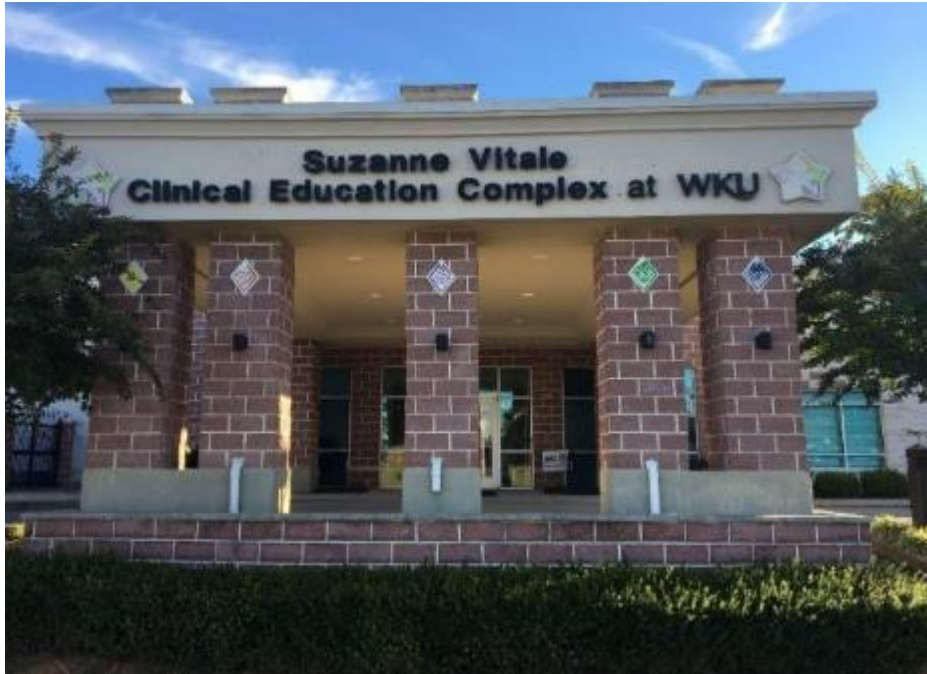




**LifeWorks** @WKU<sup>®</sup>  
Bridging gaps.  
Building relationships.

[lifeworksatwku.org](http://lifeworksatwku.org)



**Purpose:** To provide a seamless curriculum of education and support across the lifespan for individuals and families with autism while providing evidence-based best practice training for students.

Suzanne Vitale Clinical  
Education Complex

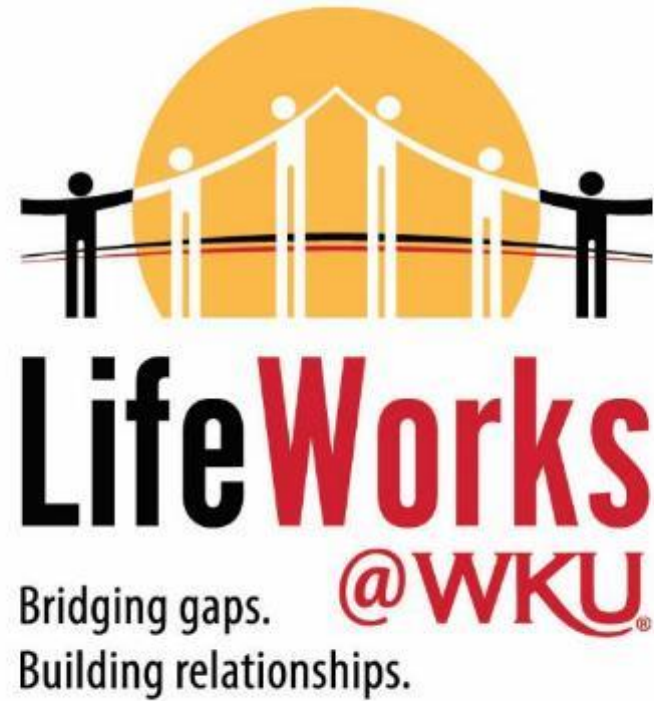
Family Resource Program

Communication Disorders  
Clinic

Renshaw Early Childhood  
Center

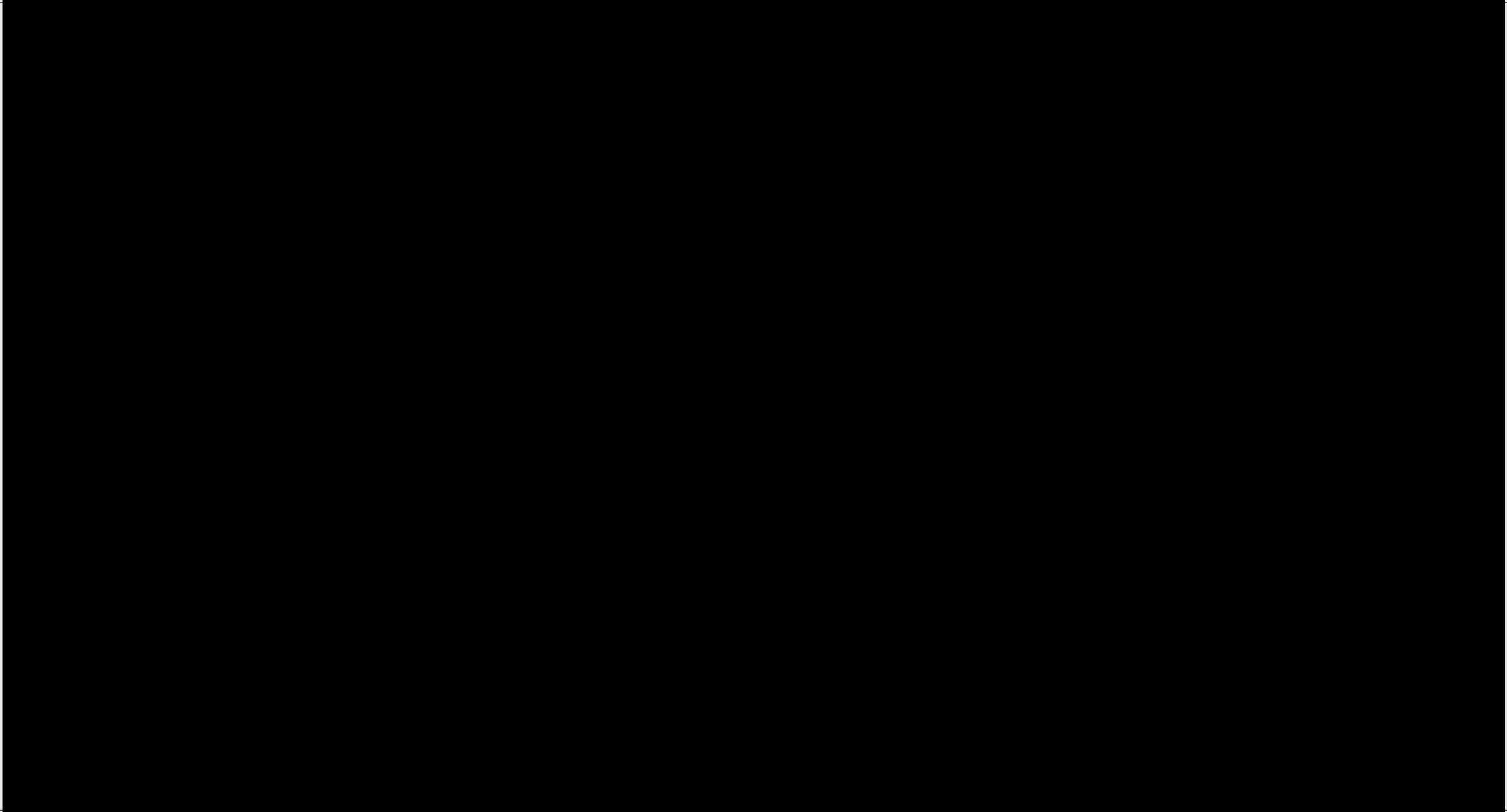
Kelly Autism Program

- Prime Time Program
- Circle of Support College Program



## Kentucky's Only Living & Learning Transition Program for Young Adults with Autism

[lifeworksatwku.org](http://lifeworksatwku.org)





# Participant Profile

- Young adult ~ typically ages 21-30
- Autism or other learning difference
- Low-average to high intelligence
- Variety of education levels and backgrounds
- Personally motivated with the ability to maintain personal safety
- May be experiencing something commonly referred to as “failure to launch”



# Joy, age 29

- Diagnosed with autism and anxiety
- Struggles with executive functioning
- Graduated from college in 2015
  - Returned home
  - No Job
  - Few personal relationships
  - Low self-confidence

**Enrolled in LifeWorks in September 2020**





## Joy...twelve months later

- Living on her own (with her cat)
- Employed 25 to 35 hours a week
- Making new friends
- Driving independently
- Serving as a role model
- Pursuing her art

**Graduating from LifeWorks in 2022 and transitioning to independent living**



# **Sarah, age 25**

- **Diagnosed with autism and ADHD**
- **Struggles with anxiety and procrastination**
- **Graduated college in 2019, Computer Science**
  - **Returned home**
  - **No Job**
  - **Limited personal relationships (mostly virtual)**
  - **Underdeveloped independent living skills**

**Enrolled in LifeWorks in August 2021**





## **Sarah ... 3 months later**

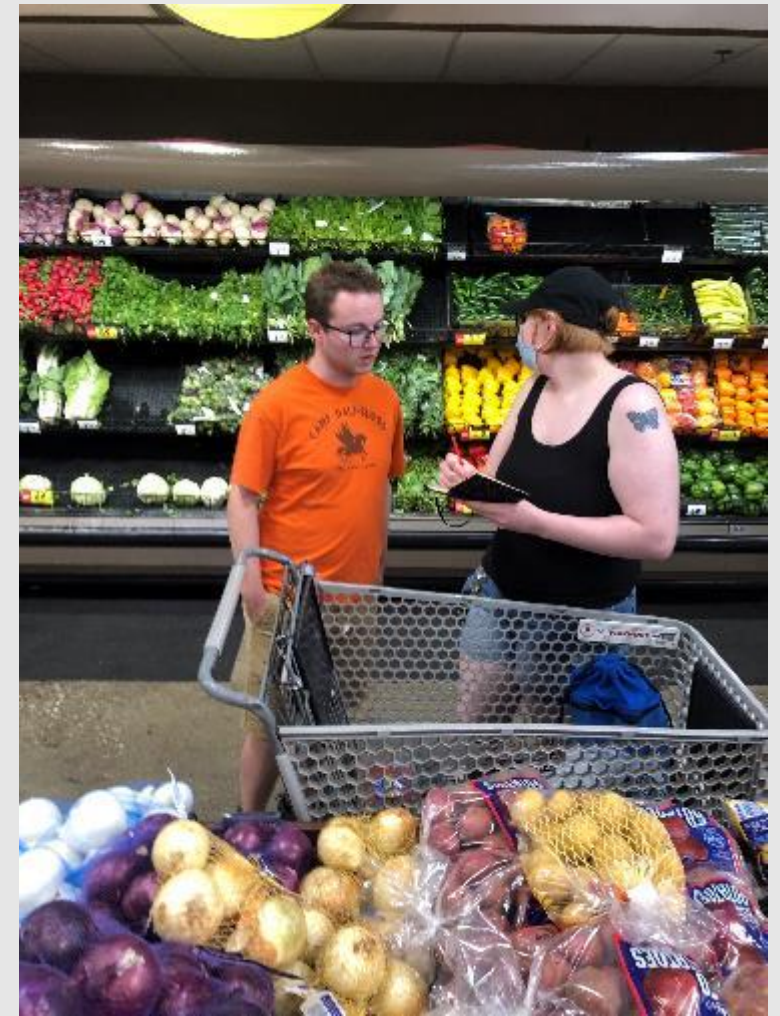
- **Managing well in her own apartment**
- **Employed 20 hours weekly**
- **Increased self-confidence**
- **Participating in social activities**
- **Active community volunteer**

**Graduating LifeWorks in 2023**

# Program Goals

*Participants work toward achieving successful outcomes in the following areas:*

- Employability
- Housing & Transportation
- Health, Wellness & Nutrition
- Life Skills
- Relationships
- Financial Management
- Adaptability
- Personal Safety
- Social Skills
- Leisure Activities



# LifeWorks Transition Academy

*Bridging gaps. Building Relationships.*

- Structured, two-year postsecondary certificate program
- On-site apartment housing
- 32-course independent living skills curriculum
- Pre-employment and supported employment training services
- Service learning and community engagement
- Social and leisure activities





## LifeWorks Bridge Program

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Offers classroom  
instruction only

---

Utilizes the  
Learn4Independence®  
curriculum

---

Participants enroll in  
up to eight courses on  
a semester basis

---

Focused on valuable  
life-skills and career-  
readiness





# A BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

**David Wheeler**

1328 Adams Street ▪ Bowling Green, KY 42101

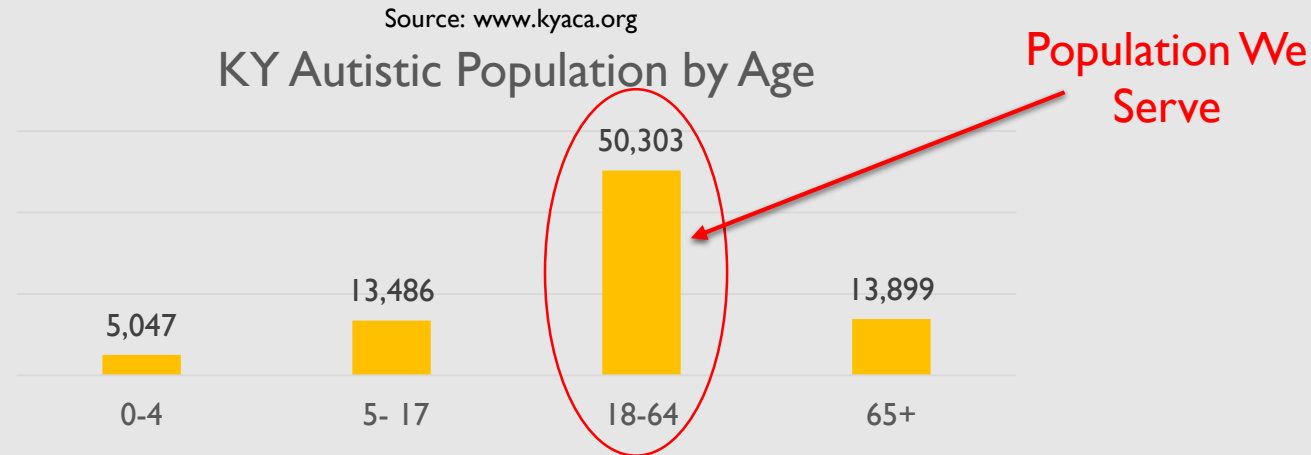
(270) 745-4380 ▪ [david.wheeler@wku.edu](mailto:david.wheeler@wku.edu)

[lifeworksatwku.org](http://lifeworksatwku.org)

# Facts to Keep in Mind:

**1 in 54:** The incidence of autism according to the Centers for Disease Control.

**82,735:** Estimated number of people who are diagnosed with autism in Kentucky.



**\$3.5-5 million**

The lifetime costs for individuals diagnosed with autism .

**30%**

Families who have children diagnosed with autism earn 30% less than other families.

**\$50,000**

Individual therapy costs per year for children with autism who are under 8 years old.

**According to Autism Speaks** the majority of costs for autism supports in the U.S. are for adult services. This is an estimated cost of \$175 to \$196 billion a year for adults, compared to \$61 to \$66 billion a year for children.

“There will be 500,000 adults on the autism spectrum aging into adulthood over the next 10 years. Yet 85% of college graduates affected by autism are unemployed, compared to the national unemployment rate of 4.5%.”

- Nicole Lyn Pesce

**Average Annual Cost of HCBS Waiver Services by  
State, 2009 According to the National Council on  
Disability**

State	Home and Community Based Waiver
Kentucky	\$48,831

# Budget

**Note: The facility is paid for by generous support from Mr. Bill Gatton and Mr. Garry Watkins. The budget costs are operational only.**

◦ Personnel Expenses (18 staff)	985,752
◦ Non-Personnel Expenses	401,788
	<hr/>
◦ Total	1,387,540
# of participants = 28	
Actual cost per participant	49,555
Tuition	50,000



# Cost of Transition Programs for Individuals with Autism (2021 data)

Name	Cost
Chapel Haven West (Tuscon,AZ)	\$93,500 – per year
ScenicView Academy	\$80,000 – per year
Mansfield Hall (Burlington,VT)	\$75,950 - Total
Project 1212 (Chicago, IL)	\$72,000 – per year
Berkshire Hills Music Academy (Hadley, MA)	\$69,500 – per year
FirstPlace (Phoenix,AZ)	\$66,000 – per year
Live Oaks (San Marcos,TX)	\$63,875 – per year
CIP Amherst (Amherst, NY)	\$62,500 – per year
29 Acres (Dallas,TX)	\$57,336 – per year
Horizons School (Birmingham,AL)	\$50,000 – per year
LifeWorks @ WKU (Bowling Green, KY)	\$50,000 – per year

<b>Cost of Funding a Participant – 2 years @\$50,000/year</b>	<b>\$ 100,000.00</b>
Less:	
State Income Tax Creation from Successful Participants,	
Average Salary \$36,000/year x .05% x 42	\$ 75,600.00
(State tax rate for 42-year work life, assumes 90% of Participants work)	<u>\$ (7,560.00)</u>
Total Lifetime Reduction in Cost/State Revenue Generated	\$ 68,040.00
 Total Cost	 \$ 100,000.00
Reduction in Cost	<u>\$ (68,040.00)</u>
<b>Net Cost of Funding a Participant</b>	<b>\$ 31,960.00</b>

#### **Lifetime Support Cost of not funding a Participant**

Average Life Span 60 years from age 18


Cost Per Year \$40,000 (public support for chronic homelessness, healthcare, etc.)

60 years @ \$40,000/year	<u>\$ 2,400,000.00</u>
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#### **LifeWorks Expected Success Rate - Reduction in Above Cost:**

10% of Participants unsuccessful, savings	\$ -
30% of Participants 50% successful, savings	
(\$2,400,000 x .5 x .3)	\$ 360,000.00
60% of Participants 100% successful, savings	
(\$2,400,000 x .6)	<u>\$ 1,440,000.00</u>
Total Reduction in Cost to Public	\$ 1,800,000.00
Less Net Cost of Funding a Participant (from above)	<u>\$ (31,960.00)</u>
Net Cost Savings for Funding a Participant in LifeWorks	<u><u>\$ 1,768,040.00</u></u>

# LIFETIME COST SAVINGS



Cost Savings per class, 28 participants  
Total Savings for 3 two-year Budget Periods  
Savings Per Net Dollar Spent for Lifeworks  
Participant

\$49,505,120

\$148,515,360

\$56.32

# LIFETIME COST SAVINGS

Savings Per Net Dollar Spent

# ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY

- Participant Tuition Contributions
- OVR Funding (for some)
- Michelle P. Waiver (for some)
- Charitable Gifts (Corporate/Private)
- Grants





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