



KWIB

Sector Strategies Qualitative Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2025

11:00 am – 12:30 pm EST

In-Person

4th Floor, Room 412NC

500 Mero St. Frankfort, KY 40601

ATTENDEES: BETH HARGIS, JO CAROLE ELLIS, REBECCA GILPATRICK, MIKE YODER, JESSIE SCHOOK, CHRISTOPHER LEDFORD, LESLIE SIZEMORE, CORREY EIMER, SAM KEATHLEY, BRANDON COMBS

STAFF: ALISHER BURIKHANOV, DEBBIE DENNISON, ELISHAH TAYLOR, LACHRISTA ELLIS, SARA JAGGER

11:04 am Welcome

Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB), opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He shared that the KWIB, voted to accept the top five in-demand sector recommendations made by the workgroup and that the board also agreed on a review of sectors every five years. He reiterated the goal of ensuring consistency in messaging among stakeholders. Alisher thanked **Sam Keathley, Senior Workforce Analyst, Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)** for joining virtually.

Introduction of Department of Workforce Development Commissioner

Alisher introduced **Mike Yoder, Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD)** who emphasized that coming from the Cabinet for Economic Development (CED), he sees the importance of how economic development and workforce development are connected. He expressed his excitement about working with the group.

Group Discussion

Discussion was held around the naming convention for the sector described as **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (PSTS)**. The discussion included the need to better define what this sector encompasses, as it still feels closely tied to business and information technology (IT) with a committee member remarking that a helpful way to conceptualize it is by viewing it as a combination of "Business + STEM." STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It was suggested that KWIB staff share the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services name change to "Business + STEM" with the Executive Committee as the state builds out marketing of these sectors. It was noted that the sector's broad nature raises concerns about Work Ready scholarship utilization, especially in the absence of clear guidelines or definitions of occupations and credentials required.

Further discussion took place to provide clear definitions of what "high demand," "high wage," and "high skill" occupations mean for various audiences including legislators. The [MIT calculator](#) was suggested as a benchmark for defining high wages. Discussions were held around differing regional approaches and identification of living wages, in-demand skills, and industry growth. It was noted that this effort cannot impact employer pay but can provide occupations of focus to help users narrow their credential, career, or college pathways.

Final discussion took place on the topic to ensure that employers are aware and engaged in understanding "tiers" of pathways, within high-demand sectors and their involvement to include, work-based learning opportunities is important.

Next Steps:

- **Outreach and Marketing:** Consult the KWIB Executive Committee of a marketing renaming of the **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (PSTS)** sector. The proposed name is "Business + STEM."

Update: upon review with the KWIB Executive Committee, the name proposed to market this sector is "STEM + Support Services," but the best way to refer to the sector is by its original name of Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

- **Grid Development:** A grid with tiers based on **high skill, wage, and demand** will be created, using the pre-read work as a foundation for developing standardized definitions across the state. This grid will be shared with the KWIB Executive Committee for further input.
- **Create definitions and standardize meanings:** high skill, high wage, and high demand occupations.

12:30 pm Adjournment:

Alisher thanked everyone for their participation, and the meeting was adjourned.



Kentucky's Top Five In-Demand Sectors

Recently, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) voted to adopt Kentucky's top five in-demand sectors. The two-phase, data-informed identification and verification process is described below with sample occupations provided. Additionally, the KWIB voted to incorporate a five-year review process utilizing the two-phase approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Kentucky's Top Five In-Demand Sectors:

1. Healthcare
2. Manufacturing and Logistics
3. Construction
4. Education
5. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (PS&TS)

Background

The process of identifying the top five in-demand sectors in Kentucky took place through a two-phase approach, through a quantitative and qualitative review process. The data gathering and analysis was provided by the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS).

The quantitative review process initiated in the Sector Strategies Workgroup with membership

consisting of KWIB members, business and industry representatives, education partners, government representatives and workforce development practitioners. The workgroup settled on the key quantitative data approach of reviewing occupations that are in-demand, experiencing growth, and have living wages. Specifically, the formula set by the quantitative group:

1. Entry Annual Wages OR Median Wages (25%)
2. Occupational Demand (50%)
3. Growth Rate (25%)

Importantly, the business members of the workgroup emphasized the importance of occupational demand and giving it more percentage weight above the other elements. The list of key occupations was then connected to their respective industry sectors. The quantitative workgroup reviewed various ranking methods in the review process (i.e. incorporating location quotient) and ultimately settled on the fact that all methods lead to similar sector output.

Once the quantitative workgroup agreed on the formula and the data derived, the work of the qualitative workgroup began. The qualitative workgroup consisted of statewide



education and training organizations that not only administer various training dollars, but also understand industries that may be experiencing growth in the future not yet reflected in data.

Example Occupations

1. Healthcare

- a. Registered Nurse
- b. Medical and Health Services Managers
- c. Nurse Practitioner
- d. Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder and Mental Health Counselors
- e. Clinical Laboratory Techs

2. Manufacturing and Logistics

- a. Assemblers and Fabricators
- b. Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers and Weighers
- c. Machinist
- d. Industrial Production Managers
- e. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

3. Construction

- a. Construction Laborers
- b. Carpenters
- c. Electricians
- d. Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters
- e. Project Management Specialists

4. Education

- a. Elementary School Teachers
- b. Secondary School Teachers
- c. Middle School Teachers
- d. Educational, Guidance and Career Counselors and Advisors
- e. Postsecondary Teachers

5. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

- a. Software Developers
- b. Management Analysts
- c. Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- d. Computer User Support Specialists
- e. Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists

Impact and Future Review

Identifying these sectors allows Kentucky to focus time and investment into growing the opportunities in industries and occupations that are in high demand, are experiencing growth and pay living wages. Investment in these sectors and occupations go beyond the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as the Kentucky workforce development ecosystem operates in a collaborative and strategic direction.

The five in-demand sectors provide a statewide lens, while local workforce development boards can incorporate an additional two sectors that are reflective of their local economies.

In addition to adopting the top five in-demand sectors, the KWIB voted to incorporate a review process every five years utilizing the two-phase approach of quantitative and qualitative review.

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

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