sessions designed to develop workplace readiness, job exploration, education exploration, self-advocacy, and more.
- Services are aligned with IEPs and 504 Plans to meet students' individual transition goals.

No Cost to the School

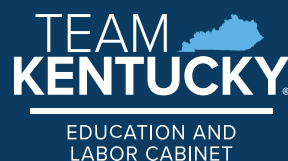
- Services are funded through our partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).
- Districts gain extra capacity to support transition planning without additional budget strain.

Data-Driven Outcomes

- Monthly reporting on progress and student milestone achievements
- Annual reporting includes postsecondary enrollment, job placement outcomes, and skills credential achievement

Contact Information

Email: EverybodyCounts@ky.gov
everybodycounts.ky.gov



Key Services Offered

- Career exploration
- Work-based learning experiences
- Postsecondary education exploration
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self advocacy

All services are customized and student-centered to support the unique needs of each learner.

Collaboration with Schools

- Career coaches are assigned to high schools and may work up to 4 days per week, depending on student needs and capacity.
- Career coaches are active in each high school and take the initiative to participate in staff/teacher meetings, ARC/IEP meetings, planning sessions for events, and family engagement events.
- We maintain regular engagement with each school district and high school we serve. Everybody Counts conducts quarterly site visits to observe Career Coach delivery of services.
- Principals receive monthly communication and quarterly satisfaction surveys to ensure quality and alignment of services delivered.
- Career coaches coordinate with teachers, counselors, and administrators to integrate services seamlessly into the school day.



What Kentucky School Leaders Are Saying About Everybody Counts

"Everybody Counts has helped us provide targeted, high-impact services to students who need it most. Our students are more prepared, confident, and excited about their futures."

– *KY High School Administrator*

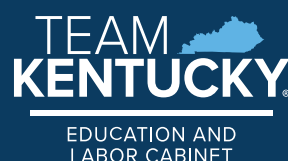
With Everybody Counts... Everybody Wins

We invite school districts across Kentucky to join us in partnership with Everybody Counts. Together, we can unlock the full potential of our students by activating their unique skills, inspiring their journey toward a bright and successful future, and creating a strong, supportive network that empowers them every step of the way.



Contact Information

Email: EverybodyCounts@ky.gov
everybodycounts.ky.gov



Jobs on Day One, Reentry Initiatives

Beginning 18 months before release, the Department of Corrections Division of Reentry Services begins regular check-ins with inmates to ensure vital resources and documents are available and ready upon leaving state custody. These include:

-  Healthcare needs
-  Home Placement
-  Identification Card
-  Social Security Card
-  Birth Certificate
-  Transportation from Facility
-  Addiction Services
-  Parenting Readiness
-  Social Support System
-  Clothing

Every prison has opened a reentry center staffed by Division of Reentry for more targeted reentry services.

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DIVISION OF REENTRY SERVICES

Team Kentucky is working to ensure that those who have paid their debt to society have an opportunity for a second chance. Successful reentry ultimately prevents new crimes, improves public safety, and strengthens the economy and our communities.



**Over the Past
2 Years Nearly**

70%

**of Those Release
From State Custody
Have Not Returned**

**Every prison has
opened a reentry center
staffed by Division of Reentry for
more targeted reentry services.**

Division of Reentry Services

Employment Program Administrators

Director

Kristin Porter (502) 330-6123

Assistant Director

Christi Sorrell (502) 330-7035

Employment Supervisor

Matthew Aaron (502) 229-9638

7/12 William Wild
(859) 391-7593

8 Desiree Dao
(606) 614-5131

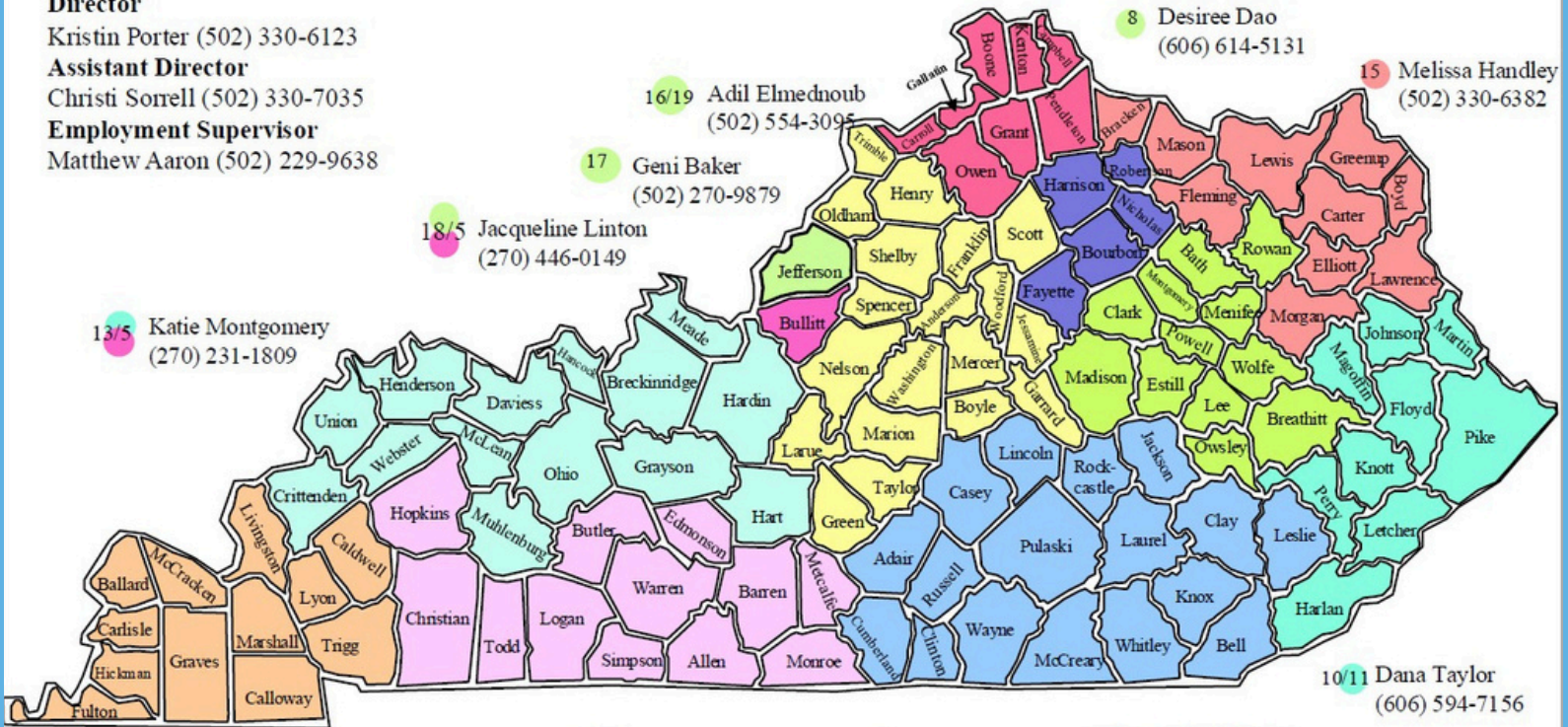
15 Melissa Handley
(502) 330-6382

16/19 Adil Elmednoub
(502) 554-3095

17 Geni Baker
(502) 270-9879

18/5 Jacqueline Linton
(270) 446-0149

13/5 Katie Montgomery
(270) 231-1809



1 Deanna Balentine
(270) 559-2113

2/3 Amanda Childress
(270) 535-8168

6/12 Felicia Leischner
(859) 270-9933

9/14 Matt Russell
(502) 316-2715

10/20 Erin Shifflett
(606) 224-7191

10/11 Dana Taylor
(606) 594-7156

REENTRY SERVICES AT A GLANCE

EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENTS
PROGRAMMING
ADDICTION TREATMENT
EDUCATION
FAITH BASED GROUPS
MENTOR OPPORTUNITIES
HOUSING
INSURANCE

EXPUNGEMENT SESSIONS
JOB FAIRS
REENTRY SIMULATIONS
CLOTHING ASSISTANCE
TRANSPORTATION
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
IDENTIFICATION PAPERWORK
TECHNOLOGY



Team Kentucky is ready to **connect you to your next employee!**

We are offering training in many
trade pathways.



For further information, please
reach out to Matt Aaron at
502-229-9638 or at
matthew.aaron@ky.gov

**TEAM
KENTUCKY®**

JUSTICE AND
PUBLIC SAFETY CABINET



CARPENTRY

- Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex
- Lee Adjustment Center
- Little Sandy Correctional Complex
- Northpoint Training Center
- Western Kentucky Correctional Complex



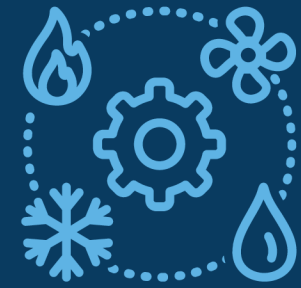
CONSTRUCTION CRAFT LABORER

- Blackburn Correctional Complex
- Green River Correctional Complex
- Kentucky State Penitentiary
- Southeast State Correctional Complex



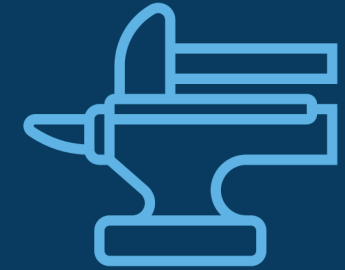
ELECTRICITY

- Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women
- Northpoint Training Center
- Western Kentucky Correctional Complex



HVAC

- Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex



IRONWORKERS PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

- Northpoint Training Center
- Luther Lockett Correctional Complex



PLUMBING

- Green River Correctional Complex
- Little Sandy Correctional Complex



WELDING

- Luther Lockett Correctional Complex
- Northpoint Training Center

Immigrants and Refugees

Kentucky Office for Refugees Employment Outcomes FY2025 October 2024-September 2025

City	FY24 Arrivals	FY25 Arrivals	Job Placements
Louisville	12,461	2,991	2,974
Lexington	1,298	422	251
Bowling Green	923	588	334
Covington	363	126	92
Owensboro	232	73	116
Total	15,277	4,200	3,767

FY2025 Arrivals by Immigration Status

Immigration Status	Arrivals
Cuban/Haitian Entrant	2,361
Refugee	1,440
Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)	125
Other	274

FY2025 Arrivals by Age Group

Age Group at Arrival	Arrivals
0-4	505
5-18	875
19-65	2,771
65+	49

FY2025 Statewide Employment Outcomes

Total Employment Enrollments: 5,317

Job Placements: 3,767

Full Time Jobs w/ Benefits: 2,391

Avg. Starting Wage: \$16.80

90-Day Retention Rate: 74%

Kentucky Office for Refugees Employment Outcomes FY2025

October 2024-September 2025

Top Kentucky Employers

Louisville

- UPS
- GE Appliances
- Walmart
- CTDI
- Surge Staffing

Lexington

- Compass Group
- Walmart
- UPS
- Amazon
- Staffmark

Bowling Green

- Perdue Farms
- Trace Die Cast
- Shift Fillers LLC
- Tyson Foods
- Dorman Products

Covington

- ABB Optical
- CVG Airport
- UPS
- Standard Textile
- Amazon

Owensboro

- Berry Global
- Tyson Foods
- Perdue Farms
- Total Packaging
- SFG

Funded Partners Performing Employment Services

Total Statewide ORR Employment Funding: \$4,839,435.82

- Catholic Charities of Louisville
- Kentucky Refugee Ministries: Louisville, Lexington, Covington
- International Rescue Committee
- International Center of Kentucky: Bowling Green, Owensboro
- See Forward Ministries
- Somali Community of Louisville
- Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education
- Refuge Bowling Green
- Community Action of Southern Kentucky

The **Kentucky Office for Refugees (KOR)** is the federal pass through entity of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. ORR funding eligibility extends to five years post arrival for refugees. In the last five years (FY2021-2025) Kentucky has resettled **48,526** eligible refugees.

In Kentucky for FY2026, the Office for Refugee Resettlement funds...

7

Resettlement
Agencies

7

School
Districts

3

Higher Education
Institutions

6

Health
Clinics

11

Community Based
Organizations

Youth Employment: Putting Young Kentuckians to Work

PUTTING YOUNG KENTUCKIANS TO WORK

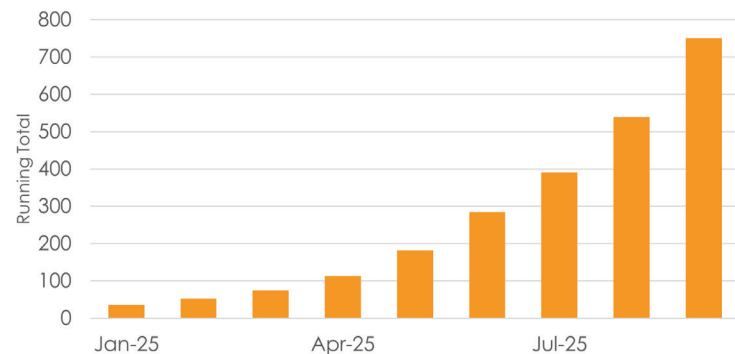
IMPACT

751

JOB PLACEMENTS

through September 2025

RUNNING TOTAL OF JOB PLACEMENTS BY MONTH



Who is Putting Young Kentuckians to Work for?

High school seniors who aren't going to college and young adults 18-24 who are struggling to find their career footing.

Why do we need Putting Young Kentuckians to Work?

Thousands of young adults across the Commonwealth need assistance to get their life on a productive, law-abiding path that leads to self-sufficiency.

What does Putting Young Kentuckians offer young adults?

Customized career training, guidance, and resources that lead directly to job placements.

Who is behind Putting Young Kentuckians to Work?

This program is funded by the Kentucky State Legislature, which empowered the state's ten workforce development boards to find solutions to the challenges facing young people and employers in their regions.

Alec, an Army Veteran, was eligible for On-the-Job Training through Putting Young Kentuckians to Work. He now works for Paschall Truck Lines in Murray, Kentucky where he assists drivers with problems they encounter on the road.



F A Q

HIGHLIGHTS

BY REGION

Lincoln Trail

- Comprehensive youth career services program
- Short-term training programs in healthcare, transportation, construction and electrical linework



KentuckianaWorks

- Custom hiring fairs for high school seniors
- Expanded young adult opportunity center (a partnership with Goodwill Kentucky) for disconnected 18-24 year olds

Northern Kentucky

- New online platform for work-based learning opportunities
- Bringing educators to tour companies in high-demand sectors



Green River

Work-based learning opportunities, job search assistance, resume building, supportive services, and soft skills development



Bluegrass

Job training pipelines for young adults in fields like healthcare and the skilled trades

West Kentucky

- Individual training scholarships for welding, healthcare, and transportation
- Funding for on-the-job training



South Central

Career coaching and job placement, plus ongoing soft skills support and retention incentives

Cumberlands

Job training to help young adults earn CDLs, certifications to become electrical linemen, and other in-demand occupations



TENCO

Pathways that help young people gain work readiness skills, short-term training, and hands-on experience through subsidized work experiences and on-the-job training

EKCEP

- Paid internships for hundreds of high school seniors via Prosper Appalachia
- Career exploration through high-tech virtual reality kits
- One-on-one career planning with certified career development specialists



“

My goal was to get certified in a trade and that's what they helped me with...This has changed the trajectory of my career.

- LaVar

25

”

Team Kentucky Virtual Job Fair

REGISTER NOW

Team Kentucky Virtual Job Fair

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Time: 10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. EST

**Focus: Professional, Scientific and
Technical Services**

*All employers are welcome to participate, including
those from the targeted industry.*

Schedule:

- 10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. - Veterans & Military Families
- 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. - Open to All Job Candidates

**Future virtual job fairs will take place on
the third Wednesday of each month.**

Here's a preview of the upcoming dates:

- **December 2025** – no virtual job fair
- **January 21, 2026**
Bourbon, EV Revolution and Tourism
- **February 18, 2026**
Healthcare



**EMPLOYERS
SCAN THE
QR CODE TO
REGISTER.**



**JOB-SEEKERS
SCAN THE
QR CODE TO
REGISTER.**



**TEAM
KENTUCKY**

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Questions? Contact Everett Bracken at 502-650-5283 or by email at everett.bracken@ky.gov

Appendix

2026 Education and Workforce Collaborative Board Meetings

January 22

April 16

July 16

October 15

All meetings are scheduled for 1:30-3:30 pm ET/ 12:30-2:30 pm CT and will be conducted in-person at the Mayo-Underwood Building (500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601) with a virtual option.

**REGISTER
NOW!**

4th Annual

Veterans Employment & Training Symposium (VETS)

November 3, 2025

10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. EST

Kentucky Community & Technical College System Office • 300 N. Main St., Versailles, KY 40383

Check-In at 9:30 a.m. EST - Event starts promptly at 10 a.m. EST

Limited seating is available. There is no charge to attend.

Sponsorship opportunities available.

Please email Kendra Pearson at kendrah.pearson@kctcs.edu.

SCAN OR CLICK QR CODE



TO REGISTER

Kentucky
WORKFORCE
INNOVATION BOARD

**TEAM
KENTUCKY.**
EDUCATION AND
LABOR CABINET