



Kentucky Unified Business Services

Recommendations Report

Submitted to:



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the executives in Kentucky’s Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, the Cabinet for Economic Development, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, as well as the members of the project Steering Committee, for their excellent leadership in this initiative. In our experience, we do not typically see such a willingness to embrace new ideas and ways of operating exhibited across government agencies as has been witnessed by our team here. The leaders, along with the dedicated professionals who attended and contributed to regional focus groups, have each provided valuable insights that shaped our thinking and informed our recommendations. Together with the critical insights from the employer community itself – those we hope to better serve – we could not have asked for a more dedicated and committed client relationship.

I. INTRODUCTION/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

Critical, cabinet-level leaders and the organizations they lead have come together in Kentucky in an effort to advance a common vision for a “Unified Business Services Strategy” for the Commonwealth. Together, the Cabinet for Economic Development (CED), the Workforce and Education Cabinet, and Kentucky’s Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) set forth a mission to better align all partners to business services that meets the needs of the business community in an effort to better drive the Commonwealth’s economic prosperity.

As a result, Maher & Maher was engaged to:

- Briefly review Kentucky’s current state of business service delivery by reviewing existing plans and engaging with three (3) regionally-organized focus groups made up of partner staff and employers;
- Using the input received through the focus groups and the project’s Steering Committee as well as a review of emerging and best practices from other areas, prepare a series of recommendations to drive a unified business services strategy that aligns all partners efforts; and
- Draft additional recommendations concerning options for the implementations of our recommendations throughout the Commonwealth.

1. **COMMONWEALTH VISION:** Create a world-class talent pipeline to fuel economic growth

2. **PROJECT OBJECTIVE:** Develop a unified business services framework that aligns workforce, education, and economic development strategies to attract, develop, and retain industries and businesses and strengthen Kentucky’s talent pipeline

3. **METHOD:** A planned, ongoing strategic COLLABORATIVE PROCESS among the Community and Technical College System, the Workforce System and the Economic Development System, interacting with employers in region-specific INDUSTRY SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS...results in:

- a. Workers, job seekers, and students of all ages and backgrounds gaining the skills to move into sustaining careers in growing Kentucky industry sectors; and
- b. Companies leveraging the talent and related support they need to compete and grow

This report will summarize our efforts toward these objectives, including our analysis and results from the focus group sessions and our carefully considered recommendations for Kentucky's leaders.

In our twenty-six year experience in working with federal, state, and local level government clients, such alignment for a common cause is, unfortunately, quite rare, and therefore the public partners in Kentucky and the business and citizenry they serve have a unique and powerful opportunity to advance this common cause.

We believe the recommendations contained here can provide a foundation that can help leaders in Kentucky – at all levels – exploit this uncommon opportunity to bolster a system-wide response, and do so in a way that values the unique needs of the project, the customers it would seek to serve, and regional differences that need to be a critical element of any resulting implementation of the recommendations.

II. REPORT OF CURRENT BUSINESS PRACTICES FROM EACH PARTNER

A. KENTUCKY BUSINESS SERVICES: Focus Group Insights

During the week of May 27, 2013, we participated in a meeting with the project's Steering Committee (see Steering Committee roster in Appendix B) and facilitated three focus group sessions in the Central, Western, and Eastern regions of the Commonwealth. The purpose of the Steering Committee meeting was to discuss the Committee members' vision for a unified business services system and partners' roles in that system, and to obtain their input on the focus group sessions.

As part of our efforts to identify the "current state" of Kentucky's business service delivery around the Commonwealth, each focus group was comprised of local and regional leaders representing economic development, the workforce system, and community and technical college system. Each of the groups included key employers/business representatives from the service delivery area as well, in order to help us better understand and record their perspective on the most critical elements of a unified strategy. However, it must be noted that participation by the business community was not uniform in each focus group, which is likely explained by the short time frame facing meeting organizers.

Three regional focus groups were conducted:

Location	Dates
Versailles	May 30, 2013
Owensboro	May 31, 2013
Hazard	May 31, 2013

The objectives of the focus group sessions were to share the vision for a unified business services system, solicit employer customer perspectives on the design and operation of the system, and gather public partners' input on system development and implementation.

Each group was presented with a mission statement for the unified business services initiative endorsed by the project Steering Committee, and was asked a number of questions to help identify what they are doing now in this area, and the characteristics of a "future state approach" that might meet the mission's objectives. Additionally, each representative of the three partner systems – KCTCS, local and regional economic development organizations, and the workforce system – was presented with a brief survey to help us better understand the "current state" of business services in each region/area. Comprehensive notes from the Steering Committee session and each of the focus group sessions, including survey results, are included in the Appendices.

We summarize the most prominent themes that emerged from focus group discussions with participating employers, as well as those that arose in focus group discussions with partner staff here. *The reader should note that not every focus group emerged in a consensus with each of the summary elements listed here.* For instance, while two focus groups shared a view that a common customer relationship management (CRM) system is required to meet the needs of the business customer and achieve the Steering Committee's mission, one focus group (Western Kentucky) did not share that view.

As a result, these summarized notes are best viewed in the context of the detailed notes from each session (Appendix A). It is fair however to assert, as we do, that these summarized notes represent fairly a clear majority view (if not a view shared by all participants) from the focus groups.

Project Mission

Develop and implement a unified business services framework and system that aligns workforce, education, and economic development strategies to attract, develop, and retain industries and businesses and strengthen Kentucky's talent pipeline.

B. EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES

- Understand our talent needs at the competency level and provide screened and skilled workers that are well-matched to our needs
- Deliver solutions, not programs and processes
- Be consistent and dependable and deliver on promises
- Demonstrate that you (as a unified system) understand the environment that employers operate in today
- Define career pathways that fuel our talent pipeline
- Anticipate and understand our talent supply chain needs (ability to quantify employers' talent supply chain needs)
- Be agile and responsive: Employers need solutions immediately, not in weeks or months
- Add value for us and deliver results
- Provide a single/primary point of contact; employers don't want to be contacted multiple times by different partner entities
- Public partners need to align their strategies and activities
- Make it simple and easy for us to do business with you; our time is money and we can't waste it

- Partners need to be more flexible, entrepreneurial, and risk-tolerant; think outside the box and remove the strings and red tape
- We (employers) need to define and communicate our needs better
- Focus on building sustained relationships with employers (vs. transactional, piecemeal contacts)
- Help us address significant soft skills, work ethic, and life skills gaps, particularly among the younger workforce
- Lose the bureaucracy and the “alphabet soup”; keep the details and workings of government programs and program requirements and limitations “behind the curtain”
- Offer more short-term, compressed, and modular worker training solutions

C. PUBLIC PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

- Focus on the customer and getting results, not on our individual organizations and programs
- Build a culture focused on delivering responsive and customized solutions
- Be a system that listens to employers, knows how to ask the right questions, and says “yes”
- Provide a primary point of contact for employer customers; the partner with the best/most established relationship with an employer “owns” the customer and coordinates engagement with other partners (consensus but not uniform view of all groups)
- No wrong door/single front door for employer customers
- Provide flexible training options
- Eliminate self-imposed barriers and restrictions
- Empower business service representatives and provide them with professional development and cross-training
- Implement a shared, universal-access customer relationship management system (consensus but not uniform view of all groups)
- Need to improve trust, communication, and information/data-sharing among partners; resolve “turf” issues
- Partners must align their policies, strategies, and activities
- Improve our ability to stay abreast of needs and challenges by industry sector and be proactive

- The business services system cannot be “one size fits all”; need to allow for regional differences and the need for adaptation at the regional level
- K-12 education must be involved in this system
- All partners need to “own” the system and demonstrate shared responsibility and accountability
- Programs, processes, and funding should be “back-office” functions and invisible to the employer
- Align services to target industry sectors, but also recognize that not all regions have sufficient staff or a large enough employer customer base to organize exclusively by industry sectors
- Do a better job of meeting the training needs of small businesses (e.g., OJT and customized training)
- Stop focusing on individual program performance measures; if we effectively meet employers’ needs, high performance numbers will follow
- The status quo will not get us where we need to go; we need to get out of our comfort zone
- We must find ways to address pervasive soft skills and work ethic challenges
- Focus on accountability and results for business customers; track performance against measures that are relevant to business
- Map and leverage all available resources/assets
- Scale existing best practices in partner collaboration and employer service delivery

D. KENTUCKY BUSINESS SERVICES: Our Current State Analysis

Since the goal of the project is to support a full array of workforce needs for businesses in any state of development (and need), we present our current state analysis within the context of the “business cycle.” This analysis represents our summarized view of the Commonwealth’s current state. It is not uniformly applicable to all areas of Kentucky. Indeed, we did identify several areas of excellence in local and regional service areas that are working diligently to implement many innovative approaches to service delivery to business. Still, this analysis is true, when viewed as a unified system, and, importantly, the baseline from which our recommendations were formed.

Again, we approach this discussion from the perspective of what partners are doing today (when viewed as a whole) in each of the services the Kentucky System provides in each stage of the Business Cycle. The narrative below is followed by a chart that summarizes this discussion.

Start-up/Expansion

All three providers offer support for companies that are in an early-stage startup phase or are expanding operations.

Entrepreneurship & Small Business Support

Kentucky economic development organizations, at both the state and local/regional levels, provide a wide range of services for business start-ups and aspiring entrepreneurs. Most economic development organizations connect entrepreneurs to local capital networks and, in some cases, develop and manage incubation space in their regions. Through CED initiatives like the Kentucky Innovation Network, businesses may access additional services, including business mentoring and assistance with growth strategies. CED-led efforts such as the Kentucky Small Business Tax Credit, the Kentucky Small Business Credit Initiative, and entrepreneurship counseling available through the Office of Entrepreneurship provide additional start-up (and expansion) support for small business.

For many economic development organizations, small business retention efforts are a core function of their services. These include technical assistance to finance existing business expansion projects and the provision (or oversight) of local physical infrastructure or utilities enhancements.

Entrepreneurship and small business development has become an important part of KCTCS' offerings. Some colleges offer stand-alone education and training leading to a specific entrepreneurship credential. Others, in absence of a specific certification, have embedded entrepreneurship principles throughout business or other existing academic programs. Some colleges also provide low-cost office or incubator space with business amenities and access to management and financial assistance for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Some small business development centers are housed at KCTCS.

The workforce system partners promote entrepreneurship as an employment option and connect business clients to related training available through KCTCS, Kentucky Career Centers, and area technology centers.

Talent Recruitment

For economic development organizations, talent recruitment services generally include campaigns to market their communities to external communities as a means for drawing highly skilled and highly educated workers. In some cases, these efforts may be conducted on behalf of a cohort of companies (e.g., information technology) that share a need for a common skill set.

Workforce system partners generally offer all phases of recruitment services to businesses including assisting employers with defining job descriptions; listing, collecting, and pre-screening job applications and resumes; and assisting with scheduling interviews.

Workforce system partners also host and organize local job fairs. In this regard workforce system partners are generally focused on recruiting talent from inside the region from their pool of candidates.

KCTCS colleges will often host local job fairs, often in tandem with their local workforce partners. Generally, all colleges post and promote local employment opportunities to their own students and alumni.

Job Matching/Placement

To support high-quality job matching and placement efforts, Kentucky invested in the state-of-the-art job matching tool “Focus Career/Focus Talent.” In addition, workforce system partners, through Kentucky Career Centers, offer a variety of job and skill assessment services available to businesses, including WorkKeys and the National Career Readiness Certificate. Most Career Centers also provide seminars and workshops aimed at building employability skills to prepare workers for specific career opportunities in the region.

Some KCTCS colleges also administer pre-employment assessment services.

While not necessarily a core function, some economic development entities promote the job matching and placement services described here to businesses they know might benefit from them.

Training

KCTCS’ core function is training workers for jobs and building credentials aligned to industry-recognized needs. Specifically, KCTCS colleges offer customized training, incumbent worker training, and, in some cases, apprenticeship programs that are aimed at developing and enhancing the skills of workers.

Workforce system partners generally provide companies with information on an array of regional training opportunities (whether through KCTCS or other training provider) that fit their needs. The workforce system in particular offers on-the-job training, customized training, and apprenticeship contracts for employers. Workforce system partners also help businesses take advantage of tax credit programs aimed at offsetting the cost of training (e.g., Bluegrass State Skills Corporation Skills Training Investment Credit).

State and local economic development organizations also work to guide business on the full array of training resources available through all partners and, in some cases, may work to negotiate on behalf of a company (or group of companies) the development of new training programs. Similar to workforce system partners, economic development partners also promote a range training tax credit programs.

Contraction

Kentucky offers an array of services for companies facing contraction aimed at either early-stage minimization of losses or post-layoff transitions.

Early Warning/Layoff Aversion

Economic development organizations and workforce system partners offer some similar services for companies facing contraction, although they may refer to these services differently. Economic development’s options for downsizing include small business credit

or loans/micro-loans (either their own programs or state programs through which they can help companies secure such funding). Workforce system partners' early warning and layoff aversion services focus generally on supporting worker transitions and assessing/setting up re-employment.

KCTCS colleges often work with workforce system partners to provide the training needed for dislocated workers.

We did not verify these early warning/layoff aversion services were currently available from all partners or in all service areas. Our recommendation is that any unified strategy ensures that such services are a well-coordinated, uniform offering throughout the Commonwealth.

KY Business Services throughout the Business Cycle: Current State

Business Cycle	Business Service	Economic Development	Community & Technical Colleges	Workforce Development
Start-up/ Expansion	Entrepreneurship & small biz support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connect entrepreneurs to capital ▶ Incubation/early-stage financing support ▶ Small business loans/technical assistance ▶ Physical infrastructure/site selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Entrepreneurship education/training (some, not all) ▶ Incubation/early-stage financing support (some, not all) ▶ Small business loans/technical assistance (some, not all) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Entrepreneurship education/training (some, not all)
	Talent Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Labor market research ▶ Recruit workers from other markets via talent attraction campaigns (some, not all) ▶ Job fairs ▶ Connect to tax credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Job postings ▶ Job fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Job postings ▶ Job fairs
	Job matching/ placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pre-employment job screening and assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Career services/guidance ▶ Pre-employment assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pre-screening candidates ▶ Counseling ▶ Skill assessments (e.g., WorkKeys, NCRC) ▶ Resume writing, interviewing services ▶ Resume collection/screening
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Training needs assessment and analysis of aggregate training solutions ▶ Facilitate access to training/ training resources (e.g. Bluegrass State Skills Corporation grant funding) ▶ Safety and health consultation and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Certificate development (industry-recognized credentials) ▶ Customized training and IWT (e.g. WINS grant funding) ▶ Apprenticeship/internship matching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide guidance and resources for ITAs, IWT, OJT, customized training opportunities ▶ Apprenticeship/internship matching

Business Cycle	Business Service	Economic Development	Community & Technical Colleges	Workforce Development
Contraction	Early warning and layoff aversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Loans/technical assistance facilitation ▶ Options for downsizing ▶ Skills upgrade training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worker retraining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Worker transitions/reemployment ▶ Technical assistance facilitation (e.g., options for downsizing)
Unified Business Service Elements	Industry sector prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Varies by region ▶ Not necessarily developed/ identified w/ input from WFS, CCs ▶ Services not generally prioritized via sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Varies by region ▶ Not necessarily developed/ identified w/ input from ED, WFS ▶ Services not generally prioritized via sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Varies by region ▶ Not necessarily developed/ identified w/ input from ED, CCs ▶ Services not generally prioritized via sectors
	Management of business intelligence (CRM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Case by case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Excel spreadsheet (captured college by college) ▶ Moving toward Salesforce.com (“Salesforce”) as a statewide system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 9 of 10 workforce system partners using ERISS
	Capacity of business services team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CED staff trained around talent development issues and priority industry sectors ▶ Local economic development staff generally not formally trained around talent development issues and priority industry sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Generally, little awareness of business needs throughout biz cycle ▶ No formal training around priority industry sectors ▶ No formal sales/consultation/customer service training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Generally, little awareness of business needs throughout biz cycle ▶ No formal training around priority industry sectors ▶ No formal sales/consultation/customer service training ▶ Lack of dedicated staff sometime results in this as an add-on” to someone’s job

Our view of the current situation is next viewed in terms of critical elements of a “future-state,” unified service delivery approach (which we will present in detail in the next section of this report).

Industry Sector Prioritization

Many of the survey respondents recognize a need to prioritize their service offerings by prioritizing companies by identified target sectors. However, few have formally changed their service delivery methods along these parameters. In many communities, target sectors have not been identified or, as is the case in some regions, the sectors are different among the three system partners.

In a few cases, KCTCS, economic development, and workforce system partners have worked together to identify industry sectors and have moved toward service delivery that reflects these prioritizations. But, as a statewide talent system, most respondents acknowledge this has not occurred consistently.

Management of Business Intelligence

All three entities learn about company talent needs through different vehicles and manage the data using different customer relationship management platforms. KCTCS colleges generally use Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to input, monitor, and track their companies' needs. KCTCS will be moving shortly to Salesforce as a management information solution. Most LWIAs (nine of 10) have moved toward using ERISS' CRM application, and recently some of these (but not all) have started to deploy its use by business services teams. The Cabinet for Economic Development reports that they have decided to build their own system in the context of an agency-wide database consolidation effort (although that work is just in its inception).

Sharing of this data among systems occurs at various levels and with varying success. In some regions, workforce system business service representatives (BSRs) are currently sharing access to ERISS' data with community college and economic development partners and developing one unified set of solutions for each business customer. However, across the Commonwealth, sharing generally occurs in informal ways through person-to-person meetings or not at all. Because the different CRM technologies are not synched, each entity has its own intake system and actions are not coordinated. Depending simply upon *when* a company voices a need for workforce training and to *whom*, a company may hear from any or all the different service providers with different offers to assist.

In addition to the operational challenges of different customer “ownership,” because workforce needs are not shared across entities in any consistent fashion, the entities cannot extract larger *strategic* business trends occurring within their region. For example, given the different data systems, it would be difficult for all parties to collaboratively analyze the technician needs of the manufacturing sector in a particular region.

Capacity of Business Service Teams

Business services staff in the workforce system have been participating in training on the solutions-based business services model, and this training has also been made available to economic development and KCTCS partners. Survey respondents, however, indicated a need for additional professional development opportunities for current business services staff (e.g., understanding priority industry sectors, customer service training). In addition, several local workforce system representatives expressed frustration that BSR duties were an “add-on” to existing job assignments. One focus group referred to this as professional staff having to “moonlight” as BSRs. The lack of dedicated resources, then, in at least some places, is seen as a barrier to tackling “additional” business services responsibilities.

Policy and Funding Alignment

Generally speaking, it appears that while all three partners systems are focusing to some degree on targeted regional industry sectors, individual program funding and services are not formally aligned to target regional sectors. Moreover, there is no consistent or formal process by which policies, funding targets, and services for each partner get aligned across providers’ systems. This is driven, in part, by the fact that each partner faces different program-driven organizational performance measures. Business service outcomes, for example, differ across providers. In addition, strategic and operational priorities and activities for business services do not appear to be coordinated and aligned among the three system partners.

Organizational Structure

Through Kentucky’s Career Center Certification initiative, workforce system partners now have a consistent organizational model for business services. Business service representatives are Career Center system partner personnel responsible for forming relationships with companies in their regions and performing the business services described above.

KCTCS corporate liaisons typically include the leaders within the workforce development division, continuing education unit, and/or customized training department. Faculty, deans, and department chairs often serve as the second touch point, integrating appropriate industry representatives into program-specific advisory boards.

Local economic development organizations often have an individual(s) who leads a business retention and expansion program (BR&E). It is during these BR&E visits or surveys that economic development staff learns about the talent and training needs of their employer customers.

E. SUMMARY

Promising evidence of business service collaboration and quality services exists around the Commonwealth; however, it occurs in pockets and no uniform framework or model exists

that can be found in practice across the state. Most importantly, employers are still seeking more seamless and solutions-oriented (not program-based) service delivery.

Kentucky's current-state structure still lends itself to siloed "sub"-systems where service providers who gather information and serve companies still feel accountable solely to their own individual programs. As a result, within the current state, inconsistencies across regions and across service providers occur, leading to duplication and gaps in quality and responsive service delivery when viewed from the perspective of sector needs.

Even in the regions where strong collaboration is beginning to occur, personnel admit that duplication occurs, feeding the perception from the employer focus group participants that the larger "system" is confusing and inefficient.

Finally, not all regions have uniform representation from each partner organization – particularly with regard to the economic development function (due to the lack of staff in every service delivery area). Also, smaller and rural areas do not usually have dedicated business services staff, making it difficult to define a single, uniform approach that can work in all areas, in all regions, and at all times.

As we moved forward to develop our ideas of a unified strategy that holds the promise to meet the project's mission, the needs of the employers you serve, and the individual/organizational limitations of each local area and region, we considered all these challenges.

III. RECOMMENDED FUTURE-STATE FRAMEWORK and PARTNER ROLES FOR A UNIFIED BUSINESS SERVICES STRATEGY

A. FACTORS IMPACTING BUSINESS SERVICE DESIGN

As mentioned in the last section, we considered many factors as we defined a set of recommendations for implementation of a unified business services strategy for the Commonwealth. Critical among the factors we evaluated were:

- Alignment of our recommendations to your project mission, but also to your existing and previous policy initiatives;
- Our assessment of the current state of service delivery and of regional differences in terms of the capacity different cultures, and varying organizational and human resources to support a given strategy;
- Local and regional preferences as expressed in the focus groups; and
- The needs of the business representatives as expressed in the focus groups (which are reflected, as well, in numerous national employer surveys).

B. POLICY INITIATIVES IMPACTING BUSINESS SERVICE STRATEGY DESIGN

It is important, we think, for professional staff as well as regional and local leaders to see the unified business services strategy as aligned with past and present policy initiatives of each of the partner organizations. We noted some possible resistance to “another new initiative” where people feel they are already struggling to implement existing priorities. A sense of resistance to another “initiative from Frankfort” is a reality we need to consider in being able to achieve the implementation goals of the Steering Committee.

Our consideration of this issue (aligning this with other policy initiatives), therefore, included a review of the program and policy initiatives of each partner.

We conclude that there are, in fact, any number of existing policy initiatives which can be shown to be supportive of, and aligned to, our unified business services strategy:

- At least three key KWIB initiatives over the past three years establish the policy infrastructure for development and implementation of a unified business services system throughout the Commonwealth. These initiatives include Career Center Certification, Sector Strategies, and Business Services Redesign Recommendations.
- The Cabinet for Economic Development and KCTCS have each produced plans that deal directly with the same talent pipeline issues as are the focus of the KWIB

strategic action items and can be seen as well-aligned with and complementary to our recommendations.

Each of these partner initiatives and plans contributes to and supports the vision, project objective, and methods for the unified strategy we would envision, including:

- Collaboration based on sustained, trusting relationships between key public partners and industry leaders;
- Data-driven decision making;
- Regionalized planning and delivery of services;
- Creating and maintaining talent pipelines in focused industry sectors; and
- Flexible, customized solution development and delivery.

The following key statewide initiatives adopt the above critical factors, and we view them as supportive of any future unified strategy to serve business. We therefore reviewed and considered the key elements of these initiatives in developing our recommendations:

1. **Career Center Certification:** Nearly two years ago, the Commonwealth reached consensus (at both state and regional levels) on eight themes that provided the framework for Career Center Certification employer services standards and measures. These themes fully support implementation of sector strategies, the Business Services Redesign Recommendations, plans produced by CED and KCTCS, and principles for a unified system:
 - a. Kentucky Career Centers' employer services are grounded in a context of **familiarity with the needs of industry sectors in their regions**, and with the particular needs of employers within those sectors.
 - b. Career Centers offer employers **creative, flexible, and customized solutions** designed to meet business needs and address business challenges.
 - c. Business services provided by Career Centers/workforce areas are designed to **support employers throughout all stages of the business cycle**.
 - d. Career Centers connect employers to all of the services and resources they need in a **coordinated, seamless**, and non-burdensome manner.
 - e. Career Centers are **nimble, flexible, and able to "keep pace" with employers** as their business needs and challenges evolve quickly over time.
 - f. Career Centers are **dedicated to building trust-based and sustainable relationships with employers** (as opposed to "transactional" interactions with employers).
 - g. Employer services are staffed and managed to **maximize flexibility, responsiveness, and availability** of partners' subject matter expertise, and to **minimize administrative barriers**.

- h. Career Centers **actively solicit employers' feedback on the value and impact of services** received, and are accountable for adjusting and enhancing services and services delivery as needed.
2. **Sector Strategies:** The overarching principle of world-class sector strategies is that they are built on a sustained, trusted relationship among the workforce system, education ("K to gray"), economic development, and industry. All seven success factors connected to Kentucky's sector strategies framework are built on that foundation.
3. **Business Services Redesign Recommendations:** This is the most recent project that holds direct relevance for employer services. The basic concept of this report and its recommendations is that (a) the unified system should serve businesses over their full life cycle; and (b) the unified system should be aware of problems and opportunities within focus industries in order to better serve the human resource needs of those companies at each point in that cycle. This can only be done through a strategy that emphasizes cross-agency, public/private collaboration on sector strategies.
4. **Cabinet for Economic Development:** "Kentucky's Unbridled Future Strategic Economic Development Plan" (January 2012) – This Plan identifies six strategic priorities, many of which deal with the same issues and principles embodied in a Unified Business Services system:
 - a. Continue to Create a More Competitive Business Climate: Continue to strengthen partnerships and embrace regionalism
 - b. Increase Human Capital by Recruiting/Developing the Workforce of the Future: Determine and address education, workforce, and training needs. In order to ensure the workforce in Kentucky has the skills and training needed, it is important to review the workforce skills and needs of the targeted business sectors. Each of the targeted sectors should be reviewed to determine the type of workforce skills, educational programs, and training programs needed, as well as the sufficiency of the existing workforce to meet the needs of the sector. In addition, the availability of educational degree or certification programs in Kentucky must be assessed.
 - c. Create and Market a Powerful Kentucky Brand
 - d. Work toward Sustainability
 - e. Create an Entrepreneurial Culture
5. **KCTCS** has a number of activities that will support a unified system:
 - Kentucky WINS (Kentucky Workforce Investment Network System) provides funding for new companies locating in the state, as well as companies expanding and creating new jobs where skill upgrading is often required.
 - Career pathways are developed, implemented, and maintained through partnerships among secondary and post-secondary education and employer

partners. Career pathways are available to all students interested in the designated sectors, including adult learners. Because career pathways are designed to lead to rewarding careers in critical areas of importance in local communities, focus on specific industries may vary from one college to the next.

- It is apparent that there is a significant amount of curriculum-sharing between colleges being called for by KCTCS. This practice will be an advantage as the colleges respond to the need to provide new, approved curriculum and offerings more quickly than in the past and must be a focused for a unified strategy.
6. **Kentucky Workforce Academy:** The Academy effort builds directly upon both Kentucky’s Career Center Certification initiative and its Sector Strategies efforts, and includes dedicated components related to high-quality business service delivery supported by a variety of system partners. The goal of the Academy is two-fold: (1) To build support and understanding of Kentucky’s brand promise, and build capacity to support the transformation of the workforce system to an integrated delivery system, benefitting the citizens of the Commonwealth and each of its economic regions; and (2) To provide valid inputs into a comprehensive curriculum plan to support the transformation and personal growth of those individuals who make up the workforce system in the Commonwealth. As such, the Academy capacity building effort provides significant foundational support for the ongoing business services redesign and unified business services strategy development work being pursued.
 7. **Kentucky Economic Development Academy:** Kentucky’s Economic Development Academy work is designed to bring together a variety of partners at the regional level to explore how each can work together in a collaborative manner to achieve community and statewide economic development goals. The focus is upon developing an integrated talent development system that supports the recruitment and expansion of business and industry and the quality jobs they bring. The Academy also emphasizes the importance of recognizing innovation as a key driver of economic growth, an alternative to reliance upon “landing” major companies in “traditional” industries, and a standard training solution to raise the competency levels of business services partner staff.

We believe the work being pursued under each of these partner initiatives directly supports and informs the unified business services strategy effort and our recommendations will include a critical element of ensuring that all professional staff from each partner organization see the Unified Business Services Strategy as building upon (rather than competing with) the above-referenced policy initiatives.

C. CHALLENGE to BUILDING a STATEWIDE FRAMEWORK: Regional Differences

Even if every other factor were the same between regions in the Commonwealth, each region would still differ from all others by nature of the existing culture – the common denominator of differences in people, and the depth of existing relationships (how they interact and work together). Beyond that, there are clear regional differences in urban vs. rural environments; which industries are critical; prevalence of larger vs. smaller employers; readiness of the workforce; and more.

Even solely in terms of the variable size and quality of the three systems and their history of working together, some focus group members expressed that current BST representatives are still “siloe” and are held primarily accountable to their own individual program performance measures. Also, and in some areas, BST members “moonlight” as members of these teams, rather than being dedicated full-time to the teams. Indeed, it is true that not all partner organizations even have personnel stationed in all areas of the Commonwealth. This raises concerns about the current capacity to bring *any* unified strategy to scale across the Commonwealth and in all regions immediately.

There are also differences in the degree to which each region is open to implementing a framework that, while designed “from the bottom up” through multiple focus groups and other input, may be seen as conceived essentially as a statewide system. Some regions may see such a system as incapable of meeting their particular challenges. For these reasons and more (and as expressed in one of your focus groups), there is a need to avoid a “one-size-fits-all” unified business services framework.

“For these reasons and more, (and as expressed in one of our focus groups), there is a need to avoid a ‘one-size-fits-all’ unified business services framework.”

Regional differences also impact on the issue of the collection and sharing of employer information – impacting on the question of a common customer relationship management system. Fully sharing information is the very foundation of any system that seeks to be unified, and a common CRM system is essential to ensuring the comprehensive sharing that can eliminate duplication of effort, improve efficiency, and ultimately provide for enhanced development and delivery of business solutions.

However, there are challenges emanating from both the Commonwealth and regional levels affecting this key element of a future unified system strategy, stemming primarily from the fact that each partner system (where such a system is in use currently) uses different technology for customer relationship management today (ranging from home-grown solutions based in Excel to multiple third-party software platforms like ERISS and Salesforce).

These challenges are real and must be addressed, but they cannot be permitted to become an excuse to step back from the challenge here, and to fail to address the equally real and significant call from employers for reform.

D. BUILDING A UNIFIED FRAMEWORK

In considering the challenges identified above and the mission that Kentucky leaders have established in reaching a unified business services strategy, we believe an optimal solution lies in a unified strategy that embodies certain common characteristics, but is flexible enough to be “customized” to meet regional differences in culture, capacity, and sectoral focus.

“... we believe an optimal solution lies in a unified strategy that embodies certain common characteristics, but is flexible enough to be customized to meet regional differences in culture, capacity and sectoral focus.”

However, it is also true that any unified strategy that hopes to fulfill the ultimate project mission and address the needs the business community consistently puts forth must have certain standards that are uniformly achieved in all areas around the Commonwealth.

In striking an appropriate balance between state-level standards and regional flexibility, we believe it is first important to define the critical, common factors that should (ideally) be achieved. Only after a clear understanding of such a “best practices” approach – a framework for Kentucky’s unified business services strategy – can we discuss ways to allow regional flexibility in deployment of that framework.

Therefore, we will identify our best practices recommendation here, and then offer our recommendations for regional and local level flexibility in deployment in our implementation recommendations.

Following that approach, the Maher Team has identified **seven (7) critical elements of a unified business services framework**. These seven elements include:

- Organizational structure
- Sectorial alignment
- Ongoing identification of talent supply chain needs for region
- Management of business intelligence (CRM)
- Policy and funding alignment
- Curriculum alignment (ongoing)
- Accountability and performance measurement

In considering each of these elements, we conclude that each has both strategic and operational aspects and issues that need to be addressed in order to truly support a “unified” system and, ultimately, achieve the project’s mission in any sustainable way.

- **Strategic aspects** tend to focus on installing the organizational and cultural connections that align all partners with evolving sector needs and align policy, programs, and processes in a sustainable way. Our recommendations therefore address such issues as a common, sustainable structure for partners to engage with senior business executives in targeted sectors and make our engagement with employers less “ad-hoc” and more efficient (both for our system and for the employers we seek to engage).
- **Operational aspects** tend to deal with activities that are related more to day-to-day engagement with employers – those more commonly referred to as “service delivery” functions. Capacity building for business service teams and recommendations concerning customer relationship management platforms might be seen (by some) as being more related to operational aspects of our framework.

“Only after a clear understanding of such a ‘best practices’ approach – a framework for Kentucky’s Unified Business Services Strategy – can we discuss ways to allow regional flexibility in deployment of that framework.”

We are aware that, for some at the state and local levels, it is sufficient to deal with operational (so-called service delivery issues) and leave more strategic activities for another time or initiative. Respectfully, and after careful consideration, we would disagree. Only when both strategic and operational aspects of a unified approach are considered and acted upon do we believe this project mission can truly be achieved, and perhaps more importantly, sustained over time.

The following graphic therefore, represents our “ideal vision” of a **Unified Business Services Framework** that can be seen to address the needs of business across the business lifecycle and in a manner consistent with the stated preferences of those business customers we serve (and hope to attract and retain) in Kentucky.

Unified Business Services Framework (Graphic)



The seven critical elements that comprise the framework depicted here, as discussed previously, suggest both strategic and operational level actions to be brought to life. Again, for now, we present these in the form of *an ideal approach* to implementation. How each action is actually achieved, at the regional and local levels, will be a function of our implementation plan recommendations later in this document.

For now, we are most concerned with creating a benchmark – an ideal vision – of a unified strategy that is seen as most responsive to business and, therefore, as a strategic asset for helping to attract and retain employers for Kentucky’s economic prosperity.

The chart that follows (“Strategic and Operational Aspects of Kentucky’s Framework”) details each of the critical aspects of our recommended framework and the supporting strategic and operational aspects of each.

Chart: Strategic and Operational Aspects of Kentucky’s Framework

FRAMEWORK ELEMENT	STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Organizational structure	Configure industry partnership collaborative	<p>Recruit and convene partners for industry teams</p> <p>Each region has a Business Services Team (BST) comprised of knowledgeable business services partners with the ability to connect employers to a full range of partner services</p> <p>The BST is functionally managed by the LWIB, or other regionally-appropriate entity, as a cohesive unit, regardless of program, funding stream, or organization from which BST staff members may originate</p> <p>Establish communication and functional relationship processes between Industry Partnership and Business Services Teams and their constituent members</p>
Sectoral alignment	Identify regional focus sectors	Align and endorse sector selections through all partners’ strategic plans
Ongoing identification of talent supply chain needs for region	Ongoing workforce and economic data analysis to quantitatively identify talent supply chain needs	<p>Implement metrics to meet supply chain demands for targeted occupations in regional focus sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development • Community Colleges • Economic Development

FRAMEWORK ELEMENT	STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
Management of Business Intelligence (CRM)	<p>Open collection and analysis and management of business intelligence</p> <p>Determine regional CRM platform</p>	<p>Ensure that all partners have access to information available through the various CRM platforms</p> <p>Maintain awareness of business needs throughout business life cycle</p>
Policy and Funding Alignment	<p>Partners’ strategic plans and related policies and funding investments reflect shared goals</p> <p>KCTCS and CED policy directs WINS and Bluegrass State Skills funding to targeted sectors</p>	<p>Partners’ operational/business plans, strategies, and activities are aligned to shared goals</p> <p>Prioritize service via sectors (for example, dedicating minimum/required amounts of partners’ funding to services/support for target sectors and occupations – including training, labor exchange, reemployment, and other business services)</p>
Curriculum Alignment	<p>Identification of high-priority education/training programs and curriculum aligned to regional target sectors, career pathways, and quantified pipeline</p>	<p>Education and training service delivery connects to career pathways in targeted industry sectors</p> <p>Programs and education resources aligned to fit industry demands by occupation and competency</p> <p>New programs developed according to demand in a timely manner</p> <p>Shared resources, curriculum, faculty, facilities, etc. enhance accessibility and responsiveness/agility</p> <p>Industry Advisory Boards maintained</p>

FRAMEWORK ELEMENT	STRATEGIC	OPERATIONAL
<p>Accountability and Performance Measurement</p>	<p>Establish model for measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems Change - Partnership development and enhancement, performance improvement, resource sharing and utilization, sustainability • Value to Employers - Reduced turnover, enhanced retention, enhanced business productivity • Worker Outcomes - Training completion, employment and employment retention, earnings, skill acquisition and credential attainment, career advancement 	<p>Establish metrics for each measure.</p> <p>Establish quality goals, track achievement</p> <p>Establish quantified goals, track performance</p> <p>Establish quantified goals, track performance</p>

This recommended framework for Kentucky’s unified business services strategy, we believe, creates a cohesive vision of the elements that must be reflected in every region – albeit within the reality of an element of flexibility to meet each region’s unique capacity and preferences.

In the next section, we continue of description of the recommended framework by exploring – again in an “ideal” vision of a future unified strategy – the critical roles and responsibilities we would recommend for each partner organization. ***Again, we stress that we realize that one solution cannot be seen as suitable for each region and local area around the Commonwealth. Our consideration here of an ideal framework and solution is intended to respond to the needs expressed by our business customer, and provide guidelines for policy formation and planning for regionally-driven deployment. We intend to provide for regional flexibility in the following defined roles and responsibilities in our implementation discussion.***

However, we believe it is helpful and important to address an “ideal state” view of roles and responsibilities by each partner, as such a view may affect the way in which future budgets and policies are constructed at the Commonwealth level, which might enable a more uniform deployment across regional areas in the future.

E. SYSTEM STRUCTURE, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The chart in this section (“Unified Business Services Model Recommendations: Partner Organizational Roles and Responsibilities”), lays out our view of a benchmark (or “best practices”) assignment of roles and responsibilities among the partners to this initiative. Again, we do so in order to create a framework/model for state and regional leaders to

“[Regional leaders] will want to explore this as a benchmark, and make adjustments to suit local capacity and budget realities (consistent with state policy as it emerges).”

consider when planning for implementation of a unified strategy. It is likely that only a few of Kentucky’s largest regional areas have the current staff capacity and local presence from each partner to deploy this model as represented here exactly. Smaller areas, and those not as far along in terms of deployment of earlier initiatives (i.e., sector strategies) will want to explore this as a benchmark, and make adjustments to suit local capacity and budget realities (consistent with state policy as it emerges).

The Roles and Responsibilities Chart is otherwise self-explanatory, but certain key elements of the benchmark model we put forward are worthy of some special discussion.

Since each system element has both strategic and operational issues that need to be considered and resolved, most at the regional level, a model that has proven to be successful in locations around the country has an Industry Sector Partnership Team or “Board” or “Collaborative” at the top of a regional organizational structure. Those representatives of industry, education, economic development, and workforce development tend to be higher-level managers or executives, and deal with the strategic issues. Industry sector-based operational teams, or Business Service Teams, then deal with the operational issues and service delivery. Both teams are discussed in some detail below.

Industry Partnership Team (IPT)

The Industry Partnership Team (IPT) is the structural foundation for the unified framework. The most critical feature of IPTs is that they are truly industry-led, with employers from the sector driving and guiding IPT priorities, strategies, and activities. IPTs help connect and meet the needs of both workers and businesses. They bring together multiple employers, public agencies and institutions and, where appropriate, worker representatives, in each targeted industry sector to address human capital needs common to that industry’s employers.

Each region would have an Industry Partnership Team for each focus industry sector. In terms of a benchmark, we recommend that economic development be responsible for convening the IPTs (in close collaboration with their partners here). When sector alignment across regions is present, it is recommended that a multi-regional Industry Partnership Team be considered.

Guided by employer partners, the IPT will establish broad policy, priorities, processes, and outcomes for each regional targeted sector, as indicated in the “Framework” chart. These Industry Partnership Teams, as envisioned here, may require some evolution from Industry Partnerships recently formed in some areas. We imagine the need for, and nature of, such evolution would be handled during the implementation phase of this initiative.

We recommend that the IPTs would consist of the following members (allowing for regional differences as required):

- Senior-level employer representatives from the sector, who lead and direct the work of the IPT;
- Senior-level leadership from each of the three public partner organizations (regionally);
- Industry/trade associations, if available;
- Labor organizations, if available;
- Approved private/non-profit training providers;
- BST representatives from the partners (preferably with specialized knowledge of that industry); and
- Local elected officials (LEOs) and/or other key influencers in the region.

Each Industry Partnership Team will establish processes whereby partners will come together to organize for regional implementation of the strategic and operational aspects of the framework elements. In doing so, industry teams will consider the following:

- Agency roles (either as discussed here or as amended in a given region);
- Implementation recommendations in this report;
- Cabinet for Economic Development Strategic Plan;
- KCTCS Transformational Plan;
- Career Center Certification Standards and Measures;
- Sector Strategy principles; and
- Recommendations for Kentucky Business Services Redesign.

Business Services Teams (BSTs)

Regional and local leaders across the Commonwealth have moved forward vigorously with the formation of Business Services Teams. Standards for these Teams are articulated in Kentucky's Career Center Certification standards, which require representation from workforce system, KCTCS, and economic development or Chamber of Commerce partners, among others. In our focus groups, we saw numerous examples of these Teams forming and beginning to exemplify collaboration across the partner organizations. Indeed, in several regions, the Teams have started to meet regularly, sharing business intelligence and brainstorming solutions to employer needs collaboratively, with more than a few implementing one or another customer relationship management platform to record activity. So, in many ways, this recommendation here is not a new one.

However, we are proposing some enhancements to the way these Teams would be formed and function in an "ideal" embodiment of the unified business services strategy. Specifically, we would recommend:

- That every client has an assigned "Client Relationship Lead" who would function as the primary point of contact for the business customer. This responds to a universal "ask" we heard in every focus group, and which has been recorded in employer surveys repeatedly across the nation. This is the very basis for the "concierge" service model we are putting forth.
- That every team deploy and be required to support a common platform for sharing business intelligence and managing the customer relationship among BST members. A common, universally-accessible (by all partners) CRM system is a critical foundation of any unified strategy, in our view.
- Every BST should have representation from each partner, and members of the team should be trained in a common Customer Profile (standardized information and assessment questionnaire designed to uncover needs that each partner is positioned to support). BST training should also include cross-training on partner offerings and consultative "selling" skills. While we note that training is occurring within regions

and local areas today, we believe that state leaders would positively impact quality and cost by including this curriculum in the Academy structures already being developed by the partners.

- The BST should be trained also in the concepts of geographic “territory management” – a process that would identify key employers (in target sectors and otherwise) and devise priorities and frequency of contact parameters. Please note that “managing territory” here is not meant to reinforce notions of rigid ownership or “turf,” but rather to convey an approach to coordinated, cross-partner, and collaborative employer relationship development, maintenance, and growth. Establishing an approach to managing the regional geographic territory will help reduce redundant contacts of employers, improve productivity, and also drive BST members to engage with new employers (rather than remain primarily focused on traditional and common users of our services today).

Finally, and on the subject of the recommended Client Relationship Lead, we spent a great deal of time analyzing options for how BSTs might achieve this in a way that is responsive to the needs expressed by employers, but also assures each partner organization that the approaches and activities required by their mission, legislation, regulations, and performance measures remain intact.

A Relationship Lead is defined as a BST member responsible for managing a specific client relationship – meaning that the Lead assures customer satisfaction by simplifying, building awareness, and seamlessly bringing partners to the table as needed to meet each client need – the “concierge” role. The Relationship Lead is therefore a primary point of contact, but not the only one; and a facilitator of the relationship between the client and the BST partners. There is no “line authority” conveyed or intended here, but rather a principle of functional alignment and organization across partners to best meet employers’ needs. The Relationship Lead succeeds through collaboration, not through any direct control over any other partner staff or organization.

As we worked through this issue in the focus groups, there was consistent resistance to an assigned “owner” of the client relationship (where one or another partner was assigned as the customer single point of contact [SPOC]). There was however, much more acceptance of a shared customer concept – a relationship where the partner who has the best existing relationship becomes the relationship leader, coordinating activities for all partners with that client. We believe such a strategy would be productive, as a business enjoying a current relationship with one partner would not want to be arbitrarily shifted to another because of a change in public policy or process.

There is also universal acceptance of the role of economic development as the client relationship lead for any and all businesses considering relocations inside the Commonwealth. Further, there is acceptance of the fact that some client information during this stage of a relationship needs to be private and not shared openly with partners until the customer has made public announcements and commitments known.

So, where a relationship exists with a Kentucky business, we believe most regions would (and should) opt to have that partner organization be assigned the BST Relationship Lead.

Further, in any and all cases and in all regions, potential new business customers moving into Kentucky would be engaged by and assigned to the economic development organization.

But what about existing Kentucky businesses that are not yet engaged by any of our partners? How do we achieve anything close to a SPOC in such cases?

The core principle of the unified business services strategy is that all partners embrace the charge to meet employers' talent development needs. Given this shared responsibility, we do not believe that any mandate from the Commonwealth level as to an assigned SPOC or Relationship Lead based on organizational affiliation is likely to be embraced or make practical sense. It is therefore recommended that a Relationship Lead be assigned for every targeted employer in a region (based on targeted sectors) and that BSTs negotiate that assignment locally, based on existing relationships, proximity, capacity, and other relevant criteria they will consider. In practical terms, these decisions must be made regionally. The Commonwealth would be well-advised, however, to require that a Relationship Lead be assigned and be accountable for every targeted employer in every region.

The following chart exhibits this discussion by documenting the roles and responsibilities that would be held by all the partners, as well as the specialized responsibilities of each, in our benchmark "ideal" situation. That said, the key to ultimate success will lay not so much in a rigid deployment of this benchmark model, as it will in its careful consideration by state, regional, and local leaders as part of a regional deployment and implementation strategy.

The standard for such a deployment should continue to be the feedback and requests received by those we serve – those businesses and industry sectors that hold the prospect of driving expanded community prosperity in Kentucky. Only a focus squarely on those needs will guide leaders to finding the right blend of these recommended roles that can work to meet the need in each regional economy.

Partner Roles (Ideal)

UNIVERSAL ROLES (all partners)

1. Provide staff to serve as members of Regional Business Services Team (BST).
2. Follow regional priorities for “territory management” (to ensure adequate coverage of targeted sectors/employers)
3. Enter data into BST CRM portal
4. Collaborate with partners to design and deliver responsive solutions for employers
5. Coordinate readiness and preparation for special grant opportunities
6. Set state policy that complements business development and expansion goals of the Commonwealth and its regions

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT “Ideal” Roles:	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT “Ideal” Roles:	KCTCS “Ideal” Roles:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business attraction/retention/expansion, including marketing of the workforce solutions/“concierge service” brand 2. Convener for economic data analysis and sector prioritization 3. Collaboratively convene “C-level” Industry Partnership Team (IPT) 4. Set policies to align Bluegrass State Skills Corporation grants to sector/occupational priorities in each regional economy 5. Provide continuous statistical (and anecdotal) information on business attraction, retention, and expansion, as it relates to regional human resource needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and continuously update quantitative talent supply pipeline data for each target sector 2. Act as “broker” who connects all of the pieces in the talent pipeline at the operational level 3. Seek and approve private and non-profit training providers for focus industries/occupations 4. Assist in competency model development and validation for each sector 5. Conduct worker attraction/recruitment 6. Provide “labor exchange” support – candidate screening, assessment, job matching, etc. 7. Set policy to align discretionary grants to sector/occupational priorities in state and each regional economy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek/develop curriculum asset maps (national, state, regional) 2. Lead competency model development and validation for each sector 3. Program and curriculum design/development and validation through industry-staffed Advisory Boards 4. Lead adoption and integration of industry-recognized credentials 5. Conduct skill assessment (e.g., WorkKeys) 6. Develop curriculum sharing agreements between institutions 7. Set policy to align WINS grants to sector/occupational priorities and maintain maximum flexibility 8. Provide continuous information on availability and results of various instructional programs (industry-specific and otherwise) 9. Articulate to K-12 systems

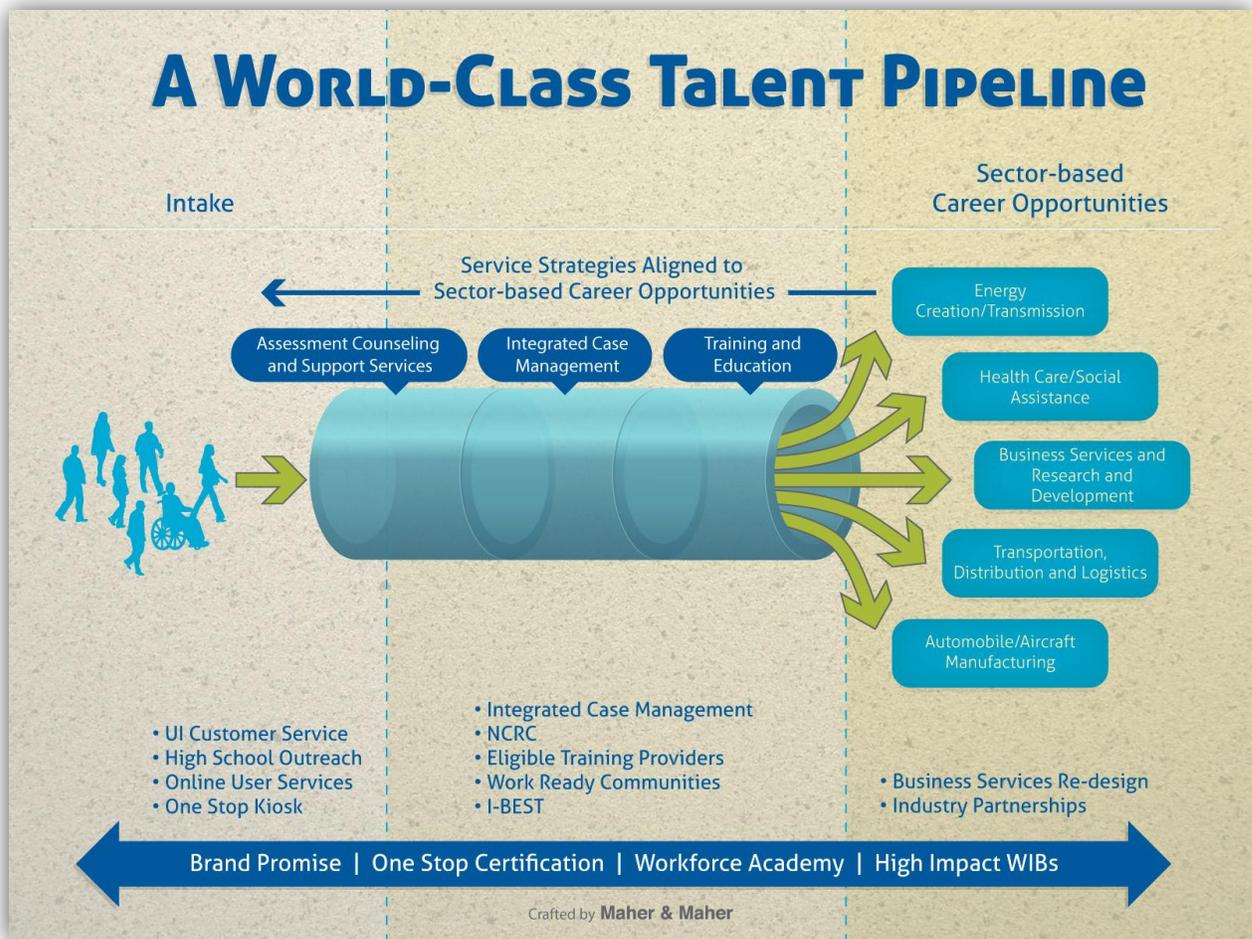
Actual roles should be determined by the regional partners in line with their preferences and relative capacity.



F. DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES RELATED TO PARTNER ROLES

The Quantitative Talent Pipeline

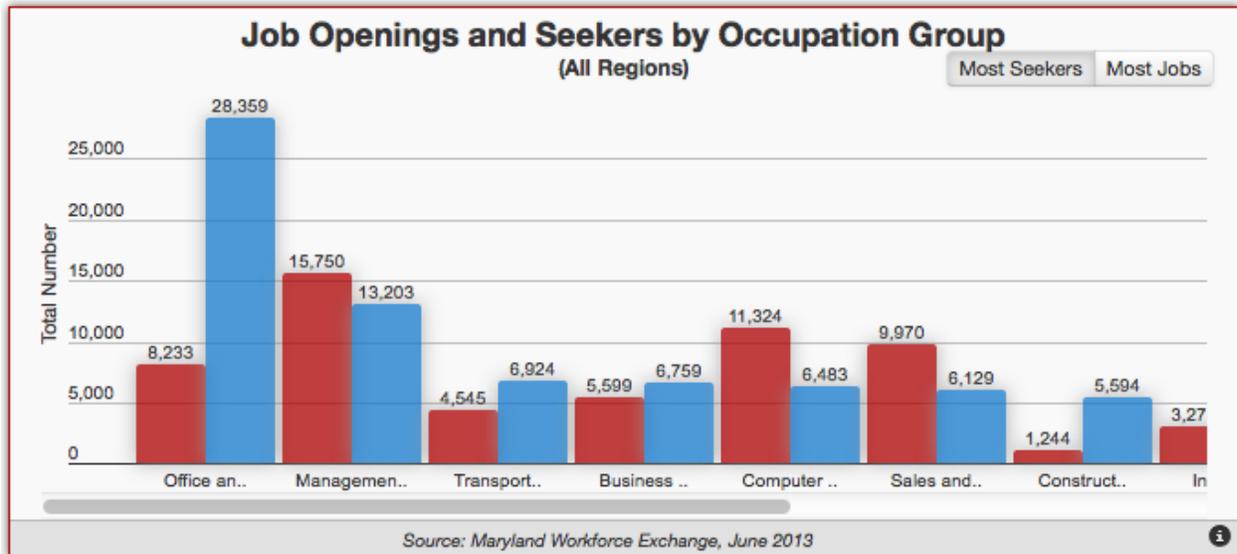
Kentucky has already embraced the concept of a talent pipeline – a seamless system that connects students, dislocated workers, graduates, and targeted populations to a wide array of support services, counseling, training, and labor exchange capabilities that prepares them for family-sustaining careers in targeted growth sectors.



This talent pipeline has been expressed graphically as shown here – providing a conceptual understanding of the role of the workforce system – but really of all three partners in driving worker, community, and business success.

Here, we are proposing to take the talent pipeline concept to a powerful, new, and quantitative level. We recommend that the quantitative talent pipeline literally quantify the talent supply chain – from available workers and their skills, to training and educational programs and capacity to projected occupational (and skill) demands. In a future supported by such a talent supply chain, Kentucky would have a decided advantage in attracting and retaining employers (as an economic development asset), but more – a

tangible, quantified methodology to “sync” planning and measurement from Career Center training referrals, to KCTCS seat capacity, and ultimately to placement in available employment opportunities.



To be clear, we are not aware of an existing deployment of such a system across any state anywhere in the country, but others are clearly moving to design and deploy such a concept now. For example:

- Maryland’s Workforce Dashboard: The Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation’s Workforce Dashboard is an interactive tool designed to visualize data and patterns related to the supply and demand of Maryland’s workforce, education, and training opportunities in the state. Users can sort to the regional or even zip code level, and can also explore training and educational opportunities linked to growth sectors (<http://www.esrgc.org/dashboards/dllr/index.html>).

While this example is not exactly what we call for here, it is a clear indication of what the talent development benchmark for excellence is gravitating toward, and we believe Kentucky is well-placed to be able to lead another level of innovation here. The benefits of such an endeavor are numerous:

- It would be a clear differentiator as an economic development asset, and something employers would see as having great value;
- It would symbolize world-class cooperation and collaboration in a true, unified strategy for business service support; and,

“We believe the workforce development system is the right partner to be the lead in supporting the development of such a capability...”

- It would be a tremendous value to KCTCS in planning curriculum and capacity needs.

We believe the workforce development system to be the right partner to be the lead in supporting the development of such a capability (at least in terms of our benchmark). It is clearly in this system's mission to do so, and we would therefore recommend they be the partner to take the lead here, but obviously and only in close collaboration with the other partners.

"We recommend that the Steering Committee consider, as part of their Implementation Phase, funding a grant opportunity for one or more regions to lead the development of such a capacity ..."

Further, we recommend that the Steering Committee consider, as part of their implementation phase, funding a grant opportunity for one or more regions to lead the development of such a capacity with the stated intent that they create a solution that could be leveraged and scaled to meet the needs of other regions at the conclusion of the grant.

Seek/Develop Curriculum Asset Maps (national, state, and regional)

As the chart indicates, our benchmark assigns a wide range of key functions to KCTCS as the critical partner to lead innovation in educational and training solution design and delivery in support of the unified framework. Clearly, such a role is consistent with

KCTCS' mission, and that of the institutions KCTCS represents. Further, a review of multiple policy and program initiatives underway and articulated by KCTCS leadership leads us to believe that many (if not most) of our recommendations are in various stages of consideration and deployment around the Commonwealth today.

Ultimately, the roles we would assign to KCTCS and its member institutions regionally all align to their mission, but more, they align to our business customers' stated request for more rapid and relevant training solutions to meet ever-shifting talent demands in a new and dynamic marketplace.

Specifically, community and technical colleges would be called on to lead the BST as educational and talent development experts, and address a full range talent development needs, including but not limited to:

- Create an asset map of available curriculum around the Commonwealth, but also available from commercial and other sources nationally;
- Form sharing agreements to bring curriculum from other institutions to scale across all regions in order to minimize development time and increase capacity and response time to "new" training needs of the employer community;
- Enhance collaboration with K-12, four-year institutions, and private sources where necessary to address projected regional talent supply needs;

- Lead the deployment of industry-recognized credentials and industry-validated curriculum in support of talent supply needs; and
- Reduce redundancy in programs and program titles and lead the ability for all partners and employer customers to address talent needs at the competency (not course title) level.

We understand that the roles assigned to the community college system are enormous, but those institutions are clearly the best-positioned to deal with them. We also know that these institutions vary in their organizational roles, their offerings, and their resources. Our focus group work also made it clear that local responsibility to “pay” for offerings is a consistent (and understandable concern) for some (if not all) schools. Indeed, in the rapidly-changing economy, it may be necessary for the colleges to consider eliminating some of its offerings that may not conform to current and projected demand in order to initiate some things that are better-aligned with the human resource needs of focus industries.

In a unified system, we would recommend that implementation planners therefore consider policy reforms that might help to drive new resources to all partners, but particularly to training providers. Such policy preferences might include:

- A stated preference for “earn and learn” models (where employers help pay for tuition and/or for work internships as part of training) and the active leveraging of private sector industry funds;
- Models where employers guarantee some form of employment for all successful graduates; and
- Policy preferences in the use of public funding for use with employers in sectors that are targeted in strategic plans, and/or for occupational training targeting those sectors.

Again, we do not suggest mandating such policies across the Commonwealth, but would encourage implementation planning at the regional level that inspires partners to drive new sources of funding into programs in order to relieve the pressure and in order to embrace new ways and methods of doing business – for all partners.

“The roles we would assign to KCTCS and its member institutions regionally all align to their mission, but more, they align to our business customer’s stated request for more rapid and relevant training solutions to meet ever-shifting talent demands in a new and dynamic marketplace.”

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

We have previously discussed the need for a common customer relationship management solution. To their credit, multiple regions are using a variety of solutions today. The solutions being explored that we uncovered through our focus groups and surveys include:

- Regular meetings and “roundtables” where BST partners come together, discuss client needs, and brainstorm possible collaborative solutions;
- The use of Excel-based forms to record and share information about customer meetings and appointments;
- The use of the ERISS CRM platform; and
- The use of Salesforce as a common platform.

We believe these early adopters, in whichever form, should be commended for moving forward with a shared CRM solution. However, multiple platforms will make it difficult to mine performance data, share data across regions for employers with multiple locations, and standardize features (such as a common Customer Profile we discussed earlier).

Our mission here did not include an assessment of any single CRM platform or solution, but we believe the activities at the Commonwealth level, including KCTCS’ efforts to move forward with Salesforce, present an opportunity that should be quickly explored and acted upon. A Commonwealth-wide solution would enhance information sharing and data mining and would save costs for local systems, reduce duplication of effort, and improve efficiency. We therefore recommend that the Steering Committee move forward to:

- Define the requirements of a common system, including the ability to interface with proprietary IT solutions (such as that being developed by the Cabinet for Economic Development) and the ability to assign Relationship Leads and protect confidential data;
- Explore whether Salesforce will adequately meet those needs as identified across the Commonwealth and for all partners;
- Explore funding a state-wide CRM solution, presumably by leveraging the existing contractual relationship between Salesforce and KCTCS; and
- Developing policy for the terms under which regions and local areas will gain access to the use of such a platform, and making that policy part of this project’s implementation phase.

Shared, Statewide Marketing and Communications

Some Steering Committee members and focus group participants have noted that Kentucky does not have a statewide message or “brand” that effectively and uniformly communicates the quality and value of all partners’ collective services and resources, and that differentiates Kentucky from its competitor states. We certainly recognize that raising the issue of marketing and messaging under a common, statewide brand can raise concerns, and we want to be clear that we are not suggesting that partners’ existing brands, taglines,

signage, etc. be eliminated and subsumed under a single brand. Rather, we are recommending that the Steering Committee discuss the potential value of creating and adopting a shared message for communicating to the employer community the vision and strength of Kentucky's full, unified business services system. This message could embody and project all partners' commitment to true "concierge" service delivery and workforce solutions development for employers.

It is important to emphasize that merely adopting a shared message or brand communication has little value unless all partners in Kentucky's business services system truly embrace the shared vision and actively implement it to deliver results for employers and industries. A shared message or brand must certainly tell a compelling story, but more importantly, it gains its meaning from the action that supports it. Put differently, partners in Kentucky's business services system must deliver on their promises to employers in order for a shared message or brand to be meaningful.

IV. RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE SYSTEM

In this section, we outline a recommended plan for implementation of the unified business services framework and system. We are proposing a phased approach to implementation that includes the following primary stages:

1. State-level refinement of the framework and the implementation plan, including resolution of any identified state-level issues or barriers that might impede regional implementation, and development of plans for state-level guidance and support;
2. Planning for implementation of the unified framework for business services at the regional level, including planning sessions, regional self-assessment, technical assistance activities, and regional implementation plan development; and
3. Full implementation of the unified business services system, including the measurement of performance, results, and continuous improvement, and the ongoing solicitation of employer customer feedback.

Each of these three phases is discussed below in further detail.

A. STATE-LEVEL PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

In the early stages, implementation of the unified business services strategy will require the engagement and planning of a guiding body representing both state and regional/local perspectives and interests and representing all three partner systems. We assume that the existing Steering Committee could appropriately serve this function. A key question for consideration is how industry and employer customers will be engaged throughout the planning and implementation process to provide their valuable insights and perspectives. While it would not be a productive use of time for business customers to be involved in the minutiae of this process, we do recommend that a group of representative employer customers be convened virtually at appropriate intervals to review key components of the roll-out strategy and provide their feedback and recommendations.

At the outset, we recommend reconvening the Steering Committee in a series of strategy, planning, and decision sessions, to develop the critical foundation for implementation of the unified business services strategy. These sessions would seek to accomplish the following objectives, which are presented in generally sequential order.

Refine the Vision, Ensure Alignment, and Resolve “State-Level” Issues

- **Review, and refine, and disseminate the framework:** Refine and disseminate the unified business services framework presented in this report as needed, based upon Steering Committee feedback, and ultimately confirm and adopt a framework that all Steering Committee members embrace and are willing to champion within their systems and spheres of influence.
- **Determine which elements of the framework must be reflected in any and all regional implementation models,** and which may be modified or adapted to reflect unique regional environments and needs. The goal here would be to set minimum criteria that should be uniform in all regions throughout Kentucky to ensure attainment of the system envisioned by employer customers, the Steering Committee, and focus group participants.
- **Resolve any issues of alignment between and among related statewide programs and initiatives:** Check for alignment with other existing and planned initiatives in order to identify points of mutual support and potential areas of conflict. (We have attempted to do so in our work here, but due the severe limitations in time and scope, senior leaders would want to ensure policy alignment for themselves.) We would want to ensure maximum alignment with and leveraging of efforts already underway in Kentucky’s economic development, community college, and workforce development systems; and ensure that stakeholders throughout the systems understand how different initiatives indeed fit together and complement one another. As important, we would want to identify any areas in which aspects of existing or planned initiatives might be in conflict with the vision established for the unified business services system. The Steering Committee will need to fully explore all of these areas of potential alignment and lack of alignment.
- **Address policy and funding barriers related to unified business services delivery:** Similarly, there will be a need to determine where partner systems’ state-level policies, funding guidance and/or investment priorities, and related strategies and activities may conflict with one another or otherwise hinder successful implementation of the unified business services system. For example, disparate program performance measures across the three systems could pose challenges to implementation of a well-aligned business services system. Exploring opportunities to align funding in support of the unified system will also be important. Here, the Steering Committee may wish to explore how Bluegrass State Skills Corporation funding, WINS funding, and Workforce Investment Act training investments can be better coordinated with one another from policy and investment perspectives, as well as whether some portion of these resources ought to be targeted for investment in high-priority industry sectors at the state and/or regional levels.
- **Address needs for state-level support:** The Steering Committee will also need to explore several state-level issues that must be addressed in order to enable consistent regional implementation of the unified business services

framework. These issues have been identified in conversations with Steering Committee members and focus group participants.

- **Customer relationship management system:** Perhaps most foundational is the need to define the business requirements for a common, state-wide customer relationship management solution and proceed with procurement and installation of this system. Partners will need to come to consensus around the best CRM platform for Kentucky's needs and identify ways to fund it state-wide.
- **Training and technical assistance:** Participants in Steering Committee and focus group sessions noted that the skills and competencies required by staff under the envisioned unified business services system may likely be different – and more advanced – than staff members' current skill sets. Consultative, relationship-based business service delivery is certainly more complex and nuanced than more traditional forms of “transactional” or labor exchange-focused business service delivery, and embodies a significant culture shift toward the “concierge” model. In addition, there will likely be training needs related to the shared customer “ownership” model and effective territory management strategies and practices. As such, while partners at the regional level will need to invest in professional development, capacity-building, and technical assistance for staff, it will likely be necessary for partners at the state level to dedicate resources to staff training and skill development in order to meet generalized needs across multiple – if not all – regions. It is also likely that some regions will require technical assistance or even outside facilitation support in order to implement their system, and the state may want to establish a process (and/or a fund) to meet those needs.
- **Curriculum-sharing:** Focus group discussions revealed that while there is some curriculum-sharing (and even faculty-sharing) taking place in some areas of the Commonwealth, curriculum-sharing among colleges does not appear to be practiced uniformly. This leads to duplicative investments in similar curriculum and reduces colleges' ability to respond quickly to employers' training needs. Developing curriculum-sharing agreements (and perhaps even faculty-sharing agreements) at the state level would be extremely beneficial to implementation of the unified business services system.
- **Quantifying employers' talent pipeline needs at the industry and occupational levels:** The ability to understand and actually quantify employers' talent pipeline needs at the regional level, by industry sector and by occupation, has been identified as an important need. Only with a clear understanding of employers' quantified, “real-time” workforce needs, from entry-level to advanced positions, can system partners effectively align their training investments and other workforce-related services. There are a variety of data sets and technology tools that can help support efforts to quantify regional

industry and occupational talent pipeline needs. Kentucky may wish to consider options for researching, developing and/or investing in such a tool at the state level to improve regional capacity to anticipate and respond to employers' workforce pipeline needs.

Establish Expectations for Implementation

Next, the Steering Committee will need to articulate its expectations regarding actual implementation of the unified business services system. This process will likely involve at least the following components:

- **Timeframe for addressing state-level issues:** Defining the timeframe within which state-level issues and concerns, such as implementing a shared, statewide CRM system; instituting curriculum-sharing agreements; and developing a training and technical assistance plan, can be resolved.
- **System implementation timeframe:** Identifying the desired phases in the regional implementation process, as well as the timing for each phase. Potential phases could include regional self-assessment against the framework; technical assistance and training needs identification; provision of technical assistance; regional implementation plan development; full system implementation; and ongoing results and continuous improvement analysis.
- **Communications and policy and planning guidance:** Identifying needed communications, awareness-building, and policy and planning guidance required to support system implementation. These efforts may include webinars or other sessions to build understanding and buy-in across the Commonwealth; joint policy communications from the Cabinet for Economic Development, the Department for Workforce Investment, and KCTCS; and, of course, guidance on regional implementation plan development, content, and submission requirements.

Following this initial phase, in which in the Steering Committee is focused upon overarching, statewide design of the implementation framework for the unified business services system, the focus would then turn to implementation preparation and planning at the regional level.

B. REGIONALLY-FOCUSED PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The level and intensity of collaboration required to successfully develop and implement the unified business services system at the regional level is extraordinary. Happily, the Commonwealth already exhibits a degree of this culture, and activities to plan for implementation are designed to both leverage and expand those collaborative practices. Success at this juncture will depend on:

- Full “vertical integration,” with the state designing activities and forums that disseminate and illuminate the framework, while fully supporting regional activities to plan and implement successfully; and
- Full “horizontal integration” – at state and regional levels – of the three primary public partners with each other, with providers of ancillary services (e.g., industry associations, Chambers of Commerce, and human resource organizations), and with the local business community

Accordingly, regionally-focused planning activities need to be thought through and coordinated very closely across state agency lines and with local delivery agents. We recommend that this planning period be divided into three time phases:

- Pre-planning activities – Carried out in the region
- Convened regional “Learning and Planning Sessions” – Joint state/regional team sessions, with multiple regions convened together in a learning and sharing atmosphere
- Final plan development activities – Carried out in the region, with technical assistance offered by the state

1. Pre-Planning Period

Objectives during this period are to:

1. **Learn the basics of the unified business services framework and system:** This would be accomplished through state dissemination of the system basics, including the implementation process and proposed timeline. Dissemination would include written materials, beginning with this report, and a series of webinars to further amplify expectations. The framework would be positioned clearly as a joint state/regional and public/private creation, with abundant opportunities for regions to plan their own system implementation in a collaborative manner within the statewide framework that ensures a consistent level of service across all regions.
2. **Organize for collaborative planning and implementation:** This involves forming and coalescing the regional team that will plan and subsequently be largely responsible for implementation of the unified business services system. At minimum, the team would include high-level representatives of the regional workforce development organizations, economic development entities, and community college(s). Additional member such as K-12 representatives, four-year colleges, and more should be considered. However, it is felt that industry representation should not be sought at this juncture. It is critical that the public partners understand and buy into the framework, and work through certain issues and processes together, before engaging employers. This would of course not preclude regional teams from

seeking employer feedback on planning “chunks” throughout the planning process, or even convening employers in a virtual feedback session, as discussed early in this part.

3. **Self-assess readiness for planning the unified system:** Regional teams would convene to discuss the statewide framework and react to a series of questions and statements intended to (a) encourage the sharing of implementation concepts, ideas, and processes among regional team members; and (b) self-identify areas the region would be advised to concentrate on changing and/or enhancing in order to develop and deliver on the unified business services system.

2. Convene Regional “Learning and Planning Sessions”

Once the Steering Team has completed – or nearly completed – its work as described above, we recommend that it convene a series of three sessions (Western, Central, and Eastern) that give a number of regional planning teams the opportunity to interact and share ideas with each other and with state officials. The state would re-introduce the framework and related expectations, and provide time for regional representatives to express their hopes and ideas for the system, as well as surface any misgivings. In this way, hopefully all silently-held objections and passive (as well as active) resistance will surface and may be dealt with by a seasoned group facilitator.

In addition to that activity, which could be carried out in a small group to large group fashion, region-specific groups would meet to:

- Assess their “current state” vs. the framework “ideal” status and minimum design and implementation standards. This activity would center on the seven critical elements identified in Part III of this report, and would carry regions a significant step beyond the self-assessments held within each region. In this activity, teams would begin to conceptualize their own ideal system/state, and the kinds of action items that might be needed to get them there.
- Identify challenges embedded in regional culture, capacity, policy, and processes that could create barriers to successful implementation.
- Consider how to go about completing a planning template (after returning home) that would be required of each region.
- Identify possible technical assistance and training that would be needed to complete the planning process, with an eye toward implementation technical assistance needs, as well.

Most importantly, at the end of the session (perhaps 1½ days), regions would engage in organized sharing among themselves and the state representatives, and

seek to leverage external ideas. A facilitator would compile potential promising planning practices from this session

3. Ongoing Regional Implementation Plan Development Activities

Following the regional sessions, planning teams would be expected to compose plans that go beyond the establishment of their ideal framework and goals for establishing the critical elements of their system. These plans would identify carefully phased approaches, actions, responsible parties, timelines, and performance measures for things like confirming regional focus industries, engaging employers, identifying career pathways, and much, much more.

As they work on implementation plan development, regions will further identify their training and technical assistance needs. The Steering Committee should compile those needs to identify economies of scale, and develop a training protocol to meet them as expeditiously and comprehensively as possible. Training will most certainly be needed around the envisioned relationship-based “concierge service” approach to business service delivery, which requires some significant shifts in culture and skill sets, including the notion of shared client ownership and accountability and strategic employer outreach and contact management planning.

The state would be expected to provide technical assistance and, where needed, respond positively to requests for facilitation services during this phase. It is recommended that, insofar as possible, peer-to-peer coaching be utilized.

C. FULL SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

Following the period for regional preparation and planning for implementation of the unified business services system, full system implementation will commence. As discussed in the previous section, the Steering Committee will need to determine the date by which they want the system to go fully “live.” Partners at the regional level will certainly need adequate time to conduct self-assessments, obtain necessary technical assistance, and finalize their implementation plans. At the same time, however, it will be important to maintain momentum on this effort and set an ambitious but achievable date for full implementation. Given the extent of the work that has been done throughout Kentucky by all three partner systems over the last several years, the Commonwealth is extremely well-positioned to implement the unified business services framework quickly. The Steering Committee may wish to consider an overall implementation timeframe of approximately one year, which would allow a reasonable amount of time to address state-level issues and pursue regional self-assessment, technical assistance, and plan development activities, while still keeping with an emphatic approach upon full system implementation as quickly as possible.

In planning for full system implementation, the Steering Committee will need to consider a number of questions – early on – that will shape the implementation process:

- How should regional implementation of the unified business services system be “**monitored**”? To what extent is tracking implementation a state level function, a regional/local function, or some combination of the two? Are there existing performance review processes that could be leveraged by partners to incorporate review of unified business service delivery implementation progress and results?
- How will **continuous improvement** be tracked, measured, and reported over time? What are the critical measures of continuous improvement (e.g., improved employer satisfaction with service process and results, increased industry sector penetration, etc.)?
- To what extent might **incentives, rewards, and sanctions** be incorporated into the implementation of the system? Would incentives and rewards be useful in catalyzing system implementation and ongoing continuous improvement? Should there be consequences for areas that do not implement the system according to established guidelines and timeframes?
- **How will employers be engaged** over time to provide feedback on and guidance to the system? In addition to soliciting employer customers’ feedback and input at the regional level, would it be helpful to establish an employer customer “advisory group” at the state level to provide periodic input to the implementation process over time?

As part of the system design and planning process, we recommend conducting a facilitated dialogue with the Steering Committee to explore these and other questions, decisions about which we would incorporate into the plan for implementation at the state and regional levels. It is important that this dialogue take place as early as possible in the project process, given that these decisions are fundamental to overall initiative design and implementation, particularly if Kentucky is interested in ensuring relatively rapid implementation of the unified system.

In order to support full system implementation, it would likely be beneficial to configure a targeted team, more concentrated than the Steering Committee, to field technical assistance and training requests, coordinate peer- to-peer assistance, monitor implementation, and review performance. This team could be organized as a work team of the Steering Committee to ensure clear lines of communication and statewide coordination.

APPENDIX A: Meeting Notes

This Appendix presents the full notes from the Steering Committee meeting and three focus group sessions held through Kentucky during the week of May 27, 2013.

Frankfort – Wednesday, May 29, 2013

Steering Committee Session

Summary: We (Maher & Maher staff members Rick Maher and Gretchen Sullivan) met with the Steering Committee for just over three hours on Day 1 of the trip. The meeting was very positive in that we were able to identify a common mission (which was captured and used in each Focus Group session), and a somewhat consistent “vision” of what a unified strategy might look like (see flipchart notes). However, we also uncovered some tactical issues we will have to struggle through, most notably the fact that KCTCS has already contracted for the Salesforce customer relationship management (CRM) system-wide, several (nine of 10) LWIAs have contracted for the ERISS CRM system, and the Cabinet for Economic Development has decided to build their own system. How we unravel this issue will be an important component of our solution.

Flipchart Notes: Characteristics of a Unified Business Services Strategy

- Flexible: We can address the needs of industry as they evolve
- Partners trust each other to do the job with the client
- Value-added service provider (building our brand as a valuable partner for both placement and retention support)
- We deliver where, when, and how employers want it
- We are solution-based (not program-based)
- Primary point of contact for employers (this term is preferred over “single point of contact”/SPOC)
- Sales force needs to be credible (trained)
- Strategic activities needs to be aligned among and between partners
- We are responsive to each other
- We have the tools, infrastructure, and policies to support the above vision
- We need a set of protocols (a culture) to support our interactions with customers (i.e., “Concierge Services”)
- Our reputation should be “consider it done”

- If you answer the phone, you “own it” (the customer’s issue/problem)
- Our service/system is evaluated or measured. It is accountable (i.e., employer-evaluated).

Versailles – Thursday, May 30, 2013

Focus Group Meeting

Summary: On Day 2, Rick Maher and Gretchen Sullivan collaborated on the focus group meeting in Versailles (at the KCTCS headquarters). The session was well attended, including by several members of the Steering Committee who spoke positively about their commitment to the project at the outset. Most interesting here was a VERY dynamic sharing session with multiple employers who attended this session (see flipchart notes). They were very engaged and positive, but also frank and constructive in the feedback they brought to this room. Notably, the group – in their visioning activities – arrived at very much the same place the Steering Committee had arrived at the day before. They seemed to align around a “team-selling” approach with a primary/single point of contact that would be determined by which agency had the strongest existing relationship with the business. Where no one had an existing relationship, they would negotiate the primary/single point of contact, but it might default to economic development in the absence of another logical choice. They also agreed to the use of a universal CRM system that all partners would utilize. We learned that economic development in the Northern Kentucky had already invested in Salesforce, and while they are willing to “share” access, there were technical issues that would not allow another agency to “own” the client relationship (described as a limitation of the software, not a policy problem per se). We’ll need to examine that issue further. Over all, this was a very positive session that seemed to very much align with the discussion (and vision) that unfolded within the Steering Committee discussion on Day 1 (see flipchart notes below).

Flipchart Notes: Characteristics of a Unified Business Services Strategy

- Focused on the customer, not on our own organization(s)
- Responsive
- “The Dream Team” (agencies collaborate, meet, share information)
- A universal-access CRM system
- Shared customer relationships
- We trust our partners to perform
- “Floating client ownership”
- Cross-training of BSR staff

- Driven by client results, not by organizational needs
- Sufficient training dollars (funding) to meet the name/vision
- Proactively promoting our services/capability
- Flexible training options (less red tape/restrictions on use of program funds)
- For employers, this is a two-way street – it should be participatory
- Empowered, qualified BSRs
- No “alphabet soup”
- Solutions-oriented
- Adequate, local training funds to meet the need

Flipchart Notes: What Employers Want (Employer Feedback)

- Government should lead with a shared vision (that the entire community can understand). Employers need to help develop this vision.
- Be accurate
- Be consistent
- Be predictable
- Understand our talent needs at the competency level
- Be a solutions provider
- Provider of skilled people capable of the job
- Be cost-effective
- Define career pathways that fuel our talent pipeline
- A quantifiable talent supply chain solution
- Help us with diversity
- Provide us a SPOC; use a laser, not a shotgun – stop with all the phone calls
- Be responsive (minutes or hours; not weeks or months)
- Sustainable and dependable
- We (employers) need to define the need better
- Be less restrictive/more flexible with programs
- Think outside the box
- Be more risk tolerant, entrepreneurial
- Engage all key business leaders

Owensboro – Friday, May 31, 2013

Focus Group Meeting

Summary: On Day 3, Rick Maher traveled to Owensboro Community & Technical College to meet with the Western Kentucky focus group. Some challenges surfaced during this session that will need to be addressed moving forward. We opened with a good discussion of business needs lead by three prime employers in the room (see flipchart notes). They expressed many of the same concerns we had heard before here. Once employers left the room and we began to focus on a vision for a unified strategy, people were positive, in that they all agreed with the need for better communication and collaboration, but they also thought they had strong working relationships already. There was not a willingness to talk about “shared ownership” or a centralized CRM system here, although there was a strong willingness to work together and deliver even higher quality services to employers. While this group did not arrive at the same consensus that other focus groups did, some very positive contributions happened here nonetheless. There was a strong desire to involve the “P-20” system in the discussion of improving “soft skills” in the regional workforce, and some good results have already been achieved here apparently (in at least one program). Also, there was the notion raised that an ultimate framework hold out “options” that regional leaders could choose from so that we avoid a “one-size-fits-all” framework that these folks do not believe could work for them. Ultimately, the vision here looks like “institutionalized collaboration” that might feature regular “roundtables” where all partners would meet and share issues, solve problems, design particular employer solutions, etc. These might be bolstered by jointly-sponsored “Industry Events” where sectors might be convened in an effort to stay aligned to employer needs and gain feedback on how things are going. The session ended on a positive note, and again, the group was very much focused on doing a positive, constructive job in serving area employers. As a follow-up to this focus group session, Gretchen Sullivan participated in a meeting of the Green River LWIA’s Business Services Team on Friday, June 7, 2013. During this meeting, Gretchen was able to gather valuable information about Green River’s existing efforts, and also received the Green River’s team input and perspectives on a unified business services strategy. This area’s feedback has been incorporated with other input received throughout the process to date in preparation of this final report.

Flipchart Notes: Characteristics of a Unified Business Services Strategy

- Advisory Boards
- A “Roundtable Seat” (regular meetings to share information, discuss employer challenges, design collaborative solutions)
- Industry Forums (sector-driven sessions, collaborative, stay abreast of employers’ needs and challenges)

- Formalized communications strategy
- Employer's responsibility: Forecasting of need, clarity of need, participatory
- Align partner policies to enhance engagement in workforce development
- Can't be one size fits all – Any solutions we adopt state-wide won't work; we'll need a framework that fits the assets in each community/region
- Getting to a SPOC? – Can't be one person, but can't be "12 people" either
- A common catalog or needs assessment for our offerings
- Regular meetings with partners/better communications
- Service offering "second to none"
- Sector-focused meetings
- K-12 MUST be involved
- A culture that collaborates (decisions are not always driven by who has the dollars)

Flipchart Notes: What Employers Want (Employer Feedback)

- Make it simple (to do business with you). "We are trying to survive and we don't have time to waste."
- Add value for us
- End multiple points of contact
- Fewer strings, less red tape, more flexibility
- Finish what we start
- Be consistent
- Get results
- Collaborate more often and more effectively
- Get us qualified people ("soft skills")
- Build relationships

Hazard – Friday, May 31, 2013

Focus Group Meeting

Summary: Only one employer (from the health care sector) attended the Hazard focus group (hosted by Hazard Community & Technical College), which limited our ability to gather multiple perspectives and points of feedback from the business

community. However, this employer was extremely thoughtful and forthcoming with his input, and other attendees did a great job sharing what they're heard from their employer customers and wearing their employer "hats." All told, the Hazard group was generally aligned with the vision discussed during the Steering Committee meeting, such as the importance of a primary point of contact (which they felt should be the entity that has the best and most established relationship with the business). There was a sense that economic development should be the lead partner in reaching out to employers in cases where there is not yet an established relationship. The group was very committed to creating a system that exhibits a "yes" culture, is focused on business solutions vs. programs and processes, and actively removes internal barriers and pursues innovation. Expanding and scaling existing "pockets" of best practices in business services was also of interest. This group raised a concern that we discussed at some length, which is that Business Services Teams, though made up of partners from different systems, are still "siloes" and are held primarily accountable to their own individual programs and program performance measures. BST members are "moonlighting" as members of these teams, rather than dedicated full-time to the teams, and there is concern that this limits their ability to perform their roles as well as they would like and bring business service delivery to effective scale. Focus group attendees from the economic development system suggested that a better approach might be to have a dedicated, full-time business services project manager-type person in each region throughout Kentucky. This individual would serve as the primary contact for employer customers, and would be well-trained to broker other partners' services as appropriate for business. There was some feeling that this approach would be more responsive to employers, and would also be a better use of scarce financial, staffing, etc. resources.

Flipchart Notes: Characteristics of a Unified Business Services Strategy

- Be a "yes" culture/system for employers; proactive, transparent, responsive, agile
- System listens to employers and partners know enough to ask the right questions
- Everybody "owns" the system (shared responsibility/accountability)
- No wrong door/single front door for employers
- Whichever partner has the primary relationship with an employer drives customer "ownership"
- Primary point of contact knowledgeable enough about other partners and services to connect employers effectively (cross-training)
- Strategic, coordinated outreach to employers led by the partner that has the best relationship with the company

- Unified with one brand (e.g., “Kentucky Workforce Solutions”); organizations should take a back seat to the unified brand
- True seamlessness: Programs, funding, process are back-office functions, “behind the curtain,” not visible to employers; no alphabet soup!
- Building a portfolio of solutions with an action plan and accountability to employers, not dumping programs and processes on them
- K-12 engaged strategically, not just piecemeal relationships; K-12 needs to be a part of this effort, more involved with getting students work/career-ready at an earlier age
- Better use of OJT and customized training (particularly with small businesses)
- Sector-based training consortia can be very effective (though also challenges due to competition among participating companies)
- We put barriers in place; need to remove
- Get out of our comfort zone; customize business services, rather than “same old, same old”
- There ARE resources; we must identify all of them and use them more creatively to meet employers’ needs
- Better relationships, trust, and information-sharing among partners and less “turf” and competition (stop focusing on individual program performance measures; if we effectively meet employers’ needs, high performance numbers will follow)
- Embed soft/life skills and work ethic development in K-12 curriculum and in workforce training
- Focus on accountability and follow-through; survey business customers for their feedback on satisfaction and results
- Use measures that are relevant to and driven by business: Results of service, sector penetration, worker turnover and retention, repeat business customers, referrals from existing business customers, system usage by business
- Bottom line must be “Are we solving business needs?” Which partner gets the “credit” is unimportant.
- Map and leverage all resources/assets
- Shared CRM would be ideal (e.g., ExecutivePulse, Salesforce.com, ERISS)
- Investment in professional development; need the right people with the right skills to work with employers

- Concern that Business Services Teams are still “siloed” and that BST members are “moonlighting” and have other jobs. BST knowledge, time, and resource constraints. Alternate model: Have a team of full-time project managers in regions around the Commonwealth that are dedicated to business services and responsible for coordinating with partners and connecting employers customers to the services they need.

Flipchart Notes: What Employers Want (Employer Feedback)

- Workforce skill gaps: Face-to-face communication skills, work ethic, life skills, “basics,” soft skills (these gaps are most common among younger generation); “entitlement mentality” is a real problem
- We need workers now (urgency, speed); public partners need to move more quickly to meet employers’ workforce needs (workforce system in particular moves too slowly)
- Partners need to be more flexible, nimble, and responsive
- Partners need to demonstrate knowledge of employers’ environments and needs
- Want a clear single/primary point of contact (organization/agency not important so long as point of contact gets needs met); do not want to deal with multiple agencies
- We don’t want to deal with process and programs; lose the acronyms and agency-specific references
- Small businesses face particular challenges; often don’t have the funding/capacity for training small numbers of workers
- There are multiple online systems that are confusing and turn employers away
- Employers don’t know what’s available to them in terms of workforce-related support; information about their options is not accessible (there is a communication gap here)
- Current relationships with employers are piecemeal
- Why are partners’ strategies and activities not aligned with one another?
- Needs to be about serving employers, not “feeding the bureaucracy”
- Too much focus on program performance measures and process measures vs. results for business
- Need to make things easier for employers; it seems we are always being invited to meetings like this but what is the result? Lack of coordination and

- follow-through among partners. Would prefer quarterly or semi-annual meetings with all partners assembled in one place.
- Relationships are critical; unknown partners approaching employers are seen as “peddlers”
 - Time is money for employers; workforce training needs to be more compressed and modular (e.g., short-term customized training and OJT)
 - Employers need assistance retaining and retraining older workers
 - Drug use/inability to pass a drug test is a huge issue in this region
 - Partners need to do a better job of screening and assessing candidates; employers don’t want “unqualified masses”
 - Employers are willing to train workers themselves for technical skill development; partners need to provide qualified people with soft skills, work ethic, etc.
 - Better understanding of employers’ skill/competency needs
 - Follow up and follow through!

APPENDIX B: Steering Committee

UNIFIED BUSINESS SERVICES FRAMEWORK STEERING COMMITTEE				
Team Member	Title	Agency	City	Contact Information
James Cole	KWIB Project Champion	Senior Advisor – The Cole Group	Southgate	Jcole84503@aol.com 859-391-3348
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Donna Davis	System Director	Workforce Solutions – KCTCS	Versailles	Donna.Davis@kctcs.edu 859-256-3249
Dr. Ed Hughes	President	Gateway Community & Technical College	Florence	Ed.Hughes@kctcs.edu 859-442-1175
Dr. Jim Klauber	President	Owensboro Community & Technical College	Owensboro	Jim.Klauber@kctcs.edu 270-686-4400
Dr. Larry Ferguson	Vice President	Workforce Solutions – Ashland Community and Technical College	Ashland	Larry.Ferguson@kctcs.edu 606-326-2252
Hollie Spade	Chief of Staff	Office of the Secretary Cabinet for Economic Development	Frankfort	Holland.Spade@ky.gov 502-782-2001
Ian Mooers	Executive Director	Center for Economic Development Eastern KY University	Richmond	Ian.mooers@eku.edu 859-622-2383
Jody Lassiter	CEO	Economic Development	Danville	jody@betterindanville.com 859-236-2805
Daryl Smith	Project Mgr. – Economic Dev	LG&E-KU	Lexington	Daryl.smith@lge-ku.com 859-367-5365
Roxann Fry	Senior Consultant KY Region	Tennessee Valley Authority Ec. Dev Program Administration Adult Education	Bowling Green	rfry@tva.gov 270-846-7013
David Walters	Director	Frankfort	Frankfort	David.Walters@ky.gov 502-573-5114
Ken Carroll	President	Foundation for KY Industry	Frankfort	K.Carroll@kam.us.com 502-352-2485
Beth Brinly	Commissioner	Department for Workforce Investment Education & Workforce Dev. Cabinet	Frankfort	Beth.Brinly@ky.gov 502-564-0372
Buddy Hoskinson	Executive Director	Office of Employment & Training	Frankfort	Buddy.Hoskinson@ky.gov 502-564-5331
Lori Collins	Division Director	Workforce and Employment Services Office of Employment and Training	Frankfort	Lori.Collins@ky.gov 502-782-3147
Jennifer Miller	Regional Manager	Northern KY – OET	Florence	JenniferS.Miller@ky.gov 859-444-1125
Linda Prewitt	Assistant Director	Div. of Workforce & Employment. Services – OET	Frankfort	Lindaa.prewitt@ky.gov 502-782-3124
Melissa Quillen	Regional Manager	EKCEP – OET	Hazard	MelissaW.Quillen@ky.gov 606-233-8791
Sheila Clark	WIA Director	West KY Workforce Area	Hopkinsville	Sheila.Clark@ky.gov 270-886-9484
Barbara Stewart	WIA Director	Northern Kentucky Workforce Area	Florence	Barbara.stewart@nkadd.org 859-283-1885
Erica Sluder	Business Service Rep.	Bluegrass Workforce Investment Area	Danville	Erica.sluder@ky.gov 859-239-7411

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Roster

WESTERN KENTUCKY							
	Name	Title	Agency	City	Contact Information		Attend
DWI	Sheila Clark	WIA Director	West KY Workforce Investment Board	Hopkinsville	Sheila.Clark@ky.gov	270-886-9484	Y
DWI	Tonya Logsdon	WIA Director	Green River Workforce Investment Area	Owensboro	TonyaLogsdon@gradd.com		Y
DWI	Vicki Wade	Regional Mgr.	OET - Barren River	Bowling Green	Vicki.Wade@ky.gov	270-282-3617	Y
DWI	Jim Skees	Business Services	Lincoln Trail Workforce Inv. Area	Elizabethtown	jim@ltadd.org	270-769-2393	Y
DWI	Allison Flannigan	Executive Director	Office for the Blind	Frankfort	Allison.Flanagan@ky.gov	502-782-3416	N
	Janell Turner	Administrator	Office for the Blind		JanellK.Turner@ky.gov		Y
DWI	Helen Mountjoy	Executive Director	Regional Alliance for Education	Utica	helen.mountjoy@gmail.com		Y
ED	Ron Bunch	President	Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce	Bowling Green	ron@bgchamber.com	270-781-3200	Y
ED	Madison Silvert	Interim President	Greater Owensboro ED Corp	Owensboro	msilvert@owensboro.com	270-926-7888	
ED	Mark Manning	President	Murray-Calloway ED Corp		makrmanning@murray-ky.com	270-762-3789	
KCTCS	Jim Klauber	President	Owensboro CTC	Owensboro	Jim.klauber@kctcs.edu		Y
KCTCS	Barbara Veazey	President	West KY CTC	Paducah	barbara.veazey@kctcs.edu	270-534-3082	
KCTCS	Cindy Fiorella	Vice President, WS	Owensboro CTC	Owensboro	cindy.fiorella@kctcs.edu	270-686-4445	Y
KCTCS	Phil Neal	Provost (President Elect)	Southcentral CTC	Bowling Green	phil.neal@kctcs.edu	270-901-1114	Y
KCTCS	Mike Davenport	Director, WS	Madisonville CTC	Madisonville	mike.davenport@kctcs.edu	270-824-8659	Y

CENTRAL KENTUCKY							
DWI	Jason Ashbrook	One-Stop Mgr.	Northern KY Workforce Inv. Area	Florence	Jason.Ashbrook@ky.gov	859-371-0808	
DWI	Michael Gritton	Executive Director	KentuckianaWorks	Louisville	Michael.Gritton@kentuckianaworks.org	502-574-2500	Y
DWI	Buddy Hoskinson	Executive Director	Office of Employment & Training	Frankfort	Buddy.Hoskinson@ky.gov	502-564-5331	Y
DWI	Tommy Wheatley	Regional Mgr.	OET - Lincoln Trail	Elizabethtown	Thomasj.Wheatley@ky.gov	270-872-7600	Y
DWI	Jennifer Compton	WIA Director	Bluegrass Workforce Inv. Area	Lexington	jcompton@bgadd.org	859-269-8021	Y
DWI	Scott Schapiro	Senior Advisor to the Mayor	Lexington-Fayette County Urban Gov.	Lexington	sschapiro@lexingtonky.gov	859-258-3100	Y
ED	Kim Huston	President	Nelson County EDA	Bardstown	kimhuston@nceda.net	502-348-6478	N
ED	Ron McMahan	Executive Director	Campbellsville-Taylor County ED Auth.	Campbellsville	ron@teamtaylorcounty.com	270-465-9636	Y
ED	Hal Goode	President	KY Association for ED	Frankfort	hgoode@kaedonline.org	859-481-2600	Y
ED	Dan Tobergte	President	Tri-County Economic Development Corp		det@NorthernKentuckyUSA.com	859-344-0040	N
ED	Wade Williams	Vice President, Mfg.	Tri-County Economic Development Corp		wtw@northernkentuckyusa.com		
ED	Eileen Picket	Executive Vice President	Greater Louisville, Inc.	Louisville	epicket@GreaterLouisville.com		Y
ED	Gina Greathouse		Commerce Lexington	Lexington	ggreathouse@commercelexington.com		N
KCTCS	Ed Hughes	President	Gateway CTC	Covington	ed.hughes@kctcs.edu	859-442-1175	N
KCTCS	Augusta Julian	President	Bluegrass CTC	Lexington	augusta.julian@kctcs.edu	859-246-6501	
KCTCS	Mary Ann Hyland-Murr	Vice President, WS	Jefferson CTC	Louisville	mary.hyland-murr@kctcs.edu	502-213-2424	Y
KCTCS	Angie Taylor	Vice President, WS	Gateway CTC	Florence	angie.taylor@kctcs.edu	859-442-1162	
KCTCS	Barbara Campbell	Chief Officer, WS	Maysville CTC	Maysville	barbara.campbell@kctcs.edu	606-759-7141	

EASTERN KENTUCKY							
	Name	Title	Agency	City	Contact Information		Attend
DWI	Jeff Whitehead	Executive Director	Eastern KY Workforce Inv. Area	Hazard	jwhitehead@ekcep.org	606-436-5751	N
DWI	Jason Slone	Regional Mgr.	OET - TENCO	Morehead	Jason.Slone@ky.gov	606-356-4291	Y
DWI	Shirlene Taylor	Business Services	Cumberlands Workforce Inv. Area	Russell Springs	shirlene@lcadd.org	270-866-4200	
DWI	David Beach	Executive Director	Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Frankfort	davidt.beach@ky.gov	502-782-3437	Y
DWI	Tonya Anderson	Local Office Mgr.	OET - TENCO	Mt. Sterling	ToniaM.Anderson@ky.gov	859-783-8525	Y
ED	Bruce Carpenter	Executive Director	Corbin ED	Corbin	becarpenter@corbinky.org	606-528-6390	
ED	Brett Traver	Executive Director	Morehead-Rowan County ED Council	Morehead	brett.traver@roadrunner.com	606-784-5874	Y
KCTCS	George Edwards	President	Big Sandy CTC	Prestonsburg	george.edwards@kctcs.edu	606-8867-3863	N
KCTCS	Stephen Greiner	President	Hazard CTC	Hazard	stephen.greiner@kctcs.edu		
KCTCS	Vic Adams	Vice President, WS	Southeast CTC	Middlesboro	vic.adams@kctcs.edu	606-248-0416	Y
KCTCS	Jennifer Lindon	Dean, WS	Hazard CTC	Hazard	jennifer.lindon@kctcs.edu	606-487-3136	Y
KCTCS	Larry Ferguson	Vice President, WS	Ashland CTC	Ashland	larry.ferguson@kctcs.edu	606-326-2252	N

WESTERN KENTUCKY						
	BUSINESS	Contact/Title	City	Contact Information		Attend
DWI	Cannon Automotive Solutions (Adv Mfg)	Andre DeSouza, Plant Manager	Bowling Green	adesouza@cannautobg.com	270-563-0090	
ED	Riken Elastomers Corporation	Laura Thomas, HR Manager	Hopkinsville	lthomas@rec-ky.com	270-475-2150	
ED	US Bank	Charlotte Speer	Owensboro	charlotte.speer@usbank.com	270-689-7340	
KCTCS	Domtar	Steve Henry, General Manager	Hawesville	steve.henry@domtar.com	270-927-7361	N
KCTCS	Century Aluminum	Dave Whitmore, Plant Manager	Hawesville	dwhitmore@centuryky.com	270-852-4764	
KCTCS	Hancock County Industrial Foundation	Mike Baker	Hawesville	mtb316@tds.net	270-316-6719	Y

CENTRAL KENTUCKY						
DWI	Central Baptist Hospital (Healthcare)	Lynette Walker, Chair-BG Hltcr Consort.	Lexington	walker@bhsi.com	859-260-6100	Y
	Central Baptist Hospital (Healthcare)	Leslie Melton, Nursing Director	Lexington	leslie.mckinney@bhsi.com		Y
DWI	LSI Graphic Solutions Plus (Mfg)	Rick Jordan, Vice President	Erlanger	rick.jordan@lsi-industries.com	859-962-5601	Y
DWI	UPS (Transp/Dist/Logistics)	Tom Volta, VP of Human Resources	Louisville	ncr1twv@ups.com	502-396-2283	Y
ED	Inoac	Kurt Krug	Springfield	kkrug@inoacusa.com	859-336-5116	Y
ED	Ford (Mfg)	Vaughn Harbin	Louisville	vharbin@ford.com	502-364-3873	
KCTCS	Mazak	Mike Vogt	Erlanger	mvogt@mazakcorp.com	859.342.1733	N
KCTCS	Verst Logistics	Paul Verst	Walton	pverst@verstgroup.com	(859) 379-1201	N
KCTCS	Universal Woods	Tim Holt	Louisville	timholt@prodigy.net	502-619-8663	Y

EASTERN KENTUCKY						
DWI	Pineville Community Hospital Association	Milton Brooks, CEO	Pineville	tc@pinevillehospital.com	606-337-4280	
DWI	SRG Global (Adv Mfg)	Jerry Bothum	Morehead	jbothman@srggi.com	(606) 783-6204	
ED	Aisin Automotive	Simon Mortimer	London	smortimer@aisinauto.com	606-878-6523	N
ED	Kellogg	John Heilman	Pikeville	john.heilman@kellogg.com		
ED	Family Dollar Distribution (Transp/Dist/Logistics)	Kristie Moore	Morehead	kmoore@familydollar.com	606-780-7979	
KCTCS	Alpha Natural Resources	Eddie Bateman, VP		ebateman@alphanr.com	276-395-3316-219	
KCTCS	Appalachian Regional Hospital	Donnie Fields, CEO	Hazard	dfields@arh.org	(606) 439-1300	

APPENDIX D: Survey Results