

1.

Does being a certified Kentucky Work Ready Community help us?

Absolutely! Employers and potential employers who may consider your community as a location want to know about your workforce. When we look at the role workforce plays in decision-making by corporate executives regarding where to locate or expand a company's operations, we see a common theme — a well-trained workforce is critical to successful economic development and a state or community's ability to compete for jobs and investment.

A Kentucky Work Ready Community certification is a measure of a county's workforce quality. It is an assurance to business and industry that the community is committed to providing the highly-skilled workforce required in today's competitive global economy.

The Kentucky Work Ready Community program has the ability to transform a community. It encourages counties to take a credible inventory of the current and future workforce, identify the gaps and carry out strategies to achieve a more knowledgeable, trained workforce.

2.

Why does Kentucky have a Kentucky Work Ready Community certification program?

If Kentucky businesses are going to compete in a global environment, we need to have a workforce that is highly skilled and ready to go to work. The quicker we can create the best workforce, the quicker we can differentiate our state to attract and grow jobs.

3.

Are Kentucky Work Ready Communities promoted by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development?

The Cabinet is very supportive of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program. The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) works closely with the Cabinet to provide updates on the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program and which counties are certified. When considering talent, the Cabinet points to Kentucky Work Ready Communities as a differentiator.

4.

How were the criteria and thresholds selected? The Kentucky Work Ready Community Steering Committee, which consists of representatives from all major stakeholders in the project (including employers, education, workforce development, economic development and more) worked to define the criteria initially. Further guidance was received by business and industry – their input drove the final selections. As a result of this approach, Kentucky's program is the most comprehensive and innovative Work Ready program in the U.S.

5.

Can multiple counties make a Kentucky Work Ready Region?

YES – While Work Ready Regions are not officially a part of this program currently, as long as the counties each meet the Kentucky Work Ready Community criteria individually and become certified, contiguous counties within Kentucky can promote themselves as a Work Ready Region.

6.

Can any unit smaller than a county apply (such as a city or region not defined by county lines)?

NO – the smallest unit allowed to apply is a county. The reason for this has to do with how data is gathered and tracked. Standardized data for the criteria included are generally tracked at a county level.

7.

Our community does not meet the minimum criteria yet - can we still apply?

YES – In order for the program to have real value for business and industry, the criteria are intentionally stringent. Most communities will apply for Work Ready Community in Progress – with detailed plans to meet the criteria where they fall short. A Kentucky Work Ready Community in Progress certification is an indication to employers that your county is on the move and that you are motivated to improve your workforce. If this status can be achieved, it becomes a framework to get your workforce to the next level.

Please use the Work Ready Community in Progress Application Package to apply for this status.

8.

How long will we have to meet the criteria if we become a Kentucky Work Ready Community in Progress? You will have up to three years to meet the minimum criteria. You will need to show continuous improvement within this three-year period.

9.

What if a Kentucky Work Ready Community in Progress does not meet its goals in three years - can we reapply? If you can demonstrate continuous improvement, the selection committee may decide to extend your goal deadline. If the committee does NOT extend your deadline and you lose Kentucky Work Ready Community in Progress status, you must wait one year before reapplying.

10.

If our community meets the criteria and becomes a Kentucky Work Ready Community, how long will that status last?

Kentucky Work Ready Community status will last for two years, at which time each community must be recertified to ensure they have not fallen below required criteria levels. The recertification process will be a shorter process than the original application and should be fairly easy as long as the local committee stays actively involved.

11.

Is there a cost? NO – there is no application fee.

12.

What is the process after we submit our application? First, the Kentucky Work Ready Community Review Panel will review the data to verify accuracy. Then, the panel will review the narratives included. Based on this information, the committee will make a recommendation to the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB), which will have final approval on granting Kentucky Work Ready Community or Kentucky Work Ready Community in Progress status on behalf of the Governor. You may receive questions from the panel via email in advance of the review panel meeting. You will have the opportunity to make a brief presentation and answer questions posed by the review panel during their meeting. Details will be provided in advance of the meeting. The process will vary in length depending on the timing of the application in relation to the next KWIB meeting.

13.

When can we apply? You may submit an application at any time. The review panel will meet at least three times per year to review applications that have been submitted at least 30 days before the review panel meeting. Once established, the meeting dates, times and locations of review panel meetings will be posted on the program's website at workready.ky.gov.

14.

What if I need help getting started? While pursuing Kentucky Work Ready Community status isn't easy, the process itself offers numerous benefits. We are here to help in any way that we can. You can contact us by phone at (502) 564-0372 or by email at workready@ky.gov. We can also put you in touch with other community leaders who have gone through the certification process to share ideas and advice.

Additionally, we have several resources available online, including a communications toolkit, best practices and data and technical resources.