

EASTERN KENTUCKY
WORKFORCE INNOVATION BOARD
STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2024

MISSION

The Eastern Kentucky WIB's mission is to "Prepare, advance, and expand the workforce of Eastern Kentucky."

GOALS

More –and better –job opportunities for the citizens of our region.

A more diverse economy in our region.

A better-educated and better-prepared workforce in our region.



VISION

The Eastern Kentucky WIB's Strategic Plan includes its visions for the region of Eastern Kentucky, the workforce system in Eastern Kentucky, and the role of the WIB:

- *Vision for the Region of Eastern Kentucky* – The WIB's vision for the region of Eastern Kentucky includes the goals below that expand its influence with other key components of the workforce system like economic development, secondary and post-secondary education, and others – with the outcome being that the WIB will have a more tangible effect on job creation, educational and skills attainment, graduation rates, economic development and diversity, and job placement and retention. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - » Employers – new, existing, and emerging – have an adequate supply of well-educated and well-trained workers.
 - » Residents have the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes to work and earn incomes that make them self-sufficient.
 - » The region exhibits improved college and career readiness among high school graduates
- *Vision for the Region's Workforce System* – The WIB's vision for the region's Workforce System includes the goals below for services and programs driven by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the current federal law that guides service delivery for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. These goals also include those shared by the Workforce Innovation Board and various partner agencies in the overall, integrated workforce system, including: postsecondary education, Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Blind Services Division, Kentucky Adult Education, Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, Kentucky Career Development Office, Experience Works, Job Corps, and Kentucky Department for Community Based Services, as well as programs authorized under the federal Wagner-Peyser Act. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - » Lifelong learning and skills development are integral parts of the workforce system. Long-standing relationships between employers and educators keep education and training opportunities one step ahead of the needs of the market.
 - » The system partners with those industries and businesses that drive the regional economy. It also works with chambers of commerce and economic development entities throughout the region to identify and support emerging industries vital to the region's continued growth and diversification.
 - » Strong commitments to innovation, productivity, accountability, and results keep the system flexible and responsive to employers' and residents' ever-changing workforce needs.

- *Vision for the EKCEP Workforce Innovation Board* – The WIB's vision for the role of the WIB includes the goals below that set the course for continued innovation in service delivery and the leveraging of additional funding to create new revenue streams that shape and guide organized activity outside the scope of WIOA. The goals associated with this vision are:
 - » The EKCEP WIB will continue to explore ways to influence economic development and provide citizens' access to more and better jobs through the use of innovation, technology, and creating opportunities for the region to participate in the global digital and marketplace.
 - » EKCEP will continue to identify and pursue new revenue streams and leverage funding to diversify the employment base and expand activity for the purposes of our mission.
 - » The EKCEP WIB sets the regional workforce agenda and is widely recognized for its excellence as a leader and governing board, and for its commitment to making a difference. [We take this role and convene all law-required state partners.]

CORE VALUES

In addition to defining its mission, goals, and visions, the Eastern Kentucky WIB's Strategic Plan also identifies five core values that the WIB believes must be embraced and practiced in order for it to succeed in its mission and attain its visions and goals. These core values are:

<p>Innovation</p> <p>We believe we must remain creative and embrace emerging technologies and opportunities in order to not only strengthen economic development now, but also anticipate and plan for future growth and expansion.</p>	<p>Diversity</p> <p>We believe that if Eastern Kentucky is to grow to new levels, sustain our citizens, and support both new and existing business, we must pursue economic diversification.</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <p>We believe we must seek, build, and nurture collaborative partnerships that will leverage the workforce system with other service providers to bring about more success for jobseekers and employers than we can accomplish alone.</p>	<p>Vision</p> <p>We believe that to positively change the economic landscape of our region, it will take a unified strategic effort and focused planning powered by a strong vision that guides the collective actions of education, economic development, and workforce partners.</p>	<p>Adaptability</p> <p>We believe that we must remain nimble and flexible in creating and delivering relevant workforce and employer services that have the most impact on jobseekers and employers and economic development throughout the region</p>
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STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The EKWIB's Strategic Goals and Objectives are aligned with the Commonwealth's strategic recommendation designed to meet the workforce needs of the future. Moreover, they are focused on supporting the growth of new and expanding industries in Eastern Kentucky within the following sectors:

- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Business Services
- Energy Production and Transmission
- Skilled Trades

The EKWIB's priorities of preparing the workforce to participate in the ever-changing future of work while increasing greater workforce participation are reflected in the goals and objectives that focus on four workforce development areas:

- Employers
- Education
- Workforce Participation
- Organization and Resource Alignment

The EKWIB's goals in each of these four areas and the metrics that will be used to evaluate progress toward their attainment are described in the sections below.



Goal One Employers

The EKWIB's priority for employers is active engagement to inform, design, and influence systemic collaborative initiatives to attract skilled workers, develop new entrants into the workforce, develop existing businesses, and support growth.

Objective 1-A: The EKWIB will develop and implement agreements with individual employers and/or employer groups that describe their workforce needs, outline a multi-year plan for meeting those needs, and define the role of key workforce partners in that multi-year plan. These agreements will formalize the EKWIB's relationships with these individual employers or employer consortia and define the EKWIB's objectives for the relationship. (For example: an agreement may define specific numbers of qualified employees for specific positions that an employer will need within a specified period, and identify the tactics EKWIB staff and other community partners will use to help produce those employees.) If circumstances

or the employer's needs change during the effective period of the agreement, the agreement may be modified collaboratively by the EKWIB and the employer to reflect and adapt to these changes.

This business- and industry-focused program structure will require the EKWIB's front-line staff to work with the region's community colleges and other training providers to ensure that their curricula and the number and competency of their graduates satisfy the employer's requirements as identified in the agreement. As a part of this, the EKWIB's front-line staff will need to work with the community colleges and other training providers to identify the barriers that keep students from completing training, and work with community and workforce system partners in a "collaborative impact case management" approach to remove those barriers. The agreements should spell out as specifically as possible the roles of community and workforce system partners in achieving business and industry objectives.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the extent to which the EKWIB and its partners meet the workforce needs as defined in MOUs and other agreements.

Objective 1-B: The EKWIB will increase the use of a "success coach" model and an "employer resource network (ERN)" approach to workforce development that links workforce staff to specific employers or employer groups. This strategy involves an ERN success coach who provides work-related services for the employer's workforce. The ERN success coach's duties will include helping workers understand and access career pathways and promotion opportunities and helping remove barriers to workers' success by coordinating and providing access to resources. Ideally, implementing an employer resource network will involve the employer or employer group sharing the cost of their dedicated or shared success coach(es). ERN success coaches may serve multiple employers in the same industry or related industries across several counties or even across multiple contractor areas. Creating and defining an ERN success coach arrangement may be a part of the plan defined by an agreement as described in Objective 1-A above.

In situations where a fully realized, employer supported ERN is not feasible or has not yet coalesced, the EKWIB front-line staff from WIOA offices may be assigned or attached to an employer or group of related employers as success coaches under the workforce system's agreement with that employer or sector. As an additional use of the expertise in that sector they would develop, these front-line staff would conduct outreach in area high schools, tech schools, post secondary education institutions, and other training providers about the opportunities and career paths in that sector.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the number of employers fiscally participating in an ERN and the percentage of the costs of ERNs that is borne by these private sector employers.

Objective 1-C: The EKWIB will increase participant involvement in work-based learning and training (e.g., work experience, on-the-job training, apprenticeship) that is linked to needs of employers or an employer group.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the increase in number of individuals served through work-based learning activities.



Goal Two Education

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

Objective 2-A: The EKWIB will advance information regarding career opportunities, best practices, and growth of key industries via social media networks and other internet-based platforms, including East Kentucky Works, a podcast that will feature business leaders, community developers, and training initiatives throughout the region. East Kentucky Works will be available for free on major podcasting platforms and disseminated through previously established online social networks.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the dissemination of pertinent workforce related information and the creation of the East Kentucky Works podcast.

Objective 2-B: The EKWIB will work collaboratively with secondary education, post secondary education and key economic sectors to create pathways for secondary students to earn entry-level credentials while in high school, participate in pre-apprentice opportunities with industries, and advance a K-Tech model throughout the region.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the increase in the numbers of Eastern Kentucky high school graduates who graduate with a job-ready, entry-level credential.

Objective 2-C: The EKWIB will work collaboratively with industry and adult education to promote and incent adult learners to earn a GED or high school diploma while employed and earning industry-recognized credentials.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the number of individuals who receive incentives awarded for earning a GED while employed by a collaborating employer.

Objective 2-D: The EKWIB will research and publish a white paper on the needs of key employment sectors and credentials in demand in Eastern Kentucky, and the ways individuals can prepare for and connect with those opportunities. The research for this white paper will include the findings and results of the EKWIB staff's participation in the region's talent pipeline management (TPM) initiatives and the first-hand findings of EKWIB staff, success coaches, and the members of the region's employer services teams, all of whom work directly with the region's employers.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the publication and distribution of this white paper.

Objective 2-E: EKWIB staff and other key regional partners – using deliverables created under previous Objectives of this Goal – will engage in a multi-faceted informational campaign that will disseminate relevant information to students throughout the region on the workforce needs of key employment sectors, credentials in demand in these sectors, and the ways individuals can prepare for and connect with those opportunities. These efforts will involve the creation of interactive website- and app-based platforms that will deliver engaging content to students, school guidance counselors, and other community leaders. These efforts will also involve local and regional events at which students, guidance counselors, school leadership, local leadership, and others will be presented this information and related content through a combination of printed materials; informational and motivational presentations; video showcases; and other activities.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the completion, distribution, and execution of all aspects of this multi-faceted informational campaign.



Goal Three

Workforce Participation

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

Objective 3-A: The EKWIB will convene, promote, and facilitate a collective-impact case management model that enables a holistic, strategic approach to removing barriers to education or workforce success faced by Eastern Kentuckians who are most at-risk and most in-need, including: justice-involved youth, graduates of substance-abuse recovery programs, youth aging out of the state's foster care system, and those facing re-entry from incarceration. These barriers include: housing, training, education, childcare, transportation, food, debt, and criminal records. The EKWIB will develop and implement a system in which success coaches engage employers to focus on transitional and transformational employment opportunities for the aforementioned groups, and provide supportive services for these individuals and opportunities for them to earn beneficial credentials.

The EKWIB believes addressing all barriers collaboratively, holistically, and strategically vastly increases the likelihood of an at-risk jobseeker or worker succeeding, and gives the EKWIB the best chance of effectively addressing long-term unemployment by improving the region's workforce participation.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the degree to which this collaborative-impact case management model effectively serves individuals who are most at risk of not participating in our region's workforce. This could include the numbers of these individuals obtaining and retaining jobs.

Objective 3-B: The EKWIB will increase its promotion of digital economy efforts, including work-from-home opportunities through Teleworks USA and advanced wage employment through other TechHire programs that provide fast-track training for in-demand, high growth jobs.

METRICS: Success will be measured by the increase in the numbers of Eastern Kentuckians working remotely in the digital economy.

Objective 3-C: The EKWIB will work to regularly convene and collaborate with partners such as Chambers of Commerce, Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR), and numerous local, regional, and state economic development organizations to design a collective-impact economic development model for Eastern Kentucky that:

1. Better prepares jobseekers and workers to meet employers' workforce demands by capitalizing on currently available, high-growth, high-wage employment opportunities in the region, e.g. registered nursing and other healthcare careers, skilled trades, etc.
2. Better prepares jobseekers and workers to meet employment demands in emerging sectors in an effort to effectively recruit new employment opportunities – and employers – into Eastern Kentucky.

METRICS: Success will be measured by this collective-impact effort's ability to increase Eastern Kentucky's workforce participation rate (currently at 38% as of November 2019) by 3% annually over the course of the next five years – making for a total increase in the workforce participation rate of 15%.



Goal Four

Organization & Resource Alignment

Work collaboratively with industry and employer partners to align resources and utilize best available data to measure success across a broad spectrum of funding sources.

Objective 4-A: Working toward greater alignment of both workforce leaning organizations and their resources, the EKWIB will convene partners, community leaders, and industry representatives in a summit to gather input from stakeholders on the state of workforce in Eastern Kentucky, and gather new ideas and tactics to implement and more effectively address workforce needs. The summit will also serve to connect agency funding with partner resources for greater impact. The first summit will be held in 2021.

METRICS: Success will ultimately be measured by stakeholder participation and the number of collaborative and coordinating contracts across funding sources resulting from the summit's creation and fulfillment.

EKCEP Service Area



Main Office

412 Roy Campbell Dr.
Suite 100
Hazard, KY 41701

JobSight Locations

Bell-Whitley CAA

129 North Pine Street
Pineville KY 40977

Big Sandy Area CAP

686 North Lake Drive
Prestonsburg KY 41653

230 Court Street
Paintsville KY 41240

131 Church St.
Salyersville KY 41465

387 East Main St
Inez KY 41224

138 College Street
Pikeville KY 41501

Daniel Boone CAA

5748 Highway 290
McKee KY 40447

1535 Shamrock Road
Manchester KY 40962

Gateway CAA

28B Bible Camp Lane
Frenchburg KY 40322

151 University Drive
West Liberty KY 41472

Harlan CAA

319 Camden Street
Harlan KY 40831

KCEOC CAP

464 Court Square
Barbourville KY 40906

LKLP CAC

412 Roy Campbell Drive
Hazard KY 41701

417 Hwy 2034
Whitesburg KY 41858

121 Maple St.
Hyden KY 41749

1622 Hwy 160 S
Hindman KY 41822

Middle Kentucky CAA

500 Brown St.
Jackson KY 41339

205 Main Street
Beattyville KY 41311

Northeast KY CAA

180 Bulldog Lane
Louisa KY 41230

1758 E. Midland Trail
Grayson KY 41143

21039 West US HWY 60
Olive Hill KY 41164

207 South KY 7
Sandy Hook KY 41171

