

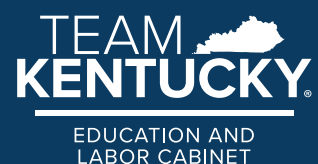
Team Kentucky

Program Year 2022

WIOA Statewide Annual Narrative



Moving Kentucky Forward Through
Workforce Training & Development



In Program Year 2022 (PY22), the theme of the Commonwealth of Kentucky's workforce development system was enhanced alignment, collaboration, and partnership to better serve the needs of individual customers, businesses, and workforce system staff in a rapidly evolving economy. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Narrative serves to highlight the effectiveness of the system in serving Kentuckians, whether they are looking for better jobs or careers as individual customers, looking to hire qualified talent as employers, or are workforce professionals working toward continuous improvement in building a resilient workforce system in the Commonwealth.



System alignment is reflected in having the WIOA programs under one umbrella in the Education and Labor Cabinet's Department of Workforce Development (DWD). This alignment is further enhanced with collaboration and partnership with Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA), sister cabinets and agencies across state government, community-based organizations, and businesses investing in hiring, training, and developing individuals served by the public workforce ecosystem.

Such collaborations are critical as Kentucky's economic development investment has continued to grow statewide with new industry locations and expansions in manufacturing, healthcare, IT, logistics, bourbon, and many other industries that see the potential Kentucky has to offer – including qualified talent. Furthermore, Kentucky continued solidifying itself as the nation's capital for electric vehicle battery production with unprecedented investment. These investments provide Kentuckians increased opportunities to enter good quality jobs that provide family-sustaining wages, career advancement, educational growth, and end the cycles of employment barriers.

By deepening efforts among WIOA core programs and partners, individuals served by the public workforce system, businesses, and the workforce ecosystem can reap the benefits of the post-pandemic economy. Kentucky's workforce system's future looks positive as innovative pilots are launched, best practices are shared, and equity is front and center regarding employment access – this is the time to embrace systematic strengths and work as Team Kentucky.

Sincerely,
Deputy Secretary
Beth A. Brinly

The Commonwealth of Kentucky's Vision and Strategy

The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) is the state's workforce development board designated to advise the Governor and work in partnership with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to develop the state's workforce and meet employer needs to support economic growth and self-sufficiency. As a majority business-led board with representation from organized labor, community-based organizations, elected officials, secondary and postsecondary education, and government agencies, the strategies set are meant to drive the system forward with continuous innovations.

In PY22, the pillars that drive the workforce system were reviewed and emphasized as the north stars of the workforce development system. The four pillars set forward in the state's strategic plan include:

1. Employer Engagement – actively engaging employers to drive Kentucky's workforce development system.
2. Education Attainment – alignment and integration of P-12, adult education, and postsecondary education to provide lifelong opportunities for Kentuckians to prepare them for the rapidly shifting realities of work in the future.
3. Workforce Participation - Increasing Kentucky's workforce participation by creating opportunities, incentivizing workforce participation, and removing employment barriers for Kentuckians.
4. Organization and Resource Alignment – Focusing resources on the most effective initiatives and improving the return on workforce investment, utilizing data to continually improve workforce development in Kentucky.

These strategic pillars align well with Kentucky's PY 22-23 Unified State Plan Modification and are set forward to creating the upcoming State Plan.

KWIB's strategy is further amplified by the work being done at DWD to actively execute the strategy. PY22 served to intentionally reinvigorate the Education and Workforce Collaborative, comprised of state government cabinet officials and statewide partners who conduct various workforce development activities with an emphasis on implementing a systemic approach to the Commonwealth's workforce opportunities and challenges. The three areas of focus in PY22 included Jobs on Day One (framework and initiative to support justice-involved talent), Work-Based Learning Ecosystem, and a unified veteran employment system.

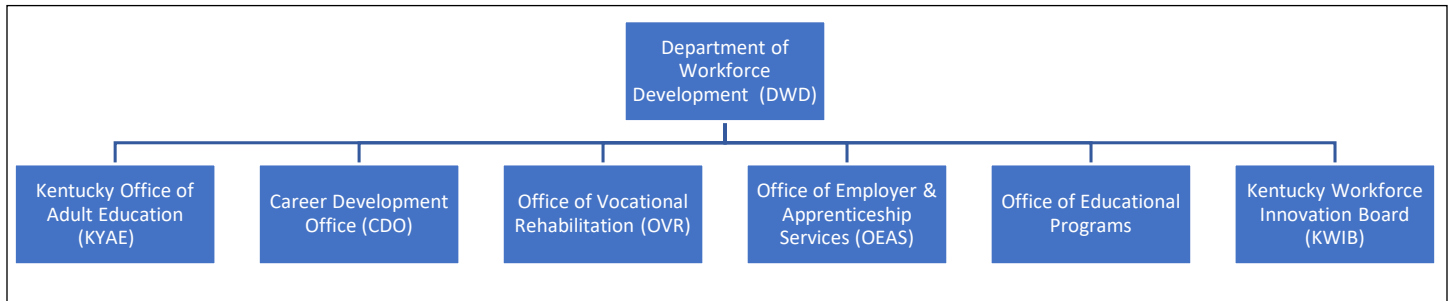
The KWIB and the Education and Workforce Collaborative have jointly embraced the vision of an aligned and collaborative workforce development system that better serves individuals, customers, and businesses.

Department of Workforce Development

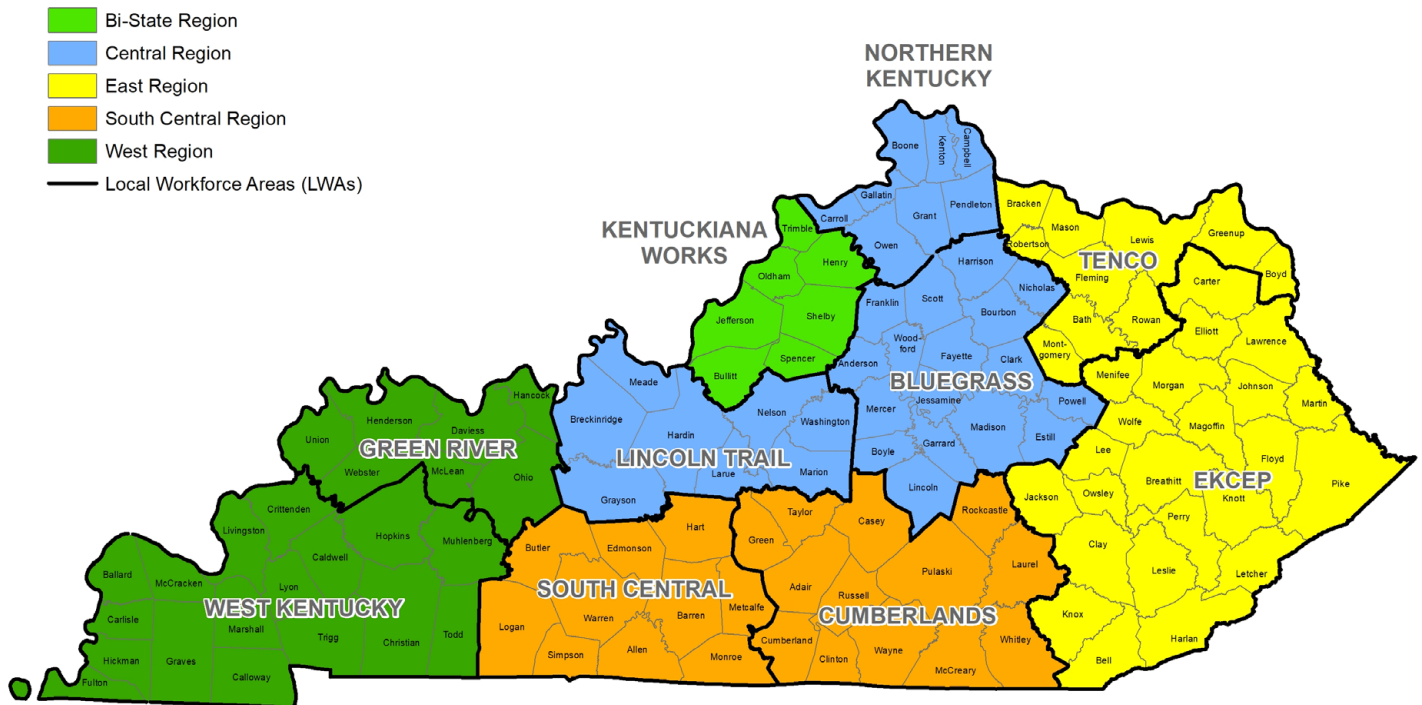
The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) sits within the Kentucky Education & Labor Cabinet and houses WIOA's core programs. Title I programs (adult, dislocated worker, and youth) are administered by the 10 Local Workforce Development Boards (located across the five regions of Kentucky, pictured below) and their respective service providers, while Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy) is within the Kentucky Office of Adult Education and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) is within the Career Development Office. Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) is within the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). DWD also houses the state-registered apprenticeship agency known as the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) and the Office of Educational Programs, which has a targeted mission of growing youth employment through the Governor's Everybody Counts initiative. Furthermore, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) is administratively attached and within DWD.

Kentucky's overarching workforce development system and the branding of the American Job Centers across the Commonwealth is known as the Kentucky Career Center (KCC). Most partners within the WIOA network are branded under the Kentucky Career Center umbrella and utilize this common name to indicate the connectivity within the workforce development ecosystem.

This structure allows for services to be aligned, improved, and continuously reevaluated to ensure a common approach to data, policy, and practice.



Kentucky's Five Workforce Regions



Updated November 6, 2023



Kentucky Center for Statistics
kystats.ky.gov

State Waivers with the US Department of Labor

The Commonwealth of Kentucky does not have any waivers in place with US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers – Performance Indicator Pilot

As mentioned in the state strategy, engaging employers in the workforce system is a critical component and one of the four pillars of Kentucky's strategic plan. When serving employers across the workforce development ecosystem, also known as the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) network, a streamlined approach is necessary to ensure a continuous partnership that results in quality service. This includes resource sharing, talent placement, work-based learning strategies, and collaboration among partners to leverage funding and resources to better support employer initiatives.

Kentucky used the business penetration rate and the percentage of repeat business to evaluate its effectiveness in serving businesses as its metrics of choice. Methods like this aim to meet businesses' demands for trained employees by fostering strong connections between employers and prospective employees. The business penetration rate indicates how many businesses in a state are using the KCC system of services as a share of all businesses in the state. Using this method, we can keep tabs on the share of the state's total business population that is making use of the program's foundational services. The penetration rate measures how well an area's foundational programs prepare its residents for work.

The second metric for Kentucky is the percentage of businesses that have used the same service within the past three years. This method keeps tabs on how often service recipients return for repeat services from the KCC's foundational offerings and how to track loyal customers. It aids in determining if businesses benefit from KCC's key programs and see enough value in those services to warrant returning for more. In PY22, 82% of the Commonwealth's businesses

were returning customers. Over 200 business services experts with a wide range of experience and resources are available through the Kentucky business services network. Titles I, II, III, and IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Employment Programs, the Department of Corrections Reentry Program, and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce all contribute to the business solutions offered. Through the collaborative approach, businesses return to the public workforce system and gain value from the wide range of expertise.

These business services experts also have access to a statewide customer relationship management tool called the Kentucky Integrated Business Engagement System (KIBES), which operates on the Salesforce platform. Through KIBES, Business Service Team (BST) members and workforce partners representing 10 workforce regions can communicate and track the progress of company contacts, ongoing relationships, programs and activities utilized, and the overall status of company engagement. Having BST members on one platform makes collaboration possible as an existing company record owner could introduce their colleague to a unique program or opportunity for the business customer. Both digital and in-person collaboration among Kentucky's business services have allowed the system to be proactive in helping companies recruit, develop, and retain talent while also helping companies access labor market information, innovative workforce development practices, and resources from partners to lower costs and increase opportunities for all Kentuckians.

Furthermore, as state partners to the local BSTs, the Workforce Development Consultants of the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) provide an opportunity to enhance the connectivity between state and local resources for the benefit of the business. These Workforce Development Consultants partner with local teams and bring state resources to business and industry partners, including the Work Opportunity

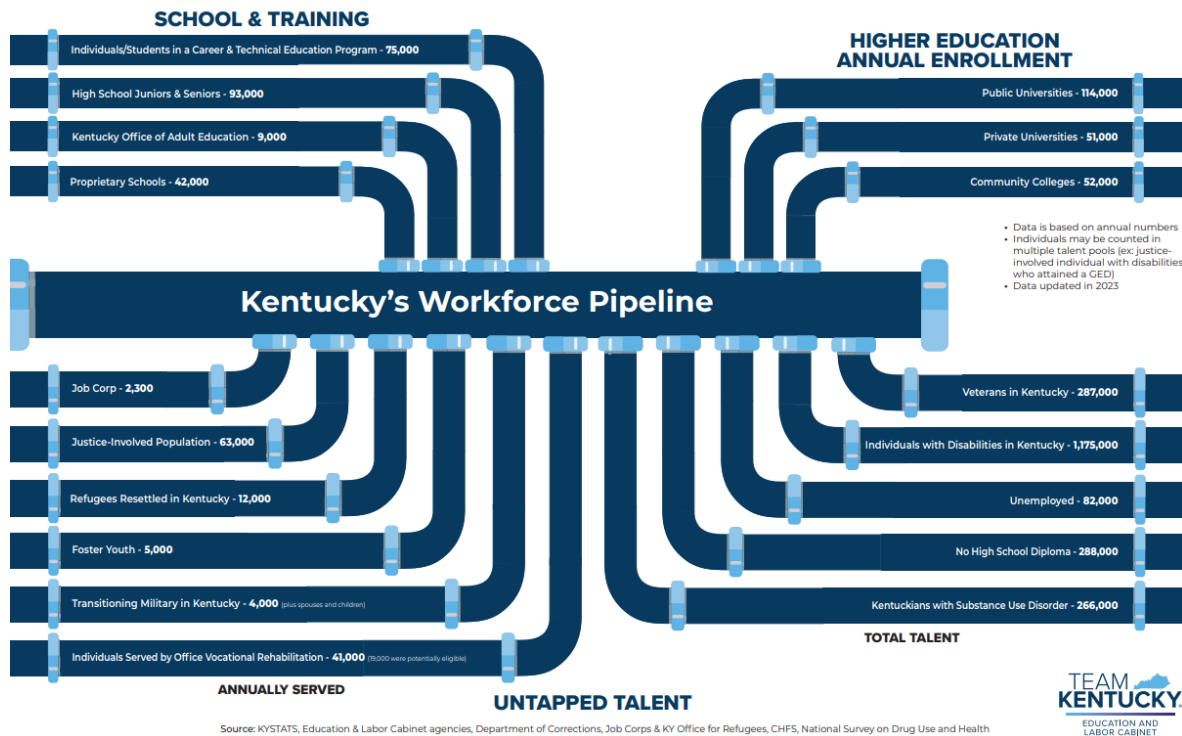
Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Rapid Response, and Registered Apprenticeship. Moreover, the eight consultants collaborate and ensure that all local and state partner resources are integrated to meet business demands.

Planned Evaluations & WIOA State Plan Listening Sessions

Throughout the second half of PY22, the planning process for the upcoming WIOA State Plan began. Kentucky conducted listening sessions in every local workforce area that included breakout sessions for key stakeholder groups. These breakout sessions consisted of employers, education and workforce partners, elected officials, and individual customers. The goal of the listening sessions was to share the state’s strategic goals and ask local stakeholders to reflect on the current workforce development system and reimagine the future state of the workforce development system. By breaking down individuals into peer categories and visiting local communities, the goal was to capture honest feedback for consideration in the WIOA State Plan process.

This coordination is further supported by the “Workforce Board Chair Roundtable, “ a local and state partnership among the workforce development board business-led chairs. The KWIB Chairman launched the Roundtable initiative in PY22 to grow the alignment and collaboration between the state and local chairs in a business-to-business atmosphere. The goal of the Roundtable is to meet quarterly in a virtual setting and have an in-person, end-of-year meeting where local executive committee members, board directors, and board chairs can come together. This platform will allow for the dissemination of the collected research for the WIOA State Plan from the local listening sessions. The findings will be provided in the PY23 annual narrative and included in the upcoming WIOA State Plan.

Additionally, research was done to establish a visual representation of the state’s workforce pipelines at the urging of the KWIB members, specifically those most interested in understanding the labor force participation rate and, more specifically, the workforce participation opportunities.



This graphic aims to showcase the "traditional" talent that graduates from secondary and postsecondary institutions and the "untapped talent," who are individuals with employment barriers traditionally overlooked in the economy. This bottom list is comprised of Job Corps participants, justice-involved individuals, refugees, foster youth, transitioning military, individuals with disabilities, the unemployed, individuals without a high school degree, and individuals with a substance use disorder. The untapped talent categories identified are closely aligned with the list WIOA provides for individuals with barriers to employment.

Customer Satisfaction – Continuous Improvements:

The goal for customer satisfaction is to increase the long-term employment outcomes for individuals seeking services, especially those with barriers to employment, to improve services to employers and demonstrate continuous improvement. In the upcoming PY, Kentucky will explore a workforce assessment process that combines the independent review results with the collection of common performance measures to align results with program improvements and innovations. Basic service delivery performance standards will be set to continuously improve. New comprehensive WIOA service delivery ideas and standards will be added over time to help ensure that common measure and customer satisfaction results go up over time. Kentucky will add to this basic approach and develop broader continuous improvement activities across the workforce system. Kentucky will evaluate statewide cross-program common data elements and gain information on the job seeker and employer programs, services, and processes on an ongoing basis. This will allow the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, the core program, and additional partners to be committed to an aligned, cohesive service delivery system with a shared understanding of policy and performance.

Kentucky will also continue to assess the effectiveness and physical and programmatic accessibility of the career centers following Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The current Kentucky Career Center (KCC) certification process is in place to ensure that KCC offices are ready to serve all Kentuckians needing services in the regional and local areas as expected. The certification process ensures the workforce system's alignment of programs, policies, and activities. Workforce agencies and partners are engaged in these assessments and making any needed improvements to ensure that all related activities are coordinated to allow partners to review relevant information and take action to improve the system.

Customer satisfaction is also achieved through internal alignment, as seen with the current reciprocal referral services with the Career

Development Office (CDO) and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), leading to efficient services for individuals with disabilities. Co-enrollment also occurs with Adult Education (Title II) and services offered by Title I and Title III programs. Such collaboration is worth studying to understand the customer satisfaction and approval level when services are braided to increase opportunities for better outcomes.

Locally, to meet the efforts of the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board's located in the Central Region intent to be more systematic in examining customer feedback and identify opportunities for program-level and system-wide improvement, the One Stop Operator (OSO) implemented an electronic customer satisfaction comment card system for jobseekers and employers utilizing Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail (KCC-LT) services.

All KCC-LT partners encourage customers to complete the survey by providing the link or QR code. Information also promotes the survey in the resource rooms at all four KCC-LT locations. Weekly and quarterly reports are generated by the OSO and shared with KCC-LT partner agencies. Each partner is accountable for examining the information and using the feedback to improve. Results are also discussed at monthly Business Solutions and Center Management Team meetings.

Data from PY22 indicated over 2,700 jobseeker and 100 employer responses, with a customer satisfaction rate of over 95%. Efforts are ongoing to identify ways to increase the employer response rates.

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Across the Commonwealth, several sector strategies are executed in the local workforce development area. Here are a few that highlight work in the Commonwealth's identified five in-demand sectors: manufacturing, construction, transportation, healthcare, and business/IT.

IT - CODE KENTUCKY

Through a Governor's Discretionary grant, the Commonwealth invests in an IT training program called Code Kentucky, operated by KentuckianaWorks local workforce development board. Code Kentucky is based on the model used by Code Louisville, which has trained and placed more than 800 people in software development and related IT jobs. The programs are also operated by an overlapping staff team and share mentors and curriculum.

In its second year in operation, Code Kentucky began expanding to serve a broader portion of the state through a partnership with SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region). Code Louisville and Code Kentucky helped place 115 people into technology jobs in the past program year at an average wage above \$28 per hour.

In partnership with KentuckianaWorks, the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD)/Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (NKWIB) supports Code Kentucky in the Northern Kentucky region.

During PY22, 115 students from the Northern Kentucky region were enrolled. There has been a 42% job placement rate for NKY program graduates, with an average starting wage of \$31.34/hour.

Employers from the IT sector have a continued desire to hire candidates with 'work experience' and relevant credentials despite the shortage of available talent. NKY WIB plans to work more strategically with IT sector employers in the coming year to identify mutually beneficial solutions for the employers and the Code Kentucky graduates.

PY22 testimonial:

- Jody, from Paintsville, KY, worked in healthcare and looked for a career change when enrolled in Code Kentucky. After graduating from the program, he got connected to UPS and is now a software developer for the Flight Crew Support Decision Tools team. He now has more flexibility to work remotely and better benefits than before.

Construction - KENTUCKIANA BUILDS

This Governor's Discretionary grant also funds the pre-apprenticeship construction training program called Kentuckiana Builds. A partnership with the Louisville Urban League (LUL), Kentuckiana Builds, was created in 2016 to respond to the need for a pipeline of trained construction employees and to increase the number of minorities and women going into the sector regionally.

This past February, leaders from the Louisville Urban League, KentuckianaWorks, and private-sector employers gathered to celebrate the 500th graduate of the program. Of those graduates, nearly 90% are people of color, and more than a quarter are women (compared to just 10% female representation industry-wide).

In PY22, the program has placed 53 graduates in construction employment at an average wage of more than \$19 per hour. Kentuckiana Builds has also cultivated innovative partnerships with the local carpenter and electrician unions.

PY22 testimonial:

- Before enrolling in Kentuckiana Builds, Alisia lived "as if there was no purpose." Now, she has started her own contracting company and, in 2023, is remodeling an entire home to resell it. "When I came into the program, I was a felon. I was lost and broken. When I left the Kentuckiana Builds program, I had a purpose, a job position, and I knew what I was doing."

Construction - Heavy Equipment Committee & Pathway

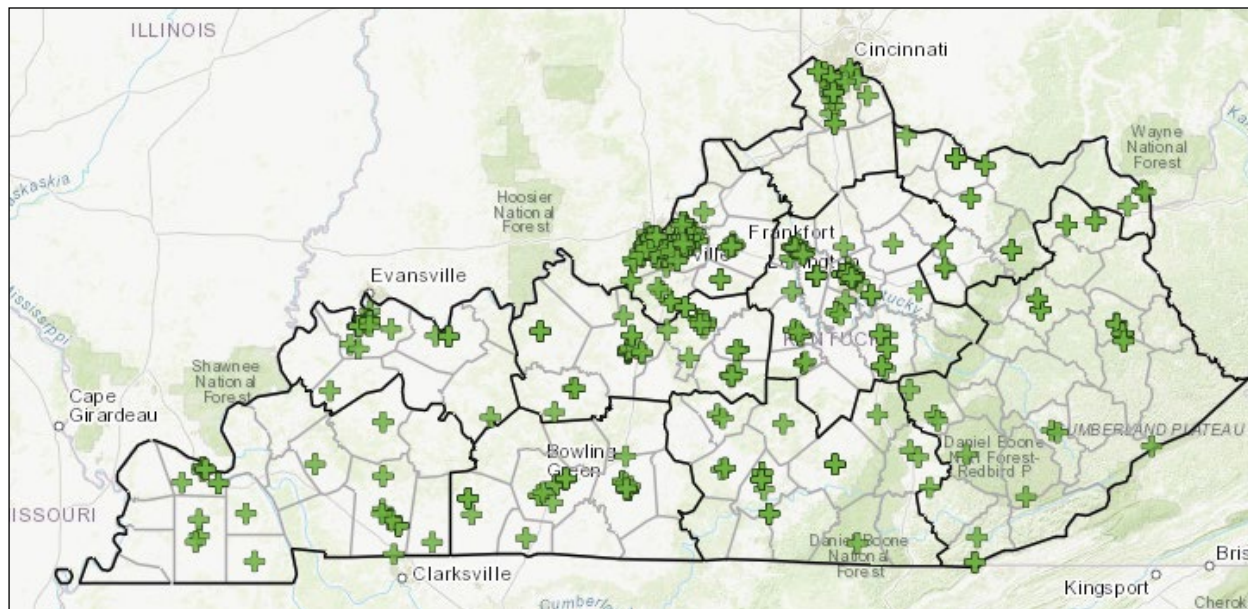
The South-Central Workforce Development Board (located in the South Central Region) started a Heavy Equipment Sciences career pathway for K-12 students launched near the beginning of the academic school year after securing statewide reserve grant funding in PY21 to purchase four training simulators. Twenty-four students were enrolled, 21 students completed the program in May 2023, and 18 of those students went on to receive full-time employment or internships with local construction companies. An adult cohort was provided in the summer of 2023 with 10 students enrolled and supported with a combination of WIOA and NDWG funding support.

Healthcare – TENCO & EKCEP WIBs

Throughout the last few years, the TENCO WDB (located in the East Region of Kentucky) has supported continuous educational improvement in the healthcare field. This need was determined after listening to sector industry groups involved in the Talent Pipeline Management project. The Board established funding to move individuals through a career pathway such as Nurse Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, and even higher education like Physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner. Dedicated funding provides a skilled talent pipeline for local businesses while providing individuals with skills that provide them with advanced employment opportunities and higher wages for their families. The Board expends \$50,000 per year on Career Pathway Projects.

Also in the East Region, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) expanded its Healthcare Pathway Partnership Program (H3P), formed in PY 2021 and funded by a US Department of Labor H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant. H3P assists eligible Kentuckians with important financial assistance and career navigation services to help ensure they are successful in training for and transitioning to healthcare careers. The program's expansion made assistance available for eligible students enrolled with additional training providers, increasing opportunities for students throughout the service area. As of October 2023, H3P has served 498 Kentuckians, including 295 people with paid services, to either begin or complete training for a healthcare career.

To more effectively serve the region's employers and better align with state and federal workforce priorities, EKCEP in PY22 placed an added emphasis on workplace training and ramped up efforts to initiate registered apprenticeships within the service area, resulting in the agency's first registered apprenticeship in early PY23 in collaboration with Hazard Community and Technical College, Alpha Mechanical Services, and Local 248. EKCEP management expects to announce additional apprenticeships in the healthcare sector in the last quarter of 2023, furthering efforts to address local workforce shortages for healthcare providers.



Pictured – Kentucky Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors

Registered Apprenticeship & Incumbent Worker Training

The US Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship Program in Kentucky fulfills a strategic data-driven solution for employers’ workforce development needs. Registered Apprenticeships are a part of achieving the vision of Kentucky being a national leader in workforce development.

A Registered Apprenticeship combines on-the-job training, related instructions, and mentorship in a paid experience, leading to an industry-recognized credential. The apprentice becomes a subject matter expert through this joint approach and can fill the most in-demand and hard-to-fill positions today. Apprenticeship programs have provided career pathways for those just entering the workforce and a means to broaden opportunities for those looking to expand their careers.

Kentucky has 304 registered programs and over 5,100 apprentices. Today’s registered apprenticeships go beyond traditional skilled trades to encompass careers such as aerospace engineering, physical therapy aide, office manager, and registered teacher apprenticeships. Kentucky’s Registered Apprenticeship programs produce a retention rate of 87%.

Locally, the Green River Workforce Development Board (located in the West Region) received a Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Workforce

Grant in 2020 for the “Hire to Operate (H2O) Project” that utilized DRA funding to partner with the Kentucky Rural Water Association’s Registered Apprenticeship Program to train 10 apprentices in the DRA counties of Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster. The H2O project allowed apprentices to become certified Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialists for local utilities. The H2O Program is a collaboration addressing the local area’s certified water and wastewater operator shortage. The H2O initiative is to utilize Registered Apprenticeships to hire, train, and retain the next generation of the Water Workforce in Green River.

Seven apprentices completed the requirements and obtained certifications through the spring of 2022. H2O assisted in replacing current operators eligible to retire or will be eligible within the next two to five years. H2O addresses the need to train the next generation of skilled workers to protect and provide the most valuable resource essential to all life—clean water.

In June 2022, DRA announced that an additional \$450,000 was awarded to the Green River Board through the Delta Workforce Grant Program. This award allows H2O to continue to train today’s workforce for tomorrow’s future.

In addition to the success of this project, the Green River Board received the 2022 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations

(NADO) for the implementation of H2O.

Incumbent Worker Training

An example of incumbent worker training comes from the TENCO Workforce Development Board, which supports Nestle USA through a customized maintenance project. New advanced manufacturing equipment at Nestle USA requires current maintenance employees to acquire advanced skills to operate and maintain the equipment. As a layoff aversion technique and to ensure the business remains competitive in the local area, the TENCO Workforce Development Board is funding customized training offered through Maysville Community and Technical College for 116 current Nestle USA employees by leveraging training dollars available from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

Similarly, the Cumberland Workforce Development Board (located in the South-Central Region) had expended \$49,209 on 92 participants within incumbent workers and apprenticeship programs through four contracts. The emphasis of the Cumberland Workforce Development Area was finding employment for individuals with their current skills, education, and abilities through core services at the One-Stop Career Centers. If local partners in the One-Stop Career Center and Affiliate sites could not find

employment, they would refer their customers to a WIOA Career Manager for career services, with employment still being emphasized. After career services, if self-sufficient employment is still not established and the need for training is determined, the WIOA customer may be trained based on their career plan and within a sector of high-demand employment as determined by the Cumberland Workforce Development Board.

Performance Accountability System

Since KEE Suite's inception in October 2018, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has continuously improved the system. In July 2021, the Commonwealth decommissioned the system from CHFS, giving the Cabinet complete control of the code. Since the decommissioning, the Commonwealth has made significant changes to the system, making reporting much more effective. For the first time since the inception of WIOA, Kentucky met all performance indicators in PY21. The Commonwealth has made significant strides in reporting processes, staff training, and the overall performance of its reporting unit. The Commonwealth of Kentucky continues to evaluate the system for upgrades and review other systems.

The PY22 and PY23 performance measures for the Commonwealth of Kentucky are as follows:

	PY 2022	PY 2023
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	73.0%	75.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	74.0%	76.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$7,100.00	\$7,500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.0%	75.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	55.0%	60.0%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	76.0%	78.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	76.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$8,500.0	\$9,000.0
Credential Attainment Rate	72.0%	74.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.0%	72.0%
WIOA Title I Youth		
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2 nd quarter after exit	67.0%	69.0%
Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4 th quarter after exit	70.0%	72.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$3,800.0	\$4,000.0
Credential Attainment Rate	60.0%	62.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	52.0%
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	63.0%	65.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	60.0%	62.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$6,100.0	\$6,300.0

Data Validation

The Commonwealth of Kentucky conducted PY22 data validation to ensure that data submitted for performance reporting was accurate and reliable. Validation was conducted on all required programs and their applicable elements according to TEGE 23-19, Change 2, Attachment II.

The Commonwealth started the process with a policy developed by the Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC) in collaboration with the local workforce areas. Policy #23-011 states that data validation will occur annually; however, quarterly is recommended. Additionally, the policy outlines training and sample methodology processes, as well. This policy was issued effective July 13, 2023.

ELC conducted Data Validation training. All staff involved with the process were required to attend. Throughout the data validation activities, ELC held many follow-up Q&A sessions with those involved to promote continuous improvement and integrity of the process.

The ELC sample methodology used to conduct validation was to review a 10% sample, random selection, of the overall PY22 cohort, which was then equally distributed to the Commonwealth's 10 local workforce areas to validate. ELC staff was engaged in assisting areas, as well. Any contracted Direct Service Providers did not validate data to prevent a conflict of interest.

Results from the PY22 data validation process were gathered by ELC and reconciled against system data before submitting the PY22 annual report.

Governor's Discretionary Funds

In PY22, the Governor's Discretionary Funds were updated to focus on three primary categories of funding: local innovation, the Governor's statewide priorities, and workforce system improvement. Funded projects included youth employment support, construction trades exposure (across several areas of Kentucky), statewide sector strategy collaborative development, multi-area IT training, and diversity initiative in recruiting and retaining talent in the line technician occupation.

Rapid Response & Layoff Aversion

Kentucky's Rapid Response efforts are coordinated through the Education and Labor Cabinet's team at OEAS in partnership with local providers in each Local Workforce Development Area. KCC Rapid Response is a layoff aversion strategy and a business transition service provided onsite to deliver a smooth transition to new employment for all affected employees.

Rapid Response partners with state agencies, local workforce development boards, education stakeholders, and local non-profit groups to assist employers in finding, training, and keeping the best talent and helping Kentuckians find, obtain, and maintain the best jobs. As a confidential outplacement service that assists employers and employees in transition, the Rapid Response team works closely with the Local Workforce Development teams to customize services to each layoff and each company's needs and expectations at no cost.

Reaching out to the Rapid Response Team can reduce the cost of layoffs for the business and employees. The team provides the following services:

- Assistance with transition planning;
- Information about alternatives that could lessen the impact of a layoff;
- Pre-layoff services to help workers shorten their transition time;
- Information on Kentucky Career Center and unemployment insurance;
- Assistance in maintaining worker morale and productivity during the transition;
- Help in preparing affected workers to find new employment; and
- Information about the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) and plant closing laws.

In PY22, 29 WARNs were filed with the state, affecting 3,472 workers.

To anticipate potential layoffs and rapid response activity, the Commonwealth utilizes the Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Market Insight System to align business needs with core partner services. This innovative, proactive approach uses real-time data and the future financial outlook of a company to identify those businesses that are in a growth pattern, in a stable state, or experiencing a potential downturn and need early intervention for layoff aversion strategies.

In PY22, an investment was made into the EconoVue platform that enhances this D&B data through an intuitive dashboard interface, allowing business-facing core program sponsors to narrow down companies based on geography, industry segment, employer risk, business growth/downturn, employer size, and view time series data of trends. With a local level understanding of D&B data, the EconoVue enhancement provides added tools to be proactive in layoff aversion strategies.

Wagner-Peyser Act

In PY22, the Career Development Office (CDO) Regional Program Managers initiated weekly Orientation (KCCO) opportunities for partners. These orientations enable the career centers to showcase their portfolio of products and services. Partner staff members participate by presenting/reviewing 2-3 slides about their service offerings.

The audience consists of:

- RESEA participants (requirement associated with UI)
- Career center customers (signed up to attend) and Kentucky Career Center (KCC) Partner Staff invitees
- Employers are invited to speak at this orientation to highlight their job openings.
- Employers set up recruitment tables at the career center on orientation days.
- KCC Partner Staff obtain referrals from the orientation.

Employer Engagement & Hiring events

At the beginning of the PY, the goal for consistency, flexibility, and connectivity with employers has been the focus. CDO staff consistently stayed engaged with caseload customers through direct communication, constant sharing of hiring event flyers on social media, through the RESEA workshop, and posting employment opportunities at the center. Open communication with several partnering and local agencies in each area has been instrumental. Further, more job seekers, job fairs, virtual conversations, and customer assessments showed interest in more intensive services, which increased employment outcomes for customers who participated.

Partner Engagement

CDO has been working to streamline the referral process with several partner agencies to assist customers once barriers have been identified. The OVR referral in one area was reduced from a five-page document to simply providing the individual's contact information and a brief synopsis of the perceived barrier. CDO is working with partners to improve their participation in CDO-scheduled orientation workshops with partners not housed in the comprehensive center. CDO has received positive comments from consumers and the staff of the different partner agencies. These interactions are breaking down some of the competitive barriers that have been in place in the past.

Military Engagement

Fort Campbell has approximately 400–450 soldiers exiting the military each month. One of CDO's current goals is to be more effective in offering services to the current service members, transitioning service members and their families, and assisting employers in recruiting transitioning service members. To achieve this goal, CDO onboarded a Wagner-Peyser staff at Fort Campbell Army Base housed at the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) office on base. It was important to select the correct individual to work in this capacity to optimize the willingness of soldiers to participate and to be included in other programs and activities that Fort Campbell offers. The staff member placed on the base is a retired Army 1st Sergeant with significant experience

cares for soldiers and their families. As a veteran, he has had many of the same experiences as the soldiers transitioning from their military careers.

Offering existing soldiers, transitioning service members and their families, resources, and workforce expertise provides a pathway for gaining employment after their military career or while stationed at Fort Campbell. The Wagner Peyser staff members work with all partners within Kentucky's workforce system, especially JVSG (Jobs for Veterans State Grant) staff, to create pipelines to other areas of the state. As Fort Campbell is on the Kentucky-Tennessee border, the staff has the added benefit of working with workforce representatives from Tennessee, as well.

Having Wagner-Peyser (WP/CDO) staff serve in this capacity allows Kentucky to serve veterans and their families more effectively, as more individuals qualify for WP services than other programs. Currently, the WP staff member has been able to increase employer and jobseeker participation in workforce services. By being readily available and a former soldier, he has gained soldiers' trust and leadership.

Co-enrollment with the Office of Adult Education

The Office of Adult Education (OAE) assists Kentuckians in improving the quality of their lives through education, training, and employment. Services and programs are governed by WIOA 2014, Sections 200-243, specifically Sections 202 and 203 regarding the purpose and associated definitions, and Sections 225, 231, and 243 regarding the delivery of services and activities. In addition, Kentucky Senate Bill 1, 2000 (Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) 151b.400-410) addresses the requirements for delivering Adult Education services in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Adult Education services are provided by a Local Provider Network (LPN) comprising 26 local providers across all 120 counties selected based on a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process covering the 2022 – 2025 RFP/Grant cycle.

Kentucky Adult Education is committed to being a valuable WIOA partner. It is embedded within the Kentucky WIOA partnership community and provides Title II services to support and align with the efforts of Title I, III, and IV partners and

support agencies. The focus of the Path Ahead for Adult Education in Kentucky is to mitigate barriers to education, training, and employment through co-enrollment across the WIOA partnership community. Integrated Education and Training (IET), Workplace Literacy Programs (WPL), and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs are opportunities to address the needs of Kentuckians by leveraging the efforts of all WIOA partners. This includes partnerships across the non-profit sector, such as the Earn and Learn Program with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky; the private sector, such as the English language acquisition and Cultural Competency programs with KCC Companies; and the public and quasi-public sector, such as the Student Basic Needs Action Network and the Commonwealth Education Continuum which sets the conditions for success for citizens transitioning to employment and or postsecondary education.

In addition, OAE continues to expand partnerships in support of justice-involved and recovery citizens throughout the Commonwealth. The OAE, in conjunction with the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and the 11 selected counties per KRS 533.270-290, assists with the administration of the Behavioral Health Conditional Dismissal Program, which is designed to provide eligible participants charged with a qualifying offense an alternative to receive treatment and recovery support services, as well as education and training instead of incarceration, resulting in dismissal of the charges upon successful completion of the program. Additionally, OAE has adopted the Putting Kentuckians First Program, which provides education, training, and employment services and opportunities to Kentuckians transitioning out of jails (described in a later section).

Co-enrollment with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has engaged in many projects to enhance services and increase our adherence to federal and state mandates. One focus area of OVR was to enhance services using technology platforms. Consumers are allowed virtual or in-person services throughout their work with agency staff. The service is especially beneficial to individuals with disabilities who experience transportation barriers that prevent them from engaging in programs that enhance their employment skills.

To promote an inclusive workforce, Employment First became law in July 2022. As a result, Kentucky established the Employment First Council administered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Employment First will help ensure meaningful employment, fair wages, and career advancement for disabled Kentuckians. It will significantly advance efforts to realize a truly inclusive workforce in Kentucky, strengthening its economy, and improving the quality of life for citizens with disabilities across the Commonwealth. This past year, OVR, along with the Council, received technical assistance from the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment, and the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) project to advance the efforts of Employment First.

Another program called "RETAIN Kentucky" partnered with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to conduct the Inclusive Workforce Summit: Engaging the Talent of Kentuckians with Disabilities. An inclusive workforce is one in which the unique skills, contributions, and diversity of qualified individuals, including those with disabilities, are actively recruited, valued, and integral to success. It is an environment where the engagement, development, retention, and advancement of an increasingly skilled and diverse workforce is promoted and supported across all employment sectors and levels. The one-day event had over 250 attendees. Another key strategy of RETAIN Kentucky's efforts to promote multisystem improvement, innovation, and change is the Inclusive Worker Health Leadership Network (IWHLN). This network,

comprised of medical professionals, public health leaders, employers, workforce development, and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, focuses on coordinating state and local initiatives to accelerate opportunities for Kentuckians to stay at work or return to work. RETAIN Kentucky is a grant through the Department of Labor, Office of Disability and Employment.

Partnership with Office of Employer & Apprenticeship Services

The Kentucky Career Center system's Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) provides educational and informational services to help employers discover innovative approaches to hiring, retaining, and developing their workforce. The primary goal of the OEAS is to coordinate, promote, market, and provide businesses with access to workforce partners through resources and services.

Kentucky continually works to build an innovative and business-inclusive workforce system envisioned in WIOA. KCCs recognize businesses as equally important customers as job seekers and focus on a demand-driven approach to assisting businesses with recruiting talent, training new and existing employees, and developing workforce strategies. The business services strategy is built around the primary organizations that provide resources and services to businesses, including:

- Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB)
- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (CED)
- Kentucky Chamber Foundation's Workforce Center (Workforce Center)
- Kentucky Technical Community College System (KCTCS)
- Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)
- Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC)

Utilizing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain targeted groups who have consistently faced significant barriers

to employment, including qualified veterans, ex-felons, long-term unemployment recipients, individuals who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, and individuals who have received rehabilitative services for a disability. KY WOTC staff has issued 33,729 certifications for these targeted groups for the PY22. Kentucky employers saved from \$1,200 - \$9,600 per qualified hire. Utilizing the WOTC, employers can be incentivized to diversify their talent pool by accessing untapped talent pools, such as individuals with justice involvement. In PY22, 3,563 certificates were issued for the Ex-Felon category. Such strides to increase and diversify the workforce involvement provide businesses with previously overlooked talent while providing opportunities to Kentuckians.

Kentucky Unemployment Tax Credit (UTC) provides employers a credit of \$100 per eligible hire against Kentucky income taxes owed when they hire residents who have been unemployed for 60 days and remain on the payroll for at least 180 days.

Another great program that complements WOTC and UTC is the Federal Bonding Program, which was rebranded in PY2021 to be called the Kentucky Fair Chance Bond program. The Fair Chance bond can provide employers with a no-cost, no-deductible insurance program ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000 in protection to help minimize employers' risk and offer job seekers opportunities. In PY22, employers ranging from manufacturing, hospitality and food industry, automotive retail, logistics, equine, and others have utilized the program to help hire individuals with justice involvement.

Utilizing Assessment Tools – WIN Career Readiness System

WIN Career Readiness System trains and measures skills attainment using the KCRC and the Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate (KESC).

KESC is an evidence-based soft-skills credential that measures teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving ability, and professionalism. WIN Career Readiness launched a new training module designed to target digital literacy. The Digital Literacy courseware comprises computer

basics, internet basics, digital communication basics, digital documents basics, and digital security; the courseware allows learners to test for the Digital Literacy Credential. Kentucky sees these skills as fundamental to growth and overcoming barriers for many individuals looking to access the new economy heavily relying on digital literacy.

Further, the WIN Career Readiness System has been targeted as one of the pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeship tools to either prepare or supplement individuals throughout the related instructions portion of their program, in addition to working with the Department of Corrections' adult institutions and probation and parole offices on the use the KESC.

National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs)

In December of 2021, The Commonwealth of Kentucky received a National Dislocated Worker Grant, DW37958, for the storms and tornadoes that impacted the western part of the Commonwealth. The total amount of the grant awarded was \$25,000,000. In July of 2022, the Commonwealth of Kentucky was able to utilize that grant for the flooding that occurred in the eastern part of the Commonwealth. The US Department of Labor has provided those funds in 1/3 increments. Kentucky has currently received 2/3rd of the monies. Those funds have been utilized to serve participants in Disaster Employment opportunities and provide training/retraining to participants who have lost their jobs because of the disasters. The disaster recovery grant continues coordinating humanitarian aid efforts, creating work-based learning initiatives for rebuilding and economic recovery efforts, and offering workforce training opportunities to provide an adequate supply of skilled workers throughout the region.

The West Kentucky Workforce Board (WKWB) Director, WKWB staff, and Business Services Team (BST) staff met immediately following the tornado and contacted the schools in Mayfield and Dawson Springs to partner with them in setting up a temporary career center to serve individuals affected by the Tornado on December

10, 2021. The temporary sites were set up to start serving customers by December 16, 2021, and remained in place until January 11, 2022, when schools were preparing to start. At that time, the staff transitioned to a different temporary site in Mayfield. Partners from the career centers, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Career Development Office (CDO), were available to assist customers at both sites. CDO staff assisted with filing their UI/DUA claims, and WIOA staff provided resources for other needs and materials for future temporary employment opportunities. Over 500 customers received services during these few weeks. The Mayfield and Dawson Springs schools were also temporary distribution sites for clothing and food. In conjunction with setting up the temporary site for services, the BST staff contacted cities, counties, schools, and local agencies that provide humanitarian services. The WKWB Director and board staff have talked to local officials, the three Kentucky Community Technical College System training providers in the region, and community agencies, informing them about available services and opportunities for on-the-job training, short-term training, and humanitarian relief through temporary employment. The BST staff introduced the Direct Service Provider (DSP) staff to the contacts they made regarding humanitarian services for temporary employment. The DSP staff are working with employers, cities, counties, and community agencies interested in hiring staff for humanitarian relief through temporary employment.

Kentucky Career Center (KCC) services for WIOA staff and partners can be virtual or in-person. Rapid Response and Trade Orientation videos are available. The WKWB staff continues to build on and expand virtual options for services and orientation while creating plans to serve those who do not have adequate internet access or need in-person assistance to be successful. Staff have made in-person appointments for people without technology who need in-person services. Videos on the website allow businesses and participants to receive services and answers at their convenience. Staff have also implemented Career Edge to expand virtual offerings. Social media, outreach campaigns, and networking

to assist in humanitarian aid and provide employment recovery continue to be developed, improved and expanded. All KCC staff share information on the Career Center and WKWB, social media, and personal pages. As many employers are using social media for recruiting, BST and DSP staff have tagged them and reached out to assist with the grant to help them fill positions, promote, and fill job openings. The WKWB staff continues to expand virtual options for services.

Many more people are accessing food bank services due to layoffs and closures because of the tornado on December 10, 2021. The community service agencies expect demand to increase as DUA expires. Staff are reaching out to food banks to see what assistance they need.

Through the grant, the direct services staff were updated by virtual staff meetings on additional services and opportunities for customers, including OJT, short-term training, and temporary relief employment.

In South Central Kentucky, new Americans are being provided Work Experience (WEX) opportunities to prepare them for employment within the five target sectors: Business/Information and Technology, Construction, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, with community partners serving as host sites to assist with the effort. Participants have been enrolled for humanitarian aid roles to serve others with language barriers to employment. Some participants are being provided with supportive services while securing permanent employment.

In the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, through the efforts of this grant, there have been many individuals who have received supportive services to assist them with work-based learning, classroom training, or new employment needs such as work attire, training supplies, or travel assistance, as well as many individuals who have been placed in disaster-related employment.

Promising Practices

Serving Justice-Involved Talent

PY22 served as a year where employers were highly interested in opening their doors to individuals with employment barriers or, as mentioned previously, Untapped Talent. One talent pool that has had a heightened interest from businesses is the justice-involved talent category – individuals with criminal records and or individuals with substance use disorder, as in most cases, these two distinctions are closely interconnected. Several local and state programs are designed to serve the justice-involved population, including the traditional Department of Corrections (DOC) reentry programming primarily serving state inmates in 12 prisons. However, about 74 local jails across the Commonwealth house not only state inmates served by DOC, but also many other lower-level offenders who are not under DOC's jurisdiction. This complexity provides challenges but also opportunities for innovative workforce development initiatives.

In PY21, the Cumberland Workforce Development Board launched a program called Putting Kentuckians First, funded by the Governor's discretionary funds. The idea of the program is to serve the individuals in local jails in the collective impact approach – by bringing together local resources and wrap-around services to serve the individual needs to ensure employment placement and retention.

Because of local success, Putting Kentuckians First was elevated to a statewide program by creating the Targeted Services Branch in the Kentucky Office of Adult Education. Within the Targeted Service Branch, the Putting Kentuckians First navigators are on the front lines of strategically aligning state, regional, and local organizations and resources to ensure individuals receive effective and efficient support in their transition to employment and success from judicial involvement, incarceration, or other barriers. The involvement and orchestration of the workforce, behavioral health partners, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, judicial entities, and recovery resources has created an ecosystem of resources and wrap-around

services that has assisted over 350 individuals in the Cumberland Region.

Further, pre-release classes at local detention centers have continued to expand, offering a level of engagement with the incarcerated population that was previously absent—putting Kentuckians First navigators in partnership with local jailers and staff to organize educational meetings that allow state, regional, and local resource providers to interact with inmates that are within 90 days of release. This forum allows incarcerated individuals to be exposed firsthand to the resources that can and will assist them during the transition back to society. These classes are then expanded upon by the targeted services offered to complete barrier removal while the individual is still incarcerated, creating an “on-ramp” for their release.

The certificate training courses offered in the Pulaski County Detention Center were also expanded and refined. Incarcerated individuals can now attend a welding certificate training course and subsequent involvement with a work release program to allow individuals to gain a credential and begin earning a wage while incarcerated. This program has offered many individuals the opportunity to pay significant judicial debts, relieving pressures many individuals experience upon release.

Another program serving justice-involved populations was launched through the state legislature under SB90 to pilot a program to serve individuals with health disorders as an alternative to incarceration. Launched in October 2022, program requirements include education, vocational counseling, and training. Because Kentucky Adult Education provides courses in most jails in the Commonwealth, their participation in the execution of SB90 is critical.

Additionally, numerous local and community-based organizations run programs designed to serve this population, including the Kentucky Chamber Foundation's Fair Chance Academy, intended to encourage businesses to hire justice-involved and substance-use disorder talent and to review existing policies that may prevent hiring a qualified and loyal employee.

Given this strong agency-level system designed to serve justice-involved talent, the Education and Workforce Collaborative took the opportunity to align better and create a true ecosystem where resources can be streamlined to better serve the individuals and businesses hiring this talent pool. Through a collaborative effort of core WIOA partners and the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, the primary cabinet overseeing the Department of Corrections, the overarching umbrella of the “Jobs on Day One” initiative was launched. The key component to this initiative is a three-phased approach: pre-release training while incarcerated, immediate job placement upon release (job on day one), and post-release retention wrap-around services to maintain retention. All partners find a role in this framework and lend their expertise.

Everybody Counts

Everybody Counts is a dynamic new initiative from Team Kentucky that provides a clear pathway to success for qualifying seniors graduating from participating Kentucky school districts. The initiative benefits graduating seniors, as well as businesses, local communities, and Kentucky’s economy. During 2022-2023, Everybody Counts completed hiring and onboarding of the Executive Director and Regional Coordinator positions. The initiative completed expansion activities beyond Jefferson County Public Schools into four additional Kentucky School Districts: Shelby, Franklin, Scott, and Fayette. With this expansion, Everybody Counts increased the number of total business partners, education partners, and community organizations from the prior year. Everybody Counts employed and trained eight Career and College Coaches to support the 2022-2023 partner district’s high school seniors, and recent high school graduates, with employment and/or post-secondary education opportunities. Before the close of the 2022-2023 school year Everybody Counts executed three spring events, including a Pathway Exploration Fair for Jefferson County and Signing Day events for graduating seniors from Jefferson and Franklin counties.

Digital Equity

The Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC) became the lead agency responsible for administering the State Digital Equity Plan. The Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is administered separately under the guidance of the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development (OBD). ELC has collaborated with the OBD while developing the Kentucky Digital Equity Plan. BEAD and Digital Equity funds will be used to implement broadband infrastructure expansion and digital equity/digital inclusion programs as part of the Commonwealth’s Better Internet Plan. This plan sets measurable objectives that will impact and interact with the Commonwealth’s (i) economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes; (ii) education outcomes, (iii) health outcomes; (iv) civic and social engagement; and (v) delivery of essential services. Before the plan’s development, ELC’s outreach and engagement activities attempted to reach all covered populations as defined in the Digital Equity Act. Kentucky is committed to making meaningful progress toward achieving digital equity as one of our top priorities. Through the Better Internet Plan, Kentucky will ensure all Kentuckians have access to reliable high-speed internet and the right devices to access that technology while also ensuring necessary resources are allocated to identify barriers to affordability and ensure there is training and support available to develop our citizens’ digital skills. Kentucky is dedicated to achieving our vision in partnership with our trusted state, regional, and community partners through robust public-private partnerships. To help bridge the digital divide in Kentucky, the Commonwealth has created a Digital Equity Plan in collaboration with Kentuckians to ensure that every voice is heard, and issues related to internet use are adequately addressed over the next five years as we review our digital connectivity needs.

This Kentucky Digital Equity Plan outlines the current state of digital equity; the various ways the Commonwealth sought input; insights about the unique needs of the communities across the Commonwealth; information from organizations already doing digital equity and technology work; and an assessment of what Kentucky needs to achieve digital access for all Kentuckians.

The plan outlines six objectives to achieve digital equity in Kentucky.

1. Enhance broadband availability and affordability for covered populations (ACP).
2. Ensure access to affordable devices for all Kentuckians.
3. Increase application accessibility and inclusivity to state and local government programs.
4. Ensure that all Kentuckians are equipped to navigate the internet safely.
5. Improve digital literacy for all covered populations in Kentucky.
6. Empower all Kentuckians to develop the digital skills necessary for work and life.

The Digital Equity Plan's goal is to empower communities, businesses, local governments, and state agencies to sustain the Commonwealth's digital equity efforts beyond the initial five-year period.

Statewide Performance Summary

- Title I – Adult: 3,372 participants served; 1,976 trainings provided; quarter median earning \$8,782
- Title I – Dislocated Worker: 410 participants served; 266 trainings provided; quarter median earnings \$10,840
- Title I – Youth: 2,470 participants served; 570 trainings provided; quarter median earnings \$5,344
- Title II – Adult Education & Family Literacy Act: 11,668 participants served; 53.45% Measurable Skills Gains rate; quarter median earnings \$4,490
- Title III – Wagner Peyser: 27,429 participants served; quarter median earnings \$6,994
- Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation: 43,501 cases served; 4,169 participants in training status; \$21.51/average earnings per hour; 33.91/average hours worked

Appendix

The Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)

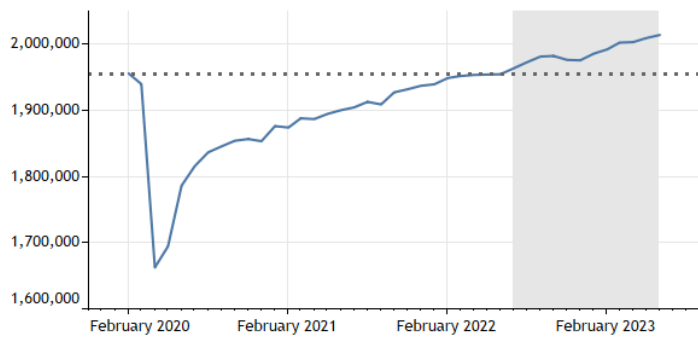
The labor market data appearing in this overview are produced by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and KYSTATS, and information on economic development project announcements is from the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (CED).

In PY 2022, Kentucky's labor market continued to recover from the lasting impacts of COVID-19. According to seasonally adjusted estimates from the BLS Current Employment Statistics (CES) program, Total Nonfarm employment reached 1,955,700 jobs in February 2020, which was at that time an all-time high). However, in March 2020, widespread COVID lockdowns began, and by April 2020, Total Nonfarm employment had declined by 15% percent or 293,200 jobs.

Total nonfarm job numbers rebounded almost immediately, adding 174,000 jobs between April and August 2020. Though the pace of recovery slowed after the Summer of 2020, Kentucky's economy has since experienced continued growth, adding an average of more than 5,000 jobs each month and ultimately surpassing its pre-COVID high of 1,955,700 in July 2022. Total Nonfarm employment continued to grow throughout PY 2022, totaling 2,013,900 in June 2023.

Total Nonfarm Employment in Kentucky, Seasonally Adjusted,

February 2020 – June 2023 (Shaded area represents PY 2022)

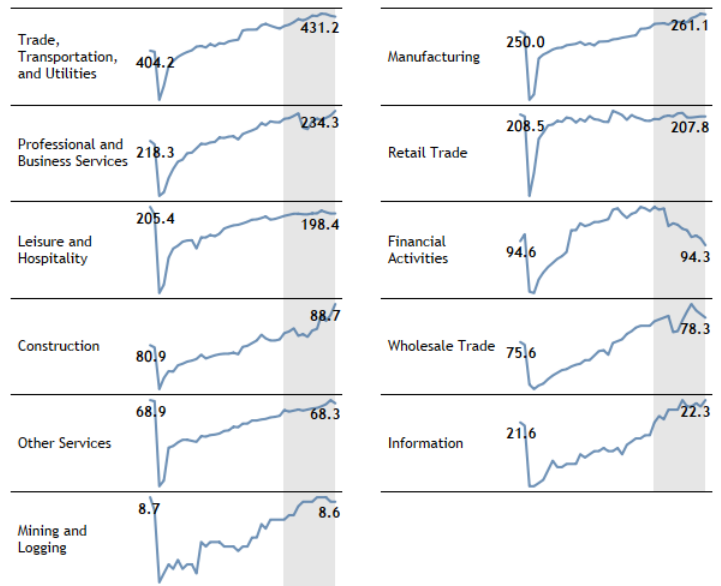


Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (CES). Data accessed 10/25/2023. Note that September 2023 estimates are preliminary and are subject to revision.

The employment growth described above has been uneven across private industries in Kentucky throughout PY 2022. Some private industries, such as Mining and Logging and Leisure and Hospitality, have yet to exceed their pre-COVID employment highs. Others have exceeded their pre-COVID employment high in at least one month during the past three years but had dipped slightly below pre-COVID levels by the end of PY 2022. These include industries such as Retail Trade, Other Services, and Financial Activities.

Industry Employment in Kentucky (in Thousands), Seasonally Adjusted,

February 2020 – June 2023 (Shaded area represents PY 2022)



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (CES). Data accessed 10/25/2023.

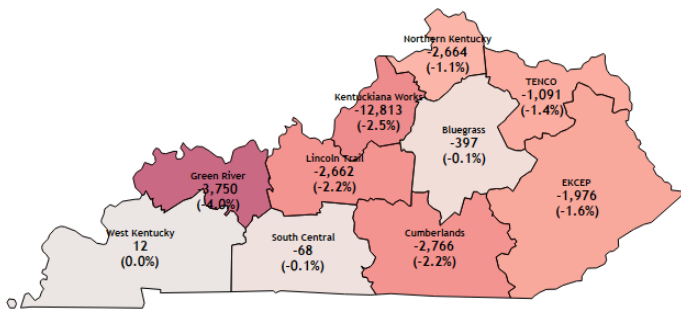
Among private industries with lower employment in June 2023 than in February 2020, Leisure and Hospitality accounts for the largest proportional and total decrease in employment at 3.4%, or 7,000 jobs. In the context of PY 2022 alone, Financial Activities fared the poorest, shedding 3% of its employment or 2,800 jobs within the program year, despite exhibiting a rapid recovery from the effects of COVID in calendar year 2020 and additional growth leading up to PY 2022.

Conversely, most industries in Kentucky have sustained their growth post-COVID recovery. In particular, the three largest super sectors

in the state—Trade, Transportation, Utilities, Manufacturing, and Professional and Business Services—collectively exceeded their pre-COVID employment totals by more than 54,000 jobs at the end of PY 2022. Other smaller industries have also experienced growth in PY 2022 alone, with Construction increasing by 6.2% (5,500 jobs), Mining and Logging increasing by 4.7% (400 jobs), and Information increasing by 3.1% (700 jobs).

Economic recovery and growth through PY 2022 have also been geographically uneven in Kentucky. This phenomenon can be explored using estimates from KYSTATS' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, which publishes employment, unemployment, and labor force statistics for Kentucky's Local Workforce Areas (LWAs). Note that these estimates are not seasonally adjusted, so comparisons over time are generally made in one-year increments where applicable in this overview.

Change in Number of Employed Persons by Kentucky Local Workforce Area February 2020 to February 2023 (Shaded by Percent Change)



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program. Data accessed 10/25/2023. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

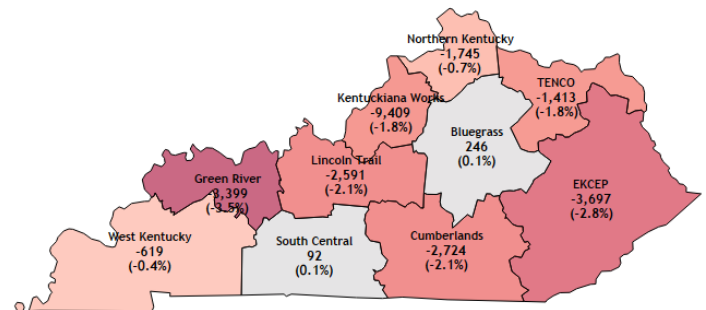
According to non-seasonally adjusted estimates from the LAUS program, in the three years from February 2020 to February 2023, the number of employed persons has declined in nine of Kentucky's 10 LWAs. Note that the perceived discontinuity between this decline and the increase above in Kentucky's Total Nonfarm employment can be attributed to several factors, including that the LAUS program measures

employed persons, whereas the CES program measures jobs.

The Green River LWA experienced the largest proportional decline in employed persons in this period, while its adjacent LWAs to the South either experienced a negligible increase in the case of the West Kentucky LWA or a much milder decrease in the case of the South Central LWA. The largest decline of employed persons by volume occurred in the Kentuckiana Works LWA, where there were 12,813 fewer persons employed by February 2023.

Change in Civilian Labor Force by Kentucky Local Workforce Area

February 2020 to February 2023 (Shaded by Percent Change)



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program. Data accessed 10/25/2023. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

In the same period, the civilian labor force (or the sum of employed and unemployed persons) decreased in eight of Kentucky's 10 LWAs, increasing in only the Bluegrass and South Central LWAs. As with employed persons, the largest proportional decline in the civilian labor force occurred in Green River, and the largest decline by volume occurred in Kentuckiana Works.

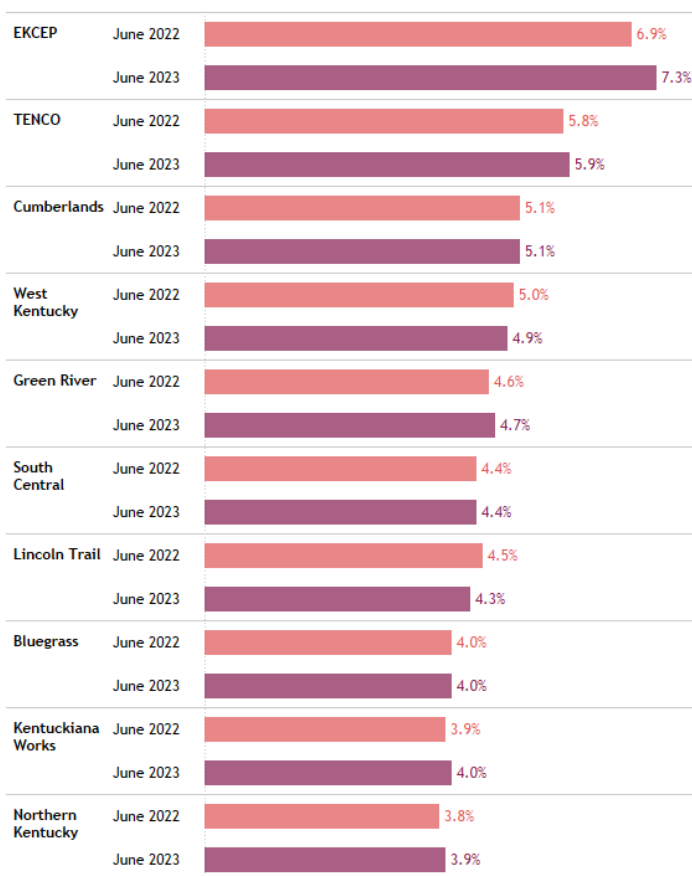
As the unemployment rate estimates those individuals who are not employed but actively seeking work, it can be interpreted as an important measure of unutilized labor. By the end of PY 2022, the LWAs with the highest unemployment in Kentucky were generally the LWAs containing the majority of Kentucky's Appalachian counties. These include EKCEP (7.3%), TENCO (5.9%), and Cumberland (5.1%). Conversely, the LWAs with the proportionally lowest levels of unemployment are Kentucky's major metropolitan areas, including

Northern Kentucky (3.9%), Kentuckiana Works (4.0%), and Bluegrass (4.0%).

Comparing the unemployment rates of Kentucky LWAs at the end of PY 2022 to the estimates one year prior (or June 2023 to June 2022), conditions were mostly unchanged across the state. Only two LWAs exhibited an over-the-year change of more than 0.1 percentage point: EKCEP (increasing from 6.9% to 7.3%) and Lincoln Trail (decreasing from 4.5% to 4.3%).

Kentucky Local Workforce Area Unemployment Rates

June 2022 vs. June 2023,
Not Seasonally Adjusted



Source: Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program. Data accessed 10/25/2023. Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Despite the comparatively high unemployment rates of several LWAs, five exhibited all-time low rates at some point during PY 2022:

- EKCEP (5.0% in April 2023)
- West Kentucky (3.6% in April 2023)
- Lincoln Trail (3.2% in April 2023)
- South Central (3.2% in December 2022 and April 2023)
- Northern Kentucky (2.8% in December 2022)

Many companies have chosen Kentucky as a location for future operations or expansion. During PY 2022, 158 active projects received approval from Kentucky's Cabinet for Economic Development (CED) and were monitored for compliance. These projects had a combined investment of \$1.7 billion and could collectively bring 18,486 jobs to the state. Note that not all expansions or new locations receive tax incentives.

Local Workforce Area	Total Project Count	Total Project Incentive Amount	Estimated New Jobs
Kentuckiana Works	26	\$46,305,000	3,149
Bluegrass	25	\$258,266,475	1,953
Northern Kentucky	19	\$24,000,000	1,944
West Kentucky	19	\$30,251,099	862
Cumberland	18	\$18,235,157	765
South Central	16	\$135,950,454	3,121
Lincoln Trail	15	\$1,133,688,948	5,862
TENCO	9	\$10,144,414	483
EKCEP	6	\$6,519,500	315
Green River	5	\$2,250,000	32
State Total	159	\$1,665,611,047	18,486

Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. Accessed 10/31/2023. Includes new and existing active projects that received approval during PY 2022.

KentuckianaWorks Local Workforce Development Board

Kentucky Career Center

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding supports career service delivery throughout a seven-county region in and around Louisville. The Kentucky Career Centers serve the region through in-person career centers, mobile career services, and availability at public libraries. Plans are underway to relocate the region's comprehensive career center at the Nia Center on West Broadway in Louisville, next door to the Norton Healthcare Goodwill Opportunity Campus, which is set to open in early 2024.

Over the past program year, the Kentucky Career Centers in the Louisville region helped place 450 clients into jobs, a 27% increase from PY 2021-22, with an average wage of more than \$19 per hour. In addition, the Kentucky Career Center team conducted career training and workshops for more than 1,700 job seekers and hosted 59 hiring events.

PY22 testimonial:

- Beverly struggled financially and risked losing everything she owned before visiting the Kentucky Career Center. Her career coach helped her with her resume and connected her to a job as a CNA at an assisted living facility. She says, "Life is starting to look up for me."

WIOA YOUTH

Demand continued to be high for The Spot: Young Adult Opportunity Campus in its second year of operation. A new partnership with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, The Spot helped place 205 young adults into jobs at an average wage of more than \$16 per hour. Clients were also connected to mental health counseling, paid internships, GED prep, and additional supportive services.

In October, The Spot held its first graduation ceremony for the hundreds of young adult participants who had completed its curriculum. In the spring of 2023, Louisville Mayor Greenberg and the Metro Council allocated an additional \$1.85 million in city funds to support this program

over the coming year. In addition to its Louisville headquarters, The Spot has multiple satellite locations in our regional counties.

PY22 testimonial:

- Jacobe was depressed and making "bad decisions" before he came to The Spot. He found a community of peers going through similar challenges and got connected to resources, including mental health counseling and a computer. The Spot also helped him get an internship at Republic Bank in Louisville. "I'm very optimistic now as far as my future goes... it's limitless."

Northern Kentucky Workforce Development Board

GROW Northern Kentucky

The Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (NKKWIB) is the backbone of NKY's collective impact strategy – GROW (Growing Regional Outcomes through Workforce) NKY. Launched in 2018, GROW is a collaboration of 70+ community stakeholders, including workforce and economic development agencies, non-profits, educational institutions, elected officials, and employers. GROW is responsible for collective efforts to positively impact the region's current and future workforce by leveraging the region's assets to grow, attract, and retain a globally competitive workforce.

Under the auspices of GROW NKY and in partnership with NaviGo, a local non-profit that equips businesses, parents, and schools to prepare students for post-secondary success and work readiness, over 22,000 middle and high school students took the YouScience assessment. YouScience *Aptitude & Career Discovery* is the only personalized aptitude-based college and career guidance assessment available and GROW NKY's goal is to facilitate this assessment with 75% of middle and high school students in the Northern KY region by 2025. With the number of students who have taken the assessment thus far, we are well on our way to achieving our goal.

Job Placements

In Program Year 22, through the Northern Kentucky network of 16 memorandum of understanding level Career Center partners, over 670 Northern Kentucky job seekers gained employment with local employers. This was accomplished through a multitude of services, including individualized career coaching, coordination and facilitation of over 100 employer hiring events and four large-scale job fairs, and an array of additional services provided by Brighton Center, the NKWIB's WIOA subcontractor. These included skill-building workshops, reverse job fairs, and job matching activities.

Employment Connections (Kentucky Works)

Employment Connections, which is funded by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, serves two target groups: Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.

The program aims to assist those receiving public cash benefits in gaining the skills and experience to attain self-sufficient employment. During Program Year 22, with the pandemic being mostly behind us, Employment Connections experienced an increase in the number of individuals served. The program received 1,309 KTAP and SNAP referrals and assessed over 350 individuals. This program is critical to the Northern Kentucky region as it has a relatively high workforce participation rate of 67% compared to the state average of 58% and the national average of 63%. Engagement with individuals who are on the sidelines and may have been historically marginalized or disengaged is essential to this continued success.

Covington Works

The Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (NKWIB) is partnering with the City of Covington through a program called Covington Works to implement customized workforce strategies to help Covington residents achieve gainful employment and to assist Covington-based employers in attracting and retaining the talent they need to be successful. This program calls for multi-faceted workforce solutions and thus requires various partnerships. Through

Covington Works, the NKWIB is partnering with Covington Independent Public Schools (Holmes High School), BuildED [<https://buildded.com>], the Housing Authority of Covington, Brighton Center, Supply Chain OKI (OH, KY, IN), and several private-sector employers to maximize outcomes.

Since starting in January 2023, Covington Works has served approximately 40 Covington residents through 21st Century Entrepreneurship skills training, Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt training, and supplying a wage subsidy for employer-based training experience.

NKWIB 2023 Workforce Innovation Awards – Celebrating Program Year 22 Successes

The NKWIB Workforce Innovation Awards, held on October 3, 2023, recognized and honored those who impacted Northern Kentucky's workforce talent development efforts over the last year.

The celebration's keynote speaker was Senator Chris McDaniel. Besides representing District 23, Senator McDaniel is a business owner who faces challenges similar to those other employers face in attracting and retaining quality employees. NKWIB also heard from Deputy Commissioner Michelle DeJohn, Department of Workforce Development, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, who focused on the state's new Good Job Principles. Good jobs, or quality jobs, are the foundation of an equitable economy that lifts workers and families and makes businesses more competitive globally.

Over the next year, Correy Eimer, NKWIB Director, announced that criteria for a new workforce development award would be established to celebrate employers that stand out from the pack in providing quality jobs. In 2024, the NKWIB will present the inaugural Talia Frye Workforce Investment Champion Award to an employer demonstrating a commitment to 'job quality.' The award will honor and memorialize the late Talia Frye, who was widely recognized across the region for her leadership and dedication in the workforce development arena.

The NKWIB Workforce Innovation Awards are awarded to local employers, workforce development

professionals, and community partners who have made a difference in our region.



Bluegrass Workforce Development Board

In the fall of 2022, the Bluegrass Local Workforce Development Area through the Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass, began career exploration and training through Oculus virtual reality headsets. Jobseekers can explore real world job scenarios and gain skills through simulated activities using virtual reality headsets. This service has exceeded all expectations, providing five devices to community organizations, educational facilities, and businesses in the 17-county area.

With literally hundreds of trainings available and more being added, jobseekers in the Bluegrass can explore various career options, improve their skills, and demonstrate their competencies in a number of sectors, including some high-demand sectors in Central Kentucky.

The popularity of this service continues to grow with almost weekly events across the 17-county area, including regular monthly events at some local libraries.

Green River Workforce Development Board

National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant Skills to Succeed (S2S)

Citing an unprecedented rise in global energy costs, Century Aluminum Co. – the nation’s largest producer of primary aluminum – announced plans in June 2022 to curtail operations and begin the idling process at its Hawesville,

Kentucky, smelter until energy prices return to more normalized levels. By August 2022, all operations had ceased at the aluminum smelter with layoffs affecting more than 600 workers.

To address the economic hardship caused by the temporary closure, the U. S. Department of Labor awarded a \$1,798,844 National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant to the Green River Workforce Development Board to provide employment and workforce training services for dislocated workers in Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union and Webster counties beginning in July 2022.

Administered by the department’s Employment and Training Administration and supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Skills to Succeed (S2S) will allow the board to provide individualized employment recovery activities to include recruitment and enrollment of eligible individuals in the following programs: occupational skills training, including work-based training, supportive services and individualized career services.

TENCO Workforce Development Board (WDB)

The TENCO Workforce Development Board serves individuals and businesses in the following 10 North-Eastern counties: Bath, Bracken, Boyd, Fleming, Greenup, Lewis, Mason, Montgomery, Robertson, and Rowan counties. While the area has seen increased economic development and employment opportunities, many new jobs require customers to have an advanced skill level. Due to this, TENCO WDB has dedicated funds to ensure its customers have the skills necessary to be successful. Projects supported by the TENCO WDB include funding occupational skills training, incumbent worker training, and career pathway projects.

Occupational Skills Training

Funding for career guidance and occupational skills training, including supportive services and intensive case management, is the primary use of the TENCO Workforce Development funds. The service supports the massive need for trained individuals in Healthcare, Education, Skilled

Trades, Transportation/Logistics, and Advanced Manufacturing. During fiscal year 2023, the TENCO WDB spent over \$680,000 in educational training and re-training. The top five highest projected occupations in the TENCO local area are registered nurses, heavy tractor trailer truck drivers, teachers, medical assistants, and licensed practical nurses.

EKCEP Workforce Development Board

Eastern Kentucky workers and businesses faced significant challenges in PY 2022 in the wake of historic and widespread flooding that displaced thousands of people and resulted in both permanent and temporary job loss and the loss of critical housing and infrastructure. More than one year later, much is still being repaired or replaced.

In response to the flooding of July 2022, the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) formed the EKY FLOOD (Finding Local Opportunities for Overcoming Disaster) program. Utilizing funding provided by the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet



as part of a US Department of Labor national dislocated worker grant, EKY FLOOD provided wages for workers to perform humanitarian and/or recovery work in the immediate aftermath of the disaster for up to 12 months. EKY FLOOD participants' work included demolishing damaged properties, such as housing and commercial locations, and delivering food and other necessary supplies to residents living in affected areas.

EKY FLOOD clients were hired to work for many employers providing important relief services in the region, including Cajun Navy, CANE Kitchen, and Appalachian Regional Healthcare. Since EKY FLOOD's inception in the days after the disaster through August 31, 2023, more than 1,050 people have enrolled for services, including job training or working toward a credential, with 119 people exiting immediate employment thus far.

While the flood posed specific challenges in Eastern Kentucky and demanded significant focus from the workforce development system

to meet some of those challenges, EKCEP nevertheless maintained a high level of service to thousands of clients and dozens of employers across



its 23-county service area. Workforce services in the Eastern Kentucky region focused heavily on training and support for workers in key industry sectors, including healthcare and skilled trades. Through its Kentucky Career Center JobSight workforce center network, EKCEP served 4,506 job seekers in PY 2022, including 1,996 adults, 1,230 dislocated workers, and 1,280 youth.

As with the previous year, a top priority for EKCEP in PY 2022 remained efforts to address workforce shortages in the healthcare sector, especially those along nursing career pathways. EKCEP continued to support nursing students at Galen College of Nursing campuses in Hazard and Pikeville and students in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System with tuition assistance and critical supportive services designed to help overcome barriers that might prevent students from completing training and gaining employment.

One of EKCEP's most successful programs over the past decade—Teleworks USA—returned to a hybrid service delivery model in PY 2022 that emphasizes in-person job prep and connection services at Kentucky Career Center JobSight locations throughout the region. Teleworks USA forms partnerships with remote-work companies that have immediate hiring needs across the nation to connect job seekers in Kentucky with available teleworking opportunities. Since 2015, that model has resulted in thousands of new jobs for Kentucky workers.

However, restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic forced EKCEP in 2020 to shift Teleworks USA to a virtual delivery model in which job seekers accessed services exclusively online. While virtual services were effective and remain in place as needed, as of summer 2023, dedicated Teleworks career advisors became available throughout the Kentucky Career Center JobSight network to meet clients in person, attend hiring events and informational sessions, and increase accessibility for Teleworks USA services.

Teleworks USA has connected 152 Kentuckians with new employment since January 2023, while an additional 150 people are receiving ongoing support through a mix of in-person and virtual services as of October 1, 2023.

To assist youth workers in Eastern Kentucky in gaining important work experience, EKCEP developed a summer work program for eligible workers between the ages of 18-24. The program provided additional funding for each of EKCEP's nine direct service contractors that covered wages for temporary work experience positions at local companies throughout the service area. The program resulted in 236 job placements, and plans are currently in place to renew the program in PY 2023.

Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board

New WIOA Direct Services Provider

In May 2022, Career TEAM, LLC, a nationally recognized workforce development leader, was selected as the region's new WIOA Direct Services Provider through a competitive bid process. Career TEAM staff supports adults, dislocated workers, Youth, and the business community through the four Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail (KCC-LT) locations in Bardstown, Elizabethtown, Lebanon, and Leitchfield.

Services include assisting jobseekers with career planning and coaching, resume creation, job interview preparation, job search assistance, and connection, as well as funding for training opportunities for those who qualify. Staff also work closely with the KCC-LT Business Solutions Team to support the regional needs of employers. The company's national presence has allowed local staff to connect with leaders in the field to learn and be mentored.

Career TEAM staff has been dedicated to engaging with the community outside the career center locations to meet individuals seeking employment and those in need of assistance preparing for work. They believe accessibility and community partnerships are integral in workforce development and provide around-the-clock access to career services through Career EDGE, a virtual career exploration tool developed by Career TEAM.

In their first year, Career TEAM has enrolled over 90 individuals in high-demand occupational skills training, on-the-job training (OJT), and work experience opportunities and plans to increase this number in the coming year.

Rapid Response Activities

Baptist Health:

Baptist Health announced a system-wide layoff in March 2023, affecting 145 employees, with more than 40% from administration at the company's corporate office.

The local Rapid Response Coordinator contacted Baptist Health Hardin's Executive Director of Human Resources regarding the impact on facilities in the Lincoln Trail region and to offer Rapid Response services. Due to the layoff already occurring, the Rapid Response coordinator provided electronic dislocated worker information and resources offered through the Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail to be shared with the affected employees.

Bed, Bath and Beyond:

After learning in early November 2022 that the Elizabethtown store would be closing, the local Rapid Response Coordinator contacted the Store Manager to provide information about Rapid Response services. The Manager indicated the store would close in mid-December, impacting 12 employees. Due to varied work schedules, the company requested hard copy Rapid Response packets with partner information and resources to be distributed to the employees.

Inoac:

The company announced in October 2022 that it would close the Bardstown facility in early November 2022, impacting 38 employees. The Local Rapid Response Coordinator and local Career Development Office Workforce Development Manager met with the HR Manager to discuss providing Rapid Response services. Due to production demands, the company requested to conduct two Rapid Response information sessions for employees to coincide with a job fair scheduled in October. The information sessions were held, and information packets with hard copy materials about dislocated worker services were provided to each employee. Employees could also make in-person appointments at the Career Center for

assistance with unemployment insurance claims.

High School Graduates Initiative

The High School Graduates Initiative, implemented in PY 2021, provides high school seniors with information on education, training, and employment opportunities. Carter Dyson, Kentucky Career Center-Lincoln Trail (KCC-LT) Manager for PY 2022, led the initiative, which resulted in making presentations to 15 high schools in the region to encourage graduating seniors who may not have future career or employment plans to come to the KCC-LT. Mr. Dyson and KCC-LT representatives contacted over 1,800 high school seniors to inform them of the career and educational opportunities available through the Career Center.

Virtual Job Fair Platform

A new avenue of engagement between job seekers and employers was introduced in January 2023. In addition to the traditional job fairs, which offer a valuable opportunity for face-to-face interactions, a new virtual job fair platform was introduced, providing convenience and a way for employers to reach a new generation of digital clients

Premier Virtual's recruitment platform allows employers to access a broad candidate pool while helping job seekers explore various opportunities. Job seekers can utilize the virtual job fair platform regardless of their employment history, educational background, or income. This flexibility extends to employers, accommodating a small business looking to fill one position or a large company looking to hire several new employees. The events are offered at no cost to job seekers or employers.

Job fairs include targeted events for advanced manufacturing, construction, transportation, business and IT services, and healthcare. The option to schedule on-demand job fairs or participate in general job fairs is also available.

Blue Oval SK Project

Construction began on two battery plants totaling four million square feet and a 42,000 square foot Elizabethtown Community and Technical College Training Center. At the peak of the construction phase, a projected 3,500 workers will be required for project completion. Beginning in 2025, 2,500 Blue Oval SK employees will be required for Plant 1 production. An additional 2,500 will be needed for Plant 2 production.

The One Stop Operator for the Lincoln Trail region has continued to convene monthly Blue Oval Task Force meetings to ensure all local partners involved in talent development and recruitment for the construction and operation of the two battery plants are communicating with each other to develop strategies and identify resources necessary to fill the thousands of needed positions.

Multiple job fairs, both virtual and in-person, were coordinated by the KCC-LT to assist with the hiring of skilled-trade workers needed during the construction phase, as well as engineering and manufacturing positions required for plant operations. The center also provided space for Blue Oval SK representatives to interview candidates.

Cumberland's Workforce Development Board

The Cumberlands Workforce Development Board (CWDB) is a 29-member advisory board that includes representatives from 13 counties, which include Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Laurel, McCreary, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Taylor, Wayne, and Whitley.

LCADD serves as the fiscal agent, one-stop operator, and direct service provider for the Cumberlands Workforce Development Board. These contracts require serving individuals in a region of 13 counties to provide qualified workers that fit the needs of existing employers and economic development activities.

The CWDB oversees the Kentucky Career Centers in the Cumberlands region, providing youth, adult, and dislocated workers and trade services that lead to employment through training or other related activities. The CWDB has developed and amended a strategic plan to guide its actions. The work continues in a collaborative way to meet goals and outcomes that will be of benefit to our communities.

Supporting Business - Area Career and Job Events

Our direct service provider, LCADD, has three business services staff that cover the 13 counties and serve as the conduit between local businesses and their needs. A Business Service Team (BST) has been established to respond to all business needs. The BST has worked with

many employers to hold hiring events and job fairs throughout the region.

Through the BST, the on-the-job training program is shared with employers. A business may be reimbursed for 50% of an employee's wages up to \$2,000 for new hires. On-the-job training allows an individual the time to train while working with the employer's cost being supplemented. LCADD served 29 participants through this program for the program year and paid employers \$48,000.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are designed for unemployed customers making low wages or unskilled jobs to find self-sufficient, paying jobs. During this program year, the Cumberland's WIOA served 160 adults through ITAs using WIOA formula funds with expenditures of \$421,572.30. A total of \$1,279,048.65 was expended through all adult programs.

The Dislocated Workers (DW) program provides services to eligible workers who lose their jobs due to a business or plant closing or a major layoff. Seven participants enrolled for the program year ending June 2023 and spent \$20,660. A total of \$708,599.20 was expended through all dislocated worker programs.

Training providers must be qualified through a request for information process maintained by the state to create an eligible training provider list for adult and dislocated workers to use.

National Dislocated Worker Grant Programs

The National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program provides services to eligible workers who lost their jobs or saw reduced hours due to natural disaster or COVID . During this program year, Cumberland's spent \$18,876.32 on work experience services. A total of \$22,765.80 was expended through all NDWG programs.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

On July 1, 2005, the Cumberland's WIOA became responsible for the training portion of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA) that helps trade-affected workers who have lost their jobs due to increased imports or shifts in production out of the United States. TAA services and benefits

are provided to help eligible workers get back to work through the One-Stop Career Centers. Our workforce area had no trade-eligible plant closings during the past year.

Youth Programs

Under WIOA, the law requires 75% of the funds to be expended for out-of-school youth. The LCADD (direct service provider) works with most local high schools to offer services to in-school youth. Many in-school youth were identified as candidates for the out-of-school program for occupational training and work experience upon graduation. Upon graduating, the out-of-school youth can be placed into work experience. The WIOA law required 20% of youth funds to be spent on work experience. At the end of June 2023, \$396,867.74 was spent on work-based learning wages and salaries for career managers. Other youths were placed in OJT contracts with expenditures of \$8,000. Many continue working into the new program year, while others are still enrolled and entered work. The CWDB also set funds for out-of-school youth ITAs that would allow them to continue occupational or technical training after graduation. At the end of June 2023, \$30,167.52 was spent on 20 youths for ITAs.

Partner Efforts Whitley County School Districts

The Whitley County School District welding night class is designed to provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to pursue a career in welding. With the increasing demand for skilled welders in various industries, this class offers a valuable opportunity for individuals to enter a field with promising job prospects. The class covers various topics relevant to the welding industry, including safety procedures, welding techniques, blueprint reading, welding theory, and equipment operation. Students have access to state-of-the-art welding equipment and receive hands-on training under the guidance of experienced instructors. In addition to technical skills, the class also focuses on professional development, communication skills, and job readiness. Participants can network with potential employers and gain insights into the industry through guest lectures and industry-specific workshops.

The classes are offered at the Whitley County High School two nights a week from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The training is valued at around \$4,000



and is offered at little or no cost to those eligible for the WIOA program, depending on local WIOA program training funds. Upon completing the welding class, participants will test based on skill to receive a certificate or credential, such as 2f 7018, 2G 7018, 3G 7018, 4G 7018, and 3G unlimited 7018 to show their achievement and readiness for employment in the welding industry. This can open doors to various career opportunities, including manufacturing, construction, automotive, aerospace, and more positions.

Success Story

Kristina Keller was a single parent to one child who relocated to Rockcastle County from North Carolina. She received public assistance and struggled to make ends meet when she was signed up for WIOA Adult program services in May 2022. She was very interested in attending CDL training to support herself and her son. Kristina successfully passed and was issued her CDL on 7/19/22, and began working at Covenant Transport out of Chattanooga, Tennessee. She was one of the most appreciative of the participants we have served in a long time. She told us it had been a life-changing experience for her family. Kristina continues to be still employed at Covenant Transport.

Locations of all WIOA Kentucky Career Centers and information about WIOA can be found on the website: www.Cumberlandsworkforce.com.

South Central Workforce Development Board

The South-Central Workforce Development Board (SCWDB) is comprised of 10 counties (suburban and rural), with 16 independent school districts and two major post-secondary institutions, Western Kentucky University (WKU)

and Southcentral Community and Technical College (SKYCTC). Our largest industry sectors are manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, transportation, and construction. To support our vibrant and fast-growing economy, SCWDB pursues four workforce development goals:

Goal #1. Actively engage employers' stakeholders to drive innovative workforce solutions—over 750 business engagements through recruitment efforts, consultative visits, and hiring events in PY22. From January to June 2023, 5,200 referrals were made to regional employers through hiring events and individual engagements.

Hiring Events are the number one form of support requested by employers. We offer a wide array of options to meet the needs of our employers and job seekers. Starting in January 2023, we tracked the number of referrals made to employers via these events—each employer was asked to track jobseekers that they talked to and moved forward with their application process. Staff followed up after each event to track the number of individuals interviewed, offered jobs, and placed into positions. This metric and positive employment outcomes were also tracked via staff individual engagements with jobseekers.

From July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, 183 engagements with employers through 25 events drew nearly 1,200 jobseekers. Below are specific activities to highlight:

- “Talent Tuesday” is a monthly hiring event that rotates to each county in our region throughout the year. It is a great vehicle to support rural employers and job seekers directly.
- We coordinated two large job fairs in Bowling Green that drew over 250 jobseekers: A New American-focused job and education fair in November 2022, and a Kentucky Career Center Hiring Event in January 2023, which also drew many new Americans. We attribute the large turnout of these events to heavy promotion and engagement on social media, as well as utilizing our established community partnerships.

- Beginning in the early summer of 2023, our business service representatives have coordinated Rapid Response services to various industries. By June 30, 2023, this involved only one employer; however, a three-phase protocol was developed that is now replicated for future Rapid Responses: 1) onsite community/education multi-partner resource fair; 2) onsite resume assistance; and 3) onsite multi-employer hiring event. All three phases typically occur over two months in coordination with company HR leaders.
- Our Business Services Reps coordinated events at our Kentucky Career Centers or a community center and assisted employers with onsite hiring events. One event held at our KCC for one employer drew 51 jobseekers, and four other employers received support for off-site events that drew over 180 jobseekers. An event held at a Housing Authority drew over 51 jobseekers.

“Workforce Collective” Events were presentations to employers offered in various counties—from December 2022 to June 2023, nine events offered in eight of our 10 counties were offered to 70 employers. These two-hour sessions provided county-specific quantitative data on people not participating in the workforce, qualitative data about demographic jobseeker “pockets” (ex., Boomers, Justice-Involved, Millennials, Veterans), and marketing and outreach strategies to engage them. The goal was to empower local employers, specifically, Human Resource professionals, to have unique labor market information to recruit and retain residents not participating in our regional workforce. These sessions were favorably received and evaluated by attendees.

Goal #2. Align and integrate P-12, adult education, and post-secondary education to provide career pathways and life-long learning opportunities for youth and adult job seekers.

- Engaging Students on Campus: The SCWDB New American Workforce Navigator and Career Team Partnership Ambassador each presented to groups of students at their local

high schools throughout the academic year. The New American Workforce Navigator coordinated topical presentations throughout the year, which she or partner agencies and education providers delivered to avail immigrant and refugee juniors and seniors of the region’s workforce and career opportunities. Over 150 New American students were engaged through five high schools. Over 300 additional students were engaged at their high school and provided resume assistance by the Career Team Partnership Ambassador and WIOA staff.

Goal #3. Increase regional workforce participation by creating opportunities, incentivizing workforce participation, and removing barriers to employment. Over 15,000 individuals engaged through the workforce system, including the SCWDB and Kentucky Career Center staff (Career Development Office, UI, and our WIOA Direct Service Provider Career Team). Including nearly 3,500 transitioning military service members engaged through presentations at Ft. Campbell; nearly 1,300 new Americans engaged (470 engaged through presentations/speaking events and 816 engaged in individual career services); over 900 individuals enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and receiving services; and over 200 individuals enrolled in WIOA employment and training activities. Major initiatives included:

- Specialized Staff Expansion: Efforts from PY21 materialized toward obtaining funding that would launch three full-time specialized SCWDB staff positions: 1) a full-time, dedicated “navigator” based at Ft. Campbell to recruit transitioning military members and their families to work in our region—this position launched in the Spring of 2022 but was fully operational throughout PY22 (thus, over 3,500 military service members engaged); 2) a new American workforce navigator, funded via our NDWG-Tornado grant, focused on increasing the capacity and utilization of workforce services for limited English proficient / new American residents (tremendously successful with over 1,700 adult and high school individuals engaged through presentations, individual career services, and a targeted job and education fair); and 3) the launch in November 2022 of a

workforce participation lead full-time position funded by WKU and local government and supervised by the SCWDB, who provides workforce data analysis and assisted in the creation and presentation of the Workforce Collective employers sessions (described in Goal #1 above), which delivered practices and strategies to increase our regional workforce participation rate.

- Reentry Programming: PY 22 concluded the third year of our holistic, partnership-based approach to reach and employ justice-involved / reentering individuals. By the Spring of 2023, the Office of Adult Education took the lead to absorb the programmatic and fiscal responsibility of this program's and associated staff's continuity in the South Central and Cumberlands' workforce development areas, and the program was officially renamed Putting Kentuckians First (PKF). The PKF partnership established by the end of PY22 involved KYAE bearing full fiscal responsibility for a full-time director (a KYAE staff member) and sharing oversight with the Cumberlands and our workforce development board of three navigators serving our regions. The culmination of effort and partnerships demonstrated how strategies incubated at the local workforce area level, supported through the ELC Statewide Reserve Grant seed money, and socialized to the top levels of the Education and Labor Cabinet can be scaled to effective, statewide programmatic strategies that increase workforce participation for a targeted demographic of Kentuckians.
- The Creation of Online Tools to Increase Workforce Participation: SCWDB continuously strives to bridge the divide between job seekers and our plethora of employment and career opportunities. In PY22, we developed the Jobseeker Map, an interactive directory of education and training resources available in our region with text and audio in multiple languages. By the end of PY22, we sought a financial sponsor to help us launch and promote this resource in the region, targeting New Americans who are high

school age and older. In addition, we developed and launched KY Vet Connect, an online platform utilizing AI that details and deciphers transitioning service members' military skill sets into professional, "civilian" profiles for employers to discover qualified candidates. This resource is currently exclusive to Ft. Campbell soldiers looking to relocate to South Central Kentucky and the employers in our region.

Goal #4. Maintain viability of the SCWDB's financial growth, quality delivery system, and return on investment (ROI) for job seekers and employers. SCWDB once again delivered excellent programmatic and financial results during state and external audits throughout the year.

- Financial and Staff Growth: Throughout PY22, SCWDB obtained \$128,500 of Statewide Reserve Grant funding for our Reentry Programming (funding two full-time staff members); a Workforce Participation Lead full-time position shared with Western Kentucky University via a grant secured by WKU with funds offset by the City of Bowling Green and the Warren County Fiscal Court (\$80,000 total); \$72,000 with equal financial contributions from the City of Bowling Green and the Warren County Fiscal Court for the continuation of our full-time navigator based at Ft. Campbell; and \$575,000 in additional NDWG-Tornado grant funding to serve additional qualifying participants.
- Quality Delivery Systems: SCWDB was developed in the last quarter of PY21 and fully launched and executed throughout PY22, revamping and reimagining our customer service model inside the Kentucky Career Center system. SCWDB led an effort to rework how our customers flow through the Career Center and provided ongoing staff training opportunities, ensuring we collected information and enforced delivery of quality Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services. The effort materialized in substantial increases in Wagner-Peyser enrollments.

- ROI: The SCWDB CEO met with each LEO and their respective community leaders to report on local workforce investment activities, summarize WIOA-funded programming, and plan for future support. In PY22, the SCWDB continued its effort to provide intentional, equitable distribution of our WIOA-allotted funds throughout each of our 10 counties. In addition to participant spending in each county, the SCWDB and Career Team conducted over 2,700 county engagements, totaling over 4,500 hours in staff time across our 10-county region, providing an estimated labor value of \$132,850. Finally, among the PY22 WIOA-enrolled training and employment participants who obtained employment, there was a nearly \$3.7 million economic impact, and the SCWDB estimates the WIOA participants still in training by June 30, 2023, will add \$2 million economic impact to our region.

West Kentucky Workforce Development Board

West Kentucky Workforce Board Right Choice Program

The West Kentucky Workforce Board's Right Choice Program allows non-custodial parents to accept their financial responsibility by providing guidance



and strategies to enhance employment efforts in financially supporting their child/children. The average cost of inmate incarceration in Kentucky is over \$38,000/year. This program enables the individual to meet obligations to their children and reduce the cost to Kentucky taxpayers. The program is structured to allow for a vast array of resources to assist non-custodial parents in obtaining or retaining employment so they can make their child support payments regularly.

The Right Choice Program provides a court-designated advocate to the non-custodial parent to develop a workforce assessment plan

for approval to present to court officials. Career centers and partner agencies are referred to meet the participants' needs.

West Kentucky Workforce Board Veterans Transition Program

The West Kentucky Workforce Board assists veterans and eligible spouses in accessing high-quality jobs and careers in West Kentucky. Staff help businesses



hire and retain skilled workers exiting the military through staff presence at Ft. Campbell, which links businesses in the West Kentucky region. When veterans or transitioning service members and eligible spouses seek services at local career centers, they receive service priority. West Kentucky Workforce Board's Veterans Transition Liaison is present for weekly employer events to assist veterans transitioning out of the military.

West KY Workforce Board Success Story – Adult Funding

Adriel Roman worked at a fast-food restaurant, earning \$11.30 an hour, which wasn't enough to make ends meet. With several manufacturing companies recruiting new employees, he decided to try a new career path. He applied at Martinrea International, a Tier 1 automotive supplier of lightweight structures and propulsion systems.



Martinrea International works closely with the West Kentucky Workforce Board. Since Adriel had no manufacturing experience, the company referred him to a Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Career Coach at the Hopkinsville Career Center. He was eligible for WIOA services, including 640 hours of on-the-job training (OJT).

Adriel began working as a production assistant for Martinrea International on February 13, 2023,

earning \$17.85 an hour, including benefits. He completed his OJT on June 7, 2023, and is employed with Martinrea International.

West KY Workforce Board Success Story Dislocated Worker

Alec Gant had been working on a land surveyor crew with DDI Engineering for 18 months when the company announced that they would be closing. His last day at DDI Engineering was February 23, 2022. After a year of looking for work, Alec knew he needed help searching. He visited the Hopkinsville Career Center and met with a Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Career Coach who helped him evaluate his challenges and stressors. Alec realized that he was interested in finding new employment in manufacturing.



Alec was hired by Delavan Fluid Power, a privately owned pump, sprayer, lawn, and garden manufacturer, and hydraulic company in Elkton, Kentucky. He started on-the-job training with dislocated worker funding from the West Kentucky Workforce Board on March 7, 2023. Alec completed his 320 hours of training on May 17, 2023. He continues to work at Delavan Fluid Power working as a commercial sprayer.

West KY Workforce Board Success Story – In-School Youth

Amari Stubbs was a senior at Hopkinsville High School and enrolled in the Medical Nurse Aide (MNA) class and Patient Care Tech (PCT) certification course pathways at Gateway Academy. She had her sights on attending nursing school upon graduation but needed support transitioning to life after high school, direction with FAFSA, scholarships, and navigating the tuition requirements for local colleges. She sought help from the Christian County Board of Education. She was determined eligible for their Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) In-School Youth Program, funded by the West Kentucky Workforce Board.



Amari spent her senior year in the WIOA In-School Youth Program, attending tutoring, participating in transition services, and leadership development activities. She was provided a Paid Work-Based Learning Experience at Jennie Stuart Health as a Student Patient Care Technician. Amari graduated with a high school diploma and Medical Nurse Aide (MNA) and Patient Care Tech (PCT) certifications in May 2023.

Jennie Stuart Health hired her upon graduation because of her excellent work ethic, dependability, and reliability during her paid work-based learning experience, creating a seamless talent pipeline in a high-demand, critical-shortage industry. Amari is now enrolled in Hopkinsville Community College’s nursing program.

Amari has not forgotten the lessons she learned in the youth program: “The WIOA program helped me get real-world and hands-on experiences to focus on getting my professional certifications and diploma while working in my chosen pathway. I am earning money in a meaningful and gratifying profession that is in shortage, and I have no college debt.”