



Kentucky's Adult Learner Statewide Strategy

At 57.5%, Kentucky has one of the lowest workforce participation rates in the nation. As a result, almost 15% of the state's population lives in poverty.

Because higher levels of educational attainment correlate with better workforce and earnings outcomes, Kentucky established an ambitious educational attainment goal: 60% of working-age residents (ages 25-64) with a postsecondary certificate or degree by the year 2030.

As 2030 draws near, the need to engage substantially more adults in postsecondary education and training is essential to meeting the state's attainment goal. However, over the past decade, enrollment of adults aged 25-49 has declined over 40%; and among those with low incomes, the decline is even larger at 46%. The pandemic, inflation, childcare crisis and other issues have proven substantial barriers for this population, and innovative solutions need to be sought to keep this population in the postsecondary pipeline.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and the state's campuses are resolved to increase postsecondary opportunities for adults in both the short and long term. In fall 2021, CPE assembled a team of state and national experts to recommend action steps to advance this important work. The report, *Moving Up: An Action Plan to Improve Economic Opportunity for Kentucky Adults Through Lifelong Learning*, highlights three priorities and 26 action steps to move us toward our 60x30 goal.

- * Increasing accessibility of higher education for adults.
- * Increasing institutional innovation to better serve adult learners.
- * Reinforcing partnerships to make transitions easier.









Progress made during the last 18 months are noted on the following pages, and we are well positioned to resolve or eliminate more of the challenges facing our adult learners.











**The Kentucky
Student Success
Collaborative**

Priority Recommendations










Key:  Completed  In Progress  On Hold

Action	Description	Stage	Remarks
► Priority One: Increasing Accessibility of Higher Education for Adults			
1.1	Launch a statewide, one-stop student information portal with specific adult-learner information.		Futuriti website solution – soft launching in March 2024.
1.2	Expand financial assistance to reduce barriers to entry for returning learners.		Adult Learner Community of Practice – Special Topic.
1.3	Launch the Innovative Scholarship Pilot program supporting students from displaced populations resettling in Kentucky.		Launched in 2022. Currently in Year 2 of the pilot phase.
1.4	Simplify admissions and intake processes to improve student access and matriculation rates.		Providing student journey mapping and process mapping technical assistance to two universities. Toolkit and impact webinar will be shared with partners in 2024.
1.5	Partner with a data analytics organization to more precisely identify prospective adult learners.		Pending.
1.6	Using insights from the data analytics and additional institutional data, launch a targeted, adult-focused marketing campaign.		Pending.
1.7	Explore strategies to limit the use of transcript withholding as a debt collection tool.		Adult Learner Community of Practice – Special Topic. Working with Ithaka S+R to provide technical assistance to campuses to navigate new Department of Education regulations on transcript withholding.
1.8	Pursue funding to re-launch and expand Project Graduate.		Pending.

Key:  Completed  In Progress  On Hold

Action	Description	Stage	Remarks
<p>► Priority Two: Increasing Institutional Innovation to Better Serve Adult Learners</p>			
2.1	Convene relevant stakeholders to share effective practices and information about credit for prior learning (CPL).		<p>Hosted Fall 2023 webinar series on Credit for Prior Learning.</p> <p>Focus area at 2024 Student Success Summit.</p> <p>Adult Learner Community of Practice – Special Topic.</p>
2.2	Identify gaps in and expand support for institutional programs that help students meet basic needs.		See KY strategy for Student Basic Needs .
2.3	Develop a statewide policy on Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), beginning with the transfer of military credit and CPL.		Adult Learner Community of Practice – Special Topic.
2.4	Implement a community of practice focusing on campus-based adult navigators/advisors.		Adult Learner Community of Practice – Special Topic.
2.5	Seek funds to pilot comprehensive support services and programs for adult learners, inspired by the success of CUNY, ASAP and similar programs.		Pending.
2.6	Consider the addition of an adult-learner specific metric to the Strategic Agenda during its 2023-24 update.		Metric has been added and performance targets set for summer 2024.
2.7	Explore the inclusion of an adult-focused metric in KY's postsecondary education performance-based funding model with institutional and legislative leaders.		Pending legislative approval, an adult learner metric will be incorporated into performance funding model beginning in summer 2024.
2.8	Expand flexible academic program options for students.		Working with KPEDS to develop tracking.

Key:  Completed  In Progress  On Hold

Action	Description	Stage	Remarks
► Priority Three: Reinforcing Partnerships to Make Transitions Easier			
3.1	Create an asset map of existing partnerships that support adult learners and their transitions into and out of the workforce.		Known partnerships are being mapped, connected to Futuriti website.
3.2	Engage community leaders about how to support and expand postsecondary opportunities for working-age adults in their regions.		Conducted several community conversations through the “Higher Education Matters” tour.
3.3	Establish partnerships with regional healthcare providers to enable current employees to further their education and training and advance in their careers.		CPE Healthcare Workforce Collaborative has launched several initiatives - CLIMB, THRIVE, CLIMB 2 – to advance this goal.
3.4	Expand student access to adult-friendly, work-based learning through partnerships with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce’s Workforce Center, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB), and other industry collaboratives.		Participating in Chamber, KWIB, and other events to determine capacity, capabilities, and climate for program implementation.
3.5	Improve pathways between KY Office of Adult Education (KYOAE) programs and postsecondary programs, particularly those at KCTCS.		Exploring partnership with KYOAE to support career pathways development.
3.6	Work with the Department of Corrections (DoC) to increase access to postsecondary education for justice-impacted Kentuckians.		Working with DoC to scale ongoing projects and expand partnership to justice-impacted participants’ to access and complete postsecondary credentials and degrees.
3.7	Promote existing state mechanisms to facilitate financial benefits for employees.		Pending.
3.8	Evaluate single-payer services for student loan repayment for employers and promote this practice to the employer community if feasible.		Pending.
3.9	Pursue a state-level tax benefit for employers to incentivize postsecondary training for employees.		Working to evaluate programs similar to KCTCS TRAINS for further development.
3.10	Explore community-based ambassador models and their sustainability.		Pending.

Learn About Our Efforts

In partnership with Kentucky stakeholders, the KYSSC has begun the work to move from strategic planning to strategy implementation. Opportunities to learn about and engage in the statewide work to support Adult Learners include:



► Read the Research

Learn more about Kentucky's Statewide Strategy to support Adult Learners by reading the full report released in September 2022.



► Collaborate with Peers

Join the Adult Learner Community of Practice – a monthly virtual meeting with stakeholders and partners to share promising practices, discuss challenges, and improve the ecosystem of supports available to adult students.



► Find Resources

Check out best practice resources and toolkits on the Impact exChange – Kentucky's knowledge and resource hub for student success.



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Kentucky Student Success Collaborative
kystudentsuccess.org

The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) is made possible through a partnership and financial investment from the James Graham Brown Foundation with the goal of engaging Kentucky's postsecondary partners with nonprofit, workforce and governmental stakeholders to address the state's most pressing challenges and barriers to student success.

