

Workforce Investment

WORKSmart Kentucky--The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) continues to oversee implementation of the WORKSmart Kentucky Plan.

-The success of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities initiative continues to grow. The board reached two milestones announced at the November meeting certifying enough additional counties to bring the total number to 30 as well as graduating Madison County from Work Ready in Progress Certification to Work Ready status. Madison is the first County to raise their certification level. The board also modified the criteria to account for the new Cohort methodology of reporting High School Graduation Rates. Now all counties must provide a plan to reach 98 percent by 2022.

-Work Ready Communities has added another level of status. Changes recently adopted by the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board were designed to support communities that would need technical assistance to meet the high school graduation and postsecondary degree attainment challenges that they may be facing due to large gaps between their actual conditions and the target achievement levels.

The Northern Kentucky Industry Partnership made a presentation to the KWIB board and provided information on its successful **Manufacturing Ambassadors Program** in several Northern Kentucky High Schools. The board is also participating with the Kentucky Labor Cabinet and the Cabinet for Economic Development to explore new and exciting apprenticeship models, including the German Skills Initiative.

Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky Update – The Department of Workforce Investment, Kentucky Community and Technical College and Kentucky Adult Education are completing the second year of a demonstration grant that provides integrated contextual education team teaching basic skills and technical education in critical sectors for low skilled adults. There have been 1,061 participants, 408 credentials have been earned and 523 certificates have been awarded to date. The number of participants pursuing further postsecondary education are 353, 82 participants have earned other credentials after AO and 128 credentials have been earned post AO. Leadership also compared first time students who were enrolled in the same programs as those offered by Accelerating Opportunity in Spring 2012-Summer 2013. The percentage of students who earn certificates and the number of certificates earned by Accelerating Opportunity students is much greater (42%) than the first time students who were not enrolled in Accelerating Opportunity (9%).

Sector Strategies Update – Beth Kuhn has been hired as the Sector Strategies Director in the Department of Workforce Investment. Ms. Kuhn would be glad to work with any school district or KDE staff in support of their sector strategies and career pathways work.

Work Ready Communities Update – Robert Curry has been hired as the Work Ready Communities Executive Director in the Department of Workforce Investment. **Mr. Curry would be more than happy to work with school district leadership that is interested in pursuing Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress designations.**