



# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## Training Today for Jobs Tomorrow

Kentucky Workforce  
Innovation and Opportunity Act

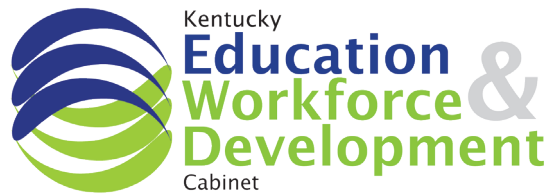
**Kentucky**   
WORKFORCE  
INNOVATION BOARD

TEAM   
KENTUCKY

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In 2018, Kentucky Work Ready: An Urgent Call to Action, a comprehensive plan developed by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board to guide the strategic direction of the Commonwealth's workforce system over the next several years. Kentucky Work Ready charts the course for the Commonwealth to create a workforce development system that is value driven for employers, aligns education with industry demands, prepares Kentuckians for the future of work and drives economic development. Kentucky Work Ready further identifies several concrete actions to be taken over the next five years and metrics that will be used to measure progress towards accomplishment of these goals.



Building on the work already begun, the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet works to continue progress in Program Year 2019. Kentucky's workforce system continues to modernize career and technical education infrastructure throughout the state, align and integrate education and workforce programs, and provide financial support for attainment of certificates and credentials in high demand sectors.

We are working towards building a better Commonwealth through a strong and resilient workforce. Our values are boiled down to an acronym - WHERE, standing for Wages, Healthcare, Education, Retirement, and Example. These are the areas that Governor Beshear and I are dedicated to improving so that we may create a better Kentucky for everyone.

Jacqueline Coleman,  
Lt. Governor  
Secretary of Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

# Waivers

## Requested Waiver

The Commonwealth of Kentucky received a waiver of the required collection and reporting of performance-related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the commonwealth's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sections 116 and 122.

## Background

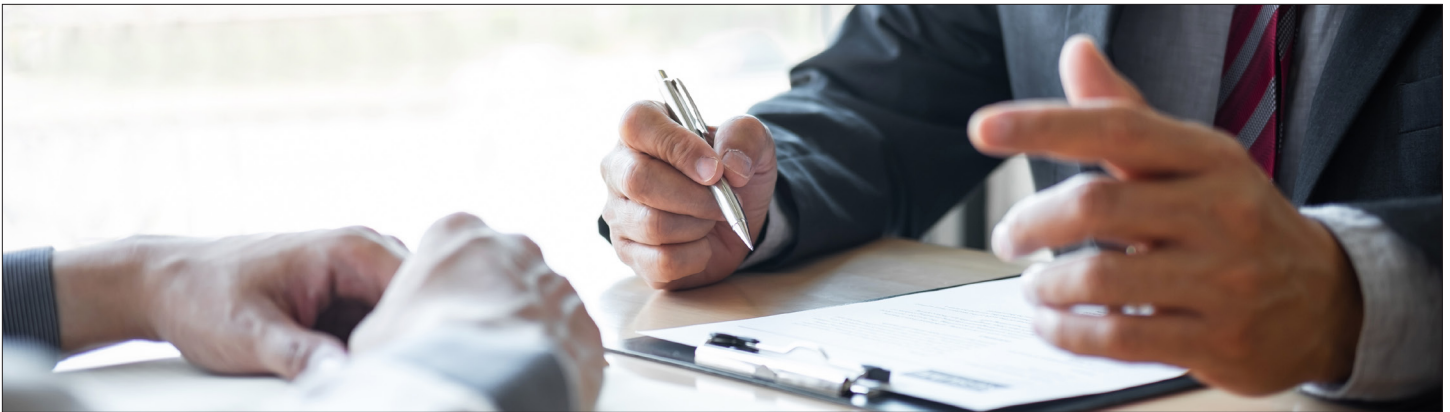
Since the passage of WIOA in 2014, Kentucky has worked diligently to understand and implement the new provision regarding Eligible Training Providers (ETP). To this end, on July 1, 2016, the commonwealth released the attached ETPL policy and subsequently created a user-friendly online portal for the submission, review and approval of eligible training programs and providers.

While we recognize the value and importance of monitoring provider performance and sharing this information with our customers, requiring training providers to produce data on all individuals instead of just WIOA-funded customers places an undue burden on providers to collect, enter and report excessive data. Despite our efforts, Kentucky has faced numerous challenges while working to fully implement the WIOA ETP requirements, including:

- Requiring training providers to provide data on all individuals instead of simply WIOA-funded participants has dissuaded some providers from seeking inclusion on the ETPL to the detriment of customer choice.
- Local workforce board lack of commitment and adoption of cohort and/or customized to ensure that each area has sufficient numbers of, and diversity of, training providers necessary to create an effective marketplace of training programs that are responsive to employer needs and provide high-growth jobs in targeted sectors for customers.
- Reducing the burden on training providers to submit performance information to the state, which may not be readily accessible.



- Lack of control or oversight of non-WIOA students attending training, so complete and accurate information is very difficult to ascertain.
- Proprietary schools do not currently have a statewide system to report student data, and as such, there is no way to automatically match students with other data sources to calculate outcomes. This results in a large reporting burden on these types of training providers.
- Proprietary schools would have to collect sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students for the state to match wage and earnings information on students utilizing ETPL programs, which may leave students open to identity theft, privacy considerations, etc.
- Many of the students attending Kentucky's career and technical college system, as well as other training providers, may do so on an episodic basis and not necessarily with the sole intent of achieving a degree or credential. If these students are not WIOA-funded, it is unfair for these students to lower the training provider's overall performance data.
- Collecting, validating, and providing information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps them make good decisions about how to use their individualized training accounts or other federal training dollars.



## Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Not only does the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) provide career services for job seekers, but they also assist employers with hiring, retaining and developing their workforce, all at no cost. KCC employer services are customized to the business' needs and fall into three categories: workforce recruitment, upskilling and incentives.

KCC's workforce recruitment service connects employers with potential job seekers. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended many job sectors causing qualified employees to lose their jobs. Our career centers have embraced the changing business landscape and shifted to creative recruitment methods like virtual and drive-thru hiring events to help employers find qualified professionals eager to join companies. For those employers who have to downsize, our Rapid Response services connect laid-off employees to other employers seeking a talented and skilled workforce.

The second employer service, upskilling, is executed through training that is specific to the industry and the company. The ultimate goal is providing certification or credentials to employees in a specific skill set. This can range from virtual soft skill development courses or through a partnership with Kentucky Community and Technical College System's (KCTCS) network of 16 campuses across the commonwealth to master a skilled trade, or even through a local coding boot camp that will strengthen an information technology (IT) department.

One of the best programs to drive innovation, increase retention and create a pipeline of incoming talent is the Kentucky Registered

Apprenticeship program. Through theoretical learning and on-the-job experience, the apprentice becomes a subject-matter expert and can fill the most in-demand positions on the market today. With over 1,200 occupations to pick from, a Registered Apprenticeship is an alternative path to postsecondary education, and we know that education is key to our commonwealth's growth and competitiveness.

The third type of service, incentives, gives employers access to funds to offset the costs of hiring and training. These dollars are available from the federal government, various state government cabinets, and Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB), and can come as tax credits, grants, bonds, and in-kind services. These savings help create and launch workforce initiatives that will provide immediate financial returns and long-term dividends from a trained workforce.

We are all working towards building a better commonwealth through a strong and resilient workforce. Our goals are boiled down to the acronym WHERE that stands for wages, healthcare, education, retirement and example. Our goals are for Kentuckians to have better wages, access to quality and affordable healthcare, an excellent education, and well-earned retirement. In addition, we can do all of that while leading by example. These are the areas that Governor Andy Beshear and our leadership are dedicated to improving, and business plays an important role in that effort.



## Office of Employer & Apprenticeship Services

The Office of Employer & Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) in the KCC system provides educational and informational services to help employers uncover innovative approaches to hiring, retaining and developing their workforce during this pandemic and beyond.

The central purpose of the OEAS is to coordinate, promote, market and provide businesses access to workforce partners with resources and services designed to meet their needs. A qualified labor market is a primary objective for workforce development in Kentucky. By aligning business personnel needs with skills training, Kentucky's economy can be continuously improved and strengthened.

Kentucky continues to strive to create a business-led workforce system as envisioned in WIOA. Career centers recognize businesses as an equally important customer as the job seeker and are working towards a demand-driven focus offering a streamlined approach to assisting businesses with recruiting talent, training new and existing employees, and developing workforce strategies. At its core, the business services strategy consists of the primary organizations that provide direct resources and services to businesses, including:

- Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB)
- Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC)
- Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development (CED)
- The Kentucky Chamber's Workforce Center (Workforce Center)

- Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)
- Kentucky Labor Cabinet

To continue effective business services, partner coordination and performance, OEAS has implemented a team of Workforce Development Consultants. This team responds to the immediate workforce needs of employers; provides local workforce development area technical assistance in the realignment of the education system to meet the needs of the business; engages businesses to define their current and future needs; empowers communities to design their solutions; and increases the workforce pipeline to accommodate growth. The OEAS consultants work with local workforce development service providers, businesses and industry partners to share their workforce development challenges and connect them with resources to assist with their needs.

## Performance Indicators

Kentucky has selected the business penetration rate and repeat business customers measures to gauge its effectiveness in serving businesses. These approaches are designed to gauge the critical workforce needs of the business community by providing businesses with skilled workers through a quality relationship-building engagement.

The business penetration rate is the percentage of businesses using KCC services out of all businesses in the state. This approach tracks the percentage of businesses that are using the core program services out of all known businesses represented in the state. The penetration is an evaluation of whether the core programs are adequately meeting the workforce needs of the area. In the program year (PY) 2019, strategic workforce business engagement was provided to approximately 37 percent of the businesses in the commonwealth.

Kentucky's second indicator, repeat business customers, is the percentage of repeat businesses using services within the previous three years. This approach tracks the percentage of businesses that receive services that use core program services more than once. Measuring repeat customers is useful in determining whether businesses that receive services from the core programs get enough value from those services to return to the KCC system. It

also assesses the ability to develop and maintain strong relationships with businesses over extended periods. In PY2019, for the 37 percent of the businesses that were served in the commonwealth, 60 percent were repeat business customers.

Kentucky business services network has approximately 200 business service professionals with a variety of skill sets and resources readily available. The business solutions specialists are comprised of individuals from Titles I, II, III and IV of WIOA, Kentucky Labor Cabinet, Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet, local economic development agencies, KCTCS, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services Employment Programs, the Department of Corrections Re-Employment Programs and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Workforce Center.

The staff works together to connect Kentucky's businesses, identify needs, and develop solutions for implementation. Business solution teams play a strategic role in communities by integrating economic development, education and government. Kentucky business services play a more responsive role by retaining and creating jobs, understanding competitive challenges, and identifying and pursuing opportunities. They develop relationships with businesses, discover and diagnose the challenges they face in growing their business, and bring the necessary resources to the table to assist them to overcome their obstacles.

### **Kentucky Integrated Business Engagement System (KIBES)**

Kentucky tracks business services and engagement in KIBES, a statewide customer relationship management system. The implementation of OEAS Workforce Development Consultants has increased statewide staff business engagement and we have increased focus on engaging and returning value to business customers.

### **Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Market Insight System**

The OEAS Workforce Development Consultant team uses the Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Market Insight System to align business needs to core partner services. This innovative proactive approach uses data to identify which businesses are in a growth pattern, a stable state, or experiencing a potential downturn and need early intervention for layoff

aversion strategies.

D&B applies the following two leading indicators of a business' financial growth outlook:

- Financial Stress Score provides predictive insights of the businesses that are most likely to fail within the next 12-18 months. Conversely, the Financial Stress Score enables strategic targeting of companies in strong financial condition and candidates for expansion leaning incentives.
- Material Change/Opportunity Segment follows real-time business activity and operating signals to determine what businesses are demonstrating in the moment growth characteristics or showing signs of contraction or declining business activity.

OEAS gathers this real-time monthly data from D&B, filtered by the local workforce development area, and distributes accordingly to provide targeted information for all the local partners to evaluate and initiate business engagement processes.

### **Rapid Response**

Kentucky's Rapid Response efforts are coordinated through the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet's (EWDC) Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) in partnership with teams in each LWDA. Rapid Response from the KCC is a layoff aversion strategy and a business transition service provided on or off-site to deliver a smooth transition to new employment for all of the 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, as well as assisting Kentuckians in finding, obtaining, and keeping the best jobs. As an outplacement service for businesses that assist employers and employees who are in business transition mode. The KCC Rapid Response Team consists of our Workforce Development Consultants that work closely with the Local Workforce Development teams to customize services to each layoff and each company's needs and expectations. There is no cost for the services provided.

Reaching out to the Rapid Response Team can reduce the cost of layoffs for the business and employees. In working with the Rapid Response Teams, the following services are provided:

- a quick response to transition planning needs;
- confidentiality concerning business needs;
- information about alternatives that could lessen the impact of a layoff;
- pre-layoff services designed to help workers shorten their transition time;
- information on KCCs and unemployment insurance;
- assistance in maintaining worker morale and productivity during the transition;
- assistance in preparing affected workers to find new employment; and
- information about the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice Act (WARN) and plant closing laws.

Rapid Response also markets the affected workforce to other industry employers, evaluates the affected workforce against current job orders, and often brings current job leads to the employee meeting to see if there are qualified candidates interested in the positions. While working with D&B as well as JobsEQ to obtain current job leads, the KCC Workforce Development Consultants work

closely with the LWDA business services teams to present the information to the employer and the affected employees during a Rapid Response an on-site or virtual meeting. Feedback from employers who received Rapid Response services indicated that they had lower unemployment insurance costs because employees were re-employed more quickly and employees appreciated the employer making the services available to help them transition.

The KCC Rapid Response Team specialists are experienced in assisting workers to cope with the job change. During Rapid Response employee services, they gather information on the employees' needs and begin to organize services to help them get back to work. Additionally, Rapid Response meetings introduce them to many other programs that can help during the time of transition.

### **COVID19 Response**

Kentucky, as well as other states, have experienced significant job loss and lay-offs due to the COVID-19 health pandemic. To date, Kentucky's unemployment system has been overwhelmed with about 1.2 million unemployment claims, an increase of over 3,500 percent from this time last year.

According to White House Coronavirus Task Force Reports for Kentucky, we are in the red zone for cases, indicating 101 or more new cases per 100,000 population, with the 16th highest rate in the country. Kentucky is in the yellow zone for





test positivity, indicating a rate between 5 percent and 7.9 percent, with the 10th highest rate in the country. This health emergency tripled the need for Rapid Response services.

Kentucky to date has received 115 notices of dislocation, reduction in force, and WARNs. We met this challenge of no face to face contact directive from our leadership quickly and promptly by leveraging our technology resources. Every notification of dislocation received a confirming response electronically connecting the employer with all resources of Rapid Response. We posted resources and information on the website of [www.workforce.ky.gov](http://www.workforce.ky.gov). Local workforce development teams also delivered follow-up resources by online virtual meetings, pre-recorded Rapid Response employee orientation videos thru websites and Facebook live sessions, and outdoor socially distant employee meetings in parking lots and community parks.

As an example of virtual Rapid Response events in KCCs in the western part of the state, please go to this website <https://wkworkforce.work/rapid-response-information>.

## Evaluations and Customer Satisfaction Approach

Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS) works with all relevant state agencies to integrate data storage activities. This ensures that data about all persons seeking services from any of the core programs are captured and matched to avoid duplication of service delivery. Not only does this help track the workforce services provided, but it also enables evaluation of those services. For example, the employment status of eligible training program completions can be tracked several years out.

KYSTATS and state agencies partner on a comprehensive approach to evaluation and research. KYSTATS has the capacity and expertise to convene the various partners to ensure coordination and effectiveness. Performance accountability measures the following indicators from respective core programs. Previously, Kentucky used surveys to measure effectiveness in serving employers in the state. In addition to surveys

assessing employer satisfaction, an approach is being considered that uses a customized system that awards points based on the degree of intensity and the value of workforce services provided. Services earning high points would reflect deeper relationships with employers and activities that are the result of longer-term relationships. Kentucky is currently participating in a DOL-sponsored cohort training which will provide more insight to evaluating quality programs.

## Achievements made in Kentucky's Strategic Goal and Vision

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

Investments in education and training are generational prospects that take significant time to come to fruition. Dynamic changes in technology and the labor market require that words like "upskilling" and "lifelong learning" become part of every Kentuckian's vocabulary. To put education into perspective, today's preschoolers are merely 12 years away from becoming our co-workers, and the jobs they seek may bear little resemblance to

the workplace as we know it. The commonwealth must strive to instill a culture of lifelong learning among its residents, setting them up for success by encouraging continuous personal growth and achievement, integrating infrastructure for lifelong skills development, and eliminating gaps between education systems and the job market.

For many Kentuckians, work is not only a source of income, but also a source of professional accomplishment, personal growth, and community. Workforce participation, therefore, represents a stabilizing factor in Kentuckians' lives, an environment that regulates daily life and provides a stepping-stone to wealth creation, achievement and personal fulfillment. At some point, however, most Americans will encounter a potentially destabilizing situation, such as a layoff or termination, a debilitating injury or illness, a criminal conviction, or other life-impacting events that results in a period of unemployment. For many Kentuckians, what begins as a temporary setback on the road of life can become a long-term roadblock that causes many exit the labor force altogether.

## **Performance Accountability System**

Over the past year, Kentucky has worked diligently on improving the case management system, KEE Suite. There have been several issues which we have addressed. Kentucky's Department for Workforce Investment (DWI) is exploring options for a new case management system because the current system lacks the desired comprehensiveness. Currently, the state uses the Focus Suites system for its labor exchange services. KEE Suite is utilized for Title I and Title III programs, KARES is utilized for the Title II program, and CMS is utilized for the Title IV program. The commonwealth is reviewing systems that will allow for the seamless integration of all programs. In the meanwhile, DWI continues to merge data files to accomplish the coordinated implementation of the state strategies.

## **Activities Provided by State Funds**

### **Cumberlands Local Workforce Development Area**

Cumberlands has three business services staff members who act as a conduit for employer services for its 13 counties. The area uses on-the-job training (OJT) to prepare individuals for a position and to supplement employer training cost, and the Incumbent Workers program. During the PY2019, Cumberlands has served a total of 98 participants through these programs and paid employers \$46,232.

Cumberlands also uses Individual Training Accounts (ITA) to serve unemployed customers, those making low wages or unskilled individuals to find self-sufficient jobs. During PY2019, the Cumberlands WIOA served 264 adults through ITAs using WIOA formula funds with expenditures of \$517,499. A total of \$1,391,964 was expended through these programs.

The Dislocated Workers program provides services to eligible workers who lose their jobs due to a business or plant closing or a major layoff. During PY2019, the Cumberlands WIOA served 45 dislocated workers through ITAs using WIOA formula funds with expenditures of \$128,741. A total of \$723,542 was expended through all dislocated worker programs and co-enrolled trade participants. Total cost for all staff for the adult, dislocated workers, and co-enrolled trade programs were \$1,077,118.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA) helps trade-affected workers who have lost their jobs as a result of increased imports or shifts in production out of the United States. During the program year, the Cumberlands WIOA served 94 TAA participants with expenditures of TAA funds being \$321,758.18 for ITA and \$66,307 for supportive services. A total of \$75,000 Rapid Response funds were received and expended for case management for these programs.

Under WIOA, the law requires 75 percent of the funds to be expended for out-of-school youth.

Upon graduating high school, the out-of-school youth can be placed into work experience. WIOA requires that 20 percent of youth funds be spent for work experience. During PY2019, 191 youth were put into the work experience component with \$485,938 being spent on wages and salaries, and for career managers. Other youths were placed in OJT contracts with expenditures of \$39,872. The Cumberland's set funds for out-of-school youth ITAs that would allow them to continue occupational or technical training after graduation. In PY2019, \$249,192 was expended on 81 youth for ITA. A total of 278 out-of-school youth were enrolled.

The Cumberland's Workforce Development Board (CWDB) has developed and amended a valuable platform to bring together individuals from business, education, economic development, and other sources to establish goals and implement plans and proposed outcomes. The regional plan between the Cumberland's and South Central Workforce areas was put into effect in August 2019 and has been beneficial to helping both areas meet common goals.

Centering On Needs Now Expecting Confident Tomorrow (CONNECT) was launched at the Russell County Detention Center to make Cumberland's re-entry goal more attainable.

Additionally, the Cumberland's area served customers in services other than ITAs. During the program year, 187 youth were served with 144 exits; 29 dislocated workers with 68 exits; 243 adults were served with 281 exits; and Wagner Peyser served 660 with 776 exits.

## **EKCEP Local Workforce Development Area**

Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program's (EKCEP) work in PY2019 focused heavily on meeting employers' needs and increasing workforce participation within target populations, including individuals who remain active in their recovery from substance use issues and youth who have had some engagement with the criminal justice system.

EKCEP's Teleworks USA initiative addressed the needs of both area job seekers and national

and global telework employers during a period that required social distancing and the need for increased remote-work opportunities. Teleworks USA quickly adapted to a fully virtual service model following the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020 that prevented in-person services at each of its nine teleworks hubs. During PY2019, Teleworks USA helped create 741 new jobs for Eastern Kentuckians, representing an estimated economic impact of more than \$17 million in new wages.

EKCEP's business services continued to increase their relevance to local employers' needs during 2019-20. Alongside One East Kentucky, EKCEP played a pivotal role in recruiting Dajcor, LLC to locate an aluminum milling facility in Perry County. The company broke ground on renovations to existing factory space in November 2019 and announced its first aluminum shipment from Eastern Kentucky in June 2020, utilizing 31 full-time employees. Additional hires are planned later in 2020.

EKCEP partnered with Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) and Galen College of Nursing in Hazard to address the region's shortage of registered nurses. This partnership has provided 173 nursing students with \$7,000 scholarships to attend the school and work toward nursing careers, representing an investment of more than \$1.4 million of EKCEP's WIOA formula funds. To date, 78 students have graduated and an additional 60 are currently enrolled.

EKCEP's partnership with the East Kentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute (eKAMI) in Johnson County assisted 37 people with tuition and supportive services as they learned skills such as CNC machine operations and graduated qualified for new careers. 100 percent of these graduates have obtained jobs.

The lineman and fiber optic training program at Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) assisted 57 graduates with tuition and supportive services during the program year. To date, nearly 80 percent of the lineman who graduated from this program remain successfully employed.

EKCEP directs the statewide Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE) that provides

career and employment services to individuals recovering from addiction. Since its inception in 2019, SITE has served more than 1,100 clients and helped nearly 300 recovering individuals gain new employment. EKCEP's Eastern Kentucky Recovery and Training (eKART) program – a subset of SITE – provides that same services exclusively within EKCEP's 23-county service area. eKART program staff has assisted 122 participants to enter full-time, unsubsidized employment, and referred an additional 117 people to partner agencies for services beyond the scope of eKART, including expungement, vocational rehabilitation, and student financial aid. eKART has also recruited 45 Eastern Kentucky companies that are interested in becoming transformational employers that hire and support recovering individuals.

During 2019-20, EKCEP's Opportunity Youth program began work to help individuals aged 18-24 youth with past criminal offenses enter the workforce using valuable career coaching and employment services.

## **Lincoln Trail Local Workforce Development Area**

### **Statewide Reserve Grant - Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC) Mobile Training Unit**

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board (LTWDB) administered a Statewide Reserve Grant January through September of 2019 for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC) to design and implement a mobile training unit.

The Workforce Solutions Mobile Training Unit is essentially a state-of-the-art computer classroom on wheels and was unveiled in October 2019. The unit can be outfitted with equipment to meet employers' needs and delivers high-quality training right to their doorstep. Since its launch, the mobile training unit has continued to provide flexible, efficient training options to employers throughout the Lincoln Trail region.

### **Statewide Reserve Grant - ECTC Coding Academy**

The LTWDB administered a Statewide Reserve Grant from January - September, 2020 for ECTC

to establish the Greater Knox Coding Academy. The purpose of the grant was to set up a Coding Academy lab and pilot a cohort that would include a mix of high school students as well as other individuals of varying educational backgrounds.

The Coding Academy allowed students to enter the job market within months through short term certifications in Java and Security+ and CompTIA A+. Based on discussions with Fort Knox contractors, many of these coding positions have starting annual salaries over \$65,000. Individuals who applied for the program went through a competitive selection process which included an aptitude test, background check and interview.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the project had successful outcomes. A total of 20 people completed the program with 10 leaving before completion. Overall, 68 certifications were attained. All students received assistance with career readiness, resume writing, job interviewing, networking, dress for success, social media, and emotional intelligence. The latest information indicated that two students obtained employment with the Department of Defense, 10 students were employed in other IT positions and nine students were in the process of completing college degrees.

The academy was highly sustainable and would be funded by participant registration fees in future offerings. Also, four companies have supported the program with sponsorships. The academy model could also be used to deliver other short-term, high-demand training.

## **TENCO Local Workforce Development Area**

### **TENCO Workforce Development Board Youth Opportunities**

The TENCO Workforce Development Board awarded a total of \$547,603 to Lewis County Board of Education (BOE), Augusta Independent Schools, Mason County BOE, and Robertson County BOE to provide a short-term Youth Employment Program (Y.E.P.). Y.E.P. is a hybrid of job readiness training and 256 hours of paid work experience. Contracts served 112 youth this year by providing skills in financial literacy, transitioning to post-secondary, completing job applications, interviewing, soft

skills, leadership opportunities, and paid summer employment. Youth who received positive work site evaluations earned incentives for demonstrating a high level of work ethics. The program has provided job preparation assistance to over 295 youth in the TENCO local area.

### **Dislocated Worker Success**

With trade training funds provided through the TENCO Workforce Development Board, a dislocated worker, Steven, enrolled in a four-week CDL program at Gateway Community and Technical College (GCTC). He completed his training in 2019 and was immediately hired by CSX to operate the equipment. Steven's short-term training didn't just secure him a job that exceeded his past wage, he now has the job he always wanted.

### **AppHarvest**

AppHarvest focuses on tomato growth and distribution to the eastern seaboard of the US. The TENCO WDB has partnered with AppHarvest over the past two years, during their construction phase, to develop a workforce recruiting strategy, provide a strong social media presence, obligate funding for training opportunities in horticulture, and develop an OJT contract to help reduce training cost for the initial 185 new hires, which will eventually grow to more than 300 people.

### **Partner Training**

The Kentucky Career Center - TENCO provided their Annual Partner Training for agency staff in the local area. The training included a Re-entry Simulation provided by the Kentucky Department of Corrections. Partners and staff members experienced a day in the life of an individual who is released from prison, jail or supervision. Barriers and frustration soon sent these staff "back to jail". Agencies participating included the Career Development Office, WIOA Title I Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth, FIVCO ADD, Buffalo Trace ADD, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, SkillsU, Department of Corrections, Senior Employment Program (Big Sandy CAP, Northern KY CAP, Southwest CAP), Department for Community Based Services, Ashland Community and Technical College, and Maysville Community and Technical College.

## **KentuckianaWorks Local Workforce Development Area**

### **Kentucky Career Centers**

The local KCCs have been closed to in-person traffic since March, but the staff has continued offering all of the core career services - including hiring events - virtually and over the phone. In PY2019, 885 people were placed in new jobs by our adult career center staff with an average wage of \$16.65. Also, more than 23,000 people visited our emergency COVID-19 online jobs board that was created in partnership with Greater Louisville Inc. (Louisville's chamber of commerce) in the early days of the shutdown.

### **Kentuckiana Builds**

The Kentuckiana Builds, a construction training program, transitioned to remote learning and continued to train and certify participants throughout the year. Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman spoke at one of the online graduation ceremonies. Kentuckiana Builds placed 68 people in construction jobs with an average wage of \$15.24 this past program year.

### **Code Louisville**

After a year-long partnership with Jefferson Community Technical College (JCTC), Code Louisville secured funding to return to its independent model this past program year. During PY2019, 269 people completed 517 Code Louisville training courses. Code Louisville now has more than 1,300 graduates and 500 job placements since the program began.

### **Kentucky Youth Career Centers**

The Kentucky Youth Career Center, which has locations in Jefferson, Bullitt and Henry counties, helped place 140 young adults in new jobs. They were also in the process of opening a new satellite center at the Nia Center in west Louisville before those plans were put on pause due to COVID-19. KYCC Regional and Louisville combined provided 27 internships (8-10 weeks) to participants and completed 62 job shadow experiences at employer worksites or through virtual calls.

### **Business Services**

KentuckianaWorks and its programs have been finding new, creative ways to support businesses in the region. They provided 1,200 customized

services to businesses, facilitated 70 Rapid Response activities, and included 196 companies on Employer Advisory Groups. Other highlights included: worked with the Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Louisville to reimagine health services in the KCCs, helped manufacturing companies build capacity to operate safely during COVID-19 through the Kentucky Manufacturing Career Center Employer Advisory Group, and placed tech employees at local companies through the bit502 work-and-learn apprenticeship program. In addition, they worked with employers including, Greater Louisville Inc., Louisville Forward, and others to develop Tech First - Greater Louisville's Innovation Alliance.

### **Labor Market Intelligence**

The KentuckianaWorks LMI team produced a variety of reports on the local workforce as well as new educational resources used in schools across the region. They also made many presentations to local business leaders, policy-makers and educators to help them better understand the Louisville region's workforce and its challenges. Highlights included, the Career Calculator web app, which offers data on local occupations and majors, surpassed the 45,000 total user mark; and the popular Labor Market Update e-newsletter reached 2,700 subscribers each month. The team also partnered with the Kentucky Center for Statistics to examine the long-term impacts of participating in SummerWorks in the 2019 SummerWorks Impact Report. LMI produced several special reports covering a variety of topics, including: "Who are Louisville's frontline workers during COVID-19?", and "The diminishing federal funding for workforce development". They also produced an Occupational Outlook guide that presents the projected local job needs over the next 10 years, as well as snapshots of jobs in advanced manufacturing, nursing and information technology.

### **Northern Kentucky Local Workforce Development Area**

Key performance indicators for the area include,

- served 19,494 individuals through Basic Career Services via five Career Center locations;

- provided skill-building and informational workshops to almost 1,400 customers;
- assisted 410 customers with resumes;
- led the state in the number of Kentucky Essential Skills Certificates with 67 credentials being earned through the KCC. Through our collaboration and partnerships, additional KESC credentials have been earned through our region;
- Advanced Business Services with a Market Penetration rate of 36.57 percent for the NKWIB; and
- high-demand industries met and exceeded WIOA performance outcomes for PY2019. Digital Literacy Workshops

This past year, digital literacy workshops increased by offering Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Microsoft Word and Excel classes in the Covington, Florence, and NKU Grant County Center. Since July 2019, 366 customers have attended the three locations. Customers were provided with tools to utilize a computer and that in turn increased their employability.

### **Pendleton County Family Court**

The Rural Talent Development Specialist attends Pendleton County Family Court every month and works with job seekers who are referred for employment needs. This relationship has resulted in 12 customers registered to WIOA Individual Career Services with a focus on job readiness.

### **Brighton Center**

In January 2019, Brighton Center launched City Futures, a place-based workforce development program in the City Heights neighborhood in Covington. Through this program, more than 50 individuals sought services at the career center, a KESC workshop was held for eight City Heights residents, and 13 people were co-enrolled in WIOA and City Futures services.

Through collaboration with Brighton Center, NKWIB and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Internal Airport (CVG), the development area reopened the CVG Career Center in April 2019 with a KCC on site in the Covington airport terminal to serve employers and job seekers. With over 70 employers on campus, CVG offers a wide array of

career pathways and quality jobs in our NKWIB high-demand industries. Collectively, those 70 companies employ over 14,000 regional job seekers. During the program year, through March 9, 2020, when they transitioned to virtual services, they held over 300 hiring events with 687 attendees and 319 job placements.

Brighton Center provides two years of aftercare to customers in the Campbell County Detention Center's Chemical Dependency program and leverages the work of a Family Development Specialist at the KCC to support the work of WIOA. During PY2019, they placed 15 women in jobs within 30 days of their release from the detention center.

### **COVID-19 Response**

During the two quarters that were impacted by pandemic, they continued to meet and exceed WIOA performance standards in all areas, including having 100 percent of the Adult and Dislocated Worker customers retain employment (4th quarter of employment), and 100 percent of the Dislocated Worker customers enter unsubsidized employment (2nd quarter), between January and June. Many of their workshops transitioned to a virtual or socially distanced format to continue effective service delivery. In partnership with the Kenton County Public Library (KCPL), they facilitated the monthly Elevator Pitch Power Hour workshop via Zoom in April. They have also transitioned the Job Search Success workshop through several partnerships, including virtually with Brighton Recovery Center and Campbell County Detention Center and in-person with Kenton County Public Library. In the final quarter of the program from April to June, during the pandemic, they had 181 individuals attend workshops via a virtual format.

Brighton Center optimized how they utilize our social media platforms to do outreach to regional job seekers and employers. In particular, our Facebook Live events have been an incredible success by enabling them to reach thousands of community members virtually. Between April and June, they hosted 18 Facebook Live events featuring either an employer or community partner with an average of over 700 views per video.

### **IRS Project History**

In September 2016, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced the closure of the Covington

processing center and layoffs at the Florence processing center to take place in September 2019. (Note: IRS was/is not required to submit a WARN or list of affected employees/contact information, per DOL/ETA policies on federal agencies). NKWIB sought a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) to provide the IRS transition assistance and the affected workers reemployment, career and training services resources. However, per DOL regulations, the NDWG application would not be accepted until six months before closure, or March 2019. To provide a longer period of transition for affected workers, EWDC offered the NKWIB the use of state-managed Rapid Response dollars to provide the IRS employees the necessary resources starting in January 2019. The initial announcement included over 1,800 affected workers but was revised to 800 after retirements, early buyouts, and transfers.

Key performance indicators and highlights for the IRS assistance include,

- served 325 affected workers through Rapid Response employee sessions;
- provided basic career services, including comprehensive assessments, job referrals, barrier identification and removal, basic skills/TA BE, and labor market information to 435 individuals;
- held four onsite job fairs/hiring events featuring 19 unique employers and serving almost 500 affected workers;
- facilitated re-employment workshops for 190 participants, including federal resume preparation, job search success, resume development, digital literacy, and financial literacy;
- assisted with the development of 183 resumes through one-on-one resume appointments; and
- assisted approximately 300 affected IRS workers obtain employment through this project. (Note: Sources for this information include, IRS, affected workers, and/or employers, as per IRS policy, employee names/contact information cannot be shared with outside agencies).

## Program Challenges

At the beginning of the project, there was a federal shutdown from January to March, which delayed onsite services until the IRS reopened. During this time they provided services from the KCC, including assistance with unemployment insurance.

While our data of the impacted workers indicated a high need for training to be marketable in the workforce, many workers preferred to stay within the federal government for employment rather than retrain for outside opportunities. Due to their longevity with IRS, federal benefits (retirement, health insurance), and the high availability of other government positions within the area, many individuals chose and were able to transfer their positions internally.

## Rapid Response Additional Assistance Trade Case Management

Key performance indicators include:

- assisted Itron's 423 affected workers due to a shift in the manufacturing of gas regulators to Mexico;
- served 13 customers in all levels of service and had 11 customers enrolled in training, four customers are still enrolled in training and scheduled to complete in this coming program year;
- assisted 86 percent (six of seven) of customers in completing training to earn a credential in NKWIB high-demand industry;
- helped 100% (five) of their registered TAA customers to employment . Note: several customers remain pending, awaiting a soft exit date; and
- held 15 employee Rapid Response and Trade Orientation sessions for 174 attendees.

## Program Highlights and Challenges

Itron's TAA petition was initiated by three impacted workers after news of a line being moved out of the country was announced. The process of moving the line and transitioning the work was ongoing and the employer needed staff to continue training and completing the current orders. As such, they had trouble in conducting large-scale Rapid Response

sessions for all of the affected workers as Itron was concerned that staff would leave before the completion of the work and were resistant to KCC providing services.

To reach those impacted workers outside of the employer, we held 11 community Rapid Response sessions in partnership with the Owen County Library for affected workers to be able to attend and gain information about KCC services.

The Rapid Response coordinator worked diligently with Itron to explain that our services were not meant to encourage individuals to leave before their lay off date, but rather to help be prepared with all of the critical resources when that date arrived. As a result, we were able to hold three Rapid Response sessions with Itron serving 73 affected workers.

Brighton Center as the WIOA Direct Workforce Services provider works closely with COO Trade staff on active trade petitions in the Northern Kentucky region. Our Rapid Response coordinator works hand-in-hand with key Trade staff and was present to provide KCC and WIOA resources during three onsite Trade Orientations at Itron, serving 84 workers.

While Brighton Center provides the key training services for those customers, they collaborate with Trade staff on vital Basic Career Services and Re-Employment to ensure a seamless transition and continuity of services. When customers move from the job search focus to WIOA training services it is after detailed and comprehensive assessments deem those services necessary.

Brighton Center also ensures continuity of service through regular training of TAA policy and procedure of all Talent Development staff and by identifying key staff to lead the work and be subject matter experts in Trade.

## West Kentucky Local Workforce Development Area

### Rapid Response and National Dislocated Worker Grant

The closure of Briggs and Stratton Corporation's regional engine manufacturing facility in Murray



created a significant need for Rapid Response services for both the employer and employees. The company, a large employer in the region for more than 30 years, announced the plant would cease all operations effective Sept. 27, 2020. Dislocations started in October 2019 and affected 634 individuals. The worker group includes local university students from Murray State University (MSU), who are working there to pay for their education.

Approximately one-half of the workers had been with the company for many years, had a high school diploma and many years of experience in small engine assembly or operator positions with no additional technical certifications. The majority of the employees (almost 60%) were involved in team assembly and had very few technological skills or other certifications. The company provided worker list showed 455 or 71 percent resided in Murray/ Calloway County, Kentucky.

Since the plant is located in a rural area and the closest KCC is 50 miles away, the area successfully launched a temporary American Job Center (AJC) to assist the dislocated workers in the fall of 2019. The West Kentucky Workforce Board (WKWB) collaborated with Murray State University, the regional state university in the area, to provide reduced-cost space for the Career Discovery Center (CDC)—the identified main services location for the Briggs workers. The board received federal grant funds and an approved trade petition.

Rapid Response and Dislocated Worker events began in October 2019 with a Job Skills Match Fair, followed by a Resource Fair. Trade orientations (TRaC sessions) began in November to make sure workers understood the benefits and services available to assist them.

In 2020, like most government agencies, COVID-19 caused the area to move to online models for Rapid Response and Trade orientations, and change service delivery models.

WIOA staff continue to offer co-enrollments, OJT and training participation for those with barriers, referrals to vocational rehabilitation, and strong outreach during the pandemic. OJT contracts have significantly increased for the worker group. Many regional employers are continuing to hire during the

pandemic for certain positions.

Once COVID hit, virtual job fairs, enrollments, interviewing and more were adapted to meet employer needs. Policies and procedures have been modified following the CARES Act to assure services are still available and provided with no contact, and promote social distancing between employers and staff. Since in-person events and services have been postponed or canceled since March, KCC staff have taken on more individualized and virtual assistance roles. The local area has moved many services to phone, video conference, FaceTime, online platforms, and whatever method is easier for the customer.

The NDWG career center staff has had to spend additional time with individual customers to help them complete items at home or in new ways. While not seeing most customers in person, NDWG staff has remained on site. The staff has taken on larger roles due to COVID. They are providing more comprehensive services unassisted onsite by traditional partners and staff, who are now teleworking and assisting with customer call volume in the state UI systems.

## **South Central Local Workforce Development Area**

The South Central Workforce Development Board established two new programs for PY2019. One project known as the Court2Career program is a partnership with the Cumberland's Workforce Development Board, which enables 23 counties to collaborate with the justice system to place justice-involved individuals directly into employment rather than incarceration. The grant has funded one position to justice-involved individuals to employment and to collaborate with the justice system on workforce development. Since the program's inception in March 2020, 271 individuals have been served with 175 of those having a positive employment outcome.

The second program created a director of postsecondary programming position to retain college graduates in the South Central Workforce Development Board's 10-county region. To date, this position has been in one-on-one contact with more than 500 students, assisting with items

such as college and career exploration, college applications, FAFSA, scholarship applications, finding student-friendly employment, general and position-specific resume and cover letter preparations, position and internship search, and connecting to human resources/hiring managers. As a result, 75 students have requested in-depth assistance with 25 gaining full-time employment upon or shortly after graduation and 12 gaining internships amid the pandemic. In addition, employment opportunities have been presented to the other students and/or graduates who remain in the pipeline.

In March 2020, the South Central Workforce Development Board made the successful transition to virtual services for career-seeker and employer customers. About two and a half years ago, the region had the vision for career services beyond bricks and mortar operations. In March 2020, at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Kentucky, the board along with the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, implemented Kentucky Career Edge across all 120 counties of the state. To date, over 4,500 new job seekers have transitioned to virtual career services utilizing the Kentucky Career Edge platform.

In addition to virtual career services, the workforce board has led a new webcast platform called Inside Jobs. This webcast series, in the form of interviews with our business services staff, seeks to grow awareness about employment opportunities that exist in their "own backyard" as well as what types of training, credentials and skills are needed to compete for those positions. They also released a virtual monthly Open Jobs Report, which focuses on projected employment demand in the board's targeted industry sectors. Additionally, the report provides video commentary with expert staff to "peel back the analysis." In doing so, the videos focus on average wages of top in-demand positions within each industry sector compared to regional living wage data compiled by MIT, top five employers posting for employment within each industry sector, the average number of part-time employment opportunities in our region, the average number of postings that specify required postsecondary credentials, among other key points. The purpose of the virtual Open Jobs Report is to provide their constituents with the interpreted data

needed to make informed decisions about career opportunities and in-demand skills for the region.

In expanding our virtual presence, we developed and released two conferences this year. One conference, entitled Women's Work, was geared toward helping women who have stepped out of the workforce for a while, moved frequently with a spouse perhaps due to military commitments, or who are entering the workforce for the first time with helpful sessions about engaging with the world of work. The second conference, WorkforceSight, is a virtual version of their 3rd Annual Workforce Summit, an in-person, employer-focused event for the past two years. This year's event, which will be launched in PY2020, will center on the topic of the future of work and has been transitioned to a fully virtual offering.

During PY 2019, the board developed a virtual access point at Ft. Campbell military installation. Ft. Campbell is located outside of our board's 10-county region, however, over 500 military service members and families exit the installation every month and are looking to relocate for employment opportunities. Our region's robust and growing economy can serve as the perfect solution for transition military service members and families who are searching for employment. The virtual access point enables us to showcase the lifestyle and employment opportunities in the region and to connect transitioning service members virtually to their team to coordinate with staff at Ft. Campbell to assist in the transition of service members to employment.

### **Statewide Reserve Awards PY 2019**

A statewide reserve award of \$750,000 was given to create Kentucky Career EDGE: Kentucky Career EDGE was developed and launched in March-April 2020 as a virtual career services curriculum for all 120 counties of the state. Kentucky Career EDGE has enabled workforce regions to serve customers with remote access career preparation and life skills throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, Kentucky Career EDGE has enabled workforce regions to scale services to meet increasing demand from career seekers, while staff have been focused on processing and resolving Unemployment Insurance related matters. As of October 2020, there are close to 5,000 new users of Kentucky Career EDGE throughout the state. Kentucky Career

EDGE has also served as a successful workforce systems integrator due to its increased usage among high school, community college, re-entry, Job Corps, vocational rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser, and other workforce partners across the state.

The SCWDB and the EKCEP collaborated to launch a registered apprenticeship intermediary non-profit with \$326,000 from the statewide reserve fund. The non-profit, myworkforcefuture, Inc., has been created to serve as the employer of record for apprentices. Also, some staff time has been charged to this statewide reserve allocation to help startup the organization. In addition to operational startup duties, staff time has also been dedicated to cultivating registered apprenticeship leads with employers. The SCWDB and EKCEP have contracted with a consultant to help operationalize the concept, including building a business plan, developing an employee manual, determining an outreach plan and strategy, and constructing an organizational budget. The organization is now operational, and it is anticipated that a staff member will be hired to begin fulfilling the mission of the organization to grow registered apprenticeships throughout the state. To date, \$77,000 has been expended from this award. The organization is in the early stages of operating.

SCWDB is using \$150,000 to fund Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) because it is one of the most in-demand job openings in south central, Kentucky. This funding enabled the workforce board to fund 36 individuals with barriers to employment into CDL training. Of those 36 individuals, 29 have employment with average wages at \$50,000 per year. Two individuals are enrolled in training now. Our organization is providing support to the remaining five program completers in locating employment.

Another \$174,250 grant was given to develop and implement a 23-county re-entry program. The Cumberland's Workforce Development Board CWDB and SCWDB partnered on an initiative called Court2Career, which seeks to collaborate with the justice system to place justice-involved individuals directly into employment rather than incarceration. The grant has funded one position to justice-involved individuals to employment and to collaborate with the justice system on workforce

development. Since the program's inception in March 2020, 271 individuals have been served. Of the 271 individuals served, 175 have positive employment outcomes.

An \$85,000 grant for postsecondary retention has created a director of post-secondary programming position to retain college graduates in the SCWDB's 10-county region. To date, this position has been in one-on-one contact with more than 500 students, assisting with items such as college and career exploration, college applications, FAFSA, scholarship applications, finding student-friendly employment, general and position-specific resume and cover letter preparation, position and internship search, and connecting to HR/hiring managers.

### **Rapid Response Award for PY2019**

The South Central Workforce Development Board has utilized \$159,750 in Rapid Response funding to assist in case management for the following employers: Sitel, 150 individuals; Fruit of the Loom, 150 individuals; Harman, 200 individuals; and LSC, 500 individuals.

## **Bluegrass Local Workforce Development Area**

The Bluegrass Local Workforce Development Area (BLWDA) has been working very hard to make a lasting impact on the 17 counties of the Bluegrass. We have a passionate staff that is truly making a difference in people's lives. The initiatives listed below are just a few of the good things they are doing in the Bluegrass.

Transitions to Transformation (T2T) is one of the newest workforce initiatives in the Bluegrass. T2T is designed to assist the job seekers who have the most challenging barriers to employment such as reentry from the criminal justice system, substance abuse recovery, homelessness, ESL individuals, and people in domestic violence shelters and human trafficking shelters. They are working with multiple recovery centers, shelters, clinics, probation and parole offices, etc. to assist job seekers who need basic skills training, by providing them with work experience for up to 480 hours.

Throughout the pandemic, career coaches have continued to meet with the T2T job seekers in person at the recovery centers and to assist them with basic and individualized career services as well as assisting them to find full-time employment. They also provide other supportive services to help with other needs, such as clothing and transportation. There is a great deal of success with this program. Currently, there are approximately 50 employers throughout the Bluegrass that have signed worksite agreements willing to give these job seekers a second chance.

One example of success through T2T is one of the employers in the Bluegrass, Toyota Tsusho, asked how they could assist individuals with employment in the recovery centers and what was the barrier preventing them from getting to their jobsite in Georgetown. They shared with Toyota Tsusho that transportation is one of the main barriers to employment in the Bluegrass. As a result, Toyota Tsusho donated \$35,000 to the Isaiah House in Lexington to purchase a 15-passenger van with the agreement that it would be used for any of the recovery homes, shelters, or clinics in Fayette and Scott counties. The Isaiah House now oversees the van and the logistics to pick up other WIOA participants in other recovery centers in these two counties to transport them to Georgetown for employment. Tsusho has been wonderful at making sure that the participants are all on the same shift and working with the participants to ensure their success.

The Bluegrass understands that the mental health of our job seekers is very important when seeking employment or beginning a job. With many of the staff having worked at the KCCs during the recession, we recognized many job seekers have mental health needs because they are dealing with issues they face never faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure job seekers are receiving needed services and assistance, Bluegrass has provided training and certification to all staff for Mental Health First Aid. They have hired a crisis counselor/resource navigator to assist job seekers dealing with mental health issues and to assist them to find resources so that they will be successful in obtaining and maintaining employment. The crisis counselor also has a therapy dog to assist their clients.

Since the pandemic, Bluegrass Workforce Investment Board (BWIB) has started a clothing bank to assist their clients with interview and work clothes. Due to the effects of COVID, many of the nonprofits that were providing free clothing had to close their doors leaving some job seekers without these resources. One of the nonprofits that went out of business due to COVID gave BWIB clothes for clients including one outfit for interviewing and up to five new outfits for full-time employment, if needed by the job seeker.

The BWIB hosted a Small Business Summit on November 10 virtually to assist small businesses dealing with the effects of the coronavirus and learn about available options. Our business services staff found that when the pandemic began and businesses were shut down, they did not know where to turn. Presenters will be from Eastern Kentucky University, Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), the Small Business Administration, The Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass, and the Small Business Development Center.

The BWIB has also partnered with the University of Kentucky and BCTC Workforce Solutions to provide a free ophthalmic assisting training program. The participants will work with an ophthalmologist or optometrist to provide patient eye care. The program will include 40 hours of classroom/lab training and a paid internship. Upon completion of the program, participants will be placed in employment at the University of Kentucky or another eye care facility.

To assist the inmate population, they are partnering with the detention centers throughout the Bluegrass to assist virtually with basic and individualized career services. Kentucky Career Edge was launched across the state in April and could not have come at a better time. The Career Edge modules can be completed independently or with a workshop coordinator. They piloted this project with the Fayette County Detention Center to teach nine of the 18 Life and Professional Skills Modules to six inmates six weeks before being released from jail. The workshop coordinator meets virtually with the six inmates two times a week to teach the courses. They provide paper copies of the Career Edge books since the inmates do not have access to a computer. During the workshop,

the inmates also meet with business services staff, crisis counselors, and a career coach to begin to build relationships before exiting jail. Upon exit, the former inmates met with staff to complete the remaining nine modules and were placed in a Work Experience/Internship with one of the T2T employers. Also, the Fayette County Detention Center refers home-incarcerated job seekers to the KCC staff for assistance in finding employment. They are currently working with Franklin and Madison counties to launch this program.

To further efforts to assist job seekers during the pandemic, the direct services provider staff and board staff have developed recordings for the website and social media in English, American Sign Language, and Spanish to meet the needs of as many people as possible. The recordings cover everything from services offered at the career centers to an employability skills workshop. Our direct services staff is also posting on social media weekly a Community Resource Minute to highlight a partner agency, Business Minute to highlight a business, and the Bluegrass Workforce Wednesday which teaches a workshop or highlights an upcoming event or initiative. They have also partnered with other agencies and libraries to offer employability skills workshops to clients virtually.

Bluegrass is partnering with the area technology schools to assist with providing virtual essential skills training through Kentucky Career Edge for high school seniors. KCC staff members are providing in-person workshops to students at school utilizing the 18 Career Edge modules. Upon completion of the high school, workforce staff will connect with graduates to assist with employment or training opportunities.

Workforce Services Manager Tiffanie Reeves was interviewed by the Department of Labor for a webcast which will be available on Workforce GPS. Ms. Reeves was interviewed about youth opportunities amid the COVID crisis. The webcast will be released in November.

To further the efforts with youth, the KEY (Kentucky Employs Youth) KCC-Bluegrass In-School Youth project focuses on creating talent pipelines. They are partnering with Berea Community Schools assisting in the development of a Work Ethics Seal. The goal

of the partnership is to create a talent pipeline for industries with students participating in courses focused on education along with job shadowing, internships, facility tours and mentorship.

In another youth project, they are partnering with Kentucky Jobs for America's Graduates to provide the youth of Scott and Boyle counties with in-depth labor market information, essential skill development and paid internships. Bluegrass will hold virtual family workshop sessions with a variety of speakers to assist the whole family in obtaining self-sufficiency.

Lastly, the Annual Joint Training and Meeting of the Governing Board of Local Elected Officials and the Workforce Innovation Board was held virtually on August 17. They had presenters from ECU and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce presenting on the topics of strategic planning, workforce in the Bluegrass, and substance use disorder.

Through all of these initiatives, Bluegrass has assisted many job seekers and employers through these tough times. They have highlighted many of their success stories on their website at <https://bgwib.us/successes>.

## **Green River Local Workforce Development Area**

### **Rapid Response**

The Green River LWDA provides local Rapid Response activities as needed. The following Rapid Response events have been held since the request was made in PY2019.

- US Bank, 65 employees affected, held employee meetings on-site on Sept. 18, 2019
- Rhino Resources, 170 employees affected, held employee meetings on-site Oct. 15, 2019. Also, coordinated a hiring event for displaced employees on Oct. 18, 2019. Twelve employers attended the event to offer various employment opportunities.
- Webster County Coal, 20 employees affected, Rapid Response packets were delivered to the employer to give to affected employees on Dec. 11, 2019

- Western Kentucky Coal Company, 250 employees affected, held employee meetings at the KCC on Feb. 26, 2020, and March 11, 2020
- Hartshorne Mining Group, 45 employees affected, held employee meetings at McLean County Courthouse on Feb. 27, 2020
- Macy's, 60 employees affected, multiple employee meetings were held on-site on March 3-5, 2020
- Dal-Tile, 67 employees affected, held employee meetings on-site on June 24, 2020, and July 8, 2020
- OMU, 52 employees affected, held employee meetings on-site on July 6, 2020

## **Trade**

The Green River LWDA served 19 trade customers in PY2019. Case Management services provide comprehensive services for each program participant. Case notes are one of the tools that document the participants' journey throughout the program. Case Notes organize information about participants and are used to plan career development strategies. Case managers interact with individuals to assess skills, competencies, and employment interests. Participants are provided resources, tools and skills to help them obtain employment, address existing barriers and become successful. An Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is developed based on comprehensive assessments for each participant receiving career and/or training services. It identifies employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve employment goals.

## **Statewide Reserve Funds**

The Green River Workforce Development Board used statewide reserve funds of \$30,265 to purchase laptop computers at the KCC in Owensboro to be used in the training/computer lab. This includes VIPRE software, fiber internet service (20MB), and network equipment (+installation and activation). The lab is used for various workshops, assessments, hiring events and training. By purchasing laptops, they can be used in other locations of the building or off-site. Additionally, other technologies such as a TV/monitor

(+installation), a printer/copier/scanner, and a podium to enhance the use of the lab were purchased.

## **Strategic Planning**

To conduct local strategic planning, the board received \$80,000. Through a competitive procurement, Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) was selected to facilitate the process for local strategic planning. TPMA assisted the board with the development of a strategic plan, which includes a mission statement, a strategic view of success for the plan, goals and action steps at the local level. TPMA also helped the board identify the stakeholders in the local system; assign stakeholders tasks to achieve the plan and a process which includes input from stakeholders, the board, and community. This was achieved through meetings with the board, input sessions, interviews with stakeholders, a board retreat, and ongoing dialogue with board staff. As a result of these tasks, a local strategic plan and a presentation suitable for public view are available.

## **Work-based Learning**

The GO FEMALES (Greater Owensboro Facilitating Equitable Manufacturing and Leadership Educational Solutions) officially launched in October 2019. The first cohort consisted of 20 students employed at UniFirst Corporation in Owensboro. The project is designed to increase the number of females participating in manufacturing training programs and employment in advanced manufacturing, a high-demand sector identified by the Green River Workforce Development Board and the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. While the primary targeted population to be served is female incumbent workers, other populations supported include out-of-school youth, low-income adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with barriers to employment. The project builds upon the innovative practices developed by the Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (KY FAME) to address the needs of manufacturers to remain competitive by creating a pipeline of highly skilled workers through successful "work and learn" models. The project includes innovative partnerships, employer engagement, diverse instructional models, flexible nontraditional delivery strategies, and comprehensive advising and support services.

All 20 students completed the first semester with a 3.8 cumulative GPA in December 2019. The program is offered in a hybrid format with instructor-led training combined with competency-based online learning and hands-on skill labs to practice and demonstrate mastery. A survey was conducted regarding what contributed to their decision to participate in the program. The overall response was an opportunity for career advancement, future salary increase, potential team leader/supervisory positions, skill gain in advanced manufacturing, and the ability to enroll in classes at little or no cost.

One student stated, "The people that are involved with this program truly make you feel like you can do it. Never before now have I had the confidence to do it. I am thankful for the opportunity!"

The second semester began in January 2020 and was progressing as planned until the pandemic interrupted training. Once training resumed, students completed the spring and summer semesters. Beginning in August 2020, 17 students were enrolled and on track to complete and graduate. After the completion of the program, the GO FEMALES students will earn an associate's degree in industrial maintenance technology, along with certifications. Recruiting efforts for the second cohort of students have continued despite challenges presented by COVID-19. Recruitment consists of in-person sessions and virtual sessions. Target populations for the next cohort have had an additional focus on dislocated workers and furloughed workers. Despite these challenges, the next cohort is scheduled to begin in spring 2021 with an emphasis on continuing to grow the next generation of manufacturing leaders while promoting gender diversity.

### **National Dislocated Worker Grant**

The board received a National Dislocated Worker Grant to provide employment recovery and training for eligible dislocated workers affected by COVID-19. The grant will enable employers and job seekers to recover from the negative impact in the Green River Local Workforce Area serving the counties of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union and Webster. The employment and training opportunities available are in the sectors of advanced manufacturing, business and information

technology, construction and skilled trades, healthcare, and transportation and logistics with a targeted population focused on workers directly laid off as a result of COVID-19, unemployed individuals, long-term unemployed (including homeless individuals and offenders) and those who are underemployed. The board in partnership with local employers, community agencies, the KCTCS, the KCC - Green River, county jails, and shelters will collaborate to address training and workforce needs in the Green River area.

The grant funds will pay wages for individuals placed in temporary employment, provide financial assistance for training (occupational, OJT, customized training, and incumbent worker training) and pay for case management services as well as activities related to administering the grant. Currently, 34 individuals have been placed in temporary employment with a focus on humanitarian assistance; seven individuals have been placed in short-term training and three are currently participating in OJT. The board supports employers with practices that promote healthy, productive and efficient workplaces; job seekers who, with additional training, would benefit from the opportunity to obtain employment in a high-demand sector; and temporary employment to those who have been laid off. The board will ensure flexibility to allow funds to be utilized efficiently and effectively based on employer and job seeker needs. The board is committed to providing the local workforce system resources and employment and training opportunities at a time when many are struggling to support themselves and their families.