

Education Action Steps

Action Item	Priority #	Quick Hit	Big Idea	Public Visibility
GED Boot Camp		✓		✓
High School Student Assessments and Outreach				✓
Apprenticeship Sales Force	4			
Sector Priorities	1		✓	✓
Eligible Trainers				
NCRC Expansion		✓		
Tech-High	2		✓	✓
GED in Context	3	✓		

Action Step**Make Investment Decisions Based on Sector Strategies****Description**

For local communities, tax breaks and infrastructure development are no longer the keys to attracting and retaining employers; businesses are now looking closely at the supply of skilled workers and the educational institutions that can provide the industry-relevant skills they need to grow.

Establishing statewide and regional industry sector strategies to achieve the best return on investment with the limited resources available to train and educate the workforce has proven effective in at least 25 other states.

Sector strategies will be developed by state and regional, employer-driven partnerships of industry, education and training, and other stakeholders focusing on the workforce needs of key industries to develop expertise in the industry of focus; and to coordinate information and resources to develop and implement effective, coordinated responses workforce challenges common across employers.

Sector strategies meet the skill, recruitment, and retention needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. Sector initiatives:

Address the needs of employers by focusing intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry sector over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of critical occupations within that industry, and assuring industry that there will be a pipeline of skilled workers to meet future workforce demands;

Address the needs of workers by creating formal career maps and pathways to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment, and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs;

Bolster regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and workforce development planning;

As sector strategies are developed, incorporation of energy efficiency and “green” issues must be incorporated in anticipation of the culture shift toward a greener economy with impacts in every sector.

Strategic Benefit

Helps align the Commonwealth’s workforce development system with economic

<p>development strategies.</p> <p>Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and economic development agencies, as well as major industries and their employers</p> <p>Helps evolve our methods of projecting jobs and training needs of the future</p>	
<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>Administrative</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Consultant to facilitate and coach the development of sector strategies - \$200,000</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>It is anticipated that roll out of the first sector strategies would occur within one year of contracting with the consultant</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Workforce Investment Board Commissioner of Workforce Development Local Workforce Investment Boards</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>Without sector strategies in place, investment will continue on a case by case, employer by employer basis. Kentucky will not realize the efficiencies that can be achieved by focusing our investments on specific high-growth, high-demand industries. Achieving these efficiencies could present opportunities to train more workers.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>Local areas will benefit by increased contact with business clients and greater focus on industry-specific training needs. Local areas should expect a higher return on investment due to the highly focused and efficient use of resources achieved via these strategies. Local boards and elected officials can have greater confidence that the services being delivered are those most valued by their clients.</p>	
<p>Potential Obstacles</p> <p>Defining and limiting the sectors Participation by stakeholders</p>	<p>Transparency/Accountability</p> <p>Benchmarking of current return on investment in each local area should be compared to the return on investment in the years following implementation of the strategies. Common performance measures should be sufficient for this analysis</p>
<p>Additional Comments</p> <p>The energy sector may prove to be the best sector to begin with as several efforts are currently underway to better understand the workforce needs of this industry.</p>	

Best Practice (optional)

Action Step**Tech-High****Description**

Much like many of our One Stop Centers suffer from an outdated identity of “unemployment offices”, Kentucky’s secondary technology centers also suffer from an outdated identity as the place to send the “undesirable” or “not-college-material” students. The fact is that these alternatives to traditional secondary education offer programs which can prepare students for work and/or continuation of their education into post-secondary skills training options such as associates degrees, occupational certificates, and registered apprenticeships.

Also similar to the identity problem with One Stop Centers, simply changing the name is not enough to realign the image of this educational alternative effectively. In order to shift the image, meaningful relationships with Kentucky high schools and Area Technology Centers around career development must be established and nurtured.

Providing Career Counselors in all Area Technology Centers, as well as those technical education facilities operated by local school boards, should be an area of focus for promoting relevant career pathways. This action is viewed as one of the most efficient and effective ways to transform the technical education system.

These services should be predicated on and supported by partnerships of local government, business and industry, industrial development authorities, and local workforce boards.

The infrastructure and equipment needs of technical education programs must be addressed on a regular basis. There are examples of businesses threatening to leave the state based on outdated technical education facilities and equipment which limit the competitiveness of the Commonwealth’s workforce.

By engaging local industry in the development of programs and facilities, technical education in Kentucky will be better positioned to respond to the needs of businesses as they thrive in an increasingly competitive environment. Institution of cutting edge programs, such as those associated with the green movement will also make our students more competitive in the job market.

Kentucky’s technical education system, regardless of what entity administers the facilities, should be viewed in the same light as a magnet school, where students aspire to attend rather than seeing it as a warehouse of last resort for non-traditional students.

<p>Strategic Benefit</p> <p>Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, and business and industry.</p> <p>Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates</p> <p>Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students</p> <p>Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries</p>	
<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>Change in the culture of technical education to one of collaboration and aspiration to lead and become a sought after service, rather than a last resort. Adding counselors to area technology centers would require legislation already proposed but not passed in General Assembly.</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Estimated annual cost for a full time counselor's salary/fringe = \$63,000 54 Area Technologies Centers @ \$63,000 = \$3,402,000</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education Local Workforce Investment Boards</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>Technical education will continue to be viewed in a more negative than positive light, programs have the potential to loose touch with skills in demand locally without strong business and industry involvement.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>Technical education has the potential to be viewed like other magnet schools with special focus and become a valuable resource to local employers and true preparatory experience for the world of work or continued education. Students engaged in such a program will become more competitive in the job market and help employers become more competitive in the world market.</p>	
<p>Potential Obstacles</p> <p>Culture shift and attitudinal realignment at all levels within the education system. Funding for career counselors</p>	<p>Transparency/Accountability</p>

Action Step**I-BEST: GED in Context****Description**

Develop integrated contextualized curriculum to meet the basic literacy skills needs and professional-technical certificate requirements to accelerate learning to prepare low-skilled adults for work and to increase their contributions to the state's economy while increasing their capacity for obtaining higher wage positions and career advancement opportunities.

Creating contextualized curriculum to be used in the 120 adult education programs across Kentucky is a way to accelerate this learning process. Currently, KYAE awards approximately 10,000 GED® diplomas and KCTCS awards 13,000 certificates a year. Each of these credentials can take several years to earn independently. However, a partnership to develop contextualized curriculum will accelerate the learning process enabling the student to enter the workforce much quicker than if each credential were earned separately.

The curriculum should be modeled after the nationally recognized Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model (I-BEST) developed by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and aligned with Kentucky's sector strategies. I-BEST programs are based on professional-technical programs that lead to an approved professional-technical certificate or associate degree program from a community college that result in high wage employment.

I-BEST pairs adult education instructors and professional-technical instructors in the classroom using contextualized curriculum, thus contributing to a learning experience for students that combines both literacy and workforce skills simultaneously. This process allows for the student to gain the necessary education and skills concurrently thus greatly reducing the amount of time the student spends in the classroom.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development

Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries

Helps establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century

Enables low-skill adults to simultaneously achieve basic literacy skills plus a college credential while decreasing the amount of time students spend in study.

Learning basic skills in the context of technical professions increases basic skills completion rates.

<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>Changes the philosophy that students must complete their GED prior to entering training or educational programs which provide them with occupation-specific skills development. Allows for simultaneous work toward a GED and career credentials.</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Estimated <\$1 million</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>Short term, curriculum development Longer term, incremental integration into postsecondary technical training programs</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Adult Education, Council on Postsecondary Education Kentucky Career and Technical College System</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>Kentucky's ability to grow its human capital infrastructure and raise the educational attainment level necessary to compete economically will suffer. Kentucky will continue with business as usual and see programs diminish or disappear as budget cuts limit the resources to achieve gains in education attainment.</p> <p>Employers see a value in the GED, in some cases as better than a high school diploma. Not implementing this program will constitute a missed opportunity to demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to innovate and provide business and industry with the skilled workforce they need to be competitive.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>The program will help local areas develop a more competitive workforce in a shorter period of time.</p> <p>Participants in the program will find the curriculum for obtaining their GED more relevant to their career choices, increasing chances for successful attainment of both education and occupation credential attainment.</p>	
<p>Potential Obstacles</p> <p>Funding for curriculum development</p>	<p>Transparency/Accountability</p>
<p>Additional Comments</p> <p>Individuals who attend community college occupational degree programs are eight percent more likely to be employed and earn \$4,400 per year more on average than similar individuals in the labor force who do not enroll in any training programs (Research Report No. 06-2 Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 2005).</p>	

Best Practice

Washington State's I-Best Program

Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) began as a pilot program at 10 community and technical colleges and has since been implemented in all 34 colleges in the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) system.

The program was developed in response to studies performed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges SBCTC that indicated that students were unlikely to complete a long-term basic skills class and then successfully transition to college level vocational programs. The I-BEST model challenges the traditional notion that students must first complete adult basic education (ABE) or English as a second language (ESL) before moving to college level course work. The I-BEST model pairs ESL or ABE instructors with vocational or content area instructors to co-teach college level vocational courses.

State and national research conducted by the SBCTC revealed that low-skilled adults often begin their educational process in either ESL or ABE courses, and few make the transition to workforce skills training programs that allow them to reap the benefits of higher wage and higher skills jobs. The intention of the ten demonstration projects was to test "traditional notions that students must first complete all levels of basic education before they can begin workforce training."

I-BEST has historically been tied to economic development, with I-BEST courses at individual colleges aligning with high-wage, high-demand jobs within their communities.

A study conducted by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University concluded that Washington's I-BEST students were "more likely than others to: continue into credit-bearing coursework; earn credits that count toward college credentials; earn occupational certificates; and make point gains on basic skills tests.

The study also used a propensity score matching model to track students for two years. This model revealed that the probability of I-BEST students earning at least one college credit was 90 percent while the probability for students in the non I-BEST control group was only 67 percent. Persistence into the second year of college was 78 percent for the I-Best students, compared to 61 percent for the control group. Chances of earning an occupational certificate proved to be 55 percent for I-BEST students compared to a mere 15 percent for the control group.

Action Step	
Apprenticeship Sales Force	
Description	
<p>Establish a partnership to market the benefits of registered apprenticeships to Kentucky business. This “earn while you learn” approach to skills development for a wide variety of crafts and trades in Kentucky has not come near reaching its potential as a tool for building a highly skilled workforce, helping business and industry increase their competitiveness, and providing sustainable wages for Kentuckians willing to work hard to raise their standard of living.</p> <p>In order to reach its potential with registered apprenticeships, a marketing partnership is recommended to promote the benefits to business and industry. This opportunity must be understood and promoted by the business service representatives of each local board and become an integral part of the solutions-based business services model.</p> <p>Registered Apprenticeships benefit employers by providing them with a pipeline of skilled workers with industry-specific training and hands-on experience. Registered Apprenticeship programs are customizable to match employers' needs, and highly flexible to always to meet employers' changing requirements.</p> <p>The growing interest in energy efficiency and environmental sustainability (Green) should be monitored by the partnership to assure that Kentucky’s apprenticeship programs are competitive with those in other regions and states.</p> <p>The partnership should also look at marketing this educational/work alternative to secondary students through the promotion and development of pre-apprenticeship programs.</p>	
Strategic Benefit	
<p>Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education, labor organizations and business.</p> <p>Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students</p> <p>Establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century</p>	
Nature of Change	Cost
Collaborative effort between existing organizations.	Training of Workforce staff - \$25,000

<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>This training should occur in advance of any outreach program rollout for re-energized business services.</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Labor Cabinet Office of Employment and Training Local Workforce Investment Boards One Stop Centers Kentucky Career and Technical College System – Apprenticeship Studies Kentucky Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>As apprenticeships grow in importance and evolve with new technologies, Kentucky could fall behind the rest of the nation, leaving our business and industry sectors less competitive and our workforce lacking the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>As an alternative to traditional post-secondary education, registered apprenticeships will appeal to a segment of the population concerned about earning a wage immediately while developing skills through a combination of hands on and classroom work. Apprenticeships also offer local workforce agencies an opportunity to discuss career pathways and training alternatives with customers.</p> <p>Local business contacts will increase as the partnership promotes the benefits of the programs, opening the door to promote additional services offered by the state and local workforce system.</p>	
<p>Potential Obstacles</p> <p>Economic conditions could limit the expansion of the program during recovery until additional funding becomes available and demand is realized.</p>	<p>Transparency/Accountability</p>
<p>Additional Comments (optional)</p> <p>Kentucky currently has 300 registered apprenticeship programs</p> <p>Currently funded through the General Fund expansion package</p> <p>Shortages are anticipated in the following trades – Welders, Lineman, Pipefitters, Diesel Mechanics</p>	

<p>Action Step</p> <p style="text-align: center;">High School Outreach</p>	
<p>Description</p> <p>Encourage local workforce boards to develop strong working relationships with middle and high schools in their regions. These relationships should be based on the One Stop centers' capability to deliver assessment and career exploration services, and the direct linkages to the local business community these boards can provide.</p> <p>Participation in such efforts as career fairs, college recruiting events, innovation and entrepreneurship programs, "reality stores", etc. local workforce boards can better position their clients for the realities of the world of work and postsecondary education. As a third-party "expert", the local workforce system will be positioned as an objective resource for career, education and training information for youth.</p> <p>Based on strengthened relationships, local workforce boards should position themselves as expert problem solvers by targeting services to youth identified by the schools as at-risk of dropping out.</p>	
<p>Strategic Benefit</p> <p>Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development</p> <p>Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates</p> <p>Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students</p>	
<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>This action item must be based locally and depends entirely upon the buy-in of local workforce investment boards. However, changing the perception of the One Stop centers and the workforce system as whole may include such outreach efforts as part of the branding architecture of a revitalized system.</p>	<p>Cost</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>This is mid-range action step (2-3 years)</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Local Workforce Investment Boards Local Boards of Education</p>

Consequences of No Action

Local areas will continue to deal with high school drop outs as customers of the workforce system and dedicate increasingly scarce resources to remedial education rather than using those resources for career training and other services. Funds will be used to catch people up rather than advance the quality of the workforce.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local workforce boards benefit by repositioning themselves within their regions as expert problem solvers, rather than just a service delivery organization.

An “intervene now, rather than expend greater resources later” approach should help local areas in the long run to advance the quality of their workforce by dedicating fewer resources to remedial skills development and greater dedication to advanced education and training.

Local schools and their students will benefit from early(ier) intervention to help prevent drop outs and better prepare students for the realities of employment and education.

Potential Obstacles

Local workforce areas will likely be challenged to identify resources they can dedicate to these programs.

Transparency/Accountability

Best Practice

Cumberlands WIA High School Assessments

In 2005, the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Area (CWIA) in partnership with Kentucky Adult Education conducted a pilot program to work with businesses and individuals to raise awareness and use of the WorkKeys assessment and the significance of obtaining a Kentucky Employability Certificate for both. During this pilot, the lack of knowledge by both groups became evident. Major inroads were made to educate and make the use of this certificate in the interviewing and hiring process. The project also revealed the need for access to a large population of workers that would help build a foundation and larger pool of individuals with the KEC to demonstrate the quality of our local workforce for economic development purposes.

After research and thought, a decision to target high school seniors as the focus to build the larger pool was made. During the pilot, a limited number were selected and the results were successful.

As a follow-up to that pilot, the Cumberlands Youth Council and Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) chose to continue the project. It has been in operation for the past five years.

During that period, 13,421 seniors took the test with 7,809 receiving either a gold or

silver certificate. Those that do not attain a certificate or wish to obtain a higher certificate are encouraged to contact their local Adult Education Center after graduation.

This service to youth is a core service assessment that can lead to a certificate that will benefit them as they seek employment for years to come. The Cumberland Youth Council and CWIB consider this a great benefit to both the individual and the business community and one step in creating and showing the quality of workforce in our area.

Region 1 West Virginia - Tipping Point Program

The Region 1 Workforce Investment Board has developed a youth initiative that encompasses the stated goals and objectives of the WIB, specifically: "Promote effective economic and workforce development partnerships that develop and sustain productive workers for business and create prosperous communities for our citizens."

The Tipping Point program was developed as a Youth Enrichment Service to introduce youth to the WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Center system and the services available including job preparation, job search activities, investigation of specific careers, required educational levels for specific jobs, labor market information, and demand occupations within the region / state.

An instructional and entertaining video containing the career information was transferred to computer-disk format, and 16,000 DVDs, CDs and videos were distributed to students in area high schools. The purpose of the project was to engage youth to think about career choices, and provide information to help them prepare to achieve in their chosen career. This process will be repeated each year for students entering high school. Each youth can access the WORKFORCE West Virginia website through their DVD's or CDs.

The Region 1 Board is aware of the need for youth career awareness and job training, as was brought into sharp focus by the U.S. Department of Labor statistics that report 11% of West Virginia teens (aged 16 to 19) are not attending school and are not working. The national average is 8%.

Action Step		Eligible Trainers	
Description			
Overhaul the Eligible Trainer Provider List process and eligibility criteria to reinforce priorities around high demand occupations, sustainable wages and career ladder goals.			
Strategic Benefit			
Ensure the training dollars provided meet the needs of business and industry, provide a livable wage for workers and support the regional and state economy.			
Nature of Change		Cost	
Develop a new statewide eligible training provider policy and redesign the state and local process to support that policy.		Programming - \$10,000	
Implementation Timing		Responsible Party(ies)	
Examine best practices around the process (1 month) Draft the new policy for KWIB review and approve (1 month) Retool the process (3 months) Train state and local staff (3 months)		Kentucky Workforce Investment Board Office of Employment and Training Division of Workforce and Employment Services	
Consequences of No Action			
Training resources may not be strategically invested based on state and regional business needs or economy demands. Job seekers may not be trained in high demand, high growth occupations limiting their economic potential.			
Benefit to Local Areas/Clients			
Individuals that receive training will be equipped to meet employers' needs in their regional economy.			
Potential Obstacles		Transparency/Accountability	
Resistance to an expanded state role in the Eligible Trainer Provider List process.			

Action Step**GED® Express
Lodge and Learn****Description**

Create an opportunity for dislocated workers and other unemployed individuals without a high school diploma to complete their GED in a compressed timeframe. Participants in the program will be required to meet certain selection criteria, including Test for Adult Basic Education minimum scores.

The program will compress the classroom work required to prepare students to take the GED exam into a four-week period. State and, possibly, university facilities (such as state park lodges and university dorms and classrooms) will be used as sites for the program so that classroom and sleeping accommodations can be provided on-site, immersing the students in a controlled environment and minimizing distractions during the program. Such locations also provide an environment that is not associated with prior failed attempts at completion of high school studies.

Rather than one-on-one, on-demand instruction, participants will receive instruction in a structured classroom environment with other students testing in at or about the same level. The instruction provided will be in the GED content areas of reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

Participants completing the program will receive free room and board during the program and will be able to spend weekends at home. The program will be scheduled around non-peak demand times at state parks and possibly universities in order to obtain reduced rates for lodging, meals and classroom rentals.

Career exploration opportunities will be incorporated into the program curriculum as a means of breaking up the day, maintaining the interest of students, and providing a context for importance of skill attainment.

Local workforce boards will also be asked to provide an orientation to the participants about the services offered through the one stop system, including employment services, occupational training and postsecondary education.

Other opportunities can also be integrated into the program, such as Dress for Success, interviewing skills, resume preparation, etc.

Career-readiness will be a key component of this model. In addition to obtaining a GED, students who complete the program will have to opportunity to test for and receive a national Career Readiness Certificate, based on ACT's WorkKeys assessment, adding to their work-ready credentials.

<p>Strategic Benefit</p> <p>Increases the number of college- and career-ready GED graduates</p> <p>Promotes educational attainment, including transition to postsecondary education, technical education, apprenticeships and specialty training</p> <p>Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries</p> <p>Establishes the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century</p>	
<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>Removes the barrier of time investment required by individuals to obtain the academic and skills preparation necessary for the jobs of the future.</p>	<p>Cost</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>It is anticipated that several pilot projects in strategic locations will begin within one year. If successful, the program can be expanded throughout the state and throughout the year.</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Adult Education, Council on Postsecondary Education Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Public University Partners Kentucky Community and Technical College System Local Workforce Investment Boards</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>Kentucky's ability to grow its human capital infrastructure and raise the educational attainment level necessary to compete economically will suffer. Kentucky will continue with business as usual and see programs diminish or disappear as budget cuts limit the resources to achieve gains in education attainment.</p> <p>Employers see a value in the GED, in some cases as better than a high school diploma. Not implementing this program will constitute a missed opportunity to demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to innovate and provide business and industry with the skilled workforce they need to be competitive.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>Local leaders have the opportunity to participate in an innovative and highly visible program designed to increase the competitive characteristics of its workforce.</p> <p>Individuals who may not have had an interest in obtaining their GED due to the length of time required to achieve it will have an opportunity to see quick results.</p>	

Local areas will have an opportunity to market their services to a group of interested customers.

Potential Obstacles

Funding for the program will be an issue. Assuming that the program has enough appeal to secure funding for the pilot projects, the sustainability and expansion of the program will need to be addressed. Other barriers may include childcare, transportation, undiagnosed learning disabilities, and proper screening of individuals and their commitment to the program.

Transparency/Accountability

Initial success of the program will be evaluated based on two or three pilot projects in different locations. Criteria will include: number of applicants, number selected, completions, GED and NCRC certificates awarded.

Additional Comments (optional)

It is anticipated that the pilot projects will generate a significant amount of media attention, increasing visibility of the importance of educational attainment. This increased attention is also anticipated to increase interest in GED attainment for those who may also be unable to participate in the program as well. Kentucky Adult Education should use this attention to increase participation in its more traditional adult education programs throughout the state, as well as incorporate best practices and lessons learned from this program to improve efficiencies and results in those programs.

Best Practices

U.S. Army Prep School

Want to join the Army, but you don't have a high school diploma, or a GED? Previously, this was not possible. However, the Army has now opened the Army Preparatory School at Fort Jackson, S.C. to help young men and women who fall short of the education requirements needed to join the military.

The four-week course is an Army one-year test program to help young men and women who want to enlist in the Army to obtain their General Educational Development, or GED, certificate.

Those accepted for the program enlist in the Army, but instead of attending basic training after their time in the Reception Battalion, they attend the prep school. Upon completion of the program, and receiving a GED, they then attend basic training. In addition to intensive classroom training to prepare for the GED examination, recruits attending the prep school will also undergo daily physical training, be subject to Army discipline, and learn customs and traditions, to help prepare them for basic. Those who fail to successfully complete the program are returned to their hometown and given an entry-level separation, with no prejudices.

To be eligible, applicants must meet the normal enlistment standards (except for education requirements). The program is only open to applicants who score at least a 50 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and those who aren't eligible to return to high school.

Once fully operational, officials said the prep school could accommodate upwards of 60 new

students each week. The school will have the capability of educating 240 recruits at a time in core academic subjects over the course of four weeks. It is expected to yield nearly 3,000 graduates in its first year who, upon completion, will continue directly to basic combat training and advanced individual training.

"The APS will help provide the Army with dedicated young men and women who until now were unable to serve their country," Capt. Brian Gaddis the APS company commander, told the Army News Service.

"Because of education requirements, there are high-quality, motivated citizens who can't join," he said. "The APS gives them an opportunity to serve their country."

The Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is also working with the South Carolina Department of Education to explore the possibilities of the state granting students with an actual high school diploma.

Gen. William S. Wallace, commanding general of TRADOC, believes that the health and fitness of America's youth is rapidly becoming a national security issue.

"Today only 28 percent of the 17 to 24 year-old population qualifies to wear a military uniform. The other 72 percent fail to meet minimum standards on education, character and health," said Wallace. "We will not lower our training standards so we're faced with helping to raise the health and education standards for our young people who want to serve."

A visit to Fort Knox by Cabinet and Adult Education representatives in March, 2010, included a briefing by Colonel Kevin Shwedo of the U.S. Army Preparatory School at Fort Jackson, SC. Col. Shwedo provided the following results of the school to date:

- Goal of 90 percent graduation rate has been exceeded, actual rate is 99 percent
- Majority of graduates show interest in postsecondary education opportunities
- Created a charter school on post so high school diplomas could be issued
- Currently able to issue a high school diploma from each candidate's original high school

New Opportunity School for Women – Berea, KY

The New Opportunity School for Women was founded in 1987 with the mission of improving the educational, financial and personal circumstances of low-income, middle-aged women in Kentucky and the south central Appalachian region.

Twice a year, the New Opportunity School for Women chooses 14 women to attend their Berea College Campus to spend three weeks in extensive career exploration and leadership development. Included is placement in an internship on campus or in the community. Through testing and counseling, job skills are identified and program participants learn to write a resume and practice job interview skills.

Educational and cultural opportunities are also provided through field trips to museums, music programs, lectures, courses in Appalachian literature, writing and computer basics. Participants examine their personal situations and possibilities for their future through group and individual counseling. Seminars are held to build self-confidence and to help participants return to their community and family with new self-awareness.

There is no cost for attending the New Opportunity School. Room and meals are provided as well. Grants for travel and childcare are available; however, childcare cannot be provided on campus during the three-week school.

Women living in Kentucky and the south central Appalachian region who have completed high school, have a GED® diploma (or actively working on a GED diploma) and do not have a college degree are eligible to apply. Participants should be between the ages of 30 and 55, of low income and should demonstrate motivation and eagerness to learn. Participants will remain on campus for the entire three-week program.

The school operates two sessions each year. The Winter Session begins on the first Sunday in February and the Summer Session begins on the first Sunday in June.

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Action Step**National Career Readiness Certificate – Adoption & Expansion****Description**

Kentucky pioneered the work-ready certificate with the implementation of the Kentucky Employability Certificate. That program became later a model for other states.

Based on performance on several Work Keys tests, the Kentucky Employability Certificate was envisioned to provide potential employers with an assessment of applicants basic skills in math, English and locating information. The program met with limited success and is used extensively by some employers in certain regions of the state and not at all by others.

ACT, the organization that administers the Work Keys assessments has expanded upon Kentucky's idea and created a nationally recognized credential called the National Career Readiness Certificate. This credential offers portability between states. ACT offers certificates at four levels, bronze, silver, gold and platinum. A focus group of those familiar with the Kentucky Employability Certificate and the National Career Readiness Certificate have concluded that the Bronze level certificate offers little value to employers. However the remaining three levels can provide employers with a valuable tool in screening applicants.

In an effort to provide business and industry with a screening tool that could prove valuable in the hiring process. These levels also provide certificate holders with a credential that will help them compete in the job market. For those reasons it is recommended that Kentucky adopt the National Career Readiness credential and recognize only those scoring at the silver and above levels with certificates. This will replace of the Kentucky Employability Certificate.

Expansion of assessment sites to include all comprehensive one stop locations is also recommended. It is further recommended that an alliance be formed between the Department of Workforce Development and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to promote the value of the certificate to business and industry, and that certificates be signed by the Governor and the President of Chamber.

Other alliances to promote the value of the certificates should be formed with the Kentucky Retail Federation, Hospital and Health Care Associations, the Hotel and Motel Association, the Restaurant Association, and the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers.

<p>Strategic Benefit</p> <p>Increase communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development</p> <p>Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates</p> <p>Provides opportunity to promote educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students</p> <p>Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries</p> <p>Helps establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century</p>	
<p>Nature of Change</p> <p>Administrative, no legislation required</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Start up and year one funding - \$420,000 Paid for with 2009 Incentive Grant</p>
<p>Implementation Timing</p> <p>Roll out in June 2010</p>	<p>Responsible Party(ies)</p> <p>Kentucky Workforce Investment Board Office of Employment and Training One Stop Career Centers Council on Post secondary Education Kentucky Career and Technical College System Kentucky Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>Consequences of No Action</p> <p>Kentucky will lose a competitive advantage in providing employers with screening tools for new hires.</p>	
<p>Benefit to Local Areas/Clients</p> <p>Opportunity to provide valuable service to local employers, opportunity to meet with applicants to assess and refer for training, if needed, added value to One Stop Centers.</p>	
<p>Potential Obstacles</p> <p>Cost of assessments in future years</p>	<p>Transparency/Accountability</p> <p>Weekly sweeps of assessments conducted and issuance of certificates.</p> <p>Annual survey to determine use of certificates by employers in conjunction with partner organizations</p>

Best Practice

In 2005, the Cumberland Workforce Investment Area (CWIA) in partnership with Kentucky Adult Education conducted a pilot program to work with businesses and individuals to raise awareness and use of the WorkKeys assessment and the significance of obtaining a Kentucky Employability Certificate for both. During this pilot, the lack of knowledge by both groups became evident. Major inroads were made to educate and make the use of this certificate in the interviewing and hiring process. The project also revealed the need for access to a large population of workers that would help build a foundation and larger pool of individuals with the KEC to demonstrate the quality of our local workforce for economic development purposes.

After research and thought, a decision to target high school seniors as the focus to build the larger pool was made. During the pilot, a limited number were selected and the results were successful.

As a follow-up to that pilot, the Cumberland Youth Council and Cumberland Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) chose to continue the project. It has been in operation for the past five years.

During that period, 13,421 seniors took the test with 7,809 receiving either a gold or silver certificate. Those that do not attain a certificate or wish to obtain a higher certificate are encouraged to contact their local Adult Education Center after graduation.

This service to youth is a core service assessment that can lead to a certificate that will benefit them as they seek employment for years to come. The Cumberland Youth Council and CWIB consider this a great benefit to both the individual and the business community and one step in creating and showing the quality of workforce in our area.