

**Kansas Department of Commerce
Workforce Services and Initiatives Overview
Deputy Secretary Michael Copeland**

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The Kansas Department of Commerce's Workforce Services division links businesses, job candidates and educational institutions to ensure that employers can find skilled workers. The Division provides services to assist employers and job seekers, including incentives and training, assistance with closings and mass layoffs, disability resources and **KANSASWORKS** virtual services. The Department also works with military veterans and employees with special needs. In addition to these services, the Department partners with other agencies including the Department of Labor and the Department for Children and Families to provide reemployment and training services, and the Department of Corrections and Board of Regents on workforce initiatives.

Workforce System

Federally funded workforce services job placement and training programs are delivered through workforce centers located across the state. In Fiscal Year 2014, the workforce system provided services to 191,412 total adult participants, 1,475 dislocated worker participants and 1,652 youth participants. Adults receiving services had an entered employment rate of 78 percent, while the rate was 82 percent for dislocated workers. Among youth participants, 75 percent entered employment or education.

Kansas met or exceeded federally negotiated performance measures in all categories for these three populations. This is the sixth consecutive year that the state has met or exceeded its negotiated performance levels.

On July 1, 2015, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will take effect. This federal legislation was passed with broad bipartisan support and will supersede the Workforce Investment Act. WIOA requires a four year workforce plan from each state, enhances data-based performance measures and promotes the use of career pathways and sector partnerships to increase employment in in-demand industries and occupations.

Workforce AID

Commerce, in partnership with the Kansas Board of Regents, is implementing a pilot project to align workforce training and education with industry opportunities and demands. Workforce AID supports Governor Brownback's strategic plan for economic development by keeping Kansas businesses competitive and promoting a more robust economy.

Workforce AID provides an industry driven training process that teaches relevant skills that are critical to business. Participating businesses outline the skills and industry recognized credentials their employees need for success and partner with community and technical colleges to design short term, highly focused training programs.

Workforce AID links education to jobs by connecting businesses and potential employees throughout the training process. Businesses and potential employees connect at the beginning and throughout the training process, with opportunities for participants to meet employers to learn about job expectations and a guaranteed interview for those who complete the program. Pilot projects have been so successful that many companies are taking the next step and pre-hiring potential employees contingent upon successful completion of training.

Projects in Topeka, Dodge City and Coffeyville boast participation from more than 25 companies, including industries such as food manufacturing, machining, welding, manufacturing production and industrial maintenance. More than 20 additional Kansas companies continue to partner on projects in Hays, Independence, Manhattan, Olathe and Wichita. Successful participants who have completed training have secured employment around the state, creating a nearly \$3 million impact on the economy in less than 12 months through payroll increases.

Second Chance Act Grant

In Fiscal Year 2012, the Kansas Department of Corrections was awarded \$894,304 through a Second Chance Act Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to increase offender participation in job development and technical training. This effort recognizes that the offender population includes individuals who can become viable members of the workforce with the proper instruction and training.

The grant facilitated the creation of a new position at Commerce to serve as a link for offenders between Commerce, Corrections and the workforce system. This new position has facilitated training and GED courses for 144 adult and 150 juvenile offenders, provided individualized employment services to 209 offenders and conducted hundreds of career advisement sessions, juvenile information sessions and informational workshops.

A recently awarded Second Chance Act Grant of \$639,684 supports a partnership between Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF), the Washburn Institute of Technology and Commerce to provide career training to female offenders. This program, which began in October 2014, offers courses at TCF for a Certified Production Training credential. Classes include contextualized learning as well as theoretical concepts to prepare women nearing release from incarceration for job opportunities available in northeast Kansas.

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