



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

2022-23 Organizational Review

The 2022-30 Strategic Agenda for Postsecondary Education sets an overarching goal that 60% of Kentucky's working-age population will have earned a postsecondary degree or credential by 2030. The 60x30 KY goal is the foundation for the priorities, objectives, and strategies of the agenda, and it guides the work of the agency.

The following report provides a look at the high-level actions and outcomes of the agency's work from April 2022 through April 2023. It is organized by the five priority areas of the agenda (Affordability, Transitions, Success, Talent, and Value), with Equity as a cross-cutting priority. A final section, State Leadership, was added to include the agency's work in key areas that are not immediately reflected in the agenda.



AFFORDABILITY

Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.

- 1. Reduce financial barriers to college enrollment and completion.**
- 2. Improve the public's understanding of how to pay for college.**

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-23

CPE is working on efforts to increase college access and affordability for all Kentuckians. Key strategies include limiting tuition and fee increases; recommending operational efficiencies; educating students and families about college savings programs, grants, scholarships, and responsible borrowing; and advocating for additional state general fund appropriations.

CPE's Student Success Collaborative has been leading state efforts to meet [college students' basic needs](#) to improve food and housing security. Earlier this year, CPE launched the [Student Basic Needs Action Network](#), a broad state coalition of over 40 organizations and agencies that has been studying student basic needs and auditing student supports at colleges and universities in Kentucky. The network has used this information to develop policy recommendations for CPE and state policymakers to increase students' access to public benefits and scale and replicate effective campus support programs.

In March 2023, CPE published a [comprehensive analysis of unmet financial need](#) among Kentucky's postsecondary students. The analysis identified the tipping point at each public university and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) beyond which unmet need diminishes the probability of student persistence and completion. This first-of-its kind report also includes research on best practice approaches and recommended state-level actions to address unmet financial need.

As part of the annual tuition-setting process, CPE staff gathered and analyzed relevant state and national data and identified key issues that formed the basis for staff's tuition and mandatory fee recommendation. Following four years of historic lows (i.e., system average tuition increases of 1.4% per year), [staff recommended a slightly higher increase in tuition ceilings for academic years 2023-24 and 2024-25](#). The new rates are designed to provide an appropriate balance between the resource needs of institutions and college affordability for students and families.

Kentucky Virtual Library's (KYVL) [Affordable Learning Kentucky](#) initiative promotes student success and fosters educational equity by supporting the adoption, adaptation and creation of affordable, open educational resources in the Commonwealth. CPE hired a full-time program coordinator, developed a series of lunch-and-learns attended by over 80 faculty and staff, and administered a survey to Kentucky undergraduates regarding the impact of textbook and course materials costs on their learning experiences.

RaiseMe is an exciting new program CPE launched this year that allows students to earn micro-scholarships at participating colleges and universities. Students can earn money for college by doing things like having good attendance, taking an honors course, participating in extracurricular activities and more. Maysville Community College, Western Kentucky University (WKU) and the University of Louisville (UofL) signed on to pilot the program.



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Early postsecondary opportunities like [dual credit](#) are a key state strategy to help lower college costs and improve affordability. CPE spent much of the last year reviewing and revising the state's [Dual Credit Policy](#) to improve program and teacher quality. Importantly, the new policy includes that goal that by 2030, 50% of high school graduates will have completed at least one dual credit course with a qualifying grade of a "C" or higher.

Last summer CPE, in partnership with the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), launched the [Kentucky Innovative Scholarship](#) to support undergraduate students displaced by crises in their home countries. As part of this process, CPE determined that these displaced students would receive in-state resident rates so that funding could be spread more widely. In addition, CPE partnered with the National Association of System Heads (NASH) to launch the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship community of practice, which provides a forum to share and scale proven practices, offers professional development for faculty and other campus practitioners serving displaced student populations, and provides resources to help leverage other state, federal or private resources.

CPE's [Kentucky Advising Academy](#) (KAA), launched in 2022, provides free professional learning and resources for school counselors, Family Resource/ Youth Service Center coordinators and other professional educators. KAA also provides flexible opportunities to connect with higher education and postsecondary advising leaders. This year KAA hosted face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities and published an [online toolkit for K-12 advisors and staff](#). The toolkit includes advising strategies and opportunities focused on college affordability, grants, scholarships and FAFSA completion.

Last fall, CPE coordinated Kentucky's annual [Go!vember campaign](#), a collaboration between CPE, GEAR UP Kentucky, KAA, KHEAA and the Prichard Committee. The campaign directs students and their families to the resources they need to navigate college application and financial aid processes. The 2022 campaign featured a Facebook live event and an enhanced student resource hub.

CPE's GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK) program coordinated a [FAFSA Frenzy campaign](#) among its 12 partner schools that led to a 54% FAFSA statewide completion rate in 2022, a three percentage-point increase over the previous year.





TRANSITIONS

Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.

- 3. Increase students' readiness to enter postsecondary education.**
- 4. Increase enrollment in postsecondary education.**

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-23

Over the last decade, Kentucky has experienced a decline in its in-state college-going rate. There are actions educators and advisors can take to help high school students successfully navigate their transition to college. We can remove tripwires that cause individuals to stumble on their path to college, particularly if they are first-generation or historically underserved by postsecondary institutions. We also can simplify bureaucratic and onerous admission processes and help demystify financial aid and borrowing.

CPE facilitated the [Commonwealth Education Continuum](#) (CEC), a P-20 initiative that promotes statewide conversations and actions among P-12 education, higher education, and workforce leaders aimed at strengthening Kentucky's education pipeline. Work groups focused on high school college readiness, early postsecondary opportunities, and first-year postsecondary success have recommended strategies to improve advising programs and increase dual credit opportunities.

The [Kentucky Advising Academy](#) (KAA), launched in 2022 and referenced above, got off to a great start. In the past year, KAA produced monthly podcasts, webinars and other advising content through social media channels. Last year, 61% of K-12 public school districts were engaged in KAA professional learning and resources, while 75% of public four-year institutions and 50% of public two-year institutions participated.

[GEAR UP Kentucky](#) (GUK), also mentioned in the Affordability section, served over 5,000

students in 12 school districts and eight partner institutions last year with a central goal of improving transitions between secondary and postsecondary education. It provided 4,000 instances of coaching to GUK first-year college freshmen, college visits for over 750 middle and high school students, and over 15,000 hours of student advising (a 67% increase from the previous year).

Staff also developed [GEAR UP 4 Success](#), a postsecondary transition readiness curriculum for high school students aligned to Kentucky's Academic Standards for Career Readiness and Financial Literacy. As a result, 10 of the 12 GUK high schools exceeded the statewide graduation rate in 2022, and the GUK average high school graduation rate has surpassed the statewide rate for the past four years. Additionally, the percentage of GUK students scoring at or near benchmark on college readiness assessments increased in all subject areas in both cohorts in 2021-22 (grades 7 – 8 to grades 8 – 9).

[One of CPE's newest initiatives](#) through KAA, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), is OneGoal. The initiative aims to eliminate equity gaps and improve postsecondary education outcomes for students. Twelve school districts were chosen for the 2022-23 cohort of the Postsecondary Leadership Series, and their work has centered on improving college readiness, academic performance and leadership coaching. This partnership impacts over 16,000 students, 68% of which participate in federally-assisted



TRANSITIONS

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school meal programs, and 19% of which are minority. After 16 months of implementation, the average postsecondary enrollment rate across these districts is 57%, higher than the statewide average.

CPE continued to promote the power of [Summer Bridge Programs](#) by awarding \$1.2 million in campus grants in 2023. These programs bring rising first-year college students on campus before the beginning of the school year to improve their academic preparation, which lowers academic disparities among underrepresented students and improves retention and graduation rates. Grants were awarded through a competitive RFP process based on specific criteria, including an independent evaluation of effectiveness and impact. In 2023, 23 campuses received up to \$50,000 each. CPE also convened summer bridge program personnel to learn from state and national experts and each other.

CPE recently joined a national initiative called "[Launch: Equitable and Accelerated Pathways for All](#)." CPE is serving as the lead agency with 10 state partners, with the goal of expanding access to high-quality and equitable college

and career pathways for all learners. The Launch initiative has a foundational focus of equity and four corresponding areas of work: Alignment of Credentials of Value; Seamless Transitions between K12, Postsecondary and the Workforce; Advising and Student Supports; and Next Generation Work-Based Learning (WBL).

CPE staff continued development of a web-based portal that will provide prospective students (high school students, adults, military veterans and active-duty personnel) with opportunities to explore career interests and related postsecondary programs and services. The platform will provide essential information about college affordability, enrollment requirements at public postsecondary institutions and occupational outlook data for the state. This platform is being created in partnership with KDE and the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), with feedback provided by multiple stakeholder groups representing all intended audiences.

Photo: Business leaders and educators talk with President Thompson and CPE staff about how to provide work-based learning and dual credit opportunities that align with college and career needs for all students. (October 22, 2022)





SUCCESS

Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.

5. Increase persistence in and timely completion of postsecondary programs.
6. Maximize transfer of academic and experiential credit.
7. Ensure academic offerings are high-quality, relevant and inclusive.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-23

CPE has doubled down on its promotion of high-impact practices that research has proven to be effective in increasing student persistence and completion. Staff works with campuses to implement both academic and non-academic policies and services to support holistic student development and workforce readiness.

To remove barriers preventing adults from enrolling or returning to college, CPE released a [statewide adult learner action plan](#), “Moving Up,” in the fall of 2022. The plan, developed after nearly a year of work from stakeholders around the state, recommends strategies to increase postsecondary accessibility for adults, promote institutional innovation to better serve adult learners, and reinforce partnerships to make transitions into postsecondary education easier.

CPE’s [Kentucky Student Success Collaborative](#) (KYSSC) continued its work with both two-year and four-year institutions through a grant funded by the James Graham Brown Foundation. In the last year, staff focused on three issues: meeting student basic needs, improving the transfer process, and redesigning gateway courses. Key accomplishments include:

- The Collaborative promoted resource sharing through the Impact exChange, [an online platform for faculty and practitioners](#). KYSSC facilitated communities of practice to promote research-based practices, provide professional development, encourage cross-institutional and community collaboration, and drive
- continuous improvement of promising and best-practice implementation. More than 300 practitioners have participated.
- KYSSC partnered with Complete College America (CCA) to work with nine institutions on the Purpose First initiative. Through this work, CPE provided technical assistance related to the first-year experience with embedded career exploration to ensure students find a major suited to their career interests. Campus partners focused on four specific approaches to student support: advising and onboarding to purposeful career pathways, advancing employer engagement, connecting competencies to programs of study, and dissecting policy.
- KYSSC facilitated a virtual Program Onboarding Institute with Community College Research Center (CCRC) in the fall of 2022, in which seven community and technical colleges learned about ways to redesign the student onboarding process. Topics included identifying opportunities, developing communication and engagement strategies, and using data to make informed decisions.
- KYSSC launched the [Statewide Vision for Transfer Student Success](#), which outlines strategies to make the transfer experience for students moving between Kentucky higher education institutions more transparent and efficient. The vision is organized around three strategic priorities and includes a student-



SUCCESS

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facing transfer website to map degree pathways, identify barriers to seamless transfer, create more network improvement communities, provide professional development opportunities, evaluate existing state-level policies, and work with institutions to create state-level initiatives to facilitate transfer.

- Through a National Association of System Heads (NASH) led initiative to use improvement science to accelerate baccalaureate completion of transfer students, KYSSC staff facilitated a network improvement community of representatives from CPE and two-year and four-year institutions to identify issues and implement rapid action cycles of change.

CPE selected 21 participants from public two-year and four-year institutions for the fifth cohort of the [Academic Leadership Development Institute](#) (ALDI), which prepares minority faculty and staff for leadership roles in Kentucky higher education. Participants are nominated based on their leadership ability, interest in professional advancement and dedication to higher education.

CPE staff and the Committee on Equal Opportunities provided an annual review of public institutions' progress toward diversity, equity and inclusion goals, as well as highlighting institutional best practices over the life of the 2016-20 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) agenda. CPE staff is finalizing a report to be presented to the CPE board in the summer of 2023.

This spring, CPE hosted the [2023 Student Success Summit](#) that engaged over 500 faculty and staff from Kentucky institutions on such topics as student basic needs, transfer, equitable learning, and essential workplace skills.

CPE continued work on the [Kentucky Graduate Profile](#), which is now being used by all public two-year and four-year institutions. Teams consist of four experts who are considered voices of influence on their campus. These teams conduct an environmental scan of their programs to determine which impact project to pursue, with the goal of infusing these 10 essential skills throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum.

Photo: Opening Keynote session of the Spring Student Success Summit, February 27, 2023.





TALENT

Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.

8. Improve the career outcomes of postsecondary graduates.

9. Increase research and service to support strong communities and economies.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-23

A primary purpose of postsecondary education is to produce adaptive, highly skilled workers to fuel the economy. CPE collaborates with government, education, and workforce partners to ensure Kentucky's graduates earn high-value degrees that lead to professional employment opportunities.

In the summer of 2022, CPE launched the [Healthcare Workforce Collaborative](#) to grow the pipeline of healthcare workers in Kentucky. The Collaborative is made up of healthcare professionals, institutional representatives, and government and community partners, and it met bimonthly over the last year to develop short- and long-term solutions to meet the state's demand for qualified healthcare professionals. In addition to reviewing the effectiveness of current campus- and state-level programs, the Collaborative oversaw \$8 million in grants awarded to campuses to support and grow programs that train healthcare providers in high-demand disciplines that lead to professional certification and/or licensure.

The CLIMB Initiative, Career Ladders for Mental and Behavioral Health, was created in the spring of 2023 to create postsecondary pathways for Kentuckians recovering from substance use disorders. This \$1.5 million program funded by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services will provide participants with an initial peer support specialist certification, with the goal of encouraging them to obtain a series of stackable certifications culminating in an Associate of Applied Science in Human Services through KCTCS, and/or a bachelor's degree in social work at a participating four-year university.

CPE launched the Career Development Officers affinity group in the fall of 2022. This group meets

bi-monthly and is comprised of workforce and career services professionals from the state's public and private postsecondary institutions. Currently, this group is exploring workforce and labor market data, hearing from state and national experts, and sharing best practice models to assist students in their transition to meaningful employment.

CPE continues to act as a liaison with state workforce and economic development agencies to ensure higher education is part of the state's overall economic development strategy, including membership on the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, strategy development with sister agencies about improving business outreach and support, and participation in state conversations about support and development of emerging industries and the state's science and technology goals.

Kentucky's nationally recognized [KY Students' Right to Know](#) interactive web tool provides information about postsecondary program costs and allows students and others to research programs and view salaries of in-state program graduates before choosing a major. CPE, in partnership with KYSTATS, maintains and promotes this site.

In the fall of 2022, CPE worked with postsecondary campuses, policy makers and others to develop [guidelines for the distribution](#) of the state's recent investment of \$40M to the Bucks for Brains initiative and \$2.2 million for the Workforce Development Trust Fund. Both programs are designed to spark economic and workforce activity through support for innovative programs, research, and scholarship.



VALUE

Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.

10. Increase public belief in the power of postsecondary education.

11. Build support for greater investment in postsecondary education.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2022-23

In the state and nation, people are questioning the value of a college. This skepticism, however, is based more on feeling than fact. Research clearly shows that higher education benefits individuals and society in countless ways. College graduates earn higher salaries, are less likely to be unemployed, and have better health outcomes than individuals without a postsecondary credential. Through research, opinion pieces and other products, CPE is determined to show how much higher education matters.

The agency's [statewide advocacy campaign](#), [#KYHigherEdMatters](#), continued to gain steam and exceeded industry benchmarks with its multi-level approach to reach prospective students and their families. The campaign had over 20 million impressions, including 165K PSA placements on radio and TV, almost 100K views on YouTube, and over 28K visits to the campaign website.

CPE advocated for the value of higher education by holding Community Conversations throughout the state to discuss with business and government leaders and other community stakeholders how Kentucky can fill workforce gaps through higher education and workforce collaboration. This work is broadening the agency's reach and helping CPE to secure additional investment opportunities.

CPE promoted its work through multiple avenues including news releases, monthly newsletters, and weekly infographics. CPE now reaches over 4,500 subscribers through its direct messaging, exceeding benchmark standards for government organizations. Additionally, the news releases

and infographics often are the catalyst for media stories and interviews.

In the fall of 2022, CPE launched the [Higher Ed Matters Podcast](#), where guest speakers discuss how higher education impacts every aspect of our lives – from the economy to health to civic engagement and community development. Listenership is growing, and staff will work to gain new audiences during the 2023-24 academic year.

CPE increased its social media presence on both the [CPE](#) and [President Thompson's](#) accounts, which furthers the Higher Education Matters message and promotes the work of the Council, its President, and its units. As a result, social media engagement rates (likes, comments and shares) greatly exceed the benchmarks for government and higher education.

President Thompson received the [2023 Lucy Harth Smith-Atwood S. Wilson Award for Civil and Human Rights in Education](#). The award was presented at the 151st Kentucky Education Association (KEA) Delegate Assembly. The Smith-Wilson Award is given annually to a person or organization that has made notable contributions in any of the following areas:

- Encouraging and supporting minorities to enter the teaching profession.
- Advancing opportunities, especially educational opportunities, for youth of color.



STATE LEADERSHIP

Strengthen CPE's role as an effective and respected postsecondary education coordinating agency.

In addition to strategic priorities, CPE has many administrative and statutory duties to fulfill. Key accomplishments in agency operations are highlighted below.

CPE continued its deep engagement with Kentucky State University (KSU) through the implementation of HB 250 (2022). In addition to distributing \$23 million in financial recovery dollars in 2021-22, CPE acted in an advisory capacity on the following:

- A review of all academic programs;
- A performance review of all faculty and staff;
- The adoption and implementation of a comprehensive management improvement plan, comprised of eight elements covering all aspects of campus operations and encompassing over 120 deliverables to be completed by KSU in phases over the next three years; and
- The approval of all expenditures over \$5,000, as well as monthly updates on KSU's financial status.
- Assistance with the hiring process of a new President.

In response to the passage of [SJR 98 \(2023\)](#), CPE staff identified three internal teams to begin work on a research framework and identify the data necessary for each of the three requests in the resolution, which are to determine: (1) the effectiveness of the current structure of higher education governance in Kentucky; (2) the feasibility of adding a four-year university in Southeastern Kentucky; and (3) the feasibility of splitting the KCTCS system into technical colleges overseen by a system office, and associate-degree programs overseen by comprehensive universities. A great deal of resources will be dedicated to the completion of the study through the rest of 2023, with the final report being due to the legislature by December 1, 2023.

To ensure statewide strategies outlined in the strategic agenda are implemented uniformly, CPE staff worked with campus leadership to finalize Campus Action Plans, which identify strategies campuses are implementing to advance statewide objectives. Staff negotiated targets on key performance indicators and continued to monitor and report progress.

President Thompson and his leadership staff have engaged in countless conversations with the governor, executive branch staff, legislators, legislative staff, and members of state and federal education organizations on issues impacting higher education in Kentucky. Additionally, they advised key legislators and staff on bill development on a wide array of topics, as well as provided testimony leading up to and during the 2023 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Throughout 2022 and the spring of 2023, CPE facilitated numerous meetings with the campus presidents and legislative liaisons to discuss legislative strategies and provide a coordinated approach to statewide issues.

CPE [released several key research reports and publications](#), including the annual enrollment and degrees reports, a study of degrees and credentials awarded by program, and the annual progress report on strategic agenda key indicators. These publications build CPE's reputation as a trusted and reliable provider of higher education content.

CPE staff developed a process for assessing the financial health of campuses. The analysis evaluates fiscal stability and sustainability, and it can help determine institutional susceptibility to market risk factors. As part of this analysis, staff identified methods, metrics, and data sources for assessing institutional viability in their respective markets and determined whether institutions are making efficient



STATE LEADERSHIP

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and effective use of state resources.

CPE held the [2022 Postsecondary Education Trusteeship Conference](#) in September. This conference brought together regents and trustees from all of the public institutions (as well as some from private institutions) to contemplate the future of higher education. The conference also featured new board member education, as required by HB 15 (2016), and continuing education from state and national partners like the Association of Governing Boards, the Gardner Institute, and state legislators. Newly appointed board members unable to attend the conference were invited to complete their required training through [online orientation courses](#).

When an academic program is not available in Kentucky, students are able to participate in the [Academic Common Market](#). This program, managed by CPE staff, enabled approximately 600 students in the 2022-23 academic year to attend out-of-state institutions at the in-state tuition rate.

CPE led Kentucky's [licensure functions](#) for non-public institutions operating within the state and managed the state's participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and NC-SARA requirements. Staff renewed 77 licenses and approved four new licenses;

approved 157 new program applications and 213 program modifications; audited faculty in 142 new programs; and issued eight new conditional licenses in 2022, with five of those satisfying conditions.

CPE managed the statewide [Kentucky Virtual Library \(KYVL\)](#), a consortium of nearly 350 Kentucky libraries and institutions, as well as the Kentucky Digital Library, a platform housing more than 1.2 million items in 40 collections to enhance scholarship, research and lifelong learning. KYVL facilitated more than 97 million database searches, and 72,000 items were transported via KYVL courier in academic year 2020-21. The library's shared services and collaborative purchasing resulted in a savings of approximately \$20 million for postsecondary education in Kentucky.

Thanks to several grants and other non-state funds, CPE has 111 employees (27 of those support GUK and eight are part-time student success interns). Staff also operated and managed a \$7,205,700 FY 23 budget for operations and strategic initiatives. We are pleased to report that the results of the FY22 agency audit showed no deficiencies or material weaknesses and a fair presentation of financial data.





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