

# Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

## NEWS RELEASE



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## **Gov. Beshear announces Kentucky Work Ready Communities**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 2, 2015)** – Governor Steve Beshear today announced that Fleming County has been certified as a Kentucky Work Ready Community and Ballard and Marshall counties have achieved Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress status.

The Kentucky Work Ready Communities certification program from the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet 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.

“This administration is committed to maintaining our state’s competitiveness, and if Kentucky is to compete for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs and attract business and industry, we must continue to show employers locations that have completed rigorous requirements and are a cut above other communities nationally when it comes to developing a skilled labor force,” Gov. Beshear said. “Much of our emphasis over the last seven years has been on creating a stronger, healthier and more educated population, in essence building our human capital. I congratulate Fleming County for partnering with us to strengthen Kentucky and its community at the highest level.”

Gov. Beshear encourages all Kentucky communities to strive for the Kentucky Work Ready Communities designation.

To become certified, a county must gather local support and commitment and apply for the Work Ready Community designation. Counties have to meet criteria in six areas including high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development and digital literacy.

In addition to Fleming, the counties of Boone, Boyle, Campbell, Clark, Daviess, Hardin, Henderson, Kenton, Madison, Nelson, Oldham, Pulaski, Rowan, Shelby, Warren and Woodford have been designated as Kentucky Work Ready Communities since

certification began in February 2012. Counties that achieve Kentucky Work Ready status must be recertified every two years.

“The Kentucky Work Ready Communities program momentum is growing as more communities learn about the certification and how it can help them achieve a higher level of competitiveness among business and industry,” said Hugh Haydon, chair of KWIB. “In addition to the 51 counties that have achieved certification as Work Ready or Work Ready in Progress, another 40-45 are in the process of applying.”

“We are excited to designate Ballard and Marshall counties as Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress, and we look forward to certifying many others in the future,” said Roxann Fry, chair of the Kentucky Work Ready Communities Review Panel and senior consultant at Tennessee Valley Authority Economic Development.

Currently, 34 counties have been designated as Kentucky Work Ready Communities in Progress because they are close to meeting the Kentucky Work Ready Community criteria. To achieve this level, a county must present a viable plan to meet all of the criteria within three years. The designation shows that a community is making strides and working with its business, education, workforce and economic development leaders to set and meet common goals that will give the county an economic edge.

Applications for the certification were reviewed by a panel appointed by the KWIB. The panel recommended certification by the board for the counties that met the criteria. The panel meets four times a year to review applications, which can be submitted at any time.

For more information about the Kentucky Work Ready Communities program, go to <http://workready.ky.gov>.