

KCTCS GOOD NEWS REPORT

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KCTCS LAUNCHES EDUCATION FIRST EMPLOYERS PROGRAM TO ADVANCE THE SKILLSET OF KENTUCKY WORKERS

Partnership aligns employers with Kentucky's leading provider of workforce training to offer abundant opportunities for Kentuckians to earn and learn.



The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) is proud to partner with Gov. Andy Beshear and TEAM Kentucky to announce a new initiative with leading companies across the Commonwealth. Businesses in Kentucky's key sectors including Healthcare, Manufacturing, Skilled Trades, and many others that are committed to attainable education and investing in their workforce will now hold the title Education First Employer.



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As our economy continues to grow, a highly skilled workforce is necessary for sustainability. Workforce development is a nonpartisan issue that affects everyone. States across the country are grappling with this challenge. This innovative solution will assist companies with filling positions and retaining quality and engaged workers, while advancing the skillset of our workforce, positioning Kentucky as the leader in this space.

Companies who qualify to participate in this network share similar values and have shown a commitment to go above and beyond to support employees through education and training. To achieve the Education First Employer designation, businesses must provide tuition assistance, flexible scheduling, and offer competitive wages. These businesses must also actively partner with their local KCTCS college to enhance students' employability skills and better position graduates for high earning potential in today's economy.

"Kentucky is welcoming historic economic investments that are creating thousands of great new jobs. At the same time, we're also seeing rising wages and record low unemployment," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "The Education First Employers initiative will make sure this rising prosperity reaches every Kentuckian where they live. It will also help us keep our promise to provide the best workforce for the increasing number of employers choosing our state to do business."

The majority of students withdrawing from higher education are making an impossible choice, forced to put their finances and work schedule before their pursuit of a better life. Education First Employers are working with KCTCS to reverse this troubling trend.

"KCTCS colleges are doubling down on partnerships with Kentucky companies to increase the skill level of our workforce," says KCTCS Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development Jessie Schook. "We are collaborating with these businesses to support learners as they balance work responsibilities with their education. In doing so, we will increase program completion rates and ultimately advance the skill level of Kentucky's workforce."

KCTCS now looks to expand the initiative, inviting companies who are investing in workforce development to sign the Education First Employer pledge and join the approximately 50 exemplary employers from across the Commonwealth.



Click here kctcs.edu/efe to watch the the Education First Employer press conference video.

Businesses interested in pursuing the Education First Employer distinction can visit kctcs.edu/efe or contact Kelly Heckman at kelly.heckman@kctcs.edu with the **KCTCS Workforce and Economic Development Office** for a full listing of current participating companies and to learn more.



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