

# Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

## NEWS RELEASE



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### Kentucky Work Ready Communities Best Practices Summit in May will help counties prepare for economic growth

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (March 27, 2013) – The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) is hosting its first Kentucky Work Ready Communities Best Practices Summit May 16 from 8 a.m. - noon at 300 Fair Oaks Lane in Frankfort. Space for the summit is limited, so advance registration is required.

The free summit is designed to help communities that want to improve their economic development potential by working toward Kentucky Work Ready Communities certification. The certification assures employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require.

“The Kentucky Work Ready Communities program has become so popular that we wanted to give community leaders an opportunity to share their successes and network with each other, and provide an event for communities that are interested in the program to learn more about it,” said Crystal Gibson, chair of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities Review Panel and vice president of Public Affairs at Citigroup. “Community leaders who have gone through the application process will speak at the summit and be available at table discussions to give insight into the program and how it has benefitted their areas.”

In the year since Kentucky launched the program, 19 counties have been certified as Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress, and 34 are going through the application process or have shown an interest in the program.

“The Kentucky Work Ready Communities program has strenuous requirements that show that a local area has the skilled workforce and community support necessary to be competitive in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy,” said Ed Holmes, chair of KWIB. “The requirements are based on input from business and industry, and economic development leaders in Kentucky and that increases the appeal of the program for businesses that are looking to build or expand.”

To be designated a Kentucky Work Ready Community, business, education, economic and elected leaders must collaborate and apply for the certification. Counties have to meet criteria in six areas including high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development

and digital literacy. Boyle, Daviess, Henderson, Warren and Woodford counties have been certified as Kentucky Work Ready Communities.

If a community is close to certification and is committed to reaching the criteria in three years, it is may be designated as a Work Ready Community in Progress.

Summit participants will have an opportunity to network during a continental breakfast sponsored by the Foundation for Kentucky Industry, Kentucky Association of Counties and Kentucky Association for Economic Development. Representatives from Daviess, Hopkins, Madison, Pulaski, Russell and Trigg counties will discuss the six requirement areas of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program and their best practices. Members of the program's review panel will field questions from participants about the process and criteria.

The summit is geared toward Kentucky Work Ready Communities committee members, elected officials, economic development organizations, Chambers of Commerce, human resource managers, business owners, school officials, business and industry associations, community college representatives, P-16 Councils, adult education directors and Kentucky Workforce Investment Boards.

For more information, visit the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program website at <http://workready.ky.gov>