

Narrative 4: Soft Skills Program

Discuss your community program or programs to address work ethic/soft skills development and credentialing for both the secondary and post-secondary adult populations. The programs must meet the following minimum standards:

- Provide evidence of employer engagement in the program development process, including representation of the county's most prolific businesses and industries;
- Provide evidence that employers recognize achievement of work ethic or soft skills credential in their hiring/advancement processes;
- Programs must include measurable goals for annual improvement in the raw number and percentage of workforce credentialed;
- Plans must include a strategy to assure employers of the sustainability of the programs; and
- Programs must address, at a minimum, the following topical areas: attendance/punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking.

Overview

A common theme among employers is the inability to find workers that possess a strong work ethic or sense of initiative. There are various programs in place in our community at both the high school and adult level that will help address this issue. Some of those that will be added to the process include the following.

Career Options Course

McLean County High School will implement a mandatory Career Options course for all ninth grade students beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The course will focus on orientation and exploration in 14 career clusters, employability skills, and work ethics. Opportunities will be provided for the development of problem solving, decision making, reasoning and learning through school and work-based learning experiences, and exploration. The complete curriculum for the course may be viewed at:

<http://education.ky.gov/CTE/Documents/Career%20Options%20Curriculum%20Alignment.pdf>

Student learning objectives for the course include:

- Classifying jobs by career clusters;
- Locate information about careers;
- Determine the level of education required for various jobs;
- Comprehend how a career assessment impacts my career choices;
- Conclude which career cluster(s) interest me;
- Apply fundamental skills required in the workplace;
- Identify resources available to assist in researching job openings;
- Generate documents necessary to apply for a job;
- Utilize basic communications and personal development skills needed to be successful in the job;
- Critique appropriate dress and grooming practices to assist with career planning;
- Use goal setting and the decision making process to assist with career planning;
- Scrutinize ILP to make important career selections;
- Identify ethical behaviors that will have an effect in the workplace;
- Identify and develop skills that employers look for in employees;
- Identify grooming practices desired by an employer;
- Define teamwork;
- Compare and contrast work-based learning, job-shadowing, and service learning experiences;
- Evaluate the impact that a job-shadowing or service learning experience can have on career choices;
- Develop a plan to prepare for a job-shadowing or service-learning experience
- Identify child labor laws relevant to job-shadowing experience; and
- Demonstrate health and safety practices needed for a job-shadowing or service learning experience.

Junior Achievement

Beginning in 2013, all senior English courses will incorporate the Junior Achievement Success Skills curriculum. Teachers will coordinate with Junior Achievement volunteers to schedule modules as appropriate within the existing curriculum.

Northwest Kentucky Training Consortium

Northwest KY Training Consortium (NKTC) assists business/industry by providing training opportunities to increase the skill level of the current and future workforce in Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster Counties. McLean County residents have the opportunity to attend soft skill training offered by the NKTC. The fall 2013 classes include a focus on Managing Workplace Conflict, Performance Management Training, Building Effective Team, Effective Communication Skills for Leaders, and Job Skills Boot Camp.

McLean County High School Soft Skills Certification

As approved on April 25, 2013, by the McLean County High School Site Based Council, to begin with the Class of 2014, the following guidelines were established in order for students to obtain a Soft Skills Certification:

- No more than two unexcused absences;
- No more than two unexcused tardies;
- No discipline referrals for fighting, vandalism, theft, possession of firearms or illegal substances, or disrespect to adults;
- Grade point average of at least a 2.5 with no failures;
- Involvement in at least two extracurricular/co-curricular activities which may include part-time employment and/or community volunteer projects; and
- Successfully complete the Junior Achievement Success Skills curriculum.

SkillTrain will offer a free 6-hour Employability Skills Workshop for adults after they have qualified for services and made improvements in their reading or math TABE assessments. The Employability Skills Workshop is composed of an initial 6-hour segment that covers job search, completing a job application/resume, and various interview skills, to include "How to Dress for an Interview", mock interview practice sessions, and how to conduct one's self in an interview setting. An additional 3-hour segment will include instruction in Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint. Students will receive a certificate upon completion of the course.

The McLean County Career Center will promote the use of the high school and adult level soft skills certification with area employers. Employers will be given information about the certifications and offered the opportunity to utilize them when qualifying applicants for positions within their businesses. All employers posting job orders with the Career Center for inclusion on the area job listing will be asked to "prefer" candidates with a soft skills certification. Job seekers at the McLean County Career Center will also be given information about the soft skill certification and encouraged to obtain the credential.