



**Kentucky Workforce
Innovation Board (KWIB)
Employer Engagement Committee**

**September 18, 2024
10:00am – 11:30am EDT
Zoom Meeting**

PARTICIPANTS PRESENT: Sara Tracy, Greg Conley, Michelle DeEsch, Michaela Mineer, Dallas Kratzer, Lisa Banner, Kaci Foster, Stephanie Collins

Staff: Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, LaChrista Ellis, Sara Jagers, Jennifer King

10:01am Welcome and Overview

Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) welcomed everyone, then gave an overview and structure of the KWIB. He also explained the importance of the Employer Engagement committee and asked for individuals to introduce themselves. After introductions, Alisher gave updates on the work that has been done in the space of employer engagement.

Statewide Workforce and Talent Team Update

The [Statewide Workforce and Talent Team \(SWATT\)](#) concept was mentioned in the [June 12, 2024](#), committee meeting. As a response to feedback from employers across the state, SWATT is a collaboration on all levels by streamlining ways to better serve businesses and their customers. The Education and Labor Cabinet Secretary, Jamie Link, along with colleagues from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), Cabinet for Economic Development, and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) presented SWATT to the Interim Joint Committee earlier this month. Secretary Link and his colleagues explained that SWATT is committed to improve measurement, coordination, and delivery of workforce development solutions and services to Kentucky employers. Alisher encouraged attendees to watch the recorded testimony, which is available on [YouTube](#).

Sector Strategies – In-Demand Sectors

Alisher spoke about sector strategies, which is a workgroup branched off the Employer Engagement Committee. This workgroup analyzes quantitative and qualitative data to define the top five sectors in Kentucky. The process involves looking at occupational demand, growth, and wages, then cross walking these occupations to industry sectors. Alisher stated that demand analysis looks at job openings in specific occupations, while growth analysis projects future trends. The current review of key sectors identified include healthcare, advanced manufacturing, educational services, professional scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, and construction. The sector strategies workgroup is still working through the qualitative component

for review with the training and education partners. For more information, please review the sector strategies workgroup meeting minutes are available on [KWIB's website](#).

The group discussed the importance of events that are being held across the state, such as [K4C Construction Career Days](#) in Shelbyville, Kentucky. Several individuals attended this week and expressed the importance of bringing education and industry partners together to engage youth. Another event mentioned was [Junior Achievement of Kentuckiana's Inspire to Hire](#), which will be in January 2025 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Everyone agreed that it is imperative that employers are aware for a chance to both build a future workforce and to mentor youth.

On November 14, 2024, the third annual [Veteran Employment and Training Symposium \(VETS\)](#) will be held at the KCTCS in Versailles, Kentucky. Representatives from the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs (KCMA), KCTCS, , Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs (KDVA), the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and the Kentucky Chamber are a few partners that will be attending. Training employers how to hire veterans or military is another outreach that will benefit the state. Kentucky has an estimated 100,000 veterans that are in the workforce area, in addition to the 3,000 veterans that return to the state each year. Additionally, CPE is working on a pilot project in Lexington bringing veteran healthcare professionals into the healthcare industry, which is called Hero's to Healers. Moving them into a pipeline to fill positions like emergency medical technicians, paramedics, registered nurses, but also phlebotomy technicians, healthcare administration, or lab technicians.

The next topic discussed was the refugee population in Kentucky, which the state is rated fourth in the nation for resettling refugees. With \$32 billion in new investments and over 54,000 new jobs in Kentucky, refugees see the opportunity for employment when looking for a place to move.

Alisher mentioned the Ukrainian population in Jessamine County increases every year and demonstrates that this talent pool is very viable. If the support systems were in place, then there is a good retention rate that comes with this population pool. Employers that are fully engaged have seen great success. On the resettlement side, it has been said there is difficulty for some refugees to get employment due to the language barrier. For example, employers sight a reason for not hiring some refugees due to safety reasons. Not being able to read or comprehend safety manuals can potentially be very dangerous. The group agreed that it is important for employers to look at their current work staff for those who may be able to assist bridge gaps such as language barriers. It can get overwhelming trying to disclose every program available in Kentucky, which is why streamlining information through SWATT is so important for the state workforce.

Group Discussion: Work Based Learning (WBL)

Alisher opened the discussion on work-based learning with an overview of the framework, which the presentation slides are available in the post-meeting packet on [KWIB's website](#). The group discussed how to increase business engagement. The overall agreement was the need to increase awareness and collaboration amount entities. Another recommendation was to better

understand the needs of employers and bridge those gaps. Employers also need to become more aware of incentives to programs that are available. For example, the understanding the difference between onboarding and apprenticeships. AmeriCorps actually pay for the employee during the period of their program, which would be beneficial to the employer to utilize.

11:12am Adjournment

Alisher thanked everyone for attending.

What is the Statewide Workforce And Talent Team?

The Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT) is a group of statewide organizations committed to improved measurement, coordination and delivery of workforce development solutions and services to Kentucky employers.

Who are we?

Founding Members of SWATT:

- Secretary, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development
- Secretary, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet
- President and CEO, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System
- Associate Commissioner, Career and Technical Education, Kentucky Department of Education
- Executive Director, Kentucky Center for Statistics
- Associate Vice President for Workforce Initiatives, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
- President & CEO, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers
- Chair, Kentucky State Workforce Development Board
- Associate Vice President, Workforce Development, Kentucky Hospital Association

Why SWATT – Why now?

In 2023, Kentucky saw nearly **\$4 billion** in new investment announcements, representing almost **7,000 new jobs**. At the same time, workforce and economic drivers have led to a significant talent gap. Kentucky had 126,000 unfilled positions and 88,000 unemployed persons, creating an excess gap of **38,000 unfilled jobs**.

What is SWATT doing?

In response to feedback from Kentucky employers, SWATT is designing and piloting a unified approach to provide workforce solutions to employers.

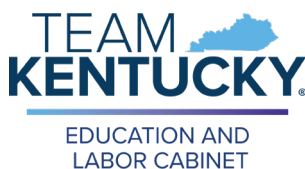
Our data-informed strategy is intended to improve coordination, responsiveness, and results among partners and ultimately drive workforce participation and business growth.

We are creating shared metrics, to roll out and assess a pilot in the industries of manufacturing and healthcare. We will then adapt the strategy as a model of operating excellence for execution with industry and workforce partners statewide.

What else is important to convey?

SWATT is not a new program; rather it is a commonsense way to work more efficiently and effectively to serve employers. Every organization at the table is a leader and a key to our state's future, sharing a commitment to defining and using a range of measures of our progress and results.

Our focus is a collective approach to creating and measuring impact for employers with rewarding career opportunities for all our neighbors. Success brings enormous economic growth for all Kentuckians and not just a few. The stakes are high, and now is the time to act.



Work-Based Learning Framework

Work-based learning looks beyond the classroom to expand academic and technical learning and accelerate advancement along career pathways. Work-based learning is defined as a student or worker completing meaningful job tasks in a workplace that develop readiness for work, knowledge, and skills that support entry or advancement in a particular career field. Work-based learning supports a continuum of lifelong learning and skill development for a range of workers and learners—K-12 students, young adults, college students, adult jobseekers, and incumbent workers.

CAREER EXPERIENCE

SPECIFIC SKILLS | PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

Engages individuals as paid workers to gain specific skills, in conjunction with related classroom or lab instruction, in a particular industry or occupation.

Models include:

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Other Forms of Apprenticeships
- On-the-Job Training
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Transitional Jobs
- Work-Based Courses

CAREER EXPOSURE

INDUSTRY INTRO | SHORT-TERM

Brings participants to workplaces for short periods of time with the goal of gaining introductory information about an industry and associated occupations.

Models include:

- Job Shadows
- Simulations
- Company Tours
- Information
- Mentoring
- Interviews

CAREER ENGAGEMENT

BASIC TECHNICAL & EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Provides extended opportunities for participants to increase their knowledge of an identified field of interest and gain employability skills and some entry-level technical knowledge or skills.

Models include:

- Internships
- Cooperative Education
- Pre-Apprenticeships
- Service Learning
- Apprenticeship Readiness

WORK-BASED LEARNING

PREPARATION FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

CAREER EXPLORATION

AWARENESS | FOUNDATION | PREPARATION

Builds awareness of careers. Career exploration activities do not take place in workplaces and are not work-based learning, but provide a foundation for work-based learning and prepare participants to make the most of opportunities.

Models include:

- Career Fairs
- Industry Projects
- Interest Inventories
- Mock Interviews