

Kentucky Work Ready

An Urgent Call to Action
*Strategic recommendations for the
Commonwealth to meet the workforce
needs of the future*

Approved February 2020
by Governor Andy Beshear

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Foreword from the KWIB Chair

Over the past few months, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) has led a rigorous process to identify challenges that may be limiting the ability of our employers, communities and citizens to reach their potential. The challenges presented in this document represent a direct threat to the health, wellbeing and future economic development of the Commonwealth. To address these challenges, we have suggested a series of steps that will require a sustained commitment from state and local policymakers along with the support of Kentucky's business community.

More than ever, people and their skills, talents, intellect and ambition propel our modern economy. The quality and availability of educated and skilled people is the single biggest factor driving business growth and expansion. To meet the needs of both business and our citizens, we must redefine the workforce development system to include not only our network of Kentucky Career Centers, but also career and technical education, as well as our primary, secondary and postsecondary institutions. The recommendations presented in this Work Ready Kentucky plan are meant to align to our collective education, workforce, and economic development efforts to provide both employers and job seekers with the support necessary to create healthy, prosperous communities and sustainable economic growth.

Using input from hundreds of individual interviews and focus groups with a wide variety of businesspeople, job seekers, educators, and policymakers, we have proposed steps to lead to a greater level of employer engagement in our workforce development system. The strategies outlined in this document will bridge talent gaps, mitigate employment barriers, encourage workforce participation, and reduce service delivery inefficiencies to make Kentuckians more productive.

As with any investment portfolio, we should insist on a return on our investment. While we have proposed specific measurements and timelines for our suggested action steps, our larger return should be measured in positive economic growth, stable employment at competitive wage levels that encourage Kentuckians to embrace work, and reduced reliance on public assistance. Successful implementation of this plan will also require increased participation and effort by employers in helping us to help them remain nationally and internationally competitive.

In creating the KWIB, Governor Bevin clearly communicated the great opportunity that he sees ahead for Kentucky. With this Work Ready Kentucky plan, we send the message that to achieve the greatness that is within our reach, **we must act, we must act boldly, and we must act now**. On behalf of the KWIB and its members, we offer our appreciation to all who have provided input and helped to develop this plan. We look forward to working with all parties to bring this vision to life.

Respectfully,



Hugh Haydon
2018 Chair, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board,
President/CEO of Kentucky Bioprocessing, Inc.

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Executive Summary





The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) is a 27-member, employer-led advisory body that advises the Governor on workforce issues and guides the strategic direction of the Commonwealth’s workforce system. The mission of the KWIB is “to be a leader and catalyst in creating a comprehensive, customer-driven workforce development system that meets the changing needs of job seekers, incumbent workers and employers.” Through data analysis, policy recommendations, and dialogue at the local, state, and regional levels, KWIB members serve as stewards of workforce development throughout the Commonwealth.

In 2017, responding to concerns over Kentucky’s workforce participation rate, educational attainment statistics, and public health indicators, the KWIB revisited its workforce strategy, developing recommendations to support a lifetime continuum of training, preparation, and investment for citizens. The objective of this effort was to create a common direction for workforce development, and align workforce assets across the Commonwealth to support Kentuckians in achieving and sustaining economic self-sufficiency throughout their working lives.

Through an environmental scan of Kentucky’s labor market data, over 100 interviews conducted with employers and workforce development leaders across the Commonwealth, and the completion of a day-long planning retreat, the following vision and strategic goals were developed to guide Kentucky’s workforce partners:

WORK READY KENTUCKY: VISION AND DESIRED IMPACT

By “Create a workforce development system that is value driven for employers, aligns education with industry demands, prepares Kentuckians for the future of work and drives economic development.”

 <p>#1 Employers</p>	 <p>#2 Education</p>	 <p>#3 Workforce Participation</p>	 <p>#4 Organization and Resource Alignment</p>
<p>Goal #1: Actively engage employers to drive Kentucky’s workforce development system.</p>	<p>Goal #2: Align and integrate P-12, adult education and postsecondary education to provide lifelong opportunities for Kentuckians that prepare them for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.</p>	<p>Goal #3: Increase Kentucky’s workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians.</p>	<p>Goal #4: Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment, utilizing data to constantly improve workforce development in Kentucky.</p>

orienting the workforce system to the skills needed by Kentucky employers, and integrating workforce development into the education and training system at all levels, the Commonwealth seeks to connect meaningful work with a culture of lifelong learning, removing barriers to employment for Kentuckians, while preparing them for the industries of the future. In doing so, KWIB’s recommendations aim to continuously improve the Kentucky workforce so that it returns dividends for each taxpayer dollar invested to improve it.

The Work Ready Kentucky Plan further articulates the vision and goals above through actionable supporting objectives and an implementation approach with action steps to support workforce system transformation over the short-to-long-term:

HOW KENTUCKY WILL ACHIEVE SYSTEMS CHANGE





Streamline customer access



Measure and invest in what works



Coordinate across Cabinets

 EMPLOYERS	 EDUCATION	 WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION
<p>WITHIN 12-18 MONTHS: Align leadership, program operations, and communication channels across Cabinets to eliminate organizational siloes and advance the top-line priorities of employers, large and small</p> <p>WITHIN 18-36 MONTHS: Recruit employer champions by region and industry to guide changes to training, P-12 curriculum, and workforce program service delivery. Educate the public on the high-quality opportunities available</p> <p>WITHIN 3-5 YEARS: Modernize unemployment technology, systematically use intelligence on workforce supply and labor demand to inform program and policy, and provide ombudsman-style coordination of services for employers engaging the system</p>	<p>WITHIN 12-18 MONTHS: Address labor shortages in skilled occupations through alignment of P-12 educational assets, adult technical education, and postsecondary programs to documented employer needs</p> <p>WITHIN 18-36 MONTHS: Expand capacity of successful training models for incumbent adults and students transitioning into the workforce, and increase awareness amongst parents, teachers, and counselors regarding the criticality of postsecondary credentials</p> <p>WITHIN 3-5 YEARS: Integrate education and workforce data to continuously improve training, maintain a balance within the incumbent worker training portfolio, and structure incentives that foster a culture of "lifelong learning" and productivity for Kentuckians</p>	<p>WITHIN 12-18 MONTHS: Mitigate disincentives to workforce participation amongst priority populations, and increase employer awareness of existing incentives to hire those with barriers to employment</p> <p>WITHIN 18-36 MONTHS: Integrate supports across programs, enhance wraparound services, and establish employer resource networks to increase worker placement and retention in full or part-time employment</p> <p>WITHIN 3-5 YEARS: Evaluate outcomes data and adjust programs to enhance efficacy of recruitment, training, placement and retention for priority populations and lower the cost to hire for employers</p>
 ORGANIZATION AND RESOURCE ALIGNMENT		
<p>WITHIN 12-18 MONTHS: Address barriers to cross-Cabinet collaboration and develop and deploy "guiding principles" to Commonwealth staff for workforce service delivery</p> <p>WITHIN 18-36 MONTHS: Capture a data-driven reflection of taxpayer spend on workforce development, and develop tracking mechanisms to evaluate return on investment on an ongoing basis</p> <p>WITHIN 3-5 YEARS: Leverage workforce non-profits and advocates to support continued systems change and capacity building, while continuing to integrate workforce services in a manner that optimizes ROI</p>		
<p>Consistently Share the Progress of Workforce Transformation with the Community</p>		

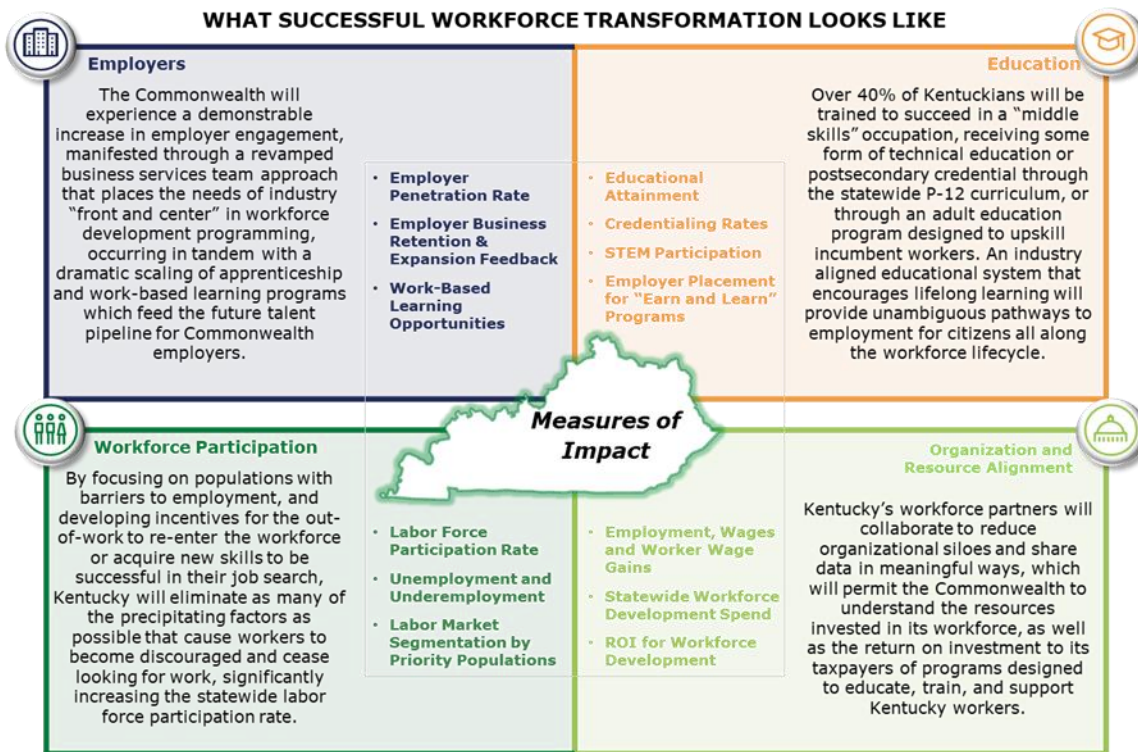
Over the next five years, the Commonwealth will convene a cross-Cabinet team to zero in on the challenges that exist within the workforce development system that impede progress, and remediate those obstacles to success, both for employers who use the system to source talent, as well as for those citizens who engage in employment, training, and employment referral activities to find meaningful work and upgrade their skills.

In this plan, we acknowledge the place in which we stand. We need:

- A systematic change;
- A cultural shift and a different mindset;
- All stakeholders being positive, willful, and proactive change agents;
- Broken down silos that keeps the customer at the forefront, and;
- An overall transformation that is dependent upon deliverables and metrics.

So what does success look like? Although re-engineering Kentucky's workforce is a long-term proposition, performance targets must be defined and measures assessed to hold the Commonwealth accountable for its progress with respect to workforce system transformation. Through diligent work and cross-sector collaboration, KWIB believes that the Commonwealth could, over the next five years, achieve milestones that include the following outcomes:

WHAT SUCCESSFUL WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE



The KWIB is committed to driving impactful initiatives that will transform Kentucky's workforce system. While this Strategic Plan is intended to focus on activities over a 5-year time horizon, it should be viewed as merely a starting point for long-term systems change.

The true keys to successful outcomes in workforce development reside in sustained collaboration by diverse, cross-sector partners over time. Continuous and data-driven refinement of the approaches outlined in this Plan, coupled with strategic investment by workforce stakeholders to build capacity and leverage resources and data in new and different ways will help the Commonwealth anticipate and adapt to the disruptive forces that impact Kentucky's employers and workers, positioning the Commonwealth to achieve positive economic growth in an increasingly dynamic future.

A Commonwealth Workforce in Crisis

Kentucky stands today at the intersection of its economic past and its future. The industrial heritage of agriculture, coal mining, manufacturing, and skilled craftsmanship that shaped the Commonwealth economy and the livelihoods of generations of its citizens is being disrupted by waves of macroeconomic change, which have arrived over the past three decades in the form of offshoring, industrial automation, renewable energy, and decentralized production. The resulting displacement of Kentuckians from industries where generations of their relatives worked has destabilized entire regions of the Commonwealth, and while some localities have been able to harness the momentum of technology and pivot accordingly, a far greater swath of Kentucky is still attempting to re-position itself within the emerging knowledge economy.

Where a strong back and a willing attitude was once sufficient to earn a family-sustaining wage and support a middle-class lifestyle, jobs now increasingly rely on the lifelong acquisition of skills and training. However, in a state where less than half of the population seeks education beyond a high school diploma, the growing gap between the skills that are demanded by Kentucky employers and those supplied by the current labor shed threatens the fortunes of businesses and employees alike, dampening statewide economic growth and stifling prospects for future economic development.

While macroeconomic transitions present new opportunities to re-invigorate the Commonwealth economy, Kentucky must first address a complex set of challenges to position its workforce to take advantage of growth:

Not Enough Working-Age Kentuckians Participate in the Labor

Force: Although labor force participation has declined nationwide over the past two decades, Kentucky's labor force participation rate (59.2%) has historically lagged the U.S. average, and currently ranks 43rd lowest in the country¹. This statistic means that within Kentucky, close to 40% of working-age adults are neither working nor seeking work, a ratio which, if reduced, it would likely spur statewide economic growth. While labor force participation of younger Kentuckians mirrors (and in some cases, exceeds) national averages, beyond age forty-five, Kentucky workers exit the labor market at an accelerated pace, and many retire before age sixty-five. To meet national participation levels, an additional 165,000 citizens must re-engage in work, a frustrating statistic considering the Commonwealth's 200,000 current job vacancies².

Kentucky ranks 43rd out of 50 U.S. States in labor force participation – 40% of able-bodied citizens neither work nor seek employment



CHALLENGE: How can we incent more Kentuckians to rejoin the labor market?

For Most Kentucky Students, a High School Diploma is Their

“Terminal Degree”: Although the Commonwealth maintains a healthy 85% high school graduation rate, less than half of students matriculate to some form of postsecondary study, and of those that do, over 1/3 require remedial education³. National statistics and state longitudinal data indicate that postsecondary education is a critical success factor for long-term self-sufficiency, as those who do not seek training beyond the K-12 system experience significantly lower lifetime earnings, higher rates of unemployment, and lower overall participation in the labor market. Kentucky's employment is expected to grow by 15.2% through 2024, creating over 326,000 new jobs, at least 1/3 of which will be in fields that increasingly demand postsecondary credentials of their

Despite an excess supply of “middle skill” jobs, only 30% of Kentuckians obtain a postsecondary credential within six years of graduating high school



CHALLENGE: How can we reinforce that postsecondary achievement is both attainable and necessary?

¹ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Participation by State, October 2017. URL: <https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/lalfprderr.xlsx>

² Source: “Workforce Participation in Kentucky.” Kentucky State Chamber of Commerce, May 2017. URL: <https://www.kychamber.com/sites/default/files/Workforce%20Participation%20Report%20-%20May%202017.pdf>

³ Source: Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics. Kentucky High School Feedback Report on College Going – High School Graduating Class of 2014. Retrieved from https://kcews.ky.gov/Content/Reports/HSFeedback/HSFRCG2014_FullReport_AllDistricts.pdf

workers⁴; however, the performance of Kentucky's graduates in the intervening years following high school graduation foreshadow that many lack essential skills, leaving them ready for neither work nor further study.

Kentucky's Aging Population Requires New Skills to Succeed in the Workplace of the Future: While nearly 1 in 4 Kentuckians is currently aged fifty-five or older, many of these individuals experience challenges securing and maintaining employment in Kentucky's growth industries due to lack of educational attainment, or the need to re-train or obtain a skilled credential. While older workers have historically battled hiring bias and other obstacles to employment, a survey of Kentucky employers highlighted the value these experienced workers bring to today's communication and leadership-intensive workplace⁵, underscoring the need for workforce development programs customized to the specific learning needs of this growing labor force demographic.

Nearly 1 in 4 Kentuckians is 55 or older, yet labor force participation among Kentucky adults aged 45+ is significantly lower than U.S. averages



CHALLENGE: How can we empower older Kentucky workers to succeed in the workplace of tomorrow?

A Significant Number of Kentuckians Are Simply Not "Work Ready": In addition to lacking essential skills such as reading comprehension, critical thinking, mathematics and measurement, many Kentucky employers also note the absence of "essential skills" required to be successful in the modern workplace. More seriously, high rates of disability (17.9% of population - 2/3 of which are due to musculoskeletal or mental health issues), substance abuse, and other barriers to employment create disincentives to work, perpetuating cycles of disengagement from the workforce and intergenerational poverty. Because most work readiness skills are learned experientially "on the job," delayed exposure to the workplace and gaps in employment contribute to a workforce that lacks self-sufficiency and creates an added burden on employers and the surrounding community.

High rates of disability, long-term unemployment, and substance abuse in Kentucky perpetuate disengagement from work and encourage cycles of structural poverty



CHALLENGE: How can Kentucky remove barriers and disincentives to work, and use exposure to the workplace as a tool to increase work readiness?

As thorny as the challenges above may seem, the complexity of the highly matrixed workforce development system designed to address them stymies most policymakers, as well as the employers and citizens who attempt to navigate the maze of agencies and programs established to support them. This diverse ecosystem of workforce providers, educators, and employers, whose collaboration can enable dramatic improvements in citizen outcomes and quality of life, has yet to realize its full potential. In response to the challenges of workforce participation, educational attainment, and public health, and in light of a looming skills gap which threatens employers and workers alike, public and private sector leaders have agreed that the time to enact systems change in workforce development is now.

⁴ Source: Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics (June 2016), Kentucky Occupational Outlook to 2024. Retrieved from https://kcews.ky.gov/Content/Reports/KYLM/Employer_Demand/2014-2024%20KY%20Occupational%20Outlook.pdf

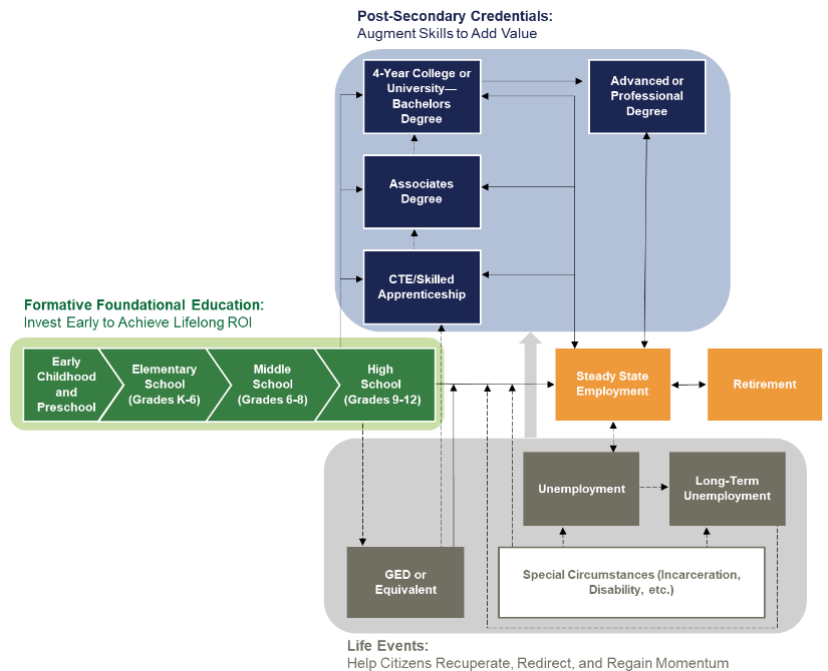
⁵ Source: "Kentucky's Aging Workforce: Employers' Perspectives on the Benefits, Challenges, and Promising Practices for an Engaged Older Workforce." The Institute for Workplace Innovation, University of Kentucky. URL: https://www.uky.edu/Centers/iwin/workplace_research/AgingWorkforceWhitePaper.pdf

The Role of the KWIB in Workforce Development

The 27 members of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) represent a cross-section of industry, labor, and education leaders who advise the Governor on workforce issues and guide the strategic direction of Kentucky’s workforce system. The KWIB was authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which requires state workforce boards to be primarily employer-led and challenges them to collaborate across commercial sectors and government agencies to devise innovative approaches that improve the workforce system. As workforce development becomes increasingly critical to keep pace with the technological and industrial transformations impacting society, the KWIB has taken on more responsibility for ensuring the Commonwealth has a strategic vision and plan to prepare and improve Kentucky’s workforce system. The KWIB provides the Commonwealth with a vehicle to re-position Kentucky’s workforce system and establish a realigned strategic direction for workforce development.

While the concept of workforce development is often viewed in relation to an individual’s employment (or lack thereof), the KWIB views the Kentucky workforce system as a holistic “lifecycle,” a continuum of ongoing education, training, and services that begins in early childhood and is supplemented and reinforced throughout a working lifetime. Within this workforce lifecycle, Kentuckians of all ages and walks of life receive opportunities to develop their human capital, in academic settings, as well as through on-the-job and continuing education, with a focus on the acquisition of essential skills and a culture of lifelong learning that help workers remain competitive through life’s inevitable ebbs and flows, maintaining traction in a dynamic job market over time.

To drive the momentum of the workforce lifecycle model, Kentucky’s workforce system engages a diverse array of private, public, and not-for-profit partners, including employers, trade councils, education and training providers, social service organizations, regional workforce boards and areas, and state, regional, and local government agencies, who collectively coordinate available resources to support Kentucky residents throughout their development. By endowing workers with a combination of supports needed to obtain and sustain employment, this network of peer organizations strengthens the resiliency of the Kentucky workforce, which contributes to more robust economic conditions and statewide growth, which in turn provide Kentuckians more and greater opportunities to secure jobs that pay sustainable wages and support economic self-sufficiency.

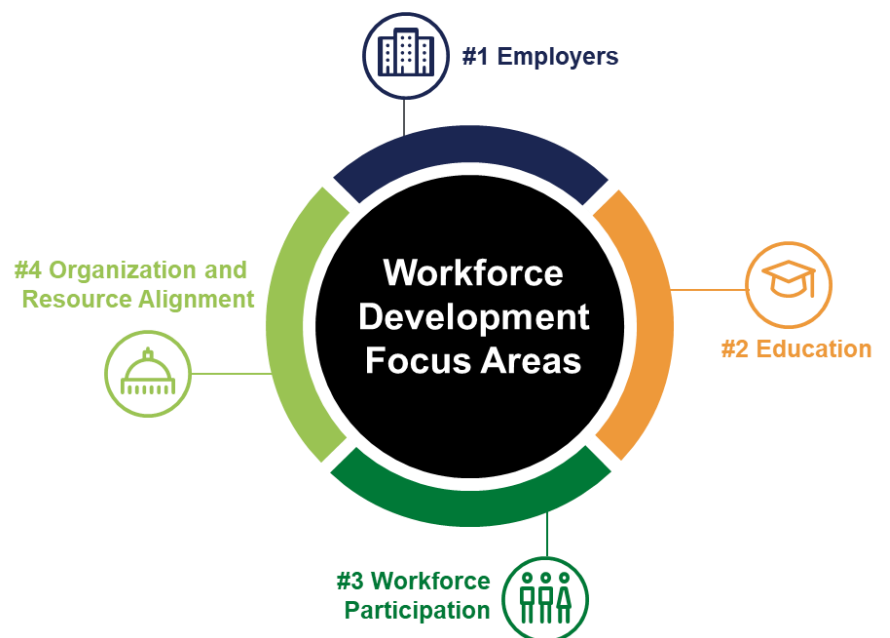


Strategic Plan Overview

Aligned with its mission as “a leader and catalyst in creating a comprehensive, customer-driven workforce development system that meets the changing needs of job seekers, incumbent workers and employers,” KWIB has drafted a Commonwealth-wide workforce development strategy that:

- Sets a common strategic direction with an urgent call to action to guide workforce development activities across Kentucky;
- Prioritizes actions that are attainable and measurable through the application of performance metrics;
- Increases and improves communication and collaboration among employers, education and training providers, regional workforce boards and areas, and state and local government organizations; and
- Identifies challenges and opportunities to improve the workforce system through an increase in workforce participation and retention, attainment of wages that promote self-sufficiency, and the provision of high-quality, accessible, and effective workforce training programs targeted to areas of growth within the Commonwealth.

The strategies outlined in this plan were informed through direct dialogue with Kentucky’s business community. Companies large and small, located across Kentucky’s industry sectors and regions, articulated the workforce challenges they felt they must overcome to sustainably grow their operations into the future. Drawing upon this input, representatives of the public and not-for-profit sectors, many of whom lead and drive assets within the existing workforce development system, worked alongside their corporate counterparts to articulate four areas of focus for this statewide strategic plan:



The goals and strategies articulated in the KWIB plan target accountability for workforce systems change along multiple dimensions. Representing the demand side of workforce development, the Commonwealth plans to align workforce programs to the most pressing concerns of employers. By employing continuous feedback from industry to refine program design and resource allocation, KWIB’s employer goals improve accessibility and ease of use of workforce services by businesses, while enhancing the employability of citizen users, and improving the customer experience for both. To support the supply side of workforce development (i.e., the labor shed), the Commonwealth will focus on improving the quality and industry relevance of the training and education that Kentuckians receive, as well as identifying and removing barriers and disincentives to productivity that negatively affect workers’ participation in the labor force. Lastly, the leaders of the Commonwealth workforce system will turn their focus inward, examining how to simplify a complex administrative infrastructure, and instill a culture of collaboration and data sharing across the many owners of workforce outcomes.

VISION AND DESIRED IMPACT

“Create a workforce development system that is value driven for employers, aligns education with industry demands, prepares Kentuckians for the future of work and drives economic development.”



#1 Employers



#2 Education



#3 Workforce Participation



#4 Organization and Resource Alignment

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal #1: Actively engage employers to drive Kentucky’s workforce development system.

Goal #2: Align and integrate P-12, adult education and postsecondary education to provide lifelong opportunities for Kentuckians that prepare them for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.

Goal #3: Increase Kentucky’s workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians.

Goal #4: Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment, utilizing data to constantly improve workforce development in Kentucky.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1a: Create a workforce development system that is valued by employers.

1b: Establish a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services.

1c: Increase the number of employers participating in work-based learning experiences and apprenticeships while also establishing employer champions.

1d: Engage employers in education efforts from early childhood through Kindergarten, Grade 12, and post-secondary.

1e: Leverage employer data on workforce projections and training needs using the talent pipeline management system of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and a revamped business service team network.

2a: Increase career exploration opportunities while students are in P-12 and provide all P-12 students an opportunity to earn a certificate(s) or credential(s) prior to graduation, with emphasis on those credentials where dual secondary/post-secondary academic credit is awarded.

2b: Review and adjust the structure (locations, pathways, and resources) of pre-K through postsecondary delivery to identify ways to align and integrate the Commonwealth’s educational infrastructure based on employer needs.

2c: Increase awareness of all market-relevant career pathways among students, educators, guidance counselors, career counselors and parents.

2d: Improve the sharing and use of data to inform the ongoing curriculum design for P-12 and postsecondary institutions.

2e: Create opportunities for early, mid, and later-career learning for all Kentucky workers in order to provide a range of learning opportunities for growth, upskilling, and adoption to changes in the nature and structure of work.

2f: Encourage the agility, responsiveness and desire for lifelong learning among older Kentucky workers.

3a: Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals.

3b: Mitigate disincentives to work and explore ways to incentivize workforce participation for individuals currently receiving social services benefits in order to support their transition to sustainable employment.

3c: Embed programs serving specific populations across cabinets to promote workforce participation. Examples of priority populations include veterans, individuals with disabilities, re-entrants from the corrections system, individuals in recovery from substance abuse, young adults transitioning out of foster care and others.

3d: Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers.

3e: Develop and pursue strategies that increase the number of Kentuckians, work-ready and free from the influence of substance abuse.

4a: Identify and address the organizational and structural changes that should be made to Kentucky’s workforce development governance to improve collaboration and accountability.

4b: Develop a framework and supporting goals and metrics for Kentucky’s workforce development programs.

4c: Identify gaps in the existing longitudinal data system and determine available sources to close those gaps.

4d: Define and create an effective communication approach for services to ensure a consistent, quality customer experience.

4e: Build a stronger, more coordinated relationship between state government and local governments, institutions and workforce innovation areas.

Based on stakeholder involvement and best practices from within Kentucky and across the United States, KWIB has created a bold strategy that addresses both structural and tactical root cause issues impacting the current workforce system. This plan represents a collaboration of education, workforce and economic development at all geographic levels, and the strategies outlined herein will leverage state, local, and private partnerships to improve workforce outcomes for Kentucky’s current and future employers and job seekers.



Strategic Goal #1: Employers

Actively engage employers to drive Kentucky’s workforce development system.

As consumers of the Kentucky’s workforce and education system’s human capital, employers must be deeply invested in the development of training and curriculum that shapes their future employees. The Commonwealth encourages employers (large and small) to assume leadership roles in workforce development programming at all points along the workforce lifecycle, from early childhood education through postsecondary study and upskilling of later-career individuals. The role of the employer may vary across workforce settings, ranging from providing on-site child care for employees with pre-school-aged children, to educating teachers and parents about the opportunities available in advanced industries, to informing technical education curriculum with industry-specific requirements, to employing high school or postsecondary interns and apprentices, to actively recruiting qualified candidates facing barriers to employment. Across all of these activities, consistent industry input and guidance throughout the skills development continuum is essential to align the training of workers to the skills they will need to succeed in the workplace now, and into the future.



Kentucky Fast Facts

<i>Kentucky’s high-priority industries include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and logistics, and construction – all of which demand technical skills</i>	<i>The National Skills Coalition projects that in the next four years, Kentucky will need to dramatically increase its supply of middle-skill workers</i>	<i>Over 180 Kentucky employers currently support 275 apprenticeship programs, which return on average \$1.47 in productivity for every dollar spent</i>	<i>During the 2016-17 academic year, only 5% of Kentucky’s 56,000+ eligible high school students participated in work-based learning programs</i>
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Employer engagement in the design and delivery of workforce development programs represents a catalyst for system change, one that is fundamental to the realization of a future in which the Commonwealth workforce system consistently delivers highly trained and flexible workers that create value for employers (as a direct result of their upfront contributions to program design). While a balance must continually be struck between filling immediate vacancies and skills gaps, and preparing the workforce to adapt to the technological disruptions of the future, employers are most qualified to steer the direction of education and training so that workforce programs produce the qualified workers they seek, both now and in the future.

EMPLOYERS: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Objective 1a: Create a workforce development system that is valued by employers.

Objective 1b: Establish a clear channel for employer engagement in workforce development services.

Objective 1c: Increase the number of employers participating in work-based learning experiences and apprenticeships, while also establishing employer champions.

Objective 1d: Engage employers in education efforts from early childhood through Kindergarten, Grade 12, and postsecondary study.

Objective 1e: Leverage employer data on workforce projections and training needs, using the talent pipeline management system of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and a revamped business service team network.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?



In five years, successful employer engagement in the workforce system would resemble:

An **increase in employer engagement** in education and workforce development, scaling to 3x current levels and mirroring that of neighboring states

A drastic (5x) **increase in the number of registered apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities** sponsored by employers

An established **set of best practice industry exposure experiences** aligning P-12 delivery with industry needs in local workforce regions

At least **40% of Kentucky youth participating in work-based learning** during their P-12 years to gain invaluable exposure to workplace skills early in life

Streamlined business services team efforts by workforce region which focus on business retention and expansion (BRE) via quality delivery of workforce services

Establishment of 50 localized statewide talent pipeline management system consortia, which assist in delivery of real-time data, allowing for better alignment of supply and demand in the workforce

Kentucky's employer goals strive to deepen business engagement in workforce development by creating convenient channels for companies to contribute input to workforce program design. By informing workforce programs with practical, industry-driven requirements, employers may subsequently take advantage of the curriculum they have helped to create through apprenticeship and work-based learning programs, generating short-term value within their operations to close skills gaps, while providing hands-on learning and apprenticeship for their pipeline of future employees. To support increased employer engagement, the KWIB proposes the following implementation activities:

HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL IMPLEMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE

Implementation Owner:
Education & Workforce Development Cabinet



Engaged Stakeholders:
Cabinet for Economic Development
Employers



Kentucky Department of Education
KWIB
Labor Cabinet
Local Economic Development Organizations (EDOs)
Local School Districts
Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
Regional / Local Chambers of Commerce
State Chamber of Commerce
Workforce Training & Service Providers

On an ongoing basis, we will:



Listen to and understand the workforce priorities of Kentucky's employers
Improve the customer experience for employers to access workforce services
Leverage Kentucky's existing business retention and expansion (BRE) infrastructure to continuously gauge progress towards meeting employer expectations
Recruit more employers to provide work-based learning for Kentucky's students and recruit more Kentucky students to participate

Within 12-18 months, we will:



Create a cross-cabinet team to **unify statewide leadership, eliminate operational siloes, and communicate consistently** with respect to areas of employer need and program service delivery

Advance the top-line priorities of employers (large and small) for the workforce development system as a cross-cabinet initiative

Within 18-36 months, we will:

Provide direction to regional / local business services teams led by economic development to **streamline the level of effort required for employers to access and acquire workforce services**

Recruit regional, sectoral cohorts of "employer champions" from the business community who can collectively influence businesses to participate in work-based learning experiences (through scale, through supply chain, through vendor networks)

Form an outreach campaign that places employers "front and center" to **educate parents, teachers and counselors on industry opportunities** in high-demand fields

Embed assistance for employer champions that helps them direct educational institutions and workforce providers to deliver value-adding workforce services

Align and enhance workforce system performance metrics to reinforce accountability of each workforce partner

Within 3-5 years, we plan to:

Modernize the Commonwealth's Unemployment Insurance (UI) technology systems to increase claims process efficiency and minimize overpayments




Perform a recurring review and analysis of data system intelligence on workforce supply compared to economic growth demands and projections to inform the regional emphasis on specific career pathways and alignment of educational programs

Provide an integrated and valued experience for employers to engage by way of an **ombudsman-style coordination with the workforce development system for businesses**

KWIB proposes measuring progress against employer objectives using a combination of existing sources, as well as new measures proposed by KWIB's Data and Metrics Committee. The metrics below focus both on objective measures of employer workforce development activity (i.e., the number of registered apprenticeships statewide), as well as measures which assess employer engagement with the workforce system, and satisfaction with the provision of workforce services overall. By leveraging existing forms of outreach, including through the economic development-driven BRE feedback process, the Commonwealth can not only strengthen an existing program to support local businesses, but can also use BRE tools to understand the quality of workforce services and the extent to which those services are translating into hiring and industry growth.

EMPLOYERS: HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL MEASURE PROGRESS

*(** indicates a new measure proposed by KWIB)*

 Metric <i>(What we will measure)</i>	 Analytical Value <i>(What the metric tells us)</i>	 Data Source <i>(Where the data comes from)</i>
Employer Penetration Rate	Measures the extent to which employers are engaging with existing workforce development programs across the Commonwealth	Cabinet for Economic Development and Education and Workforce Cabinet, in partnership with local WIBs
Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Employer Feedback (by Regional and Local Workforce Areas)	Tracks employer satisfaction, engagement, local workforce and hiring needs, and emerging skills gaps via an annual BRE survey administered locally	Cabinet for Economic Development BRE survey
Availability of Work-Based Learning Opportunities (including number of Apprenticeships, Licensures, and Employer-Driven Work-Based Learning Programs)	Indicates overall level of employer investment in work-based learning and credentials	Kentucky Department of Education, KCTCS, Council on Post-Secondary Education, Labor Cabinet and Public Protection Cabinet, and KCEWS
Statewide Employer Survey Results	Examines employment diversity, workforce investment, use of WIOA funds, and other measures of corporate engagement in workforce development	TBD by the KWIB Data and Metrics Committee
Talent Pipeline Management Consortiums	Quantifies the extent to which regional consortia are formed to adopt, customize, and implement the U.S. Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management System pathways within Kentucky local and regional contexts	Education and Workforce Development Cabinet / U.S. Chamber of Commerce

By placing Kentucky's employers in the driver's seat of workforce development, the Commonwealth hopes to not only connect more Kentucky workers to sustainable job opportunities, but to also make the workforce system adaptable to the dynamism of the commercial sector. By increasing the level of integration between what companies need and what the workforce system can deliver, Kentucky can use workforce development to become a more responsive business partner to companies that locate and do business in the Bluegrass State.



Strategic Goal #2: Education

Align and integrate P-12, postsecondary, and adult education to provide lifelong opportunities for Kentuckians that prepare them for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.

As cultivators of human capital, Kentucky’s educators strongly influence the quality of the labor shed throughout the Commonwealth, and play a pivotal role in workforce development. The work of the education system is longitudinal in nature, and must be carefully orchestrated across decades of student preparation, often preceding the emergence of industry trends or technological disruptions that shape the job prospects of students in the classroom. In addition to learning essential skills that form the foundations of self-sufficiency in adulthood, through education students also gain early exposure to future career options in the P-12 setting. Whether through an internship, a summer job, or a registered apprenticeship, early workplace experiences increase student self-awareness, motivate postsecondary study, and enhance employability later in life. With global shifts in the future of work materializing across industries, one should also note that education and training have also assumed a central role in the lives of Kentucky’s adult workers. Remaining competitive in today’s job market necessitates continuous learning and upskilling throughout a working lifetime, to adapt to the changes introduced (in some cases, abruptly) by disruptive technologies and larger macroeconomic trends.



Kentucky Fast Facts

Despite high graduation rates, over 45% of Kentucky adults pursue no education beyond high school, and more than 20% pursue some postsecondary education, but obtain no credential

On average, Kentuckians who lack postsecondary education earn less than their peers, experience rates of unemployment twice as high, and are less likely to participate in the labor force

Kentucky currently suffers from a significant shortage of “middle skill” workers, who possess postsecondary training between a high school diploma but less than a 4-year degree

By 2020, over 2/3 of U.S. jobs will require some postsecondary study – and by 2030, automation could replace up to 40% of jobs, requiring a mass re-skilling of workers

Investments in education and training are generational prospects that take significant time to come to fruition; that said, dynamic changes in technology and the labor market require that words like “upskilling” and “lifelong learning” become part of every Kentuckian’s vocabulary. To put education into perspective, today’s preschoolers are merely 12 years away from becoming our co-workers, and the jobs they seek may bear little resemblance to the workplace as we know it. The Commonwealth must strive to instill a culture of lifelong learning among its residents, setting them up for success by encouraging continuous personal growth and achievement, integrating infrastructure for lifelong skills development, and eliminating gaps between education systems and the job market.

**EDUCATION:
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**



Strategic Objective 2a: Increase career exploration opportunities while students are in P-12, and provide all students an opportunity to earn a certificate or credential prior to graduation, with emphasis on those credentials where dual secondary / postsecondary academic credit is awarded.

Strategic Objective 2b: Review and adjust the structure (locations, pathways, and resources) of Pre-K through postsecondary delivery to align and integrate the Commonwealth's educational infrastructure based on employer needs.

Strategic Objective 2c: Increase awareness of all market-relevant career pathways among students, educators, guidance counselors, career counselors and parents.

Strategic Objective 2d: Improve the sharing and use of data to inform the ongoing curriculum design for P-12 and postsecondary institutions.

Strategic Objective 2e : Create opportunities for early, mid, and later-career learning for all Kentucky workers to provide a range of learning opportunities for growth, upskilling, and adaptation to changes in the nature and structure of work.

Strategic Objective 2f: Encourage the agility, responsiveness and desire for lifelong learning among older Kentucky workers.

**WHAT DOES SUCCESS
LOOK LIKE?**



In five years, successful educational alignment within the workforce system would resemble:

An **adequate supply of middle and advanced skill workers** to meet the hiring projections of Kentucky's employers.

At least **40% of Kentuckians possess training sufficient to fill a "middle skill" job**, with 70% having acquired some postsecondary training or credential beyond a high school diploma

High school graduation requirements reformed to give **more credit to technical training and promote work-based learning** as part of the curriculum

Technical education courses are aligned to postsecondary credits and programs offered by local institutions of higher education, increasing the availability of dual credit and "stackable" credentials

Implementation of **program-specific goals and metrics for K-12 technical education programs aligned with industry** needs

KWIB's goal for education is to align the myriad educational assets that exist for the P-12, higher education, technical training, and adult education systems, so that any Kentuckian who seeks skills development at any point in their working lifetime can identify an unambiguous pathway to obtaining the training they need and clearly connect that training to a corresponding employment opportunity in the Commonwealth upon completion. To support increased educational alignment, the KWIB proposes the following implementation activities:

HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL IMPLEMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE

Implementation Owner:

Education & Workforce
Development Cabinet



Engaged Stakeholders:

Cabinet for Health & Family
Services
Colleges and Universities
Department of Corrections
Department of Military Affairs
Early Childhood Programs
Cabinet for Economic Development
Employers
Kentucky Board of Education
Kentucky Department of Education
KWIB
KY Adult Education
Labor Cabinet
Local School Districts
Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
Parents & Students
Regional / Local Chambers of Commerce
State Chamber of Commerce
Teachers & Guidance Counselors
Workforce Training & Service Providers



On an ongoing basis, we will:

Seek alignment and integration
across educational pathways to
make career navigation easier for students
and trainees
Emphasize career exploration among
Kentucky's student population, with a specific
focus on encouraging postsecondary study
and highlighting middle skill occupations
Continuously validate with employer
champions that education interventions
adequately address their current and future
skills and hiring needs
Coordinate industry feedback from the private
sector to educators and workforce providers
via employer advisory committees



Within 12-18 months, we will:

Identify shortages in current supply versus demand of incumbent worker training

Assess alignment of technical education and postsecondary programs for both locations and programs

Create awareness by students of professional opportunities within Kentucky's high-demand fields by leveraging existing networks and modes of communication with employers

Align P-12 educational assets and infrastructure against documented workforce needs communicated by industry employers

Create a resource network for older Kentuckians to retrain and upskill for late career opportunities



Within 18-36 months, we will:

Establish statewide advisory committees to **aggregate and streamline employer feedback to educators and providers** on technical and workforce training needs

Use data to identify enhancements and augment curricular design to **align educational delivery to labor market demand** as students transition from P-12 to full-time employment

Craft messaging targeted to specific audiences (students, parents, teachers, counselors, etc.) to convey the scope and scale of today's available job opportunities, including competitive salaries, exciting and innovative work, tuition reimbursement, and rapid advancement for enthusiastic learners

Support **additional capacity for re-skilling adult populations**

Pilot a P-12 suite of career exploration activities at the school district, city, and county level, leveraging successful existing program models to create a scalable approach

Within 3-5 years, we plan to:

Institutionalize a **continuous feedback loop between employers and the education and workforce development community**

Maintain an ongoing **balance within the incumbent worker training** portfolio

Structure incentives that **keep older workers productive** in the workforce longer

Identify additional opportunities to **access, share, and integrate workforce development and education data** across workforce partner sources

KWIB proposes measuring progress against education objectives by reviewing overall trends in postsecondary educational attainment, while simultaneously examining more detailed measures of skills development, such as the attainment of work readiness certificates, rates of credentialing at the statewide and local levels, and the pursuit of STEM and technical electives in the P-12 developmental pipeline. Performance measures around education not only seek to assess whether Kentuckians are investing more heavily in their skills, but also the extent to which the skills they are acquiring translate to value for employers in the form of hiring placements and overall employer engagement.

EDUCATION: HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL MEASURE PROGRESS

*(** indicates a new measure proposed by KWIB)*

 Metric <i>(What we will measure)</i>	 Analytical Value <i>(What the metric tells us)</i>	 Data Source <i>(Where the data comes from)</i>
Educational Attainment Level of Working Age Population (High school diploma or less, postsecondary certification credential, Associate’s Degree, and college diploma or higher, with emphasis on educational attainment “six years out” from high school)	Tracks the extent to which the Commonwealth is educating its workforce at levels sufficient to meet industry hiring needs for postsecondary credentials	KCEWS
Credential Rate (Statewide and at the Regional / Local Workforce Area level, by type credential, with additional examination of credential attainment by priority populations)	Tracks the extent to which the Commonwealth is educating its workforce at levels sufficient to meet industry hiring needs, particularly for “middle skill” occupations	Council for Postsecondary Education and KCEWS
Population with Kentucky Essential Skills Certificates, Career Readiness Certificates or Equivalent	Captures the proportion of high school graduates demonstrating work-readiness, and provides context to the acquisition of essential skills by Kentuckians	KCEWS (for the high school population), certificate-administering agencies, WorkReady Communities
Rate of enrollment in STEM and other market-relevant P-12 electives and postsecondary programs	Provides a proxy for technical skills development in P-12 education, and articulates the effectiveness of awareness campaign activities to promote career pathways	Kentucky Department of Education, KCTCS
Percent and number of students who participate in work-based learning	Reflects the level of alignment between technical and community college education and employers	Kentucky Department of Education and KCTCS
Rate of Employer Placement for Technical Education and “Earn-and-Learn” programs	Tracks efficacy of technical training, work-based learning, and credentialing efforts from both an employer and a trainee perspective	Kentucky Department of Education, KCTCS, Administrators of “earn-and-learn” programs

Through the alignment of Kentucky’s education and training assets, the Commonwealth can construct a workforce skills development infrastructure that supports Kentuckians from early childhood through retirement, enables them to maintain awareness of where the “good jobs” are and how to pursue them, and encourages citizens at all stages of life to continually upgrade and refine their skills so that they stay engaged, competitive, and prosperous in a rapidly evolving job market.



Strategic Goal #3: Workforce Participation

Increase Kentucky's workforce participation by creating opportunities, incenting workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians

For many Kentuckians, work is not only a source of income, but also a source of professional accomplishment, personal growth, and community. Workforce participation therefore represents a stabilizing factor in Kentuckians' lives, an environment which regulates daily life and provides a stepping stone to wealth creation, achievement, and personal fulfillment.

At some point, however, most Americans will encounter a potentially destabilizing situation, such as a layoff or termination, a debilitating injury or illness, a criminal conviction, or other life-impacting event that results in a period of unemployment. For many Kentuckians, what begins as a temporary setback on the road of life can become a long-term roadblock – within the Commonwealth, 4 out of 10 working-age adults neither work, nor seek work. These individuals have exited the labor force altogether.



Kentucky Fast Facts

<i>While younger Kentuckians (16-24) participate at a higher rate than their U.S. peers, starting at age 45, Kentucky workers exit the labor force at a rate that substantially exceeds national benchmarks</i>	<i>Receiving disability is often a precursor to dropping out of the labor force: more than 300,000 Kentuckians, or 8.1% of the population, receive Social Security disability / SSI, compared to 4.7% nationally</i>	<i>Kentuckians experiencing life events such as long-term unemployment (130,000)⁶, substance abuse disorders (8.10% or 359,397)⁷, or a criminal record create barriers to employment that discouraged workers may not overcome</i>	<i>For Kentucky's current labor force participation rate (59.2%)⁸ to the meet the U.S. average (63.1%), an additional 165,000 Kentuckians would need to re-join the labor market, many of whom will need re-training to succeed</i>
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Many individuals derive self-worth and identity from their work; therefore, it is no surprise that protracted periods of unemployment are correlated with depression, substance abuse, and negative health outcomes. Kentucky has one of the lowest labor force participation rates and health rankings in the nation; therefore, it is the Commonwealth's overarching priority throughout this strategic plan to uncover and remediate the factors that cause workers to become discouraged and opt out of work.

⁶ Source: Quote from Cabinet official featured in the article "Long-Term Unemployment Still a Drag on the Economy," October 28, 2016. URL: <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/money/2016/10/28/long-term-unemployment-still-drag-economy/89781060/>

⁷ Source: "Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year." 2015-2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. URL: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHsaePercents2016/NSDUHsaePercents2016.pdf>

⁸ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Participation by State, October 2017. URL: <https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/lalforderr.xlsx>

WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Objective 3a: Strengthen collaboration across workforce development, social services, employers and non-profits to address barriers to employment for individuals.

Objective 3b: Mitigate disincentives to work and explore ways to incentivize workforce participation for individuals currently receiving social services benefits in order to support their transition to sustainable employment.

Objective 3c: Embed programs serving specific populations across cabinets to promote workforce participation. Examples of priority populations include veterans, individuals with disabilities, re-entrants from the corrections system, individuals in recovery from substance abuse, young adults transitioning out of foster care and others.

Objective 3d: Develop and promote strategies for employers to address employment barriers.

Objective 3e: Develop and Pursue strategies that increase the number of Kentuckians, work-ready and free from the influence of substance abuse.



In five years, successful remediation to the Commonwealth's workforce participation would resemble:

A significant increase in the statewide labor force participation rate, with Kentucky's labor force participation surpassing that of neighboring states

Elimination of as many precipitating factors as possible that cause workers to become discouraged and stop looking for work

A consistent focus on assisting those with barriers to employment, including correctional populations, individuals in foster care, individuals who have substance abuse issues and disabled individuals

Increased demand from employers to hire from priority populations, and those with barriers to employment

Established **career coaching and guided assistance for youth in foster care** prior to transitioning out of the system

Established **systems to work with later-career individuals to support re-entry** into the workforce through re-training and upskilling

Improved health statistics for Kentucky with established metrics for Healthy and Work Ready Communities initiatives

KWIB's goal for workforce participation calls upon the Commonwealth and its community partners to triage the immediate issue of low labor force participation, while conducting an in-depth assessment of the underlying causes of worker disenfranchisement. The results of this analysis can then be used to refine programs and policy so that they help workers recover from setbacks and redeploy into the labor market more quickly, losing as little momentum as possible. To increase labor force participation throughout the Commonwealth, the KWIB proposes the following implementation activities:

HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL IMPLEMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE

Implementation Owner:

Education & Workforce
Development Cabinet



Engaged Stakeholders:

Cabinet for Health & Family
Services
Department of Corrections
Department of Military Affairs
Cabinet for Economic Development
Employers
Kentucky Board of Education
Kentucky Department of Education
KWIB
Labor Cabinet
Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
Non-Profit Organizations and Advocacy
Groups
Regional & Local Chambers of Commerce
State Chamber of Commerce
Substance Abuse Treatment & Rehabilitation
Facilities
Workforce Training & Service Providers
Work Matters Task Force



On an ongoing basis, we will:

Address the root causes that
motivate individuals to opt out of
the labor force
Identify marginalized priority populations and
conduct targeted outreach to them
Continually assess the ways in which public
programs and policy incent or dis-incent labor
force participation, and work to improve them



In the short term (12-18 months), we will:

Develop a **common level of understanding regarding the unique experiences of each priority population** (individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, foster care, drug addicted, etc.) using the Work Matters Task Force



Eliminate (as much as possible) disincentives to work (i.e., benefit cliff issues) that exist in public programs and policies

Promote **employer awareness of incentives to employ individuals with barriers to employment**

Apply best practices in identifying, addressing, and remediating drug abuse inside and outside of the workplace

Establish a system where **correctional facilities can access workforce system resources** for exiting offenders

Establish a partnership among Medicaid managed care providers and system resources to better serve populations in education, career, and health areas.

In the near term (18-36 months), we will:

Educate the employer community on the benefits of hiring individuals with barriers to employment, including longer retention and equal performance to those without barriers

Establish employer resource networks to increase worker placement and retention

Work with treatment providers and the recovery community to **design policy and programs that harness the rehabilitative power of work** for individuals impacted directly and indirectly by substance abuse

Provide wrap-around services to further support customers on the road to self-sufficiency

Integrate essential skills training and work placement services into drug rehabilitation and juvenile justice rehabilitation programs (regardless of conviction or circumstance)

In the long term (3-5 years), we plan to:




Lower the overall cost to hire and organizational risk to the employers to hire individuals who have barriers to employment

Gauge impacts on workforce participation within all and especially affected priority populations and revise the theory of change practices

Individuals who do not participate in the labor force may overlap multiple demographic groups or priority populations, and the factors that motivate them to stop looking for work may be nuanced and overlapping. Therefore, care must be taken in performance measurement to avoid double-counting individuals with respect to outcomes, or drawing spurious conclusions about “what works” based on trends observed within the labor force participation rate. Measures of progress within this category may be slower to improve given the nature of the challenge, but by examining aggregate measures of labor force participation, as well as segmenting the population by demographic groups, KWIB intends to evaluate the extent to which interventions are successful among specific groups and to leverage progress in one group to design productive interventions for other priority populations.

WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION: HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL MEASURE PROGRESS

*(** indicates a new measure proposed by KWIB)*

 <p>Metric <i>(What we will measure)</i></p>	 <p>Analytical Value <i>(What the metric tells us)</i></p>	 <p>Data Source <i>(Where the data comes from)</i></p>
<p>Labor Force Participation Rate (Statewide and by Local Workforce Area)</p>	<p>Assesses whether Kentucky's labor force participation is improving, and the extent to which participation varies across regional geography</p>	<p>KCEWS, Work Matters Task Force, Bureau of Labor Statistics</p>
<p>Labor Force Participation Rate by Demographic Groups (including age, sex, race, educational attainment level, military service, disability status, Medicaid participants)</p>	<p>Assesses whether there are specific "pockets" of individuals with lower labor force participation, to enable the diagnosis of root causes and the identification of positive interventions</p>	<p>KCEWS / Bureau of Labor Statistics</p>
<p>Statewide and Local Unemployment and Underemployment Rates</p>	<p>Indicates the extent to which the common definition of unemployment (the BLS U3 "unemployment rate") masks larger patterns of underemployment or the prevalence of discouraged workers at the state and local level</p>	<p>KCEWS / Bureau of Labor Statistics</p>
<p>Credential Rate (by priority population, including: disabled individuals, corrections populations, long-term unemployed, etc.)</p>	<p>Tracks the extent to which credentialing programs (aimed at helping workers obtain "middle skill" employment) are being utilized by priority populations with barriers to employment</p>	<p>Agencies supporting vocational rehabilitation for priority populations, including: Office of the Blind, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Council on Military Affairs, Department of Corrections, etc.</p>
<p>Number of GED / technical training completions occurring in correctional facilities</p>	<p>Tracks the pre-release upskilling of incarcerated individuals in preparation for re-integration into the Kentucky community</p>	<p>Adult Education / Educational Entities / Department of Corrections</p>
<p>Number of GED / technical training completions occurring in substance use disorder programs</p>	<p>Tracks the utilization of vocational rehabilitation and training as a component of recovery treatment</p>	<p>Adult Education, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Department of Corrections</p>
<p>Rate of Program-to-Employer Placements for Priority Populations in Employment Referral Programs</p>	<p>Gauges the volume of recipients receiving workforce services designed to overcome barriers to employment, and tracks efficacy of vocational rehabilitation programs designed to serve priority populations</p>	<p>Agencies supporting vocational rehabilitation for priority populations, including: Office of the Blind, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Council on Military Affairs, Department of Corrections, etc.</p>
<p>Number of Employer Tax Deductions Claimed for Hiring Long-Term Unemployment (UI) Recipients</p>	<p>Tracks effectiveness of commercial incentives in helping the long term-unemployed find work</p>	<p>Office of Employment and Training / Department of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service</p>

Too many Kentuckians have experienced the discouraging effects of long-term unemployment, or of barriers to employment that make a job search frustrating, lengthy, or unsuccessful. When this mindset prevails, it is the collective obligation of employers, policymakers, and workforce providers to reach out to disenfranchised workers and motivate them to rejoin the workforce. Doing so results in an economic and social benefit to the individual, as well as the overall community. Through a probing examination of those currently out of the labor force, learning what motivates them, and discovering how public policy empowers or discourages them from seeking work, the Commonwealth can use its resources to provide opportunity to out-of-work citizens, in a way that repairs the statewide economy, and provides relief to both workers and employers alike.



Strategic Goal #4: Organization and Resource Alignment

Focus resources on the most effective initiatives and improve the return on our workforce investment, utilizing data to constantly improve workforce development in Kentucky

Workforce development is a matrixed function within government, touching numerous agencies and programs across multiple Cabinets, and intersecting with industry and the providers with whom service delivery is coordinated. While a high degree of engagement across sectors and administrative divisions is necessary to administer effective workforce programs, inconsistency in defining the workforce system, lack of resource alignment across its participants, and competing priorities amongst stakeholders result in ambiguous goal-setting, siloed activity, and decisions driven more by funding sources and reporting requirements than by impact on the populations served.



Kentucky Fast Facts

A 2016 analysis by the Lieutenant Governor's Office identified over 70 Commonwealth programs and initiatives oriented to workforce development

A lack of detailed budget documentation obscures the ability to determine programmatic spend, evaluate performance, or assess return on investment

Kentucky lacks a clear channel or single business services point of contact for workforce resources; employers and job-seekers often navigate the system on their own

Numerous programs collect data that is not consistently defined, shared, or aggregated across administrative entities, inhibiting performance evaluation

For the Commonwealth to enact its ambitious workforce agenda and affect substantive change, the system itself and the programs within it must be clearly and consistently defined, the resources invested to support it identified, and organizational structures aligned to promote consistent approaches and prevent working at cross-aims. By giving workforce development administrative structure and naming its subsidiaries, the Commonwealth can move beyond workforce as a concept and accelerate its strategy to get Kentuckians back to work and earning competitive wages.

**ALIGNMENT:
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**



Strategic Objective 4a: Identify and address the organizational and structural changes that should be made to Kentucky's workforce development governance to improve collaboration and accountability.

Strategic Objective 4b: Develop a framework and supporting goals and metrics for Kentucky's workforce development programs.

Strategic Objective 4c: Identify gaps in the existing longitudinal data system and determine available sources to close those gaps.

Strategic Objective 4d: Define and create an effective communication approach for services to ensure a consistent, quality customer experience.

Strategic Objective 4e: Build a stronger, more coordinated relationship between state and local government, institutions, and workforce innovation areas.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?



In five years, successful workforce system alignment would resemble:

Established "workforce development" governance, a leadership collaborative of partners which oversee effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

Sharing of data between programs in a common platform, used to calculate return on investment by program area, and use of metrics to judge the performance of the workforce system and its partners.

Availability of assisted and self-navigation of workforce services for both employers and job seekers within the Commonwealth by way of shared and leveraged partner resources

Performance-based incentives leveraged between State and local workforce boards to establish policies, procedures and programs which support quality-oriented customer services.

At present, the Commonwealth workforce system is a complex arrangement of moving parts and programs, serving a large population of people at various developmental stages and walks of life with an array of services that span the entire workforce lifecycle. Even those working within the system have expressed confusion over which programs are included under the umbrella of "workforce development," and the inability to accurately capture programmatic spend or paint an aggregate picture of how the system serves citizens makes it difficult to conceive of how to innovate within it.

Because workforce systems change is so heavily dependent upon personal relationships between program leaders and a cohesive collective understanding of how disparate programs integrate to serve users, KWIB proposes the following implementation actions to improve organizational and resource alignment:

HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL IMPLEMENT SYSTEMS CHANGE

Implementation Owner:

Education & Workforce
Development Cabinet



Engaged Stakeholders:

Cabinet for Economic Development
Labor Cabinet
Cabinet for Health & Family Services
Colleges & Universities
Kentucky Department of Education
KWIB
Local WIBs
Local Government Workforce and Economic
Development Organizations (EDOs)
Local School Districts
Non-Profit Organizations and Advocacy
Groups
Workforce Training & Service Providers



On an ongoing basis, we will:

Explicitly define the programs and
agencies that make up the
Commonwealth workforce system
Capture with precision programmatic spend
and outcomes and use the data to evaluate
workforce return on investment
Listen to our customers (both employers and
job-seekers) to continuously improve service
and minimize confusion navigating the system
Communicate the story of Kentucky's
workforce transformation to the public –
documenting and highlighting the
Commonwealth's progress against the
strategic plan, accomplishments to date,
metrics and statewide outcomes



In the short term (12-18 months), we will:

Address barriers to collaboration by engaging with
influencers and drivers of workforce policy across
sectors



**Develop a set of overarching “guiding principles” for workforce
delivery** in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Implement a training for all staff to improve service delivery along the
workforce lifecycle continuum

Create an Emerging Workforce Leaders Council to **prepare early to mid-
career workforce managers and administrators for the next level of
leadership** through cross-sector collaboration and field-building activities

**Verify and (to the extent possible) eliminate siloes related to
resource allocation** leveraging spend analysis by the Lt. Governor's
Office and a cross-Cabinet team assembled to align workforce service
delivery

Identify where state longitudinal data could be augmented or improved to
better track citizen development along the workforce lifecycle, and
**determine whether existing data is available or if new data sources
must be created**

In the near term (18-36 months), we will:

**Create representative examples of quality “customer experience” for
both employers and job-seekers** who utilize workforce development
services, as well as a follow up mechanism to gauge customer satisfaction

**Capture a data-driven reflection of the taxpayer dollars expended on
workforce development**, and use this information to inform innovative
approaches to helping Kentuckians find work

Develop tracking mechanisms to evaluate the return on investment
for public spend in workforce development services

Prioritize and **specify requirements for enhancements** to the state
longitudinal data system




In the long term (3-5 years), we plan to:

**Leverage workforce non-profits and advocates to support convening
and capacity building**

**Integrate communications with customer service feedback channels
and points of live contact** within the Commonwealth so that customers
feel a sense of seamless connection in their services

One of the most elusive measures of workforce system integration in the Commonwealth has been to accurately capture the amount that Kentucky spends on workforce services delivery, and use that information to balance the portfolio of workforce investments and direct resources to areas where they are most needed. Estimates gathered by some agencies have placed workforce development spend in Kentucky in excess of \$1.2 Billion annually, but connecting that investment to the workforce outcomes supported by it has revealed challenges to analyzing data across Cabinets and programs. Therefore, progress measures for organization and resource alignment focus most heavily on the ability of the Commonwealth to assess with accuracy the return on investment for workforce spend, both for users of the system, and the citizens and companies whose tax dollars sustain it.

ALIGNMENT: HOW THE COMMONWEALTH WILL MEASURE PROGRESS
*(** indicates a new measure proposed by KWIB)*

 Metric <i>(What we will measure)</i>	 Analytical Value <i>(What the metric tells us)</i>	 Data Source <i>(Where the data comes from)</i>
Aggregate Statewide Employment, Median Hourly Wages and/or Median Salary	Captures the number of employed persons, their earnings, and can be used to construct the aggregate output from labor statewide	KCEWS / Bureau of Labor Statistics
Wage Gains Over Time	Examines whether Kentuckians' economic standing has improved (preferably correlated with workforce investment, increased educational attainment, and upskilling)	KCEWS / Bureau of Labor Statistics
ROI for Workforce Development (Aggregate and by Demographic Categories)	Reflects the return on investment for public dollars invested in workforce development activity	TBD – Proposed by the KWIB Data and Metrics Committee
Statewide Workforce Development Expenditures (By Cabinet and Program)	Indicates the cost of workforce development at the Cabinet and program level	Governor's Office
Throughput of Workforce Development Program	Reflects staff complement invested in workforce development	TBD – Proposed by the KWIB Data and Metrics committee

By visualizing workforce development within the context of the services provided, outcomes realized, and overall value for spend, the Commonwealth can make informed future investments in human capital. Aligning administrative divisions, capturing their financial inputs and programmatic outputs, and examining the outcomes of public investment, will allow the Commonwealth to adjust their workforce portfolio when circumstances demand, and use data to articulate the value realized through investments in Kentucky's current and future workforce.

Looking Ahead: Putting Strategy into Action




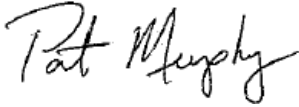





Adopting a portfolio approach to workforce investment that is informed and driven by industry, and aligned to the workforce lifecycle will move Kentucky beyond the vague notion of a workforce development “system” – and towards a more dynamic, defined workforce **marketplace**, one where industry growth and hiring trends drive responsive policy interventions, and both employers and job seekers experience improved hiring, employment, and wage outcomes as a result of their engagement.

In preparing its strategic plan, KWIB engaged in extensive cross-sector dialogue between Kentucky’s business, government, and education leaders, whose perspectives informed its content. That said, the implementation actions outlined herein are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive; rather, they are intended to highlight the most pressing concerns facing Kentucky’s workforce and economy today. This plan represents the starting point for a significant workforce transformation effort, and KWIB recognizes that additional actions may be added, or existing actions modified in response to changes in Kentucky’s workforce landscape.

Beyond the logistics of how the strategy is implemented, or how progress is measured, the most important aspect of the strategic plan is that the time to take action is NOW. Kentucky’s workforce challenges are not unique compared to those of its neighbors, or the nation as a whole; what differentiates the Commonwealth today is a recognition of the critical need to take immediate action, and the breadth of relationships that have been forged between leaders of the private and public sectors to act on the Commonwealth’s commitment to its workforce.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee Members

In agreement and with a motion to recommend "Work Ready Kentucky: An Urgent Call to Action"

<p>Hugh Haydon, KWIB Chair President/CEO Kentucky Bioprocessing, Inc.</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<p>Kim Menke State Government Liaison Toyota Motor Manufacturing</p> <p>Signature: </p>
<p>Amy Luttrell President/CEO Goodwill Industries, Kentucky</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<p>Pat Murphy Workforce Development Manager United Parcel Service (UPS)</p> <p>Signature: </p>
<p>David Adkisson President/CEO Kentucky Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<p>Hal Heiner Secretary Education and Workforce Development Cabinet</p> <p>Signature: </p>
<p>Terry Gill Secretary Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet</p> <p>Signature: <i>Out of the Country thru Feb 19</i></p>	<p>Kristi Putnam Program Manager Kentucky HEALTH - CHFS</p> <p>Signature: </p>
<p>Dr. Jay Box President/CEO Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<p>Dr. Stephen Pruitt Commissioner Kentucky Department of Education</p> <p>Signature: </p>

Approved by the Kentucky Workforce
Innovation Board

February 15, 2018