

Putting Young Kentuckians to Work

Year Two Update
September 17, 2026

Myra Wilson

*Executive Director,
Cumberlands Workforce
Development Board*

Michael Gritton

*Executive Director,
KentuckianaWorks*

Funding under 2024 HB1

General assembly invested general funds in the state's 10 local Workforce Development Boards for the first time under HB1 in 2024:

→ Invested \$10 million a year
for two years



Putting Young Kentuckians to Work

Funding provided an opportunity for local workforce boards to:

- Serve **thousands more young people** ages 16-24 who aren't enrolled in school or working
- Put graduating high school seniors without a plan on a path to **stable employment**
- Find **innovative, local solutions** that put more young people to work in their communities

Goal: **3,604** full-time job placements

Outcomes 2024-26

3,600+

**Young Kentuckians
placed in jobs**

through September 2026

\$14.78

**average
wage**

The need is great

Disconnected Youth

Without a successful transition to stable employment, young people run the risk of becoming disconnected.

13% of Kentucky's young adults were disconnected in 2024

→ More than **68,000** young people

Source: IPUMS

Employers Need Talent

Kentucky's businesses are struggling to find the trained workforce they need to grow.

2/3 of Kentucky employers say there is not an ample supply of trained workers

Top Policy Priority

Employers most frequently cited **workforce development** as their primary policy issue.

Source: KY Chamber

Changing Lives Across Kentucky

More young people are finding work and building careers in all ten of the state's workforce regions.



*"I instantly knew this is what
I want to do forever."*

- Ashley

**Ashley turned a paid Prosper
Appalachia internship into a
full-time career in early
childhood education after
graduating from Letcher County
Central High School.**

**She has already been promoted
to Assistant Teacher at LKLP
Community Action Mayking
Head Start, where she is excited
to build her career.**



“When you’ve got somebody in your corner, it makes you feel like maybe you do have a shot...It gives people a chance to believe in themselves.” - **Paul**

Paul said he didn’t value his future before coming to The Spot: Young Adult Opportunity Center (a partnership with Goodwill Kentucky).

The team helped him get soft skills, a logistics certification, and land a good job.

Cumberlands

Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Laurel, McCreary,
Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Taylor, Wayne, Whitley

With a baby on the way, Chanler, a 24 year old from Pulaski County, needed a stable, good-paying career to help support his family.

Through the help of Putting Young Kentuckians to Work, he was able to enroll in the Somerset Community College Lineman Program, where he excelled.



Chanler (pictured above) landed a job making \$24 an hour at High Volt Advance.

Bluegrass

Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette,
Franklin, Garrard, Harrison, Jessamine, Lincoln,
Madison, Mercer, Nicholas, Powell, Scott, Woodford

**Samuel, 23, found employment
with Summers Taylor making
\$26.87 per hour.**



**After relocating to Kentucky to
be closer to his family, Samuel
struggled to find a good job.
He had experience in
construction, but needed
guidance.**

**With support from Putting
Young Kentuckians to Work,
Samuel enrolled in and
completed a four-week CDL
training program that
expanded his career options.**

TENCO

Bath, Boyd, Bracken, Fleming, Greenup, Lewis,
Mason, Montgomery, Robertson, Rowan



Kaitlyn is now making \$30 an hour as a Valve Technician for Westinghouse Electric Company

Putting Young Kentuckians to Work helped Kaitlyn (left center) get a summer job at Cannonsburg Water District, where she proved to be a dedicated employee.

She continued working part-time during her senior year and, after graduation, she used the skills and connections she made to start a promising career.

West Kentucky

Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg

Peyton was working at a temp agency and lacked benefits or secure employment.

Through Putting Young Kentuckians to Work, he got 480 hours of on-the-job training at the Antolin manufacturing facility in Hopkinsville.



Peyton completed training in June and now makes \$22.50 plus benefits.

South Central

Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan,
Metcalf, Monroe, Simpson, Warren



Jalayia recently passed her 90-day retention milestone. She is excited to be on a career path just months after graduation.

Ready.Set.Hire. works with schools throughout the South Central region, helping seniors prepare their resumes, practice interviews, and connect with local employers.

Jalayia (left) is one of ten Warren County graduates who got a job offer from Med Center Health at the end of the school year!

Green River

Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean,
Ohio, Union, Webster

Rebekah (right) was placed in a work-based learning position at A New Leaf Flowers, Gifts, & More in Morganfield.

This gave her the opportunity to earn a paycheck while gaining valuable real-world experience. After the internship was complete, New Leaf hired Rebekah as a staff member.



Rebekah's employer shared their thoughts:

"The program gave us the opportunity to invest time, training, and guidance into someone who is just beginning her journey in the workforce."

Lincoln Trail

Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, LaRue, Marion,
Meade, Nelson, Washington

Through the support of Putting Young Kentuckians to Work and the Kentucky Career Center, Kiasia (right) was able to find career guidance and earn the certifications she needed to pursue a career in the dental field.

She is now working at Proctor Family Dental in Bardstown.



“““

I'm grateful for the foundation they helped me build and the doors they opened for my future!

Kiasia

Northern Kentucky

Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant,
Kenton, Owen, Pendleton

Joshua dreamed of following in the footsteps of family members in the skilled trades, but he needed guidance.

This program helped Joshua every step of the way, including getting him enrolled in HVAC training and preparing him for full-time employment.

In June 2026, Joshua was hired by Blau Mechanical as an HVAC Apprentice and Pipe Cutter.



"I felt kind of stuck in the loop of working in fast food or never actually starting a career...(now) my job gives me confidence I didn't have before."

- Joshua