

Supporting Postsecondary Success for Special Populations- Leveraging CTE pathways

KENTUCKY CTE
EMPOWERED
Today's Career and Technical Education



OSEEL
Office of Special Education & Early Learning



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Objectives

- Understand the unique needs of special populations in postsecondary advising
- Explore how Career and Technical Education supports career exploration and career readiness
- Identify strategies for effective advising tailored to diverse student groups



Who are some of our Special Populations?

- Students with Disabilities
- English language learners
- Economically disadvantaged
- Students pursuing studies in nontraditional fields
- Foster Youth
- Unhoused/Transient students
- Gifted and Talented Students

Kentucky Administrative Regulations. (n.d.). 704 KAR 3:285. *Programs for the gifted and talented*. Legislative Research Commission. Retrieved from <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/kar/titles/704/003/285/>



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Challenges Faced by Special Populations

- Student-Level Barriers
- School/Staff Knowledge Gaps
- Access and Structural Barriers
- System-Level Challenges
- On-site SPED support
- OSEEL OCTE Work Group

Culturally Responsive Advising Strategies

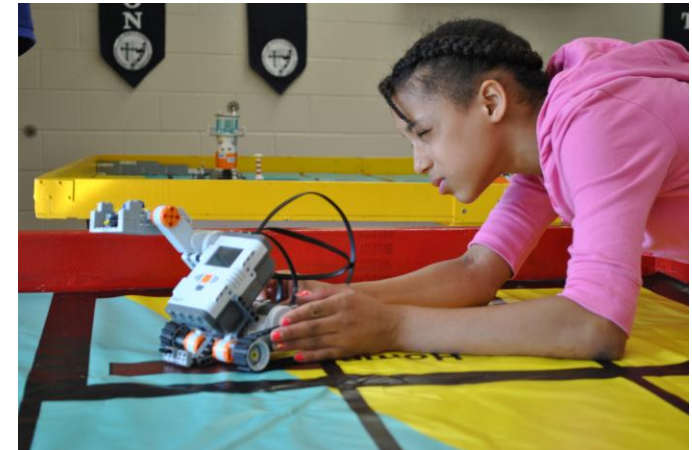
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) development
- Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meetings
- Special Education (SPED)/CTE/Counselors collaboration
- Intentional placement

Predictors/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent Living
• Career Awareness	Promising	Promising	
• Career Technical Education (was Vocational Education)	Research-based	Evidence-based	
• Community Experiences		Promising	
• Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status		Promising	
• Goal-Setting	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Inclusion in General Education	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Interagency Collaboration	Promising	Promising	
• Occupational Courses	Promising	Promising	
• Paid Employment/Work Experience	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Parent Expectations	Promising	Research-based	
• Parental Involvement		Promising	
• Program of Study	Research-based	Research-based	
• Psychological Empowerment (new)	Promising	Promising	Promising
• Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Self-Care/Independent Living	Promising	Promising	Research-based
• Self-Realization (new)		Promising	Promising
• Social Skills	Promising	Promising	
• Student Support	Promising	Research-based	Promising
• Technology Skills (new)		Promising	
• Transition Program	Research-based	Promising	
• Travel Skills		Promising	
• Work Study		Research-based	
• Youth Autonomy/Decision-Making	Research-based	Research-based	Promising

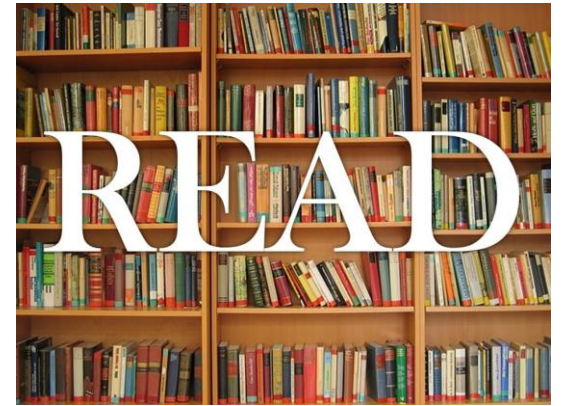
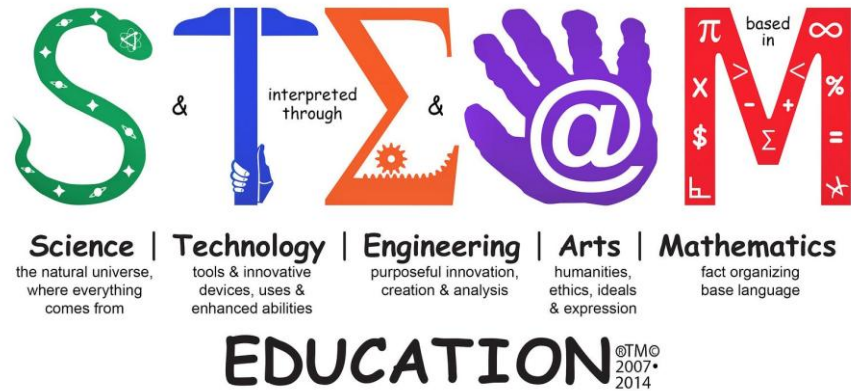
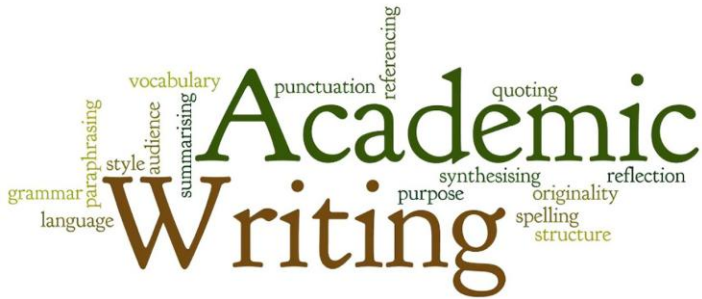


CTE Provides Vibrant Learning Experiences

- CTE provides **experiential learning** that resonates with students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings.
- This is especially beneficial for students with disabilities or those who are disengaged from school.



CTE connects academics to the world of work.



CTE Provides Additional Advising and Support

- Students receive additional advising and support through their CTE teacher who understands their specific career field
- There are additional supports through industry partners, Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO's)
- This is critical for foster youth, unhoused students, and others who may lack consistent adult guidance.

Empowerment Through Nontraditional Fields



- CTE encourages students to explore **nontraditional career paths**, helping break down gender and cultural barriers.
- This supports equity for underrepresented groups in fields like STEAM, skilled trades, education, and healthcare.



Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK)

[Work-Based Learning - Kentucky Department of Education](#)

- Real-life occupational experiences
- Provides students with the opportunity to engage and interact with employers
- Demonstrate essential employability and technical skills

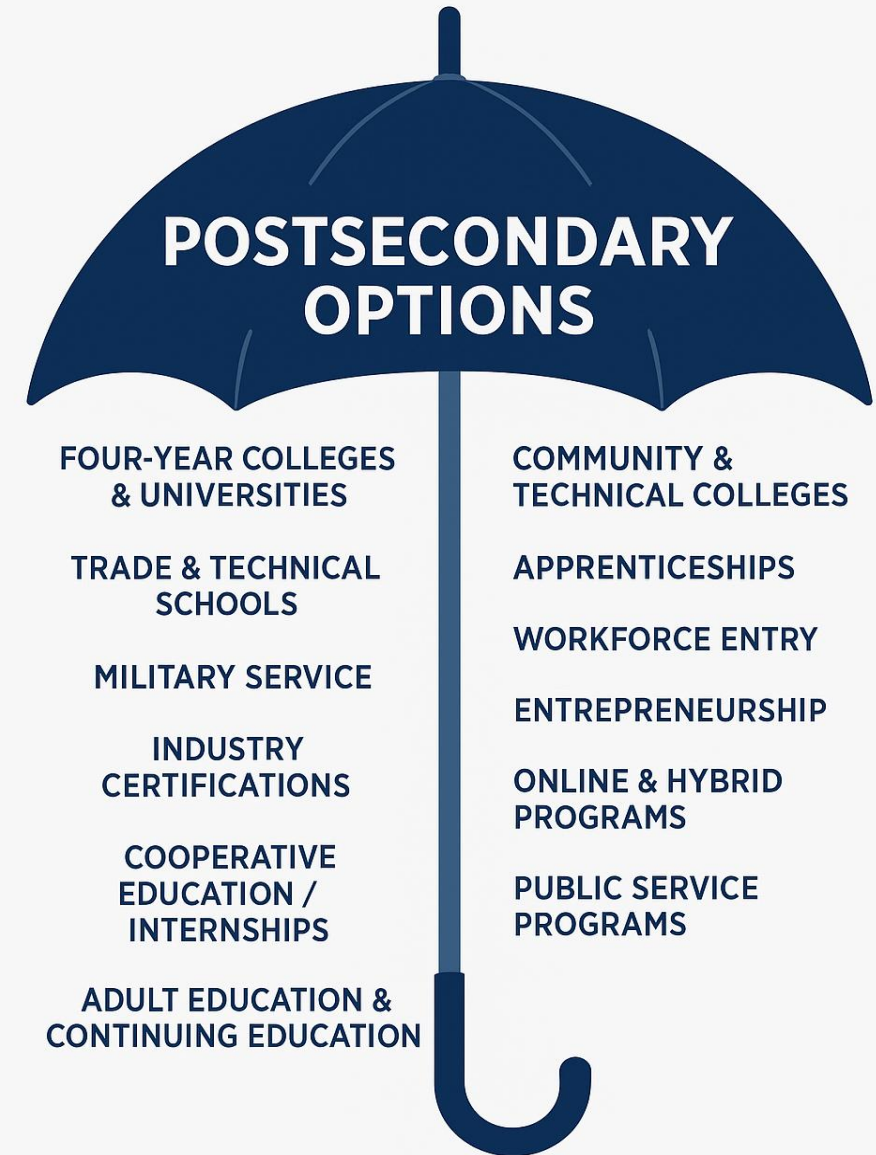
[TRACK: Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky - Kentucky Department of Education](#)

- Provide secondary students with career pathway opportunities into Registered Apprenticeship programs through TRACK pre-apprenticeships
- Create a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training
- Students receive a nationally recognized credential at little or no cost.

Provides students with opportunities to earn postsecondary credit through articulated and dual credit.

- [Statewide Articulation Agreements - Kentucky Department of Education](#)
- **NEW-**[Articulation Agreements by Apprenticeships, Trade and Industry - Kentucky Department of Education](#)
- [Dual Credit - Kentucky Department of Education](#)

Career and Technical Education serves as a gateway to many postsecondary opportunities and career options





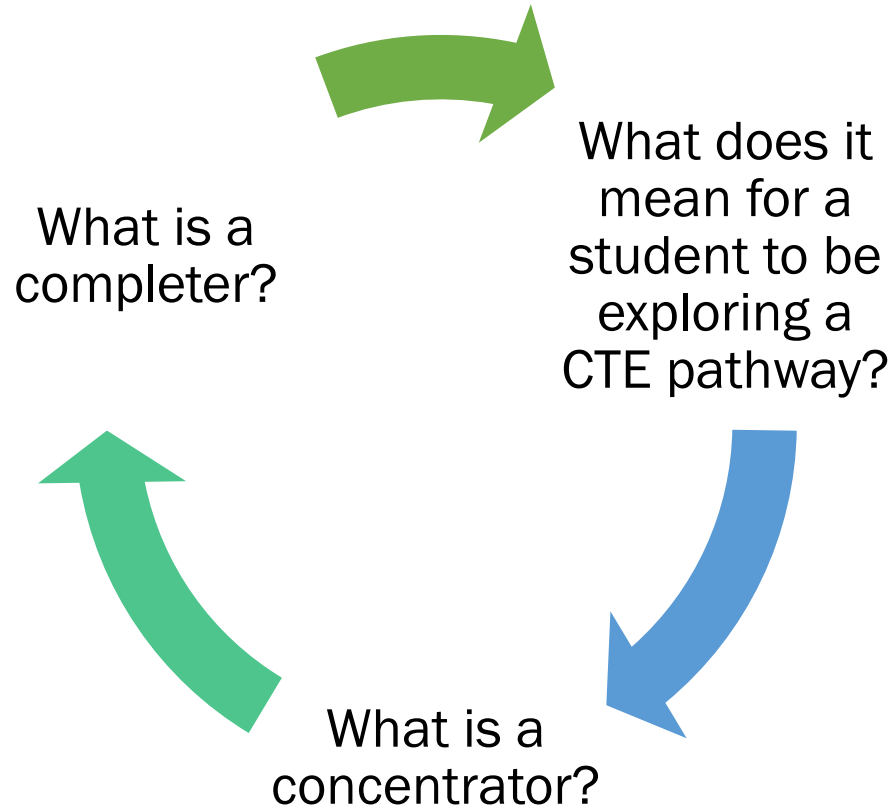
KY's NEW Top 5 In-Demand Sectors

1. Healthcare
2. Manufacturing and Logistics
3. Construction
4. Education
5. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (PS&TS)

CTE is Data-Driven

- **Perkins V** requires states to identify and address disparities in access, participation, and outcomes for special populations.
- The **Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE)** uses data to:
 - Monitor equity gaps
 - Inform local needs assessments
 - Guide funding and program improvement
- **ACTE** and **Advance CTE** provide tools and frameworks (e.g., High-Quality CTE Framework, Opportunity Gap Analysis Tool) to help schools and districts:
 - Disaggregate data by population
 - Set equity goals
 - Implement targeted advising strategies

Career and Technical Education Pathway



- Exploring
- Concentrator
- Completer

Barriers to Postsecondary Success

- Academic gaps and learning challenges
- Limited access to college/career resources
- Cultural and language barriers
- Lack of representation in career fields

Table Discussion: What barriers have you observed in your students' postsecondary planning?

Strategies from the Field

- **Intentional Scheduling**

- One-on-one course planning with students and families
- Pathway choices guided by student strengths and interests

- **Strong Relationships & Mentorship**

- Build trust through regular check-ins and consistent support
- Use mentorship programs to provide personalized guidance



Key Best Practices



- **Professional Learning for Educators**
 - Equip CTE instructors
 - Leverage Perkins funding
- **Early Career Awareness and Exploration**
 - Spark early career interest

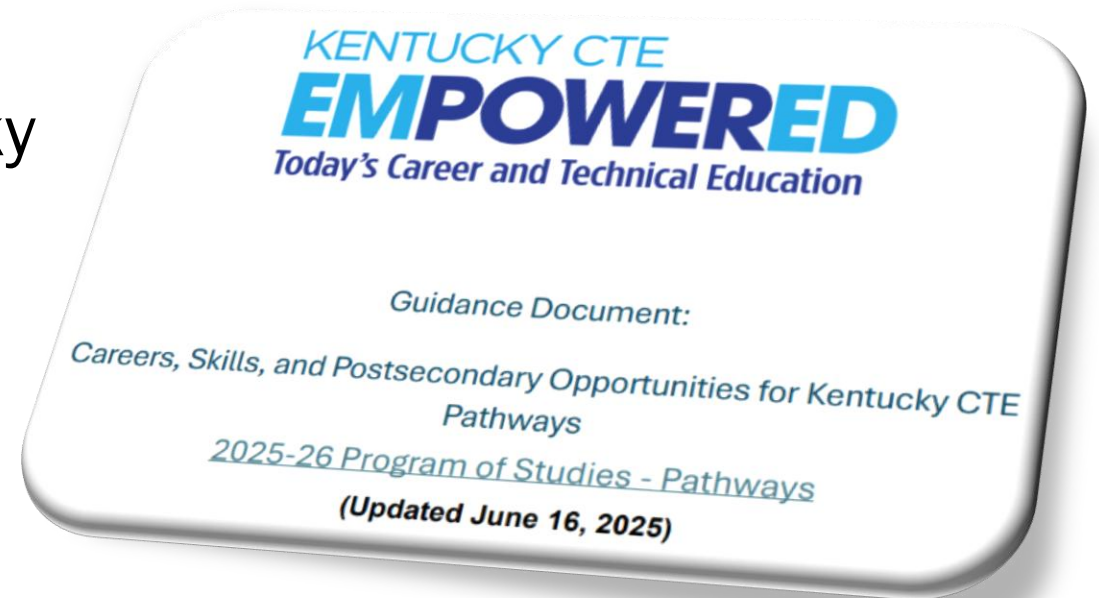
Strategic Partnerships for Student Success

- **Collaboration Across Educators and Families**
 - Strategic coordination across grade levels and educator roles linking SPED, CTE, feeder schools and families
- **Data-Informed Intervention**
 - Monitor progress toward program completion and certification
 - Use data to identify students in need and provide timely supports



Actionable Guidance

- Career Choices
- Aptitudes Needed
- Common Work Environments
- Postsecondary Opportunities in Kentucky



<http://bit.ly/3K4NTS2>

Careers, Skills, and Postsecondary Opportunities Guidance Document

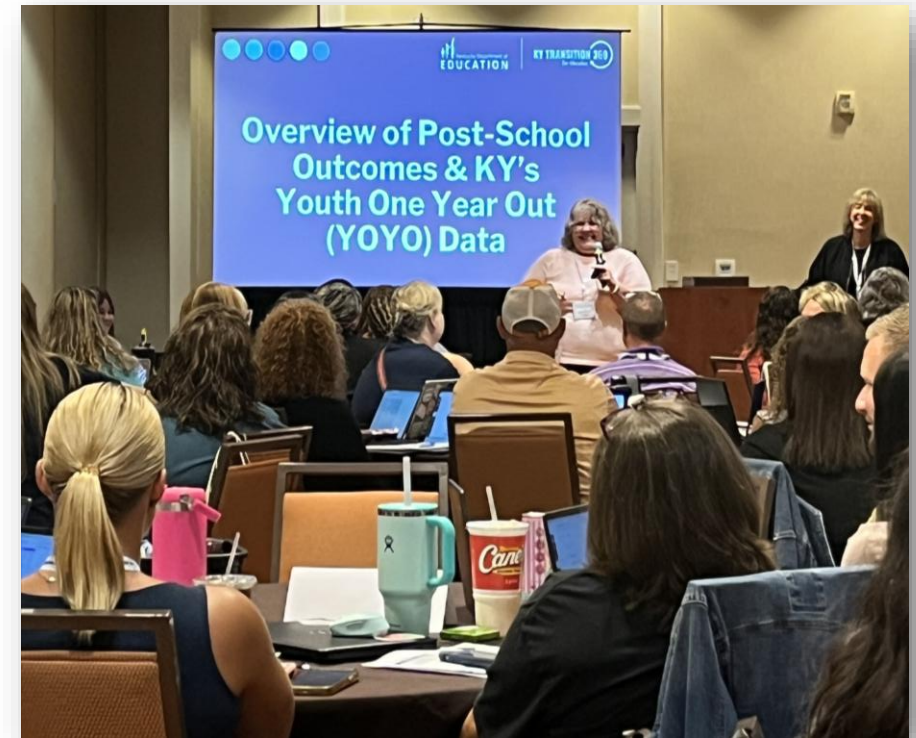
KY Transition 360 for Educators

A Tiered Model of Professional Learning

Tier 3
Communities of
Practice

Tier 2
Implementation

Tier 1
Foundational Learning



KY TRANSITION 360

For Educators

Policy

Student Skills

The goal of KY Transition 360 for Educators is to increase the quality of transition programming for special education students through **five priority areas**.

Collaborative
Systems

Transition
Planning

Career
Development

Let's look at who's participating...



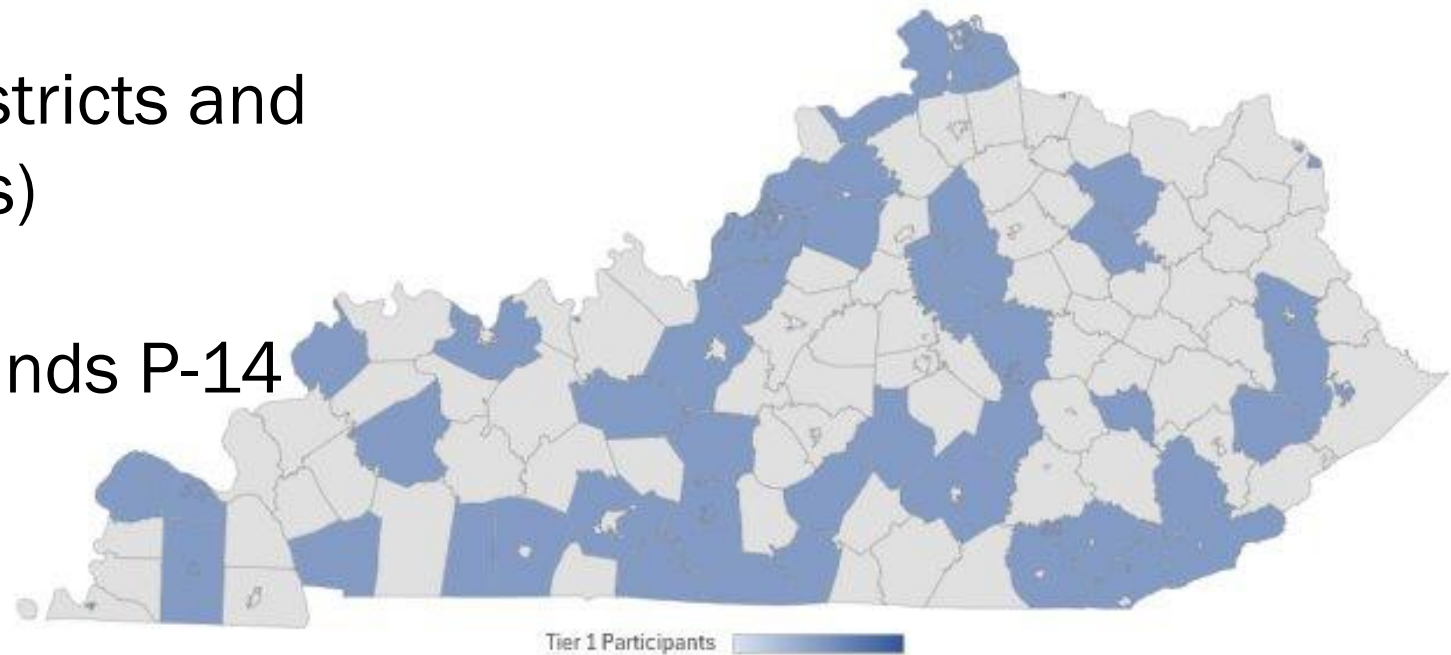
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KY Transition 360 For Educators

Representation: Tier 1

As of October 2025:

- 424 Participants across 74 districts and Area Technology Centers (ATCs)
- 10+ role groups represented
- Representation in all grade bands P-14



KY TRANSITION 360
For Educators

KY TRANSITION 360

For Educators



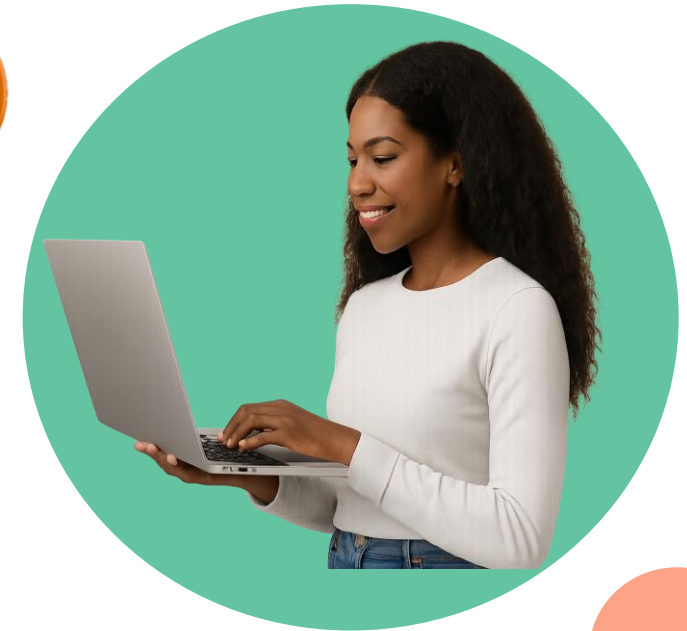
Online Learning Units:

- Asynchronous Flexibility
- Build Skills
- Collaborate
- Comprehensive Content
- Access Resources
- Stipend Upon Completion

APPLY NOW



<https://bit.ly/3ZgrsOS>



Open To:

- General and Special Educators
- Administrators
- Paraprofessionals
- Career and Technical Education Teachers
- Job Coaches
- Other Transition Support Staff



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Kentucky Transition 360

- Two Key Components:
 - Family Mentors
 - Statewide Cadre



- Focus on the family and community side of post-secondary transition.
- Builds local and state partnerships across systems and agencies that are already working to support students in achieving postsecondary success

Family Mentors

- Community-based family mentors will serve across the state.
 - Provide individual and small group mentoring for parents, families and students focused on identifying and addressing barriers and challenges for students transitioning into adulthood
 - Strengthen local partnerships among districts, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, employers, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and parents/families/students

KY Transition 360 Cadre Representatives

Kentucky
Department of
Education/Transition
Education Unit

Office of Vocational
Rehabilitation Parent
Training and
Information Center

Family Mentor

District

Statewide
Independent Living
Council

Centers for
Independent Living

Student (coming
soon)

KHEAA-Work-Ready Kentucky Scholarship (WKRS)

- **What is WKRS?**
A scholarship that helps Kentuckians earn a **tuition-free certificate, diploma, or associate degree** in high-demand workforce sectors.
- **Award Details:**
- Covers remaining tuition and eligible fees (up to \$400/year) after other aid (Pell, CAP, KEES)
- Up to **60 credit hours** or until an associate degree is earned
- [KHEAA](#)

Summation-Benefits of Career and Technical Education

- Career and Technical Education is focused on providing students with skills, knowledge and other training to prepare to be postsecondary and career ready.
- Exploration of Career Opportunities
- Development of Durable (aka soft/transferable...etc.) Skills
- Industry Credentials and Certifications
- Improved Graduation Rates
- Bridges to postsecondary education

Closing Activity-Reflection

 *What's one step you'll take to make your advising more inclusive, equitable, and CTE-informed for special populations?*

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Question and Answer





thank you!



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