



Human Development Institute

Memorandum

To: Governor Matthew G. Bevin
From: Employment First Council
Katie Wolf Whaley, Co-Chair
Judith Bradley, Co-Chair
CC: Secretary Scott Brinkman
Dr. Kathy Sheppard-Jones
Date: September 30, 2019

Executive Order 2018-328 stated “it is the policy of the commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive and integrated employment in the community shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of the working age who have communicated a desire to become employed.” Subsequently, per Executive Order 2018-687, an Employment First Council was created to carry out the charge of the Employment First order. Per the Executive Order, an annual report is to be submitted.

As you will see in the report, much progress has been made in working toward the charge outlined for the Council. The report lists policies identified that create barriers toward employment with specific recommendations for eliminating such barriers. You will also find a wide array of products and resources that have been developed to promote employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities to a wide audience.

Thank you for supporting Employment First as a policy directive in Kentucky and for supporting the work of this Employment First Council. Your continued support will have a positive effect on many adults who live with disabilities and want to be part of their local workforce.

Kentucky Employment First Council
2019 Annual Report



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Introduction

On May 15, 2018 Governor Bevin signed Executive Order 2018-328, stating that “It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive and integrated employment in the community shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who have communicated a desire to become employed.” In order to assist the Commonwealth toward this goal, an Employment First Council was created. This Council understands that the workforce participation rate for individuals with disabilities is about 1/3 that of people without disabilities and that this low employment rate has been increasingly recognized as a serious societal issue, with over 13.5 million adults of working age in the United States receiving disability benefits from Social Security. It has also been continuously shown that with assistance, accommodations, and encouragement, many people with disabilities can work successfully in the community. Kentucky has a broad service system for adults with disabilities. The goal of this Council is for employment to become the first and preferred service outcome for those who express a desire to work. The reality is that our service system was not designed to prioritize employment. Data also shows that there is a general perception of unemployability for many with disabilities and, while this is slowly shifting to one of employability, we have a very long way to go. This report shows the Council’s progress in making recommendations to address barriers to employment for Kentuckians with disabilities.

The Council consists of 27 members, representing people with disabilities, employers, family members, state government agencies and disability organizations. They met 5 times between October 1, 2018 and October 1, 2019. Notes from each full Council meeting are available upon request. A full roster and list of meeting dates are included in Appendix A. A website, www.employmentfirstky.org, was created as a platform to outline the goals of the Council and let interested Kentuckians know of meeting dates and location. At the first meeting Council members named Co-Chairs and began to discuss the importance of the work ahead. Each Council meeting has had included topical presentations to better enable everyone to full understand the depth of the issues at hand. The Council created 4 Sub Committees, made up of EF Council members and interested Kentuckians. These subcommittees are:

- Employer Engagement
- Advocacy
- Provider Capacity
- School to Work Transition

It was the intentional goal for the subcommittees and Council at large to recognize the pervasive barrier of transportation, and to therefore embed transportation considerations across each of the subcommittees. While not its own subcommittee, transportation was discussed at length at a full Council meeting. Many members of the EF Council are now

participating in a related Transportation Work Group administered at the Human Development Institute in partnership with the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Partnerships in Employment statewide systems change grant. Lists of members, agendas and meeting notes are attached to this report for the full Employment First Council and each subcommittee. The goal of each subcommittee was to dive deeply into the charge of the Council, in their topical area, and to report back to the larger Council.

Members of the Council and the subcommittees have created a range of products, including Employment First website, surveys that identify needs and knowledge, and informational resources to be disseminated to boost employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities. A list of resources is included in Appendix B.

Addressing the Charge of the Executive Order

The Council was charged with four main tasks in order to communicate how we, as a Commonwealth, can be sure our state policies and regulations are in line with the premise of Employment First and that Kentuckians have the information, training and resources needed in order to increase employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities. These tasks represent the objectives of the Council. Following is a review of the progress made toward achieving each objective.

1. Identify state policies that create disincentives to employment of people with disabilities and develop recommendations to address and eliminate those disincentives.

Policy identified: In the Home and Community Based (1915c) Waiver System there are regulations and funding levels that are inconsistent with the Employment First Executive Order stating “It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive and integrated employment in the community shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who have communicated a desire to become employed.”

Recommendation: As these waiver regulations are currently in the process of review for formal revision, we recommend that intentional attention be taken to ensure that revised regulations do not contradict Employment First, as set through Executive Order 2018-328. This recommendation also supports the direction Kentucky is working toward, within the 1915c waiver, to reach the Final Rule set by Center for Medicaid Services in 2014.

Policy identified: In 2012 Kentucky regulation changed the language from “Certificate” to “Alternative High School Diploma” for students who have an IEP and exit public education at

age 22. Receipt of this does not count the student toward the school district's graduation rate nor does it serve as a Regular High School diploma for purpose of seeking employment (a common requirement.)

Recommendation: This Council recommends that Kentucky adopt the Alternative High School Diploma as an option for students with disabilities who have met the criteria. The 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes language around a state-defined alternate diploma that: 1) is standards-based, and 2) is aligned with the State's requirements for regular high school diploma. ESSA allows the state the option of offering this to an eligible student with cognitive disabilities. It also allows that student to count in the district's graduation rates.

Recommendation: School systems should be encouraged, by Executive endorsement, to employ students who have received an Alternate High School Diploma, if they are able to complete the required tasks of the job. Lack of Regular High School diploma should not negate employment possibilities for former students educated by our own school systems.

Policy Identified: The ARC process determines the placement and implementation of the IEP. The KDE Guidance Document for Individual Education Program (IEP) Development July 2019 states "In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effects on the student or on the quality of services. A student shall not be removed from an age-appropriate general education setting solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum. The ARC must also ensure a student with an IEP participates with non-disabled children in non-academic and extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate." In reality, students with disabilities are often spending time in segregated classrooms and activities, away from peers without disabilities. We know that when students are segregated during school, it is easier to accept segregated services after completion of school. In order for students to be prepared for inclusive, community life after school we want to be sure they are included during school. It is far too easy to view Special Education as a place rather than a support strategy for educating.

Recommendation: Consideration of including the addition of "...and on the student's future" in the above guideline. This full portion of the guideline would now read "In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effects on the student or on the quality of services and on the student's future. A student shall not be removed from an age-appropriate general education setting solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum. The ARC must also ensure a student with an IEP participates with non-disabled children in non-academic and extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate." The goal is for ARC committees to intentionally discuss the impact on life after graduation and be

sure that education maximizes the potential for inclusive employment, which may require additional training or post-secondary education.

Policy Identified: In order to maintain employment for people with significant disabilities, Long Term Support services are utilized. The level of support is individualized and should be provided if and when needed over the course of employment. Currently, there is no single fund for this service. 1915c waivers can provide them for those who have such a waiver. However, many people do not. There is no source of funding within Behavioral Health for these services. If we want people to remain employed and not leave the workforce in which they 1) receive more public dollar benefits and 2) utilize day services at a higher cost than employment supports, then long term employment supports need to be funded.

Recommendation: A collaborative effort to seek funding for this service. Money could be reallocated from sheltered work or day habilitation services (as people go to work, less dollars are needed for segregated services) as one option. More research will need to be done. One particular recommendation was for 2 years of employment monitoring for all students with disabilities leaving high school who qualify for OVR services. If we can successfully transition students from school into employment and maintain employment for 2 years, they are more likely to remain employed. Exploration of a 1915i waiver is suggested, as this could cover the cost.

2. Develop training and resources for families, self-advocates, public and private providers, and employers on the benefits of working in meaningful and productive jobs within the general workforce.

The belief that people with disabilities are unable to work keeps many people from pursuing employment or even thinking that it is an option. When young people opt out of the workforce at a young age, they are less likely to join later. Increasing the expectation of employability and sharing information to assist people with disabilities, their families and educators to understand possibilities is essential. Many resources exist and, at no additional cost, could be disseminated more widely. Kentucky's Partnerships in Employment state systems change project (PIE) (that includes several Council members) has developed an array of resources that are available online at www.kentuckyworks.org Resources include electronic documents, training modules, blog, family curriculum, and one page overviews addressing employment related topics (infographics) around themes that include:

- Employer Engagement
- Family Engagement

- Postsecondary Access
- Transition from School to Work
- Impact of Wages on Benefits

Appendix B includes more information and links to specific resources.

Specific suggestions for dissemination of resources include:

- Local school systems disseminating information related to transition, employment and connecting with OVR twice per school year. These materials already exist and can be made available to schools by OVR, KDE and PIE. This would also help ensure families are familiar with services available while in school and take advantage of them. Students who have work experience and exit school with a job are more likely to be employed over time. A set expectation would require LEAs to do this.
- Transition for students with disabilities should be a routine Professional Development topic for all teachers and rehabilitation counselors. Many resources exist to provide this, including free online modules through kentuckyworks.org: Transition 101, Transition 102, and Transition 103. Continuing education credits are available.
- Information on employment for parents and working families should be widely available. This would increase expectations for employment and increase a family's capacity to seek out relevant resources and supports rather than apply for public benefits. A collaborative effort could name responsible parties to place resources at DCBS office, health departments, churches, doctor's office and Medicaid waiver providers.

The Employer Engagement Subcommittee, through outside funding, created a flash drive branded with the Employment First logo and filled with resources and information specifically for employers. These have been and can be passed out at business networking events, meetings, conferences and in individual meetings. These resources also exist via DropBox link. A list of included materials is attached to this report in Appendix B. Getting resources and information into the hands of businesses and hiring managers is critical.

The Family Engagement Curriculum, developed by the PIE and available at kentuckyworks.org, is a free resource to share information with families to help raise the expectation of employment. This can be shared through school systems or other community groups and may be especially useful in areas of highest rates of Medicaid usage.

- 3. Recommend the implementation of effective practices to increase employment opportunities for workers with a disability to public and private providers of employment assistance and employers.**

Targeting Employers Directly

The Employer Engagement Subcommittee has drafted a plan for a future Employment First Board, (including Regional Action Teams) appointed by the Governor, to target businesses in their region and explain various models for employment i.e. Co-op, intern, apprentice, etc. These Action Team members could connect local businesses with disability employment service providers, who know job seekers well, to help companies find relevant and qualified applicants with disabilities. This model would streamline the process of businesses to reach an untapped pool of employees and increases effectiveness by the Action Teams being comprised of local business members themselves. Recognition by the Governor is expected to entice businesses to participate (Appendix B contains the Plan.)

Explore the State as Model Employer

Should the Commonwealth serve as a Model Employer for people with disabilities, many opportunities will be realized. It will also put the State at the forefront of developing a workforce and workplaces that are inclusive. The Council recommends the State becoming a Model Employer, as has also been proposed in the Kentucky Work Matters report, issued May, 2018.

Improving Post School Systems as a Path to Increased Employment

Currently two Kentucky school systems are piloting a specific model of Seamless Transition in order to increase employment outcomes of students upon exiting high school. We will watch the progress of this pilot and hope to expand upon it in the future.

Providing Guidance for Families Upon Reaching Age of Majority

It is suggested that KDE issue guidance for school districts when a child turns 18 and a guardian is not appointed. There is often confusion as to whether family members can participate in ARC meetings once a child reaches the age of majority without applying for guardianship. Families often opt to apply for guardianship in order to be included in these meetings and plans. Clear direction would alleviate this need and leave open options for alternatives to guardianship that support young adults with disabilities without infringing upon their legal rights, which may also make it harder to obtain employment.

Providing Technical Assistance to Educate Families About Work

One barrier to obtaining employment is the fear that someone will lose access to public and/or Social Security benefits. There is a great deal of confusion among beneficiaries and their families about the impact of potential wages on these benefits. Kentucky currently has two programs funded through Social Security to provide Work Incentives Counseling, however it is not enough to serve all those who could benefit from the service. We suggest Kentucky explore options to create more certifications for community partners to be Community Partner Work Incentives Counselors (CPWIC). With expanded capacity to provide benefits counseling, we

would see higher rates of people opting into the workforce and less people receiving public benefits. This upfront investment will benefit everyone financially.

Assisting Disability Service Providers in Providing Supports that Promote Competitive and Integrated Work

We need to build capacity among providers of employment supports for people with disabilities across Kentucky if we are going to serve more people, as is the intent of Employment First. This will require a concerted, intentional effort of cross agency collaboration. Addressing funding streams was mentioned earlier. We need funding and policy to align so that employment supports are an incentivized service. When congregate services, which can be easier to provide from an administrative perspective, are more affordable we will not get the organizational transformation required. If Kentucky can align policy, regulation and funding to allow agencies to afford to provide thoughtful employment supports then we can move forward with building capacity. This capacity effort will require both recruiting new agencies to begin these services and to have existing agencies switch the priority of services provided and their business models to one that supports people all throughout communities, rather than in their buildings. The steps to do this are complex but understood by many in our field who have been through this process; there is no need to reinvent this wheel. We suggest that Kentucky apply for the US Department of Labor-Office of Disability Employment Policy's Vision Quest initiative. This brings another year of a subject matter expert to move forward in our Strategic Plan toward becoming an Employment First State and will address the issues included in this report.

We further suggest that Office of Vocational Rehabilitation continue to fund proposals which allow agencies to acquire specific training, mentoring and certification of staff to provide Customized Employment. This is a service that allows for individual negotiation of employment between a business and an employee. The certified employee has the skill set to not only get to know the job seek with, often a significant impact of disability, but to also learn about and understand the business in order to be an effective consultant and help suggest a newly created position that will be a benefit to both. This type of in depth support service will be necessary to expand capacity across Kentucky if we are truly going to say that employment is an option for all Kentuckians with disabilities.

4. Establish measurable goals to assess progress of efforts to increase the employment of workers with a disability within the general workforce

The gap in employment rates in Kentucky between people with and without disabilities has exceeded 46% for the last 3 years. This exceeds the national average of 41% (American Community Survey). Additionally, in 2018, 30.5% of Kentucky students with disabilities reported one year after exiting high school that they were neither employed nor engaged in post-

secondary education. For students with more severe disabilities, that statistic is worse, as reported in the Youth One Year Out survey. (Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center).

The Employment First Council is in a unique position to help build awareness of the interconnectedness of state and local formal partnerships with a disability focus. This work has been done through the creation of the Kentucky Alignment of Employment Initiatives matrix, available at: <https://www.hdi.uky.edu/kentucky-formal-network-partnerships-for-increased-employment-with-disability-focus> Increased communications, collaboration, and documenting of practices with positive results across these entities can help amplify results and further the progress toward increasing employment for people with disabilities.

Goal: Decrease gap in employment rate in Kentucky between people with and without disabilities by 1% by 2021.

Goal: Increase collaboration across Employment Initiatives through development of a communication network, resulting in 24 new instances of information sharing/collaboration by the 2020 Employment First report to the governor.

Goal: Decrease percent of students with disabilities who report not being employed or pursuing higher education one year post high school exit from 30.5% to 29.9% by 2021 as measured by the Youth One Year Out survey.

Goal: Include county level disability data from sources such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, in operationalizing workforce strategic planning for the state. These data can be included in the WorkReady Communities Workforce dashboard, as suggested by KentuckyWorks Collaborative members at the August 29, 2019 meeting.

Conclusion

On behalf of the full Employment First Council and all those interested in expanding employment opportunities, we thank you for the Executive Order and request for this information. Many Kentuckians have spent decades promoting employment supports and helping people find jobs, without significant change in employment outcomes overall. We are now at a time when Employment First is receiving a lot of attention and we have the chance to make real change and advances. In order for more people to be able to receive the supports needed to join or return to the workforce, systems change and cultural perceptions around employment for people with disabilities are needed. We look forward to working together on

making the changes suggested and carrying out the mission of Employment First across Kentucky.

Appendix A

The Employment First Council members were appointed via Executive Order 2018-687 on August 15, 2018. The Employment First Council met 5 times between October of 2018 – September of 2019:

October 4, 2018

November 1, 2018

January 3, 2019

April 4, 2019

July 9, 2019

Employment First Council Members with representation:

Kenneth Anderson, employers

Michelle Bazeley, State Rehabilitation Council

Judith Bradley, Co-Chair, family members with a disability

Becky Cabe, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Tal Curry, Office of Autism

Beth Davisson, employers

Jeff Edwards, Protection and Advocacy

Garry Gupton, family members with a disability

William Hubbard, Disability Determination Services

Amanda Huddleston, employers

Margretta Hylton, Department of Education

Macy Knights, persons with an impairment

Levi Loverkamp, employers

Kellie McCain, Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities

Malkanthie McCormick, family members with disability

Cora McNabb, Office of the Blind (now Office of Vocational Rehabilitation)

Diana Merzweiler, family members with a disability

Michael Michalak, employers

Lori Norton, Division of Behavioral Health

Norb Ryan, persons with an impairment

Rick Searcy

R. Larry Taylor, Autism Training Center

Russell Watts, persons with an impairment

Carla Webster, employers

Jeff White, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Patricia Williams, employers

Katie Wolf Whaley, Co-chair, UK – Human Development Institute

Full notes from each meeting are available upon request at kwolf@uky.edu.

Appendix B

Summary Report of Kentucky Employment Provider Survey

One of the Employment First Provider Committee's goals is making recommendations in regard to retaining employment providers. A survey to providers was created and circulated to 85 Kentucky Employment Providers in Spring of 2019. 40 providers responded to the survey.

The objective of the survey is to learn more about the provider's profile, financial challenges, client barriers, retaining competent staff and training and peer support.

Survey Findings

Providers Profile

75% of providers are non-profit organizations.

87% are regional providers in the state some only serve one county.

53% maintain one location for employment services.

28% maintain 2-4 locations for employment services.

Financial Challenges

22% reported occasional cash flow challenges due to state reimbursement schedule.

49% reported frequent cash flow challenges due to state reimbursement schedule.

64% reported occasional cash flow challenges due to clients losing their job and needing assistance finding a new job.

29% reported frequent cash flow challenges due to clients losing their job and needing assistance finding a new job.

62% reported never experiencing issues with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation service payments.

30% reported occasional issues with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation service payments.

47% reported never experiencing issues with Supports for Community Living waiver Supported Employment service payments.

42% reported occasional issues with Supports for Community Living waiver Supported Employment service payments.

50% reported never experiencing issues with Acquired Brain Injury Waiver Supported Employment service payments.

50% reported occasional issues with Acquired Brain Injury Waiver Supported Employment service payments.

55% reported never experiencing issues with Michelle P waiver Supported Employment service payments.

40% reported occasional issues with Michelle P waiver Supported Employment service payments.

Does your agency have additional funding sources outside of OVR or waiver funding?

25% reported grant funding.

27% reported Donations.

29% fundraising events.

19% other funding.

Client Barriers

36% reported frequently Clients did not have waivers services for long term support.

32% reported occasionally Clients did not have waivers services for long term support.

22% reported never do Clients not have waivers services for long term support.

33% reported that frequently Youth with disabilities exiting the school systems without adequate skills and/or information about transition process.

33% reported that occasionally Youth with disabilities exiting the school systems without adequate skills and/or information about transition process.

44% reported never did State Guardian/family member/employer requiring 100% supervision of client by agency staff at the work site.

44% reported occasionally did State Guardian/family member/employer requiring 100% supervision of client by agency staff at the work site.

Recruiting and Retaining Employment Staff

31% reported occasional challenges in recruiting competent staff in the current highly competitive environment.

31% reported frequent challenges in recruiting competent staff in the current highly competitive environment.

23% reported never experiencing challenges in recruiting competent staff in the current highly competitive environment.

32% reported occasionally actively implementing a recruitment plan for qualified staff.

21% reported frequently actively implementing a recruitment plan for qualified staff.

21% reported never actively implementing a recruitment plan for qualified staff.

58% reported 2 to 5 years average length of employment of Employment Specialists

24% reported 5 to 9 years average length of employment of Employment Specialists

11% reported 1 year average length of employment of Employment Specialists

Wages for Employment Staff

New Employee Range \$9.00 to \$18.00 per hour

New Employee average \$12.94

One to three -year average \$10.00-\$21.00

One to three- year average \$14.64

Education Requirements

49% required a bachelor degree for Employment Specialists.

43% required a High school diploma/Ged.

Circumstances for employment staff leaving the agency

43% reported not a good fit, personal reasons and other factors.

31% reported wages as reason

12% reported benefits

Employment Staff Training and Peer Support

50% reported participating in the Supported Employment Leadership Series.

50% reported never participating in the Supported Employment Leadership Series.

57% reported they or their agency are not a member of APSE/KY APSE the Association of People Supporting Employment First.

43% reported they or their agency are a member of APSE/KY APSE the Association of People Supporting Employment First.

53% reported occasionally receiving mentoring from fellow providers.

24% reported never receiving mentoring from fellow providers.

18% reported frequently receiving mentoring from fellow providers.

47% reported that occasionally provided mentoring to fellow providers.

39% reported that they never provided mentoring to fellow providers.

13% reported that they frequently provided mentoring to fellow providers.

Contents of flash drive to give to employers

- APSE Employment First Statement
- Bluegrass Employment Infographic
- Business Strategies that Work – A Framework for Disability & Inclusion
- Careers for People with Intellectual Disabilities (video link)
- Customized Employment Q&A
- Customized Employment – Put it to Work for Your Business
- Customized Employment – Works Everywhere
- Employment Files YouTube channel with stories of Kentuckians with disabilities at work across Kentucky
- Fact Sheet – Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Hiring People with Disabilities Makes Sense – infographic
- Kentucky Customized Employment video
- Kentucky Employer Pathways
- Kentucky Employment First Executive Order
- Recruiting Hiring Retaining People with Disabilities – A Resource Guide for Employers
- Southeast ADA Center brochure
- Six Myths about Workers with Disabilities
- Solutions for Employers – Customized Employment (video)
- Southeast ADA Center – quick resource sheet
- Tax Incentives for Businesses that Employ People with Disabilities
- Top 10 Myths of Social Security Benefits and Work
- What Employers Are Saying About Hiring People with Disabilities
- What is Customized Employment?
- What is Supported Employment?

These documents are provided to employers on an Employment First branded flash drive and can be found [online here](#)

School to Work Transition Resources for Students, Families and Professionals

Employer Engagement Materials

Kentucky Employment Files



The Kentucky Employment files are developed and produced through a partnership with the Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Human Development Institute, University of Kentucky.

[Click here](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXtURikHL6kSombWvav19Xw), or visit www.youtube.com/channel/UCXtURikHL6kSombWvav19Xw

HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MAKES SENSE FOR BUSINESS!

84% of businesses report having difficulty hiring staff...

A READY AND ABLE WORKFORCE
At least 32% of Kentuckians with disabilities want a job.

ON WHOM YOU CAN DEPEND
The turnover rate for people with disabilities is 8%, compared with 45% for other workers.

FOR A VERY REASONABLE INVESTMENT
Employers see a \$28.69 average return, for every dollar invested in accommodation.

WITH HUGE POTENTIAL
Customers with disabilities and their families, friends, and associates represent a \$3 TRILLION market segment.

TO IMPROVE THE COMPANY'S BOTTOM-LINE
87% of customers say they would prefer to shop at businesses that hire people with disabilities.

www.KentuckyWorks.org
[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Hiring-People-with-disabilities-makes-sense-flyer-final.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Hiring-People-with-disabilities-makes-sense-flyer-final.pdf

ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities



This form shows many examples and specific directions about how to make a location ADA compatible.

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/2018/03/28/ada-checklist-for-existing-facilities/), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/2018/03/28/ada-checklist-for-existing-facilities/

Tax Benefits for Businesses that Employ People with Disabilities

Disabled Access Credit

a yearly credit up to \$10,000 for small businesses having expenditures to provide access to persons with disabilities. It may be used to:

- remove barriers to accessibility;
- provide assistance to people with hearing impairments;
- provide assistance to individuals with visual impairments; or
- acquire or modify equipment for use by people with disabilities.

Barrier Removal Tax Deduction

Businesses may claim a deduction of up to \$15,000 a year

- No limitations on business size.
- Qualified expenses include removal of architectural and transportation barriers.
- Supporting persons with disabilities and the elderly
- Items no longer have to be capitalized

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

provides employers incentives to hire qualified individuals

- maximum tax credit ranges from \$1,200 to \$9,600 depending on the employee hired and the length of employment
- credit is available to employers for hiring individuals from target groups facing significant barriers to employment, including
 - individuals with disabilities and
 - veterans
- credit is limited to the amount of the business income tax liability or social security tax owed.

www.KentuckyWorks.org For more information go to: [WWW.IRS.GOV](http://www.IRS.GOV)

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tax-Incentives.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Tax-Incentives.pdf

WHAT KENTUCKY EMPLOYERS ARE SAYING ABOUT hiring people with disabilities.

"Give someone a chance because you can never be sure what they are capable of. See where they fit in because most of the time there is something they can do."
Todd Blume, Owner, Paducah Beer Werks, Paducah, Kentucky

"Brandon is highly effective on the job: working safely and working efficiently at all times."
Mark Baskerville, Worldport Small Sort Supervisor, United Parcel Service, Louisville, Kentucky

"My biggest surprise was the amount of energy and enthusiasm that Robbie brings each and every day. I'd like to bottle that and have it be a showpiece for all staff."
Paul Hitchcock, General Manager, Morehead State Public Radio, Morehead, Kentucky

"We bring people with disabilities into our workforce, put them to work, and give them the tools they need... these folks are some of our best workers."
Nick Hargett, Computer Operations Manager, Best Buy Distribution Center, Shepherdsville, Kentucky

"Jon comes in every day with a sense of enthusiasm, gives it 100%, and takes pride in doing a good job."
Adam Carver, Co-Owner, Sirloin Stockade, Murray, Kentucky

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/What-employers-are-saying.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/What-employers-are-saying.pdf

6 MYTHS ABOUT WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

COST TO ACCOMMODATE IS TOO HIGH.
Research finds that most accommodations cost less than \$500. In fact, studies have shown that less than one-quarter of employees with disabilities need accommodations. A better perspective might be gained by determining the dollar value of recruiting an exceptional employee.

MORE LIKELY TO USE OR EVEN EXCEED SICK DAYS.
Studies have reported people with disabilities had fewer scheduled absences than those without disabilities, and fewer days of unscheduled absences.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ARE NOT ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY.
More than anything, individuals with disabilities are restricted not by their abilities, but by society. As an employer, do not let a person's disability get in the way of an opportunity for him or her to demonstrate talents.

TOO RISKY FOR EMPLOYERS TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION.
With the exception of negotiated accommodations, all employees should be treated the same. Using "kid gloves" for employees with disabilities creates a standard that is not good for anyone.

PEOPLE WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE UNPREDICTABLE.
Most people who have behavioral health needs are no more unpredictable than anyone else. You probably know someone with behavioral health issues and don't even realize it.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CAN ONLY DO SIMPLE, REPETITIVE JOBS OR CAN ONLY DO LIGHT DUTY WORK.
People with disabilities have a variety of skills to offer, which differ from individual to individual, as with everyone else.

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Six-Myths-about-workers-accessible.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Six-Myths-about-workers-accessible.pdf

School to Work Transition Resources for Students, Families and Professionals

Family Engagement Resources

Kentucky Department of Education Transition Overview



Learn from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) about important resources and regulations that can help your student achieve their goals of employment and post-secondary education. [Click here](#), or visit <https://www.kentuckyworks.org/2019/07/25/transition-overview-document/>.

KentuckyWorks Blog: The Transition Journey



The blog offers a first-person perspective about hitting the milestones on the transition journey and how families and youth can prepare, address challenges, and get support. Includes question and answer sessions and the opportunity for to share more comments and stories on different transition topics. [Click here](#), or visit blog.kentuckyworks.org.

Students can use this vision statement template to share their goals and dreams, strengths, challenges, and motivators with teachers and professionals. Educators and parents can also watch a video about how to prepare a vision statement with a student. [Click here](#), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/2018/08/07/brighter-futures-vision-statement/.

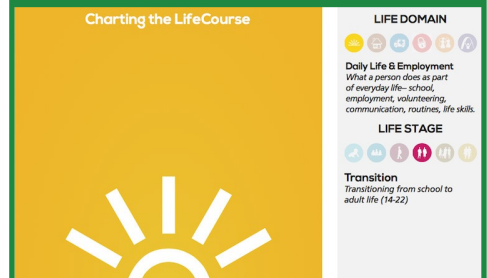


Student Vision Statement



This free online course shows parents of children with significant disabilities how to start preparing for meaningful employment throughout the school years. We outline what competitive employment means, how to explore and develop work-skills and talents, how to address concerns, and resources you can use to help your child achieve their dreams. [Click here](#), or visit https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334 to access the training.

Charting the LifeCourse Employment Booklet



Comprehensive booklet by the UMKC Institute for Human Development to help you think about what you like and want to do in the future. This guide will help you think about questions to ask, things to do, and resources to access that lead to a job, career, volunteer position, or continuing education of your choice. [Click here](#), or visit <https://lifecoursetools.com/wp-content/uploads/EMPLOYMENT-GUIDE-FINAL.pdf>

Handout with Resources for Parents

Handout to give parents the vision of employment for students with significant intellectual disabilities and practical steps to take throughout the school years to prepare for the world of work. This handout includes activities and a resource list for families and individuals. [Click here](#), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/2019/03/27/seeing-a-brighter-future-handout-with-resources/

Seeing a brighter future



School to Work Transition Resources for Students, Families and Professionals

Impact of Wages on Benefits

Benefits 101



Benefits 101 is an overview of how earned income may affect eligibility for an entitlement to social security disability benefits and supplemental security income.

[Click here](https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334) or go to https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334 to access the training.

FREE!

A Guided Study of You Own Situation

This video provides all the basics that youth with disabilities and their parents need to know about applying for Supplemental Security Income when they turn 18 years old! The video also covers how youth with disabilities can work and keep their benefits.

[Click here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9sBOO4PLks&feature=youtu.be) or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9sBOO4PLks&feature=youtu.be> to access the video.

SSI 101 Video



The Truth About SSI and Working

THE TRUTH ABOUT WORKING WHILE RECEIVING SSI IN 2019

SSI Provides... Supplemental Income in an amount up to \$771 per month for a single person (\$1,157 for a married couple) and health insurance through Medicaid.

You can work and earn money while receiving SSI!

The first \$85 you earn each month does not change your SSI benefit. After that you get to keep:

fifty cents of your SSI for every one dollar earned

If your only income is from SSI and your job, when your paycheck reaches \$1,627 per month, your SSI cash benefit will stop. But you will still receive Medicaid until your income reaches Kentucky's threshold amount.

Kentucky's current threshold income is \$30,818 per year!

If you earn enough money from your job to stop your SSI payment, the amount you earn at your job will not be counted when calculating any required Medicaid share of cost payment

IF SSI IS YOUR ONLY CASH BENEFIT, YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE MORE MONEY TO SPEND BY WORKING!

For more information visit: www.kentuckyworks.org

[Click here](https://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/The-Truth-About-Working-While-Receiving-SSI-in-2019.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/The-Truth-About-Working-While-Receiving-SSI-in-2019.pdf

THE TRUTH ABOUT WORKING WHILE RECEIVING SSDI IN 2019

Social Security Disability Insurance pays a monthly benefit based upon your work record and/or the work record of a responsible family member and health insurance through Medicare after a 24 month waiting period.

You can work, earn money, and continue to receive your full SSDI benefits until Social Security determines you have the ability to consistently produce significant income (currently defined as the ability to earn \$1,220 per month or \$2,040 if you are blind). This is called **substantial gainful activity**.

Adjustments to Substantial Gainful Activity
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) refers only to earned income. Some assistance your employer provides to you, but not other employees, may inflate your apparent ability to earn SGA and their value could potentially be disregarded from the SGA decision. Some of the most common are: special assistance with tasks, frequent rest breaks, provided with special equipment, assigned work especially suited to impairments, specially arranged concessions, a lower standard of productivity or efficiency, or given the opportunity to work because of a family relationship, past association, or the employer's concern for the person's welfare. See www.ssa.gov/redbook for more details.

Trial Work Period
The Trial Work Period is the first step toward long term employment. It is a total of nine months over a five year period of time. During those nine months, you can earn an unlimited amount of money and test your ability to work. Each month you earn \$830 or more, counts as a trial work month. When you have used all of the Trial Work Period months, if SGA has not been determined, an Extended Period of Eligibility begins and there are other work incentives available. Learn more at www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html

For more information go to: www.KentuckyWorks.org

[Click here](https://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/The-Truth-about-Working-While-Receiving-SSDI-2019.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/The-Truth-about-Working-While-Receiving-SSDI-2019.pdf

Disability Benefits 101

Disability Benefits 101 gives you tools and information on employment, health coverage, and benefits. You can plan ahead and learn how work and benefits go together.



Working With a Disability

Disability Benefits 101 gives you tools and information on health coverage, benefits, and employment. You can plan ahead and learn how work and benefits go together.

[Click here](https://www.kentuckyworks.org/2017/09/03/disability-benefits-101-tool/), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/2017/09/03/disability-benefits-101-tool/

School to Work Transition Resources for Students, Families and Professionals

Transition Training Modules

Transition 101



What We All Need to Know About Transition for Students with Significant Disabilities

Transition 101 is an overview of the current status of employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Kentucky, the key steps in the transition process, legal requirements, agency roles, types of employment (competitive, supported, and customized), and the development of measurable post-secondary goals for transition-age youth. The module has a series of guiding questions, with interactive questions throughout. [Click here](#) or go to https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334 to access the training.

FREE! Continuing Education Credit also available.

Transition102 describes the strongest, evidence-based correlates of post-school competitive employment for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The module discusses additional variables related to successful transition for students with significant disabilities, and highlights Kentucky resources available to put these predictor variables into practice. [Click here](#) or go to https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334 to access the training.

FREE! Continuing Education Credit also available.

Transition 102



Important Predictors for Post-High School Success

Transition 103



Endless Possibility: Preparing High School Students with Disabilities for Successful Transition to Employment

Transition 103 reviews preparation for students preparing to move from high school to employment. In addition, learn how support organizations fit into the broader picture of transition, and how Kentucky has used opportunities like the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA) for supports to youth with disabilities. [Click here](#) or go to https://www.hdilearning.org/?woo_category=334 to access the training.

FREE! Continuing Education Credit also available.

School to Work Transition Resources for Students, Families and Professionals

Post-Secondary Education Tools

Think College



Think College is a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability. With a commitment to equity and excellence, Think College supports evidence-based and student-centered research and practice by generating and sharing knowledge, guiding institutional change, informing public policy, and engaging with students, professionals and families.

[Click here](https://thinkcollege.net/) or go to <https://thinkcollege.net/>

Generating and Sharing Knowledge

This table provides several goals and related activities that can be used in a transition IEP to support students in developing skills that will help prepare them for inclusive postsecondary education.

[Click here](https://www.kentuckyworks.org/2017/08/09/transition-goals-and-activities-for-inclusive-postsecondary-programs/) or go to <https://www.kentuckyworks.org/2017/08/09/transition-goals-and-activities-for-inclusive-postsecondary-programs/>

Transition Goals and Activities for Inclusive Post-Secondary Programs

Transition Goals and Activities for Inclusive Post-Secondary Programs	
Goal 1.1	<p>Communicate</p> <p>Improve level of independent level of communication through activity</p> <p>Ability 1.1.1. Respond to ... email per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.1.2. Initiate ... email per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.1.3. Attach documents to email ... per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.1.4. Prepare ... types of adaptive software to use in communication/technology needs.</p> <p>Ability 1.1.5. Utilize adaptive software to assist in communication/technology needs.</p> <p>Ability 1.1.6. Make ... electronic journal entries per (month/semester)</p>
Goal 1.2	<p>Submit ... assignments in electronic format per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.2.1. Attach ... assignments to email or submit in electronic classroom per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.2.2. Create ... presentation in electronic format (powerpoint, prezi) per (month/semester)</p> <p>Ability 1.2.3. Present ... electronic format assignment to peers, instructor per (month/semester)</p>
Goal 1.3	<p>Independently complete ... assignments</p> <p>Ability 1.3.1. Record ... assignments in agenda, electronic calendar or assignment book</p> <p>Ability 1.3.2. Create ... agenda for task completion</p> <p>Ability 1.3.3. ...</p>

By Karla Wade, PhD

People with Intellectual Disabilities are attending and completing college!

Know your options...

Option One	Option Two
Attend as a traditional degree-seeking student	Attend an approved Comprehensive Transition Program.
<p>Traditional Degree Seeking Student</p> <p>Do I Need a Regular High School Diploma? Yes, you must have a regular high school diploma.</p> <p>Do I Need to Take College Entrance or Placement Exams? Yes. You must take all college entrance exams required by your college or university.</p> <p>Can I Take Regular College Classes? You can take any course for which you have the necessary preparation.</p> <p>Am I Eligible to Receive a Degree? Yes, if you complete all the course requirements.</p> <p>Am I Eligible for Financial Aid (Pell Grants and Federal Work Study)? Apply for federal financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</p> <p>Am I Eligible for KEEES Money? Go to the KEEES website for more information.</p> <p>Can I Receive Reasonable Accommodations Because of My Disability? To receive accommodations, you must register with your Disability Resource Office, disclose your disability, and provide documentation of the disability.</p> <p>What if I Need Course Modifications to Participate Successfully? Students earning regular college credit are not eligible for course modifications. You must master all the course content.</p>	<p>Comprehensive Transition Student (CTP) Student</p> <p>No diploma or certificate is required.</p> <p>No - unless required by a specific CTP.</p> <p>Courses may be taken either for credit or as audit (non-credit) with approval of the class instructor.</p> <p>You will receive a meaningful credential from your college, if you meet all the requirements.</p> <p>Yes, if you meet financial need requirements and maintain required academic progress, as defined by your college, for all students.</p> <p>Yes, \$500 per semester if attending at least 6 hours, and \$250 per semester if less (credit or auditing).</p> <p>To receive accommodations, including courses not taken for credit, you must register with your Disability Resource Office, disclose your disability, and provide documentation of the disability.</p> <p>If you are taking courses for audit, with permission of your instructor, you can have modifications to course content. You are required to learn the modified content.</p>

For more information go to: www.KentuckyWorks.org

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Post-Secondary-Grid-Comparison-Chart.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Post-Secondary-Grid-Comparison-Chart.pdf

What is a COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAM (CTP)?

An individualized program through a college or university approved by the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid that allows students with Intellectual Disabilities the opportunity to work toward a career goal of gainful employment.

Individually planned supports and services include:

- Integrated work experiences/internships
- Academic classes (for credit or audit)
- Extracurricular activities

CTP Facts

- Students with disabilities may enroll with either a standard high school diploma or an Alternative High School Diploma.
- Financial Assistance is available (Pell Grants, Work/Study, KEEES).
- Course modifications can include alternate class work and readings, alternate demonstrations of student learning, and modified testing formats.
- CTPs are typically two-year programs leading to a University credential.

Current Kentucky Comprehensive Transition Programs:

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
Dr. Cindy Clemons
cclemons@murraystate.edu
270-809-4426

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Dr. Missy Jones
jonesm@nku.edu
859-572-1423

For more information visit www.KentuckyWorks.org

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CTP-Facts-1.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CTP-Facts-1.pdf

Students with intellectual disabilities in Kentucky can receive financial assistance to continue their education... even those without a regular high school diploma!

ENROLLMENT

You must enroll at a college or university with a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP). A CTP provides a series of audited or for-credit courses with internships or work experiences that lead to a meaningful credential. In Kentucky, there are currently CTP programs at Murray State University and Northern Kentucky University.

FEDERAL GRANTS

When attending a CTP, you may complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to qualify for a Federal Pell Grant.

WORK - STUDY

Completing the FAFSA will also determine if you qualify for the Federal Work-Study Program.

STATE GRANTS

Unlocking KEEES

Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarships (KEES), are available to all students who attend a CTP. Funds are available for courses taken for credit as well as audited classes. Five hundred dollars (\$500) per semester are available for enrollment in at least six (6) hours of classes, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per semester for less than six (6) hours.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.KentuckyWorks.org

[Click here](http://www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Post-Secondary-Financial-Assistance-infographic.pdf), or visit www.kentuckyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Post-Secondary-Financial-Assistance-infographic.pdf



Employment First Council April, 4 2019

*Employer Education and
Engagement*





Our charge from the Governor:

Employer Education and Engagement

Identifying state policies that create disincentives to employment for people with disabilities and developing recommendations that eliminate them.

Develop training and resources on meaningful and productive jobs within the general workforce for a variety of audiences, including people with disabilities, families, providers and employers.

Recommend implementation of effective practices that increase employment opportunities, and;

Establish measurable goals to assess progress of these efforts



Our team wanted to focus on how to engage Kentucky's employers and build sustainable employment paths





Our team's activity:

At our previous meeting we discussed:

Educational / promotional video's such as "Discoverability," and other successful activities.

Internships and Co-ops.

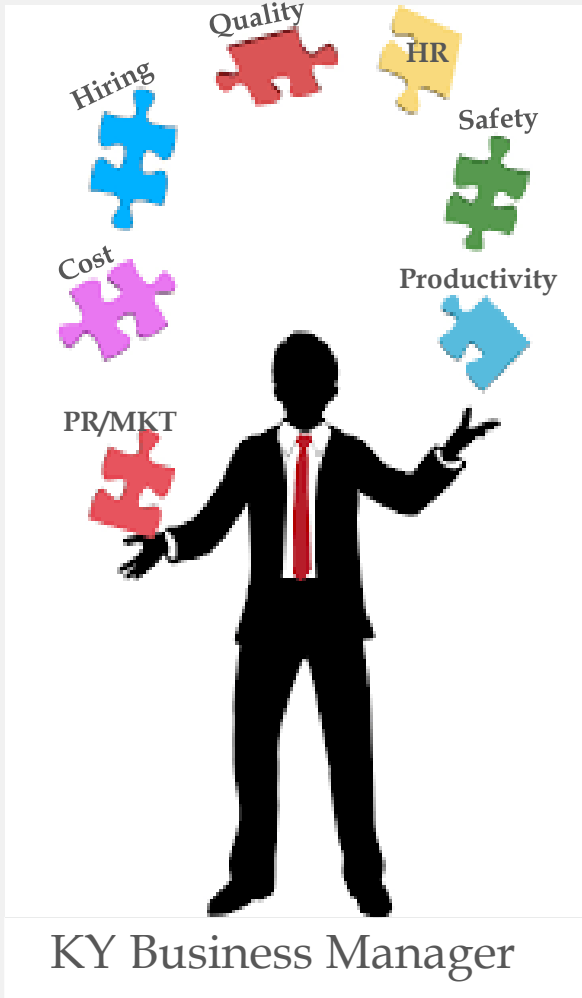
Team building activity.

Brainstormed action plans / and next steps.

Discussed the idea of creating a model to help businesses connect with an untapped labor pool. See following slides.



Our problem to solve: *Employer Education and Engagement*



Kentucky's business managers and decision makers are extremely busy juggling their daily priorities.

Most of these leaders have a defined hiring process that can (usually) meet their needs. However running their business is their key focus.

Most are not aware of additional hiring options, or that there is a largely untapped, dependable labor pool out there looking for opportunity.

No system / process is driving hiring from our pool (Recognition-or best practice).

• Our discussion:

Employer Education and Engagement

Establish a Employment First Board. N=6 Members.
Appointed by the Governor / With recognition built into the program.
Appointees are Kentucky business leaders/ Governor's Emissaries.
The Board will receive mission and vision education.
The Board will be charged with selecting "action teams."

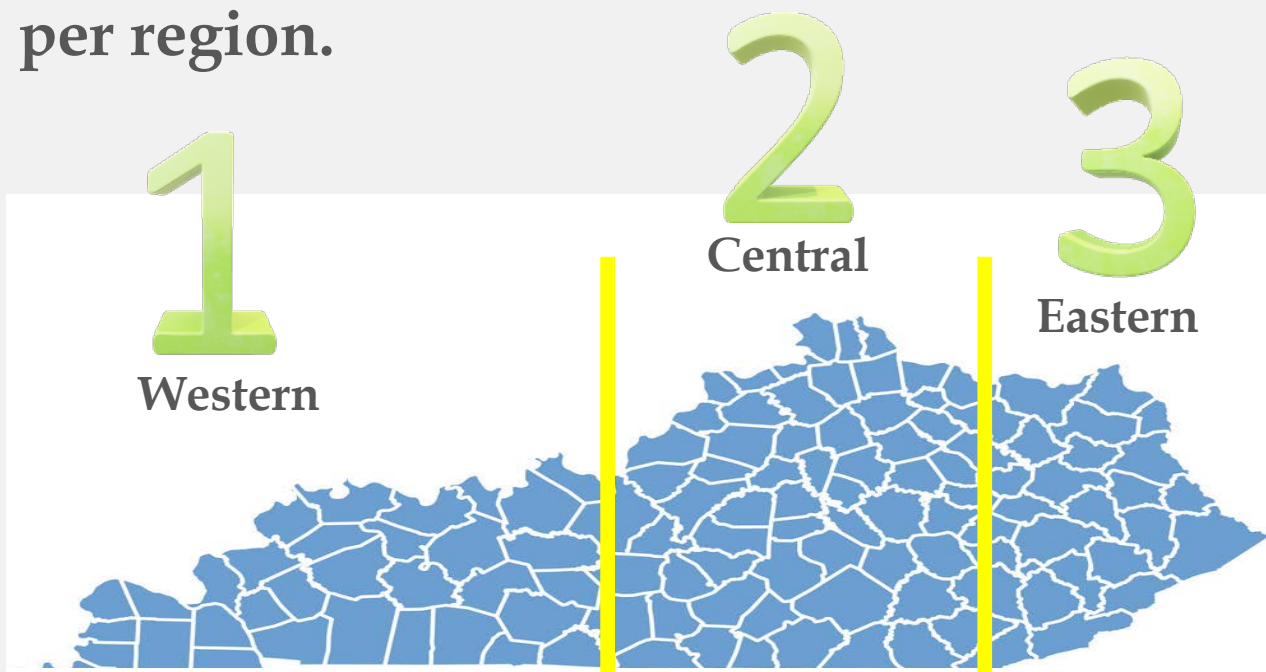




Our discussion:

Employer Education and Engagement

Break Kentucky into 3 Regions: Western, Central and Eastern. 2 board members per region. 4 Action team members per region.



Each Region's will have a Governor appointed Action team (6 members per region) 18 members total.



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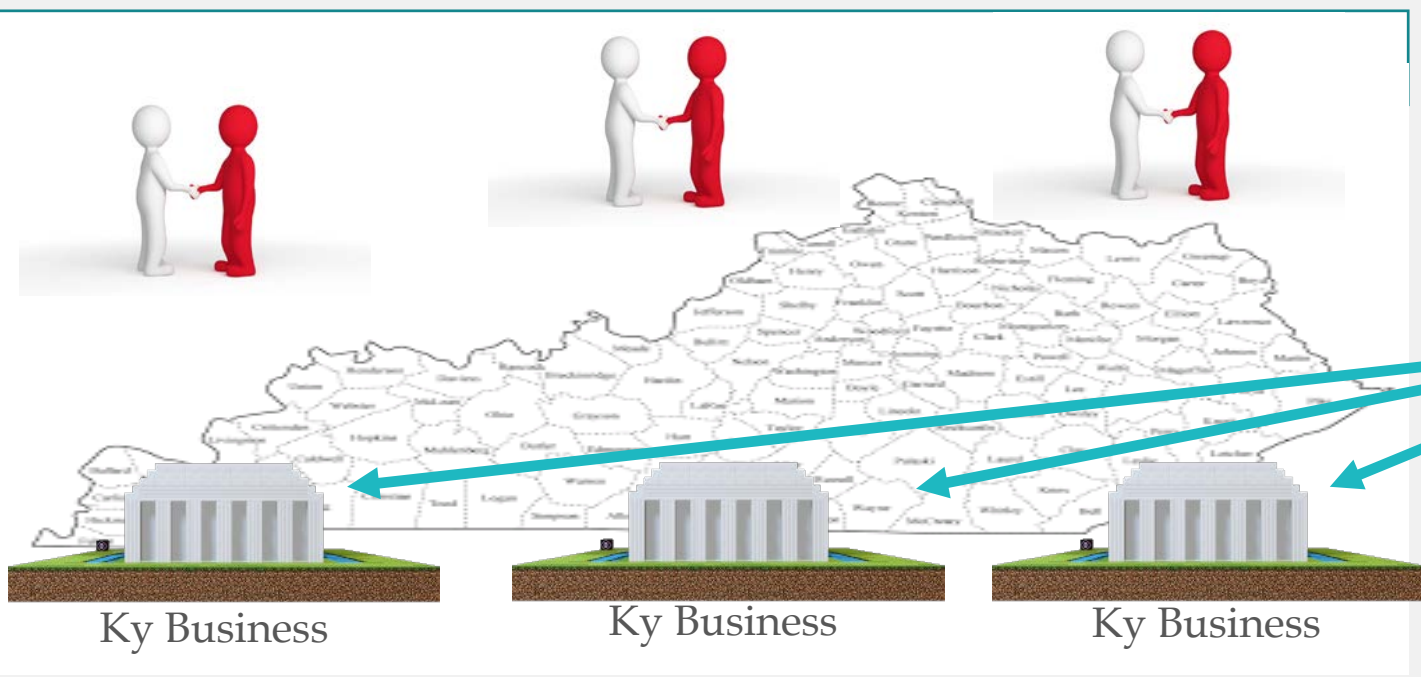
- Our discussion:
Employer Education and Engagement

Action teams:

Action teams will visit targeted businesses in their region.

Action teams will be provided with presentation / videos / resource list / script.

Action team will explain various models for employment and request consideration.
Co-op, intern, mfg. etc.



Benchmark companies will be listed/shown



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• Our discussion: *Employer Education and Engagement*

Draft image (Flow) of Employer Engagement:



Governor's Emissaries.



Action team.



Ky Business



HUMANS FACTOR



First day of work



Transportation team



Advocacy team



Candidates

shutterstock.com • 589527299



Gov. Recognition program



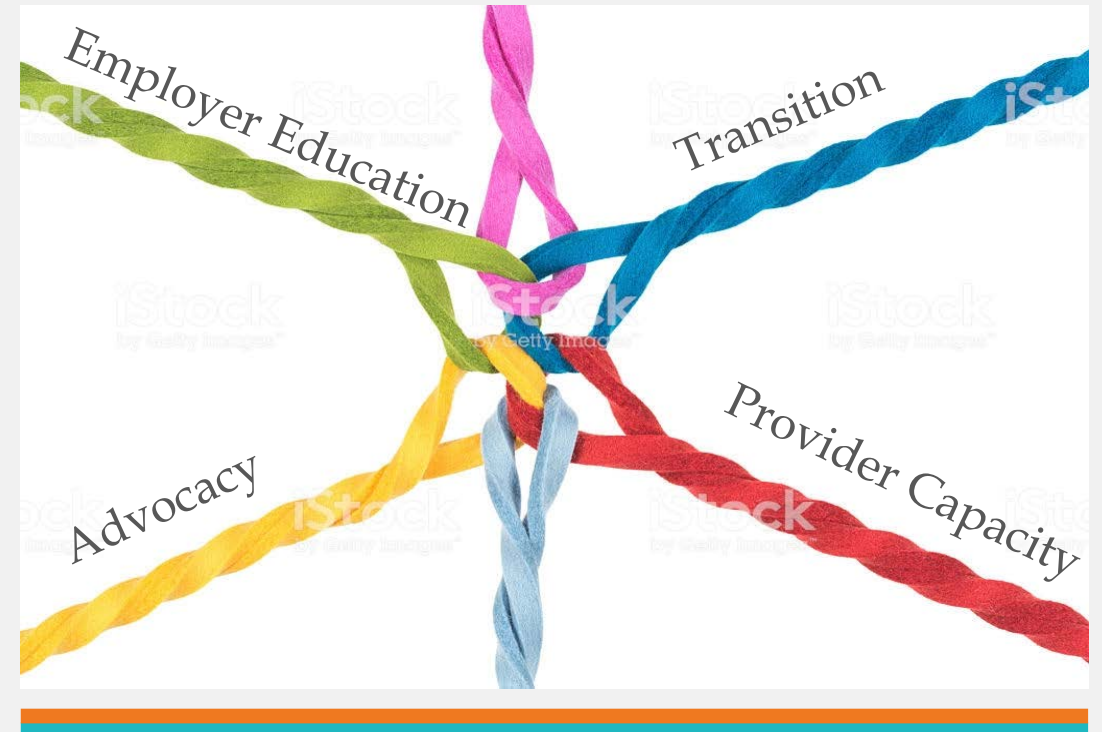


Reflection: “The push and the Path”

Employer Education and Engagement

What we’ve learned:

- Each of our teams are interconnected. Success will require us to work together. True change won’t be easy, but we can make it happen.
- Businesses need workers. They just don’t have a push to hire or a defined path to hire.
- We will have to break through some serious barriers such as transportation and opportunity costs.
- We will have to market our activity and recognize the successes to encourage others to follow.





Questions / Comments



