



EDUCATION AND
LABOR CABINET

Education Attainment Committee
Meeting Briefing Packet

April 21, 2026

10:00 – 11:30 am ET

Committee Chair

Johnny W. Collett

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Education Attainment Briefing Packet

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Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification



April 21, 2026

Education Attainment Committee

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification

Recommendation

The Business and Education Alignment Taskforce (BEAT) reviewed and recommended the certifications, which were approved by the CTE Certification Review Workgroup on April 2, 2026, and are now presented to the KWIB Education Attainment Committee for consideration, 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
Lean Six Sigma	Multi	Pending BEAT recommendation
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

Pending / Under Review

- Lean Six Sigma – Industry Certification Program Area: Multi - pending BEAT recommendation

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
- **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

High Demand Certification

2026–2027 High-Demand Industry Certifications Process and High-Demand Designation

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.

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.](#)

Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning (WBL) Definitions Compilation

The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) Education Attainment Committee requested a review and alignment of **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** definitions across partner agencies and organizations.

In response, input and resources were gathered from key partners, including:

- Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE)
- Everybody Counts Initiative
- WIOA Youth – Education & Labor Cabinet
- Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS)
- Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE)
- Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE)
- Office of Industry & Apprenticeship Services (OIAS)
- Career Development Office (CDO)
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS)

These responses reflect a range of perspectives, including:

- Federal and state-aligned definitions (e.g., Pre-ETS, Perkins V, and 705 KAR 4:041)
- Programmatic and operational definitions currently in use
- Variations in how WBL components and experiences are categorized
- Considerations regarding consistency across systems to avoid confusion for employers and learners

The collected input highlights both **common themes**—such as employer engagement, skill development, and real-world application—and **differences in terminology and structure** across partner agencies.

Stakeholder Definitions Compilation

A comprehensive compilation of all partner responses, definitions, and supporting resources has been developed and is maintained in a shared document.

Access the full compilation here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jllgvZTnLwgl7_pqJqmFbp-XjnmKzFfoi

Workforce Pell

Workforce Pell – Proposed Governance Structure – DRAFT

Background:

Workforce Pell was included in the federal tax and spending legislation passed by Congress and requires every state to implement Workforce Pell by 7/1/26, a very rapid timeline as the US Education Department is yet to provide final ruling. In Kentucky, SB249 has passed both House and Senate and has been enrolled.

Workforce Pell allows Pell eligible students to pursue short term credentials, 8-15 week programs. Eligible programs are:

- High-skill, high-wage, and in-demand (*definitions for all three identified by each state*)
- Stackable and portable credentials (*stackable = credit bearing or credit for prior learning; portable = accepted by more than one employer*)
- Have 70% completion rate, and 70% employment rate with wages premiums higher than the cost of tuition and fees

The Governor, with the consultation of their state workforce board (KWIB), will review and approve programs that meet those thresholds to submit to the Secretary of the US Education Department.

Proposed Governance Structure:

1. Institutions submit potential programs to the “Workforce Pell Program Review Workgroup”
2. Workgroup reviews quarterly and submits to the KWIB Education Attainment Committee for review (this structure mirrors the approach currently done with CTE certifications, Perkins Leadership Funds, and In-Demand Certification)
3. Education Attainment submits to KWIB for business approval sought in Workforce Pell
4. Approved recommendations are sent to DWD Commissioner
5. The Governor receives recommended programs via DWD Commissioner or ELC Secretary

The timeline and cadence can be accelerated if needed.

Workforce Pell Program Review Workgroup Members:

Voting Stakeholders:

- Kentucky Department of Education
- Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (business member)
- Local Workforce Development Board (business member)
- Council on Postsecondary Education
- Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges & Universities
- Department of Workforce Development - Office of Industry and Apprenticeship Services
- Department of Workforce Development - Office of Adult Education

Non-Voting Observers:

- Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority
- Cabinet for Economic Development
- Kentucky Center for Statistics

Appendix

13 Stats Everyone Needs To Know About Internships

By [Brandon Busteed](#),

Mar 24, 2026, 09:51 am EDT. Forbes <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brandonbusteed/2026/03/24/13-stats-everyone-needs-to-know-about-internships/>



Internships make the career dream happen. We need a lot more of them.

Internships may be the single most important factor to career success. And as the early career opportunity ladder begins to crumble for young adults, growing the number of internships across all employers may be our only solution. Here are 13 stats every student, parent, educational institution and employer need to know:

1. An internship [double the odds](#) that a college graduate has a good job waiting for them upon graduation.
2. An internship doubles the odds that a college graduate ends up engaged in their work over their lifetime.
3. There were 8.2 million college students who wanted an internship last year; only 3.6 million got one. This means we are 4.6 million internships short.
4. 79% of high school students wanted an internship; [only 2% got one](#).
5. Internship job postings in the U.S. were [down 17.5%](#) last year.
6. At top companies, it's harder to get an internship than it is to get into the Ivy League.
7. Although internships are fewer and further between, there are 5x more internships (~3.6M) in the U.S. than apprenticeships (~700k). Even rapid growth in apprenticeships isn't going to get us close to bridging our overall work experience gap.

8. Percentage of [unpaid internships by sector](#):
57% - Non-profit
48% - Government
34% - For-profit
9. A college graduate who had a [paid internship](#) averages 1.01 job offers and an average starting salary of \$68,000 while one with an *unpaid* internship averages .66 job offers and a starting salary of \$53,000. Paid internships really matter.
10. Among parents of 5th-12th graders, the majority would pick an internship at Google over a degree from Harvard as the “best path to a good job” for their child.
11. Employers say the number #1 factor in hiring a college graduate is whether they did an internship.
12. For employers, the [internship-to-hire ratio is 144x better](#) than the job-posting-to-hire ratio.
13. The current number of internships in the U.S. is equivalent to 2.2% of all jobs. At just 5%, there would be an internship for every student who wants one.

Demand for internships is exploding, while supply is contracting. Students want internships, parents want internships and employers want to see candidates who have had internships. And all for good reasons: internships matter *a great deal* to career success. The problem is that not enough employers are offering enough internship opportunities. And too many are offering unpaid internships.

Every employer in America – from non-profits (including schools and colleges themselves) to government to for-profits – should aim to offer the equivalent of at least 5% of their total workforce in the form of internships. At 5%, our talent development pipeline works. At 2.2% it is failing.

Structural forces are preventing young adults from gaining valuable work experience. Labor force participation rates among teenagers have plummeted due to adults taking what used to be jobs predominantly filled by young people. And AI is disrupting the white-collar, entry-level job market. While the structural forces may not have any obvious solutions, the internship shortage is imminently solvable. We aim for 5%.

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Partner Spotlight

Partner Spotlight highlights initiatives by sharing best practices and innovative approaches in Kentucky's workforce development system.

May 6, 2026 • 12:00 p.m. (ET)

Discussion Topic: How Adult Education Providers Support Community & Employer Needs

Presenter:

Jamie Taylor, Ph.D., Deputy Executive Director
Kentucky Adult Education

Local Adult Education Experts:

Steven Schreck, Director
Newport Adult Education

Donnie Osborn, Adult Education Program Director
Kentucky Educational Development Corporation (KEDC)

Tammy Castle, Director of Adult Education
Big Sandy Community & Technical College (BSCTC)

Tina Cook, Executive Director
Laurel County Literacy Council

Dorinda Maynard, Program Director
Madison County Public Libraries

Ashley Janicki, Manager
Jefferson County Public Schools



Your Future Starts Now

Connect with Everybody Counts Today!

Let's turn your passions into a paycheck - with one-on-one help from Everybody Counts Career Coaches.



Why Students Choose Us



Personalized Coaching

Get support tailored to your goals—college, career, or certifications.



Easy Scheduling

Meet during school hours, after school, or virtually. You choose.



Real Opportunities

Internships, job shadows, and job leads in your area.



Goal Planning

From resume help to job interview prep—we've got your back.

"Coach Deon inspired me to get going on finishing my work so I could get a job somewhere that's good for me. It impacted me in many ways, including my ability to get work completed, how to communicate with people, improved my work ethic, and increased my job opportunities. My coach helped push me to the right path, so I know what's good for me. He created a good space for people like me to graduate and gave opportunities to move on after graduating."

Martin Silva - Class of 2025

Partnering Communities

- Fayette
- Franklin
- Jefferson
- Jessamine
- Oldham
- Scott
- Shelby

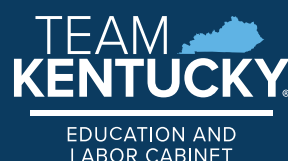
Ready To Get Started?

It's free. It's easy. It's all about YOU.

Ask your counselor to connect you with an Everybody Counts Coach or visit EverybodyCounts.ky.gov and click **Get Connected**.

Contact Information

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





Everybody Counts Benefits for Kentucky Employers



What we do for Employers

- Free promotion of your business to over 12,000 students graduating high school each year
- Coordinate delivery of company hiring events at local high schools
- Provide direct access to entry-level talent during the school year and upon graduation
- Cultivate essential skills to enhance employee workplace readiness
- Improve employee retention and productivity
- Save time and money on recruiting entry-level talent from local high schools
- Support new hire applicants to complete your company's hiring process and show up for work
- Ensure new hires enter the workplace equipped with real-world skills for long-term success

Services

- Youth workforce participation and readiness
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Employee talent pipeline
- Youth essential skills development

Why should employers engage with Everybody Counts?

Our services are free - there is no direct cost to employers. We create unique opportunities for your company to engage high school talent throughout the school year. Upon graduation, we support the successful transition into the workforce. We equip new hire talent with the essential skills your company requires, so employees are ready for your company's workplace.

We actively promote your company and our job opportunities to thousands of potential new hires each year.

Everybody Counts equips high school juniors and seniors with career pathway plans and the skills to thrive in Kentucky's workforce.

Employers can have confidence that new hires have developed essential skills outside of their academic coursework, enhancing:

- Workplace readiness
- Work-based learning
- Money management
- Time management