

**Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board**  
**Meeting Briefing Book**

May 21, 2026

1:30 – 3:30 pm ET

1:00 pm ET Networking

Location: Kentucky Community & Technical College System

300 North Main Street, Versailles, KY 40383

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# Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board Meeting Briefing Book

May 21, 2026, 1:30-3:30 pm ET

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# Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) Quarterly Meeting Agenda

Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Meeting 1:30 – 3:30pm ET (1pm Networking)

In Person: Kentucky Community and Technical College System  
300 North Main Street, Versailles, KY 40383

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89463812011?pwd=nuWHmOk0ymEokhEumOaCtBHVEQ9VDJ.1>

Meeting ID: 894 6381 2011/ Passcode: 721764 / dial via phone: 16469313860

**1:30 CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**Welcome/Housekeeping** .....Lori Ulrich, Chair  
Fleming-Mason Energy

**1:35 Roll Call**.....Elishah Taylor  
Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)

**1:40 Consent Agenda (Voting Required)**..... Lori Ulrich, Chair  
Fleming-Mason Energy

*Provided in briefing packet:*

- April 16, 2026, Minutes
- Kentucky Career Center (KCC) One-Stop Certification: NKY (Access Point)
- Career & Technical Education (CTE) Certification

**1:45 KCTCS Welcome and Second Chance Update: Kentucky’s Reentry Center**.....Ryan Quarles, Ed.D.  
President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Natalie Burikhanov  
Executive Director, Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services

**2:15 High-Demand CTE Certifications (Voting Required)**..... Tom Thompson  
Director, Division of Student Transition and Career Readiness  
Office of Career and Technical Services

**2:25 KWIB Strategic Plan 2026-2029 (Voting Required)**..... Alisher Burikhanov  
Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

**2:40 Membership Update**..... Lori Ulrich, Chair  
- Selma Owens: New Committee Chair and Executive Committee Member

**2:50 Update: Workforce Pell Grant**..... David Potter, Ph.D.  
Senior Coordinator, Education Transition Strategist  
Kentucky Adult Education



# Consent Agenda



# Quarterly Board Meeting

## Draft Minutes

April 16, 2026; 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm ET

IN-PERSON – Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) 300 Sower Blvd, Frankfort, KY 40601  
with virtual zoom option

### 1:30 pm ET Call to order

**Lori Ulrich, Fleming-Mason Energy, KWIB Chair**, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees both in the room and online. She shared that captioning services are available through zoom and reminded online board members and proxies to unmute and enable their cameras for roll call, voting, and comments throughout the meeting.

For those participating in person, Chair Ulrich walked through using microphones and raising nameplates to indicate a desire to speak. She mentioned that the board strives to follow Robert’s Rules of Order during meetings. The consent agenda and additional materials for the day were provided in the KWIB Quarterly [Briefing Book](#). She stated that meeting minutes and presentations would be available on the KWIB website ([kwib.ky.gov](http://kwib.ky.gov)) under the date of the meeting. Any further questions could be directed to Debbie Dennison, ([debbie.dennison@ky.gov](mailto:debbie.dennison@ky.gov)).

**Roll call was held, and quorum was confirmed.**

### **KWIB (Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Lori Ulrich, Chair	Business	X	Dr. Aaron Thompson	Partner	
Gov. Andy Beshear (proxy: Rocky Adkins)	WIOA CORE	X	Dr. Ryan Quarles	Partner	
Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman	WIOA CORE		George Nichols	Labor Representative	X
Sen. Jimmy Higdon	Legislative		Heidi Margulis	Business	
Sec. Jamie Link (proxy Commissioner Mike Yoder)	Partner	X	Kevin Middleton	Workforce	X
Sec. John Hicks	Partner		Kevin Nolan	Business	
Sec. Jeff Noel (proxy: Kristina Slattery)	Partner	X	Kevin Smith (proxy: Rena Sharpe)	Business	X
Rep. Bobby McCool	Legislative		Lyndon Pryor	Workforce	
Commissioner Robbie Fletcher	Partner	X	Robert Shelton	Labor Representative	
Commissioner Mike Yoder	Partner	X	Ryan Holmes	Business	
Judge Owen McNeil	Local Elected Official		Selma Owens	Business	
Mayor James (J.H.) Atkins	Local Elected Official	X	Suhas Kulkarni	Business	
Beth Davisson (proxy: Callie Miracle)	Business	X	Todd Dunn	Labor Representative	
Johnny W. Collett	Business	X	Tom Lilienthal	Business	X
Dr. J.C. Gregory	WIOA CORE	X	Jim Flynn	Education	X
Alice Houston	Business		Susan Hershberg	Business	

Annissa Franklin	Workforce Representative	X	David Hall	Business	
Cora McNabb	WIOA CORE	X	Adam Caswell	Business	
Dianne Owen	Workforce Representative	X	Sharon Price	Workforce Representative	
Kim Menke	Business	X	William Downey	Business	X

**In-person guests attending:** Rocky Adkins, David Potter, Kim Brannock, Myra Wilson, Taban Herrington, Beth Hargis, Eleri Gesler, Amanda Houle, Natalie Burikhanov

**Online guest attendance:** Jessica Fortner, Sara Tracey, Cathy Hoehn, Connor Campbell, Michelle Whitis, Michael Overby, Susan Cornelius, Tonia Godfrey, Todd Blanton, Thomas Thompson, Jacqueline Korengel, Michelle Drake, Amanda Curry, Tara Estes, Bridget Back, Jon Sowards, Chris Wooldridge, Jackie Masterson, Tiffanie Reeves, Beckie Wells, Joe Copeland, Elizabeth Daniels, Leslie Sandusky, Cassie Bertram, Sheila Clark, Justin Suttles

**KWIB Staff:** Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, LaChrista Ellis, and Elishah Taylor

**Lori Ulrich, Chair** welcomed everyone and recognized the gentleman from the Governor’s Office.

**Team Kentucky Opening Remarks**

**Rocky Adkins, Senior Advisor to Governor Andy Beshear**, provided an overview of Team Kentucky’s economic and workforce development progress, highlighting \$48.2 billion in investments, and more than 69,000 jobs created under the Beshear administration. He emphasized high-quality job growth, strong fiscal performance, and national recognition for economic development successes. He also discussed key initiatives such as New Kentucky Home, Pre-K for All, Second Chance Hiring, Everybody Counts, and Work Ready Communities, all focused on connecting Kentuckians to good jobs and strengthening workforce participation through education, training, and partnerships.

**Consent Agenda (Voting Required)**

**Lori Ulrich, Chair** noted that this was an action item requiring a formal vote, and that all related materials were included in the Briefing Book provided. Items included:

- November 20, 2025, Minutes
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification Approvals
- Perkins State Leadership Fund Request Awards 2026-27
- Certification of two Kentucky Career Center locations

Lori Ulrich called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. *Kim Menke made the motion, which was seconded by Annissa Franklin.* A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously, with no opposition. After the vote, Lori Ulrich welcomed attendees to Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and thanked KDE leadership for hosting.

**Host Welcome: Kentucky Department of Education**

**Robbie Fletcher, Ed.D., Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education**, welcomed the board and highlighted a few Kentucky Department of Education updates including House Bill 727 (uniform application for teachers) and House Bill 257 (accountability). He provided an overview of KDE offices driving diverse educational functions. More information about KDE can be found by visiting: <https://www.education.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

**WIOA State Plan Modification**

**Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)** shared updates to the WIOA state plan modification due at the end of April, noting that it is required of all workforce boards. He shared that a full plan overhaul will begin next year for the required 2028 submission. He provided public comments received noting no substantive changes provided.

Lori Ulrich called for a motion to approve the WIOA Plan Modification as presented. *George Nichols made the motion, which was **seconded** by Kim Menke.* A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously, with no opposition.

### **Workforce Pell**

**David Potter, Ph.D., Senior Coordinator, Education Transition Strategist, Kentucky Adult Education,** provided an update on the Workforce Pell Workgroup, focusing on the development of eligibility criteria and a governance framework. Dr. Potter outlined three primary areas of focus: occupational criteria, education program criteria, and student outcome criteria, with plans to present further details at the next board meeting. Workforce Pell extends Pell Grants to short-term credentials (8-15 weeks) targeting high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. Initial framework and launch is July 1, 2026.

### **Work Ready Communities Metrics**

**Jessica Fortner, Senior Consultant, TPMA** shared that Work Ready Communities metrics have been finalized and they are working on finishing the updated website and deliverables with updated metrics and areas of focus. She shared goals including aligning regional skill supply and demand, widening talent pools, and expanding work-based learning opportunities. Updates also include adjustments to data, language, and focus areas such as childcare and transportation. The group is finalizing the framework and preparing for the May launch of Work Ready Communities - Next Generation.

### **Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) Conference**

**Bridget Back, Deputy Director, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP),** provided an updated-on behalf of Becky Carnes-Miller regarding the 2026 SETA Fall Conference, which will be held in Louisville from August 30 through September 2. The conference will bring together workforce professionals from across eight southeastern states to share best practices, policy updates, and professional development opportunities.

### **Joint Discussion: Kentucky Education & Workforce Collaborative and Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board**

**Lori Ulrich, KWIB Chair and Mike Yoder, Commissioner, Department of Workforce Development, and Education and Workforce Collaborative,** led a discussion focusing on priorities for advancing workforce development in Kentucky. Topics included cross-sector collaborations and challenges, preparing students for jobs, strengthening community-based and regional approaches, addressing workforce gaps, and expanding public-private partnerships. The need to monitor and measure AI impacts and opportunities is paramount. Effective talent attraction strategies were shared.

Participants discussed building on current momentum around reentry, veteran employment, apprenticeships, and removing barriers to workforce participation connecting Kentuckians to quality job opportunities. Advocacy, including for expungement options, among others, and increase employer education and engagement aims to tap into underemployed labor pools.

It was noted that Kentucky's diverse economies require adaptable programs rather than one-size-fits-all models. While state guidance should be provided, flexibility in implementation is key.

Educators shared the need for increased funding for career coaches and community liaisons in schools and shared best practices where they are seeing positive results. They also stressed the need for precise data on job types, outlooks and longevity to prepare students effectively. Increasing alignment between industry need and school career pathways is critical.

### **Closing Comments & New Business**

**Lori Ulrich** opened the floor for new business and closing remarks including a reminder of the next KWIB meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup> at Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) in Versailles, along with references to materials in the briefing book such as the 2026 calendar, travel reimbursement and information, and upcoming initiatives.

With no further business to address, Lori Ulrich called for a motion to adjourn. *Cora McNabb* **made the motion**, and *Tom Lilienthal* **seconded it**. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3:22 pm ET    Adjournment**



May 21, 2026

**Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board  
Consent Agenda Item**

**Kentucky Career Center (KCC) One-Stop Certification and Recertification**

**KCC Access Point**

**Recommendation**

The following Kentucky Career Centers have been reviewed and certified by their respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

DWD staff have received and reviewed all required documentation, and the following are presented to the Executive Committee for consideration and recommendation of KCC One-Stop recertification.

<b>LWDA</b>	<b>Center Location</b>	<b>Center Type</b>	<b>Previous Type</b>
NKY	Boone County Public Library – Florence Branch 7425 US HWY 42, Florence, KY 41042	Access Point	Access Point

**Kentucky Career Center Access Points** provide basic information for workers, job seekers, employers, and youth and young adults, guidance and counseling for employment, and referrals to other resources and partner services.

To learn more about the item listed in the consent agenda above, please click the link to access the relevant information on Google Drive: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/114-VG1SwrU4I0Cl4Knk9U-g0bhQfooh?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/114-VG1SwrU4I0Cl4Knk9U-g0bhQfooh?usp=drive_link)



May 21, 2026

**Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board  
Consent Agenda Item**

**Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification  
Recommendation**

The Business and Education Alignment Taskforce (BEAT) reviewed and recommended the certifications, which the CTE Certification Review Workgroup approved on April 2, 2026, and the KWIB Education Attainment Committee on April 21, 2026, and are now presented to the KWIB for final approval, as outlined in the following certifications:

Industry Certification Name	Industry Certification Program Area	Recommended Industry Certification List?
Adobe Certified Professional: Illustrator	Computer Science	The BEAT recommends expanding the Adobe Certified Professional: Illustrator certification to the Digital Design and Game Development pathway.
AMCA Mental Health Technician	Healthcare	The Beat recommends adopting the AMCA Mental Health Technician Certification
SFMA Turfgrass Science	Agriculture	The BEAT recommends the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) Turfgrass Science Certification as a standalone credential for the Plant Science Systems pathway.
Unity Certified User: VR	Computer Science/Media Arts	The BEAT recommends the Unity Certified User: VR Credential.
Unreal Engine 3D Fundamentals	Computer Science/Media Arts	The BEAT recommends the Unreal Engine #D Fundamentals as a standalone credential

**Certification Information**

**Adobe Certified Professional: Illustrator**

- **Description:** Description of the Certification and Cost, if applicable - Adobe Certified Professional certifications are the official, industry-recognized credentials that validate proficiency in Adobe Creative Cloud applications and foundational knowledge for digital media careers. The 50-minute Graphic Design & Illustration Using Adobe Illustrator exam is comprised of two sections—selected-response items followed by Live-in-the-App tasks in Illustrator—and is designed at the level appropriate for the following Target Candidate: The Target Candidate has approximately 150 hours of instruction and hands-on experience with Illustrator. \$66 or Site License \$4,624
- **Website:** <https://certiport.filecamp.com/s/i/YD7zIWBVNiC2XrJN>
- **Recognized by:** Fayette County Public Schools

- **Workforce Areas:** Bluegrass|KentuckianaWorks - Greater Louisville|Northern Kentucky|West Kentucky
- **Previous Program Status:** Yes

### AMCA Mental Health Technician

- **Description:** Description of the Certification and Cost, if applicable - 119.00 A Mental Health Technician cares for individuals with mental or emotional conditions or disabilities, following the instructions of physicians or other health practitioners. A Mental Health Technician may monitor patients' physical and emotional well-being and report to medical staff, or participate in rehabilitation and treatment programs, help with personal hygiene, and administer oral or injectable medications.
- **Website:** <https://www.amcaexams.com/exam-candidates/mental-health-technician-certification/>
- **Recognized by:** Three Rivers Medical Center
- **Workforce Areas:** Statewide
- **Previous Program Status:** N/A

### SFMA Turfgrass Science Certification

- **Description:** The certification assesses industry-valued and industry-recognized standards produced by the Sports Field Management Association. Comprised of sports field managers from across the country, SFMA serves as an official voice for green-industry professionals. The certification validates individuals have acquired knowledge and skills in turfgrass development, turfgrass environment, preparation, practices and benefits. Those who earn the certification are more qualified and prepared to pursue a meaningful career in the turfgrass or sports field management industries. Additionally, the certification allows employers to identify and connect with more skilled candidates, filling gaps in the labor market and jumpstarting individuals' careers. The certification exam consists of 100 questions and assesses knowledge and skills from the following weighted industry standards: Benefits of Turfgrass 5%; Turfgrass Anatomy, Identification & Adaptations 20%; Turfgrass Environment 25%; Turfgrass Cultural Practices 30%; Playing Surface Preparation 20%. Cost: There are three different pricing options to sit for an industry certification. ICEV offers a certification subscription to ICEV subscribers for \$35/year, sold in bundles of 25 for \$875. Certification vouchers allow for one attempt at the exam and cost \$50 for ICEV subscribers & \$75 for non-ICEV subscribers. An ICEV subscription, which provides optional curriculum for the certification, is a per-student cost and can be quoted here: <https://www.icevonline.com/request-quote>
- **Website:** <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/turfgrass-science-certification/>
- **Recognized by:** Georgetown
- **Workforce Areas:** Bluegrass
- **Previous Program Status:** Yes

### Unity Certified User: VR

- **Description:** Description of the Certification and Cost, if applicable - The Unity Certified User VR certification exam will test the candidate's ability to create VR experiences and programs within Unity

software. The exam objectives are aligned with current industry standards set by professionals and educators. Individuals will be expected to have at least 150 hours of Unity software use and training to obtain this certification. Also, while not required, familiarity with C# programming and VR software and hardware (including tethered and standalone headsets) can help candidates learn Unity VR Development more easily. \$68 or Site License 100 exams \$2,185

- **Website:** [https://certiport.filecamp.com/s/i/UCU\\_VR\\_Developer\\_0823](https://certiport.filecamp.com/s/i/UCU_VR_Developer_0823)
- **Recognized by:** Fayette County Public Schools
- **Workforce Areas:** Bluegrass|KentuckianaWorks - Greater Louisville|Northern Kentucky|West Kentucky
- **Previous Program Status:** Yes

### **Unreal Engine 3D Fundamentals**

- **Description:** Description of the Certification and Cost, if applicable - This certification serves as a powerful capstone for any student building foundational skills in interactive 3D with Unreal Engine. The certification is an ideal credential for courses in game design, animation, virtual production, and digital art. It covers building interactive 3D experiences, designing levels and creating player immersion using the tool behind some of the world's most popular games. The Unreal Engine 3D Fundamentals Certification aligns with CTE, STEM, and workforce development priorities in most states, making it eligible for Carl D. Perkins Funds and other career-readiness funding. \$50 per student or we can get district/school pricing discount.
- **Website:** <https://gameplan.com/certifications/unreal-engine-3d-fundamentals>
- **Recognized by:** Fayette County Schools
- **Workforce Areas:** Bluegrass|KentuckianaWorks - Greater Louisville|Northern Kentucky|West Kentucky
- **Previous Program Status:** No

To learn more about the item listed in the consent agenda above, please click the link to access the relevant information on Google Drive:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1M7atN765M\\_sskMO4\\_W5B0oGHUrm\\_y-r0](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1M7atN765M_sskMO4_W5B0oGHUrm_y-r0)

# Second Chance Update: Kentucky's Reentry Center

# IMPROVING SECOND CHANCE OUTCOMES

## KCTCS – Kentucky Department and Corrections Prison Education Program Expansion

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System, in partnership with Kentucky Department of Corrections, is proposing a national model prison education training program to reduce recidivism, accelerate workforce development and increase savings to society.

Approximately 95% of the current incarcerated population will be released at the end of their sentence. At the same time, Kentucky will need to fill more than two million jobs over the next 10 years to keep up with labor market demand. Working with fair-chance employers, KCTCS's and KYDOC's proposal will lower recidivism and meet this workforce need.

The proposal builds upon KCTCS's current work in 14 state prisons and county jails. The model, based off of the "vocational villages" concept in Michigan, will accelerate workforce development in a central location. Recidivism for Michigan inmates participating in the vocational village is half the rate of the general population.

Preliminary programs were selected based on feedback from employers that hire formerly incarcerated individuals.

Programs include:

- Advanced Manufacturing Technology**
- Welding**
- Aviation Mechanics**
- Carpentry**
- HVAC**
- Diesel Mechanics/Technology**
- Electric Lineman Technician/Fiber Optics**
- Computerized Machining and Manufacturing**
- Additive Manufacturing**
- Heavy Equipment Operations**
- Computer Engineering Technology**

## FACILITY CONSTRUCTION COST

KCTCS Construction	\$33,584,982
KYDOC Construction	\$8,328,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$41,912,982</b>

## ANNUAL PERSONNEL/INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS

KYDOC Personnel	\$667,800
KCTCS Personnel	\$3,625,000
KCTCS Instructional Costs	\$150,000

## ANNUAL FACILITY OPERATIONS

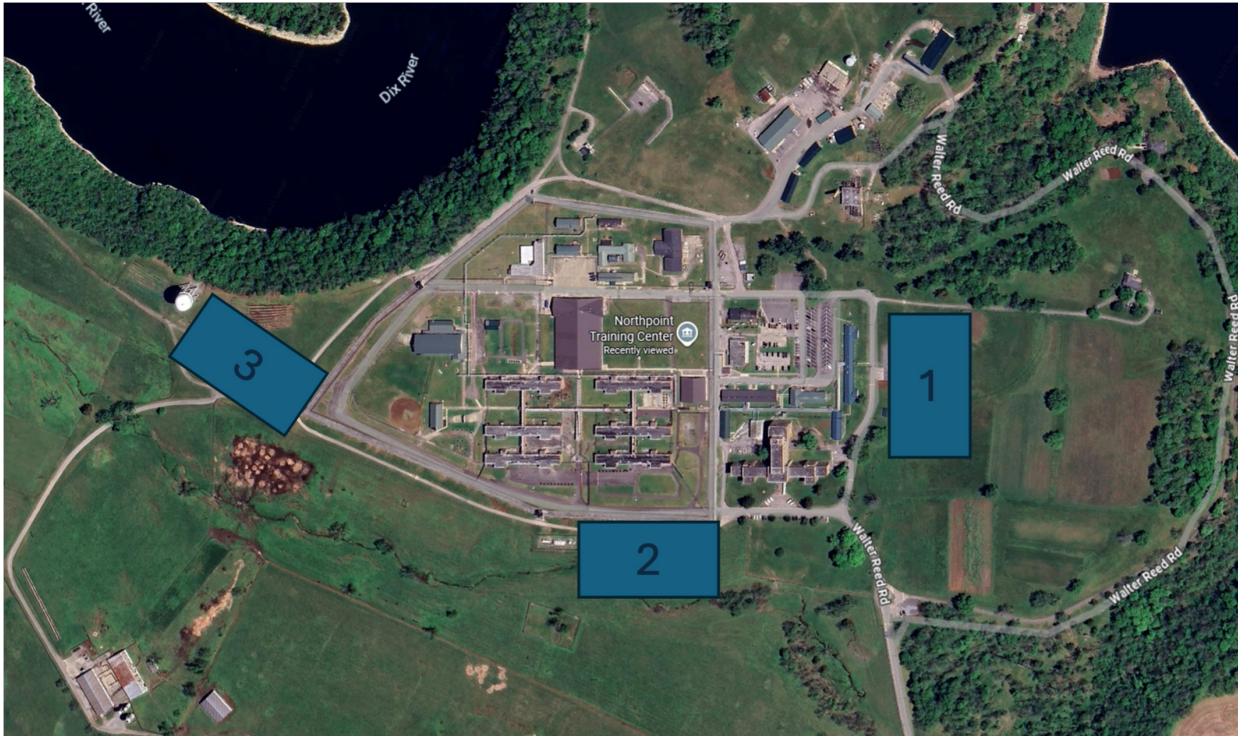
Utilities (\$1/51/sqft)	\$77,800
Building Maintenance	\$57,500
Operational Supplies	\$80,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,658,100</b>



Interior of BCTC Georgetown, which will serve as a model for this facility.

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The project will leverage an existing KCTCS accredited prison education program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College. Leveraging the availability of land and proximity to prospective employers, the facility will be located at KYDOC's Northpoint Training Center in Burgin, Kentucky. The 51,530 square foot, state-of-the-art, multi-model, flexible in-person training facility will educate 400 inmates annually, with the ability to increase to 750 based on demand, nearing the completion of their sentencing.



Northpoint Training Center, Burgin, Kentucky

## OPERATING FUNDS

The goal is to develop a self-sustaining program supported by financial aid (ie. Pell Grants) and tuition revenue. However, in order to stand-up the program, KCTCS is requesting one year of \$4.6 million in operating funds in the second year of the biennium. Operating funds are to support annual KCTCS and KYDOC personnel, instruction costs, facility maintenance and operations, and supplies.

# High-Demand CTE Certification (Voting Required)

# 2026–2027 High-Demand Industry Certifications

## Process and High-Demand Designation

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### Background

In accordance with [KRS 158.6455 \(1\)\(e\)](#), local workforce development boards, in partnership with regional economic development organizations, annually identify and rank industry-recognized certifications, licensures, and credentials based on workforce demand. These recommendations are submitted to the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board for review, with final lists disseminated to school districts as postsecondary readiness indicators.

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### 2026 Data Collection Process

- Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) identified high-demand certifications using regional employer feedback
  - Submissions were collected via standardized Excel templates
- 

### Integration Method

- All LWDB submissions were compiled into a single, centralized master spreadsheet
  - This created a comprehensive statewide view, reflecting both statewide and regional workforce needs
- 

### LWDB Variability

- Submission details varied by region, with some including extensive employer input and tiered demand levels
  - For consistency, all entries were streamlined into a binary classification: High-Demand (HD) or Non-High-Demand
- 

### KDE Review Process

- The Kentucky Department of Education is reviewing all submitted data
- 

### Additional Information

The full list of proposed **2026–2027 High-Demand Certifications** and [The 2026-2027 listing of proposed High-Demand Certifications can be found here.](#)

# Member Update: Selma Owens

# Selma Owens:

## Coordination and ROI Committee Chair

### Executive Committee Member

**Selma Owens** is a Lexington, Kentucky-based entrepreneur, caterer, and creative professional with extensive experience in hospitality, retail, and client service. As owner of Selma's Catering, she built a reputation for delivering personalized catering services and event experiences throughout the Lexington community. She has demonstrated expertise in facilitating workplace learning and career development for high school and college-age youth.

Before launching her catering business full time, Ms. Owens developed a diverse background in fashion retail and customer engagement, working with nationally recognized retailers including Macy's and D. H. Holmes, as well as Dawahare's in Lexington, Kentucky. Her professional experience reflects a longstanding commitment to customer service, design, and hospitality excellence.

Ms. Owens studied at Western Kentucky University and the Atlanta School of Design, combining creative training with entrepreneurial vision. She has also been involved with the Living Arts and Science Center, reflecting her appreciation for community engagement and the arts.

Through her business and community involvement, Ms. Owens continues to contribute to Lexington's vibrant culinary and small business landscape while fostering meaningful relationships through service, creativity, and hospitality.



# Workforce Pell Grant

## Workforce Pell - Occupation Eligibility Criteria Definitions

Training programs eligible for Workforce Pell must prepare learners for occupations that are **In-Demand, High-Wage, or High-Skill**. The Team Kentucky Workforce Pell Workgroup proposes the following plain language and operationalized definitions for these criteria as follows.

### Plain Language Definitions:

- 1) **In-Demand:** An In-Demand occupation is growing faster than the overall growth rate, makes up a substantial share of job openings, or has been identified to be strategically critical to economic growth in the Commonwealth.
- 2) **High-Wage:** A High-Wage occupation has a median wage higher the overall median wage.
- 3) **High Skill:** A High-Skill occupation requires technical or vocational training, related on-the-job experience, completion of an apprenticeship, or an associate's degree or higher.

### Operationalized Definitions:

- 1) **In-Demand Operationalized:** An occupation is considered in-demand if, according to the most recent set of published ten-year occupational employment projections from the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), it is:
  - a) One whose projected annualized employment growth rate is at least as large as the annualized projected growth rate for all occupations within its relative area (either at the LWA or state level), OR
  - b) One that is projected to account for at least 0.4% of the total demand for all occupations within its relative area (either at the LWA or state level), where demand is defined as the projected job openings expected to be produced by economic growth and exits of workers from the labor force, OR
  - c) One that has been identified by the Governor to be emerging or critical to the state's economic growth as a result of investment in the commonwealth, with public documentation of the rationale.
- 2) **High-Wage Operationalized:** A High-Wage occupation is one whose median wage meets or exceeds the overall median wages for all occupations within its relative area (either at the LWA or state level) according to the most recent set of published occupational wage estimates from the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS) and/or the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
  - a) Statewide median wage: \$22.99
  - a) Local median wage range: \$18.31 (EKCEP) - \$23.20 (KentuckianaWorks)
- 3) **High Skill Operationalized:** A High-Skill occupation has an [O\\*NET Job Zone](#) score equal to or greater than 3.

1 AN ACT relating to workforce development and declaring an emergency.

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 151B IS CREATED TO  
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5 (1) As used in this section, "eligible workforce training programs" means programs  
6 that meet applicable requirements in section 83002 of Pub. L. No. 119-21.

7 (2) The Governor, in consultation with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board,  
8 shall:

9 (a) Approve all eligible workforce training programs for purposes of federal  
10 Workforce Pell Grants; and

11 (b) Coordinate approval of eligible workforce training programs with other  
12 state and federal workforce programs to avoid duplicative payments for the  
13 same student costs that are covered by federal Workforce Pell Grants.

14 (3) The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board shall establish an internal procedure  
15 to:

16 (a) Determine if a program meets the applicable federal requirements to be an  
17 eligible workforce training program; and

18 (b) Ensure that the implementation of this section does not impose  
19 requirements more restrictive than, or inconsistent with, any applicable  
20 federal rules or regulations governing Workforce Pell Grants.

21 ➔Section 2. Whereas the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a paramount interest  
22 in creating educational opportunities for all citizens, an emergency is declared to exist,  
23 and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its  
24 otherwise becoming a law.

# Work Ready Communities

# Work Ready Communities: Next Generation



## Clear Expectations and Better Connections

Communities will align workforce, education, and economic development efforts around shared regional priorities. The updated approach creates clear expectations through defined goals, common data sources, and practical regional strategies.

## Connected Partners



- Workforce Development Boards
- K-12 and Post Secondary Education
- Economic Development Organizations
- Employers and Industry Associations
- Community and Nonprofit Partners

## What Has Changed?

The updated program moves from a static certification model to a practical, strategy-focused approach that:

- Uses clear, measurable goals tied to workforce and talent priorities
- Recognizes both “Work Ready” and “In Progress” communities
- Expands focus beyond workforce metrics to include barriers such as childcare, housing, transportation, and broadband
- Shifts focus from certification alone to ongoing strategy and collaboration
- Creates strong alignment between regional workforce needs and economic development strategies
- Builds on feedback across workforce, education, economic development, and local community partners

## Simplified Participation and Support

Work Ready Communities: Next Generation is designed to make participation more accessible and manageable for communities across Kentucky.

### Clear Process

- Streamlined online application
- Centralized website with resources, templates, and guidance

### Shared Resources

- Resource guide with templates and application supports
- Data guide with step-by-step planning and data collection guidance
- Kentucky best practice examples

### Ongoing Support

- Technical assistance for community conveners
- Recognition for both progress and achievement

These updates support ongoing regional planning and coordination beyond certification.

## Moving Forward

You can play an important role in launching Work Ready Communities: Next Generation by:

- Promoting the value of regional collaboration and shared workforce strategies
- Encouraging participation from employers, educators, workforce partners, and local government
- Supporting communities that are beginning the process, not only those already certified
- Sharing local success stories and best practices

# Appendix

# What Is the Public Workforce System?

Kentucky's public workforce system connects talent with opportunity by linking employers, employees and job seekers across the state to build skills, careers and a stronger economy.



## Who We Are

We're a partnership of state agencies, local workforce boards and community organizations offering free services to employers and job seekers. Whether you're searching for a job, advancing your career, or growing your business, we're here to help.

## What We Do



### Recruitment Support

We connect employers with qualified candidates.



### Training & Career Pathways

We assist with building skills to meet Kentucky's workforce needs.



### Retention Services

We assist in employee growth through training and apprenticeships.



### Barrier Reduction

We help people overcome challenges like transportation, child care and accessibility.

## How It Works

### Kentucky Career Center

The Kentucky Career Center (KCC) is the gateway to the state's public workforce system. With 80+ certified locations statewide, KCC connects employers and job seekers to a network of partner agencies that offer specialized programs, services and support.

### Partner Agencies

- Career Development Office
- Office of Adult Education
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Office of Industry & Apprenticeship Services
- Local Workforce Innovation Boards
- Everybody Counts
- Other community partners and agencies

# Career Development Office



## Comprehensive Career Centers Statewide

We operate 13 comprehensive career centers statewide that help job seekers find lasting employment, connect individuals to education and training opportunities and support employers in finding skilled, qualified workers.

## Our Programs

### Job Matching Services

- Connect job seekers with employers looking to hire
- Job seekers receive career services, job search help, referrals and placement assistance
- Employers can post jobs and find qualified applicants

### Unemployment Support

- Supports individuals receiving unemployment benefits
- Helps with reemployment plans, career information and enrollment in services to get back to work

### Veterans Services

- Provides dedicated staff to help veterans and eligible individuals with significant barriers find careers and training
- Connects employers with job seeking veterans

### Seasonal Farm Work

- Authorizes temporary workers (H-2A) to enter the U.S. when not enough local workers are available for seasonal agricultural jobs

## Support for Job Seekers and Employers

Whether you're a job seeker or an employer, the CDO team is ready to assist you—visit [kcc.ky.gov](https://kcc.ky.gov) to find the location nearest you.

## Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits for **Kentucky 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.

Workers with disabilities who receive accommodations match non-disabled workers in:

- Productivity
- Attendance
- Reliability
- Overall effectiveness

### **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 by building self-confidence, self-reliance and social support.
- Provides opportunities for re-training, advancement, retirement contributions and travel.

### **Employer Services Branch**

We 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:

#### **Recruitment & Hiring**

- Pre-screening applicants based on essential job functions
- On-the-job training and internships

#### **Workplace Support**

- Onsite job trainer and support services
- Job restructuring and worksite adjustments
- Assistive technology and specialized equipment

#### **Accessibility:**

- Accessibility checklists
- Worksite accessibility surveys

#### **Additional Resources**

- Staff development
- Financial incentives information
- Follow-up services

## Adult Ed Solutions for **Kentucky Employers**



### About Us

We are committed to empowering Kentucky businesses to reach their maximum potential. With a team of experienced professionals, we provide **customized education** and **training services** designed to help employers navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to work with Kentuckians to improve their quality of life through education, training and employment so they can take care of themselves and their families and help their communities and the state's economies expand and thrive.

### Employer Benefits

- Enhanced productivity & efficiency
- Increased employee retention
- Improved safety and workplace communication
- Higher employee engagement and morale

### Services

#### Workplace Readiness

We assist in developing skills in communication, teamwork and critical thinking.

#### Digital Literacy Training

We assist in optimizing and enhancing technology skills.

#### English Language Learning

We offer English language and civics education for non-native speakers.

#### GED Preparation and Testing

We offer in-depth GED test preparation and free GED test fees for eligible Kentuckians.

#### Customized Training Solutions

We offer job-specific literacy and skills training.

#### Soft Skills Development

We assist in improving delivery of customer service, conflict resolution and more.

Check out  
our services.



**KYAE.KY.GOV**

# Workforce Talent Project Team

You aren't doing this work alone.

We're here to help employers hire, develop and retain top talent – connecting the right people, programs, and partnerships to unlock tailored workforce strategies for your business.



## Services

- **Free, full-service** business support for employer's workforce needs
- Provide **easy access** to workforce analysis and strategy for Kentucky's businesses
- Address **attraction and recruitment** challenges with an industry-focused, data-informed approach
- Support with **workforce selection and onboarding** solutions
- **Create a business structure** that delivers results for employers and career seekers

## Benefits

- **Customize workforce strategies** aligned to industry demands at no cost
- **Foster employer relationships** and maintain strong ties to address workforce needs
- Create a **business structure** that delivers results for employers and career seekers
- Improve **communication and confidence** among workforce partners
- Access to Kentucky's proven **speed-to-market advantage** that gets you operational faster

Scan the QR code and  
connect with us today.



**KYWORKS.KY.GOV**

**502-564-5920 or [workforce@ky.gov](mailto:workforce@ky.gov)**

*Your personalized workforce service is just one call away!*

## Office of Industry and Apprenticeship Services



### Services

- **Registered Apprenticeships (RA)** and on-the-job training opportunities are available.
- Companies can get up to \$9,600 in **valuable financial incentives** including work opportunity tax credits (WOTC), deep training discounts and grants.
- Receive **rapid response and layoff support** to assist employees during transitions and to minimize business disruptions for workers and the community
- Kentucky Fair Chance Bonding is available to employers and applicants **at no cost to protect your business.**

### Benefits

- **Apprenticeship Workforce Consultants** provide no-cost guidance, program development, recruitment, training and workforce solutions for over 1500 occupations.
- **91% of apprentices** remain employed after completing their programs and 87% of Kentucky apprentices are employed and in the same industry.
- Registered apprenticeships show a \$1.44 return on every dollar invested.

Scan the QR code to  
connect with us today.

Let's make hiring easier.



**KYWORKS.KY.GOV or APPRENTICESHIP@KY.GOV**  
**502-564-5920**

*Your personalized workforce service is just one call away!*



# Kentucky Employers



## What We Do

- **Free promotion** of your business to over 12,000 students graduating high school each year
- **Save you time on recruiting** entry-level talent from local high schools
- Provide **direct access to entry-level talent** during the school year and upon graduation
- Ensure new hires enter the workplace **equipped for long-term success**
- Improve employee **retention** and **productivity**

## Why Partner with Everybody Counts?

Our **services are free** with no direct cost to employers.

Everybody Counts equips high school juniors and seniors with career pathways and skills to thrive when they enter Kentucky's workforce.

Employers can have confidence that new hires have developed essential skills outside of their academic courses.

Everybody Counts enhances workplace readiness, work-based learning, money management and time management.

Visit [everybodycounts.ky.gov](http://everybodycounts.ky.gov) or email us at [everybodycounts@ky.gov](mailto:everybodycounts@ky.gov) to learn more.

## 2026 Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board Quarterly Board Meetings

May 21 - Kentucky Community and Technical College System  
300 North Main Street, Versailles, KY, 40383

August 27 – Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Inc. (EKCEP)  
145 Citizens Ln Suite 101, Hazard, KY 41701

November 19 - The CentreWorks Building at Centre College  
236 W. Main Street, Danville, KY 40422

All meetings are scheduled for 1:30-3:30 pm ET / 12:30 - 2:30 pm CT and will be conducted in-person with a virtual option.

## 2027 Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board Quarterly Board Meetings

February 18 – Location TBD

May 20 – Location TBD

August 19 – Location TBD

November 18 – Location TBD

All meetings are scheduled for 1:30-3:30 pm ET / 12:30 - 2:30 pm CT and will be conducted in-person with a virtual option.

## Board Membership Travel Reimbursement Information

Per the [By-Laws](#) of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, Article III, Section 2, Members of the Board and non-members serving on committees or workgroups, shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in connection with their duties in accordance with state travel expenses and reimbursement administrative regulation.

Regulation and Travel Expense and Reimbursement: The reimbursement rate is determined using the American Automobile Association (AAA) Daily Fuel Gauge Report for Kentucky for regular unleaded gasoline. The gasoline cost used for the calculation is located on the AAA website at <http://gasprices.aaa.com/?state=KY>.

The rate shall be adjusted on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 each calendar year based on the average retail price of regular grade gasoline for the week beginning on the second Sunday of the prior month as follows:

	AAA Average Weekly Fuel Cost	Reimbursement Per Mile
a.	\$.01 to \$1.499	36 cents per mile
b.	\$1.50 to \$1.699	37 cents per mile
c.	\$1.70 to \$1.899	38 cents per mile
d.	\$1.90 to \$2.099	39 cents per mile
e.	\$2.10 to \$2.299	40 cents per mile
f.	Greater than \$2.299	41 cents plus 1 cent for every 20 cent increase

Mileage for in-state travel shall be based on the “Kentucky Official Highway Map”, MapQuest website, Google Maps website, or similar web mapping service. Out-of-state mileage shall be based on the most recent edition of the “Rand McNally Road Atlas”, MapQuest website, Google Maps website, or similar web mapping service.

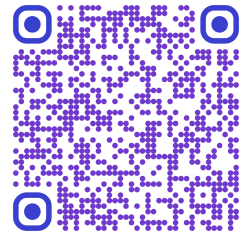
**Current rate through June 30, 2026, is \$0.47/ mile.**

Education and Labor's financial office requires board members to create a vendor account on: <https://vss.ky.gov> This allows for direct deposit, after the event has occurred, and “voucher” paperwork has been submitted and approved.

If you will follow the prompts in the link and then let KWIB staff know what your “vendor number” is, KWIB staff can set up the “voucher” that will calculate your reimbursable expense and prompt the process for payment. Email [kwib.projects@ky.gov](mailto:kwib.projects@ky.gov) for more information or questions.



## Futuriti helps Kentuckians understand the state's 5 high-demand workforce sectors.



Kentucky's in-demand career sectors offer many opportunities to build rewarding careers while supporting the state's growing economy. These sectors, approved by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, provide stability and growth and allow you to make meaningful contributions to your community.



### Healthcare

Healthcare practitioners and healthcare support workers play vital roles in maintaining and improving people's health. Practitioners, such as doctors and nurses, diagnose, treat, and manage illnesses, while support workers assist with daily care, administrative tasks, and patient comfort.



### Manufacturing and Logistics

Workers in manufacturing build and assemble goods, from cars and electronics to clothing and food products, often using advanced machinery and technology. Logistics professionals prioritize and manage the supply chain, ensuring that materials are transported efficiently.



### Construction

Construction careers contribute to all aspects of Kentucky life, from building homes and schools to developing roads and bridges. With opportunities ranging from entry-level positions to skilled trades and leadership roles, the industry offers a clear pathway for growth and specialization.



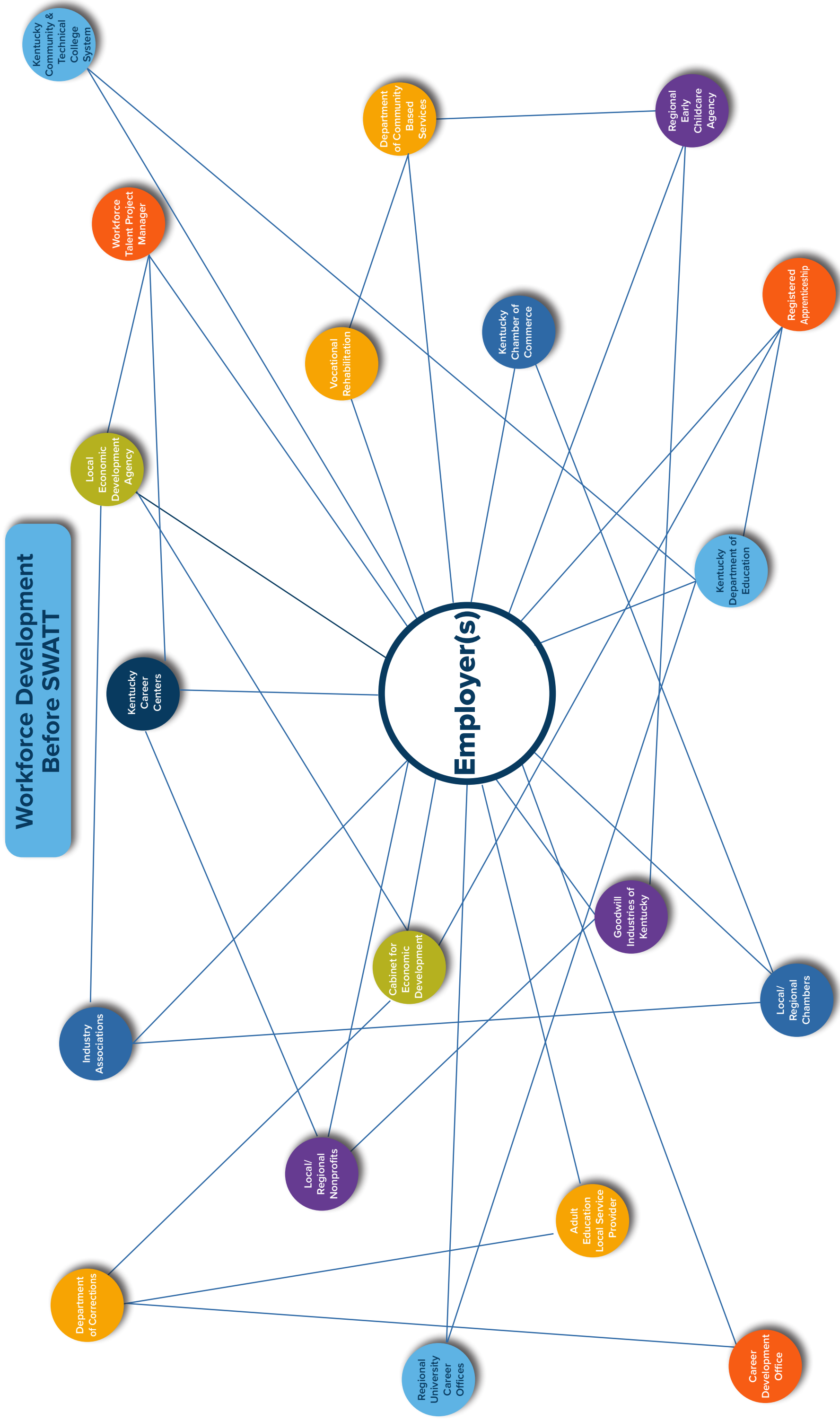
### Education

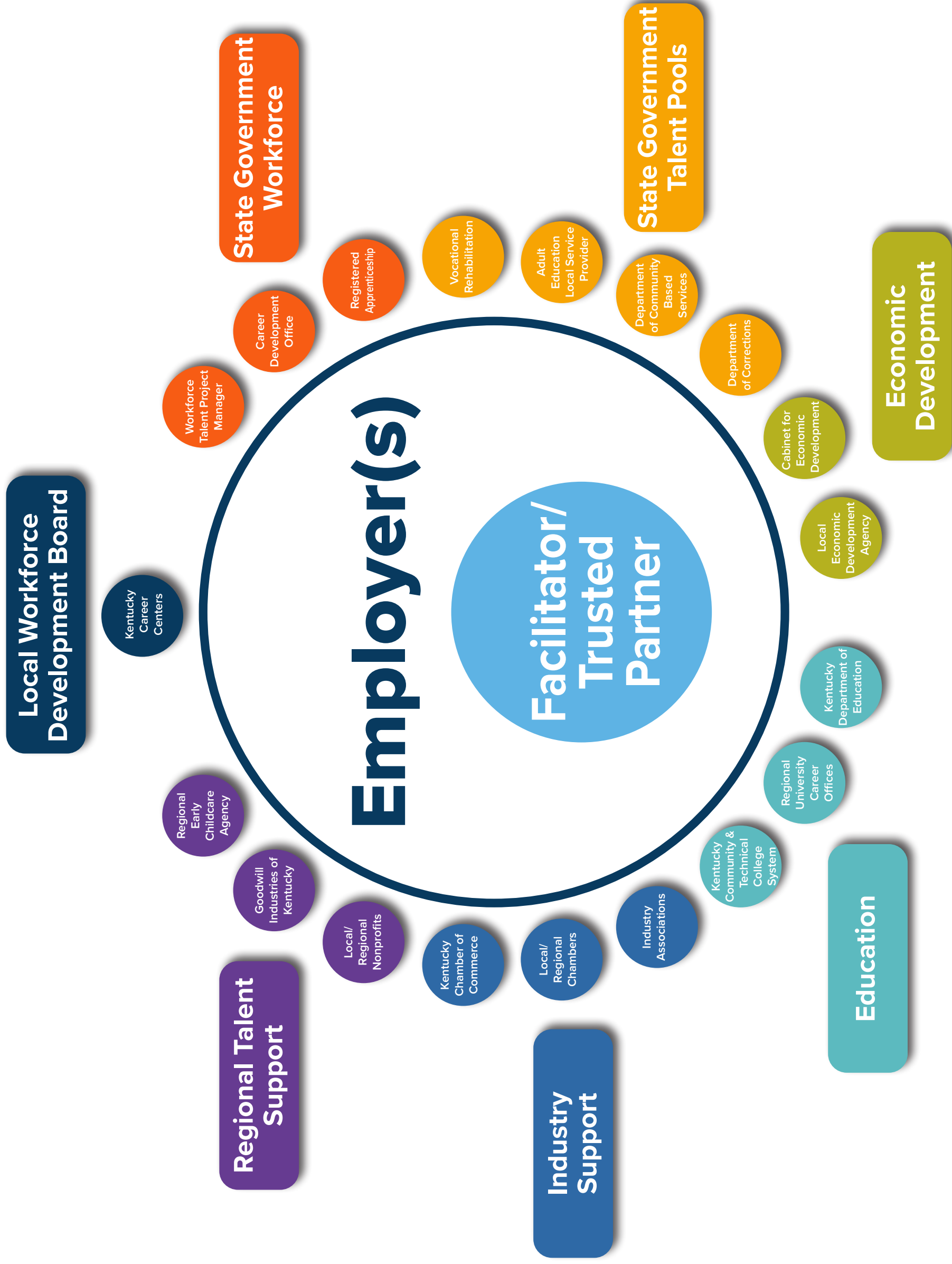
Education careers require patience, creativity, and strong communication skills to engage learners and guide them toward success. Beyond the classroom, education offers opportunities in curriculum development, educational technology, and administration, providing numerous paths.



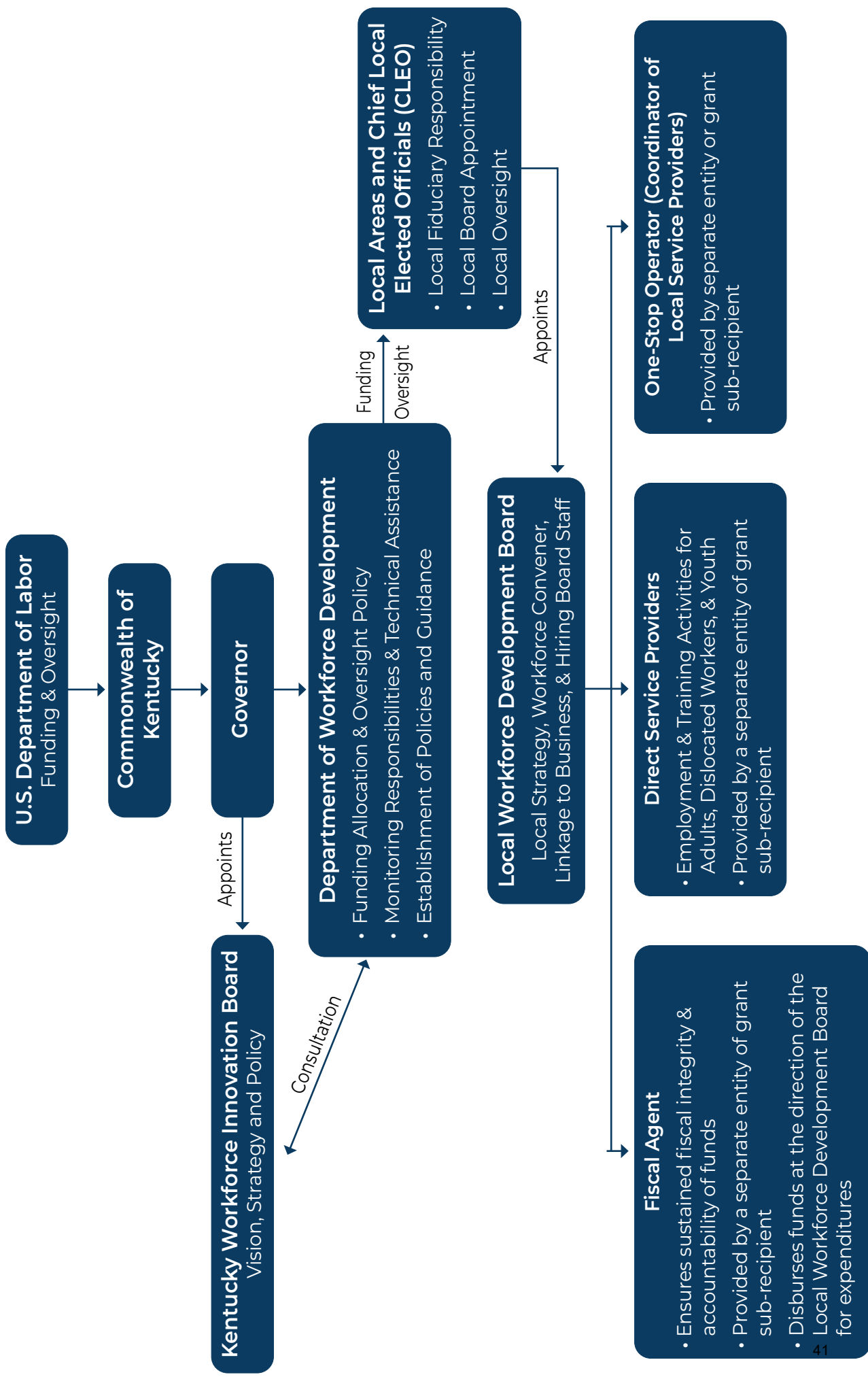
### Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Professionals in these fields may specialize in designing cutting-edge technology, conducting scientific research, managing finances, or offering legal and business advice. These roles require knowledge, analytical thinking, and a commitment to staying ahead of industry trends. <sup>38</sup>

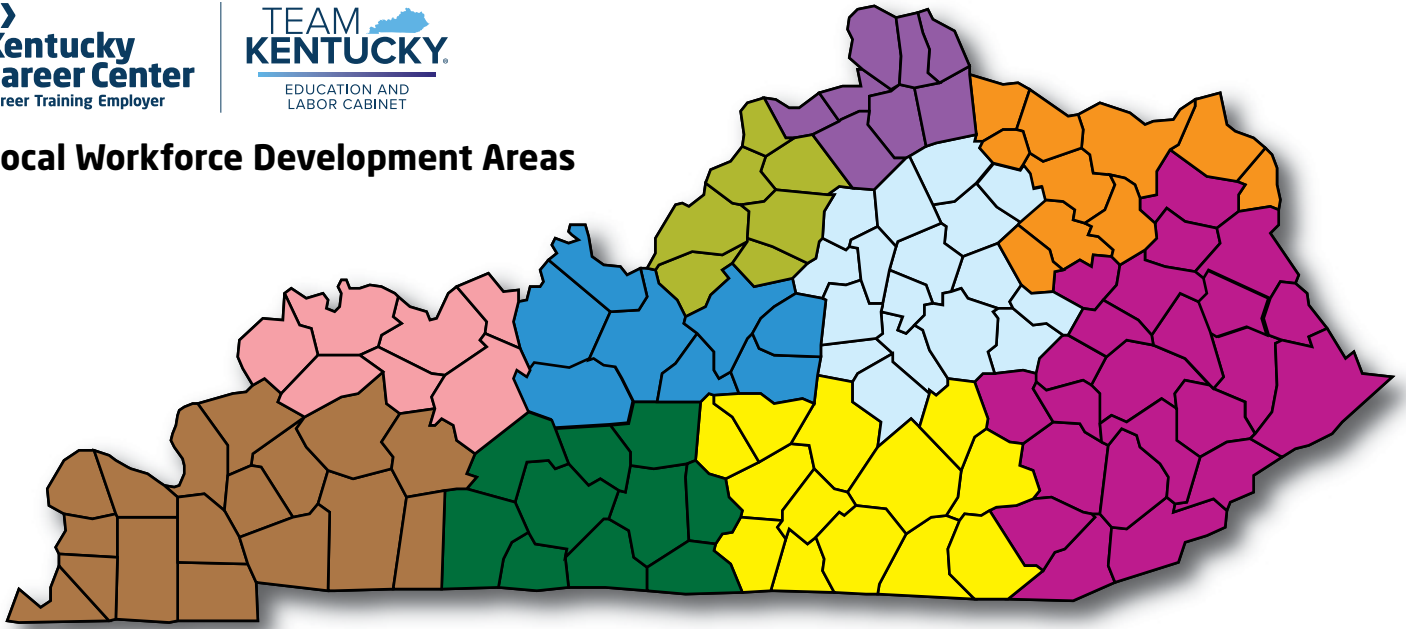




# WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth Kentucky Governance



## Local Workforce Development Areas



### **Bluegrass**

Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Harrison, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Nicholas, Powell, Scott, Woodford  
**Tiffanie Reeves, Director**  
699 Perimeter Drive  
Lexington, Kentucky 40517  
859-810-2536  
[ckycareers.com](http://ckycareers.com)  
[treeves@bgadd.org](mailto:treeves@bgadd.org)

### **Cumberlands**

Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Laurel, McCreary, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Taylor, Wayne, Whitley  
**Myra Wilson, Director**  
PO Box 1570  
Russell Springs, Kentucky 42642  
270-866-4200  
[cumberlandsworkforce.com](http://cumberlandsworkforce.com)  
[myra@lcadd.org](mailto:myra@lcadd.org)

### **EKCEP**

Bell, Breathitt, Carter, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Wolfe  
**Becky Carnes-Miller, Director**  
145 Citizens Ln, Ste 101  
Hazard 41701  
606-436-5751  
[jobsight.org](http://jobsight.org)  
[bmiller@ekcep.org](mailto:bmiller@ekcep.org)

### **Green River**

Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, Webster  
**Michelle Drake, Director**  
3108 Fairview Drive  
Owensboro, Kentucky 42303  
270-852-1312  
[gradd.com](http://gradd.com)  
[michelle.drake@ky.gov](mailto:michelle.drake@ky.gov)

### **KentuckianaWorks**

Bullitt, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble  
**Michael Gritton, Director**  
410 West Chestnut Street, Suite 200  
Louisville, Kentucky 40202  
502-574-2500  
[kentuckianaworks.org](http://kentuckianaworks.org)  
[michael.gritton@kentuckianaworks.org](mailto:michael.gritton@kentuckianaworks.org)

### **Lincoln Trail**

Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Washington  
**Jackie Masterson, Interim Director**  
PO Box 604  
Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42702  
270-769-2393  
[ltcareercenter.org](http://ltcareercenter.org)  
[jackie@ltadd.org](mailto:jackie@ltadd.org)

### **Northern Kentucky**

Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, Pendleton  
**Correy Eimer, Director**  
22 Spiral Drive  
Florence, Kentucky 41042  
859-488-1854  
[nkcareercenter.org](http://nkcareercenter.org)  
[correy.eimer@nkadd.org](mailto:correy.eimer@nkadd.org)

### **South Central**

Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson, Warren  
**Jon Sowards, President/CEO**  
2355 Nashville Road, Suite C101  
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101  
270-846-6707  
[southcentralworkforce.com](http://southcentralworkforce.com)  
[jon@southcentralworkforce.com](mailto:jon@southcentralworkforce.com)

### **TENCO**

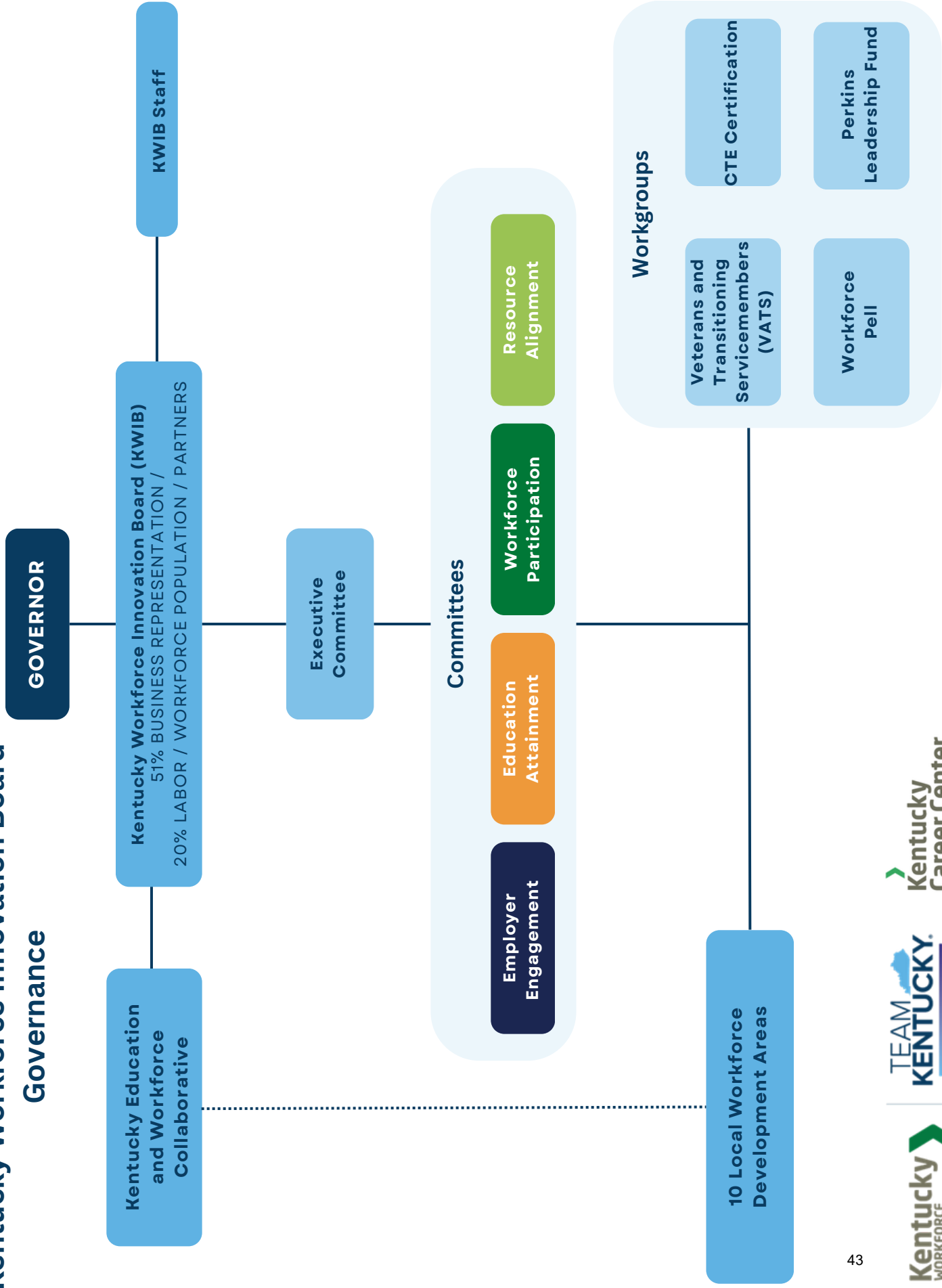
Bath, Boyd, Bracken, Fleming, Greenup, Lewis, Mason, Montgomery, Robertson, Rowan  
**Justin Suttles, Director**  
201 Government Street, Suite 300  
Maysville, Kentucky 41056  
606-956-2634  
[tencocareercenter.com](http://tencocareercenter.com)  
[justin.suttles@ky.gov](mailto:justin.suttles@ky.gov)

### **West Kentucky**

Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg  
**Sheila Clark, Director**  
300 Hammond Drive  
Hopkinsville, Kentucky 42240  
270-886-9484  
[wkworkforce.work](http://wkworkforce.work)  
[sheila.clark@ky.gov](mailto:sheila.clark@ky.gov)

# Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

## Governance



# HELP DRIVE

## KENTUCKY'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Join the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board  
**Strategic Committees**



### **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

Shape a business-led workforce system



### **WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION**

Create opportunities for untapped talent and remove barriers to work



### **EDUCATION ATTAINMENT**

Align and build a lifelong education system to meet the future of work



### **RESOURCE ALIGNMENT**

Consistently improve the system and increase return on workforce investment

Business and community leaders, educators, and government professionals interested in serving, email us at [kwib.projects@ky.gov](mailto:kwib.projects@ky.gov).