

Narrative 2: Educational Attainment: Present a plan to raise the Educational Attainment rate to 32 percent within 3 years [KY average] and 39 percent within five years [national average] (three pages maximum). A separate plan must also be presented to reduce the percentage of working age adults (18-64) in your county without a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma (e.g., GED®) as based on the American Community Survey by 3% points in three years and 5% in five years.

Ohio County has a rate of 16.5% of working age adults who hold at least an associate's degree with goals to increase the rate to 25% by September 2016 and to 32% by September 2018.

One strategy to increase the educational attainment rate is to help high school students and adults to transition to Post-Secondary Education. Retention rates for students beginning college in Kentucky are dismal. Ohio County was recently selected as one of four schools to participate in the state's Close the Deal initiative. This will be held October 16th, 2014.

Owensboro Community & Technical College offers the following transition services to Ohio County students: work-based learning, clinical, internships, co-ops, shadowing are available through specific degree programs, as well as, through the Career Counseling Office at OCTC. As of Fall 2012, there were 505 adult Ohio County students attending OCTC. Since Fall 2000, OCTC has had 783 graduates from Ohio County.

Discover College is a state and national model that encourages students to explore college courses at OCTC before graduating from high school. Since the summer of 2012, 94 Ohio County High School students are taking technical courses and/or general education courses, earning college credit and/or exploring advanced areas of interest through this endeavor where courses are offered in their high school taught by qualified college instructors and/or on OCTC's campus. Some learn they are capable of college work, while others get a jumpstart on the college credits they will need for a four-year degree. The program has helped to improve the on-to-college rate for the region. Math, reading, and English courses, developed by high schools in partnership with the local colleges, allow students to take classes in the college transitional sequence as their fourth math credit in high school when their ACT scores indicate they are not prepared for college algebra. This allows them to go directly into credit-bearing classes when they enter college.

The Regional Alliance for Education is an umbrella organization that brings together in a partnership all the regional public and private school districts, the four postsecondary institutions, workforce and economic development professionals, early childhood and adult education providers, business and labor representatives, and foundation executives. Participating counties include Daviess, Hancock, Ohio, and McLean. Through this alliance, regional education strategies can be pursued. The Degree Completion Committee is focused on strategies to increase the number of degrees conferred to residents. The focus has been on identifying residents that have college credits but have not completed a degree or have enough credits to earn a degree but have not applied for one. These students are being contacted by the colleges (Kentucky Wesleyan, Owensboro Community & Technical College, Brescia University, Henderson Community College, and Western KY University – Owensboro) and encouraged to complete.

Financial Aid: A college education is one of the most important investments a student will ever make; however, most students have concerns about how they will pay for all of their educational expenses. KCTCS strives to offer excellent financial aid services to help them fund their academic endeavors. The key to receiving aid is applying and doing so in a timely manner. Because some aid programs are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis, an early application receives priority consideration for those limited funding sources. Filling out the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) applies students for federal Pell and Supplemental Educational Opportunity (SEOG) grants, as well as the Kentucky College Access Program (CAP) grant. KCTCS also participates in the Federal Work Study (FWS) program, which provides jobs for students with financial need. The KCTCS Scholarship program offers a variety of scholarships based upon academic progress, program of study, and/or financial need.

To help transitioning students, KCTCS has implemented the new START Center, so all services, including two new full time advisors, are co-located. KCTCS is working to implement a mandatory first year experience course that would strengthen study and other skills for the entering student. The colleges offer tutoring and academic counseling, and continue to enhance other student services.

SkillTrain (Adult Education) offers the following transition services to Ohio County adult education students:

Students are encouraged to set their goals for enrolling in college the first day of SkillTrain orientation. In addition to providing information about Owensboro Community and Technical College's academic programs and enrollment processes, SkillTrain-Ohio County offers COMPASS 101, a course of study designed to prepare adults for the COMPASS assessment. Qualifying students can work toward improving academic skills in reading, math, and language via targeted instruction delivered through the combination of strategies including small group instruction, computer-based curriculum, and one-on-one assistance. After demonstrating appropriate academic skill gains on the TABE assessment, students are scheduled for the COMPASS assessment.