



Tech Ready Apprenticeships for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK)

Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Office of Apprenticeship

VIDEO LINK



AASA Kentucky Youth Apprenticeships



TRACK represents a partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education’s Office of Career and Technical Education and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet. Its primary goal is to provide secondary students with career pathway opportunities into Registered Apprenticeship programs. This cross-functional partnership is a business and industry-driven program designed to create a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training. TRACK employers are able to tailor the program for their specific needs and are able to select the Career and Technical Education courses and students for their apprenticeship pathway. This process creates a competitive recruiting environment to ensure that employers benefit by gaining future employees who have a good foundation and an interest in that occupation. Additionally, it enables students to receive a nationally recognized credential at little or no cost.

Benefits for Students

- ▶ The apprenticeship program benefits students:
- ▶ Reinforces students’ capacity for developing and applying a range of higher order reasoning skills, including critical thinking, creative problem solving, and analysis.
- ▶ The experiential learning approach in all TRACK sites addresses students’ innate need for high levels of engagement, multi-sensory learning options, growing levels of independence and autonomy, and self-efficacy.
- ▶ TRACK students report that they learn best when they receive coaching to develop requisite knowledge and skills—and then participate in self-guided application.
- ▶ TRACK addresses the wide range of skills, competencies, and dispositions that include the capacity to work successfully as a member of a group; communicate in written, spoken, and multi-media formats; acquire and apply a range of advanced technology skills and competencies; and a capacity for self-directed work leading to clear outcomes.

- ▶ The TRACK apprenticeship experience is powerfully aligned with growing national emphasis upon “personalizing” the learning experience for students.
- ▶ Nationally-recognized industry certification/credential

Benefits for Education and Industry

- ▶ Apprenticeships ensure that regional industries and businesses have skilled entry-level workers capable of succeeding in a continually changing and technology-driven work environment.
- ▶ The economies of the state of Kentucky, its various regions, and locales benefit significantly from sustained technical assistance and support to improve the workforce; credentialing reinforcing national industry-recognized standards; tax credits available in many states for employers participating in apprenticeships meeting federal guidelines and standards; and access to federal resources, including funding from many federal programs specifically designed to sustain and scale apprenticeships in high-yield, high-needs employment areas.

Key Components of the Ecosystem in Kentucky

- ▶ The TRACK apprenticeship ecosystem offers students a constellation of interconnected support services and interventions. This ecosystem involves several requirements for its success, sustainability, and scalability:
- ▶ Alignment between students' academic experience and industry workforce needs and consistent revision and enhancement of apprenticeship-related coursework to make it timely, relevant, and aligned with changes in industry practices and needs.
- ▶ Highly-skilled and committed personnel, including program coordinators, guidance counselors, principals and central office staff responsible for ensuring viable program and policy implementation.
- ▶ Industry mentors that reinforce learners' successful mastery of key skills and technical requirements and orientation to the organizational culture and expectations of the business and the industry it represents.
- ▶ Industry partners that provide ongoing feedback and recommendations concerning their needs for future employees, the range of technical and workplace skills required for a specific career pathway, and ideas for curriculum design.
- ▶ Parent engagement and support; and Student engagement
- ▶ Post-secondary partners that grant credits and degrees work closely with industry partners to ensure alignment between courses and the workplace skills required for success.

Programs

A program of study for each TRACK career pathway is a coherent, unduplicated sequence of rigorous academic and career/technical courses including dual credit opportunities, leading to postsecondary degrees and industry recognized certifications and/or licensures:

- ▶ **Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources**
- ▶ **Arts, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications**
- ▶ **Architecture and Construction**
- ▶ **Business Management and Administration**
- ▶ **Education and Training**
- ▶ **Finance**
- ▶ **Government and Public Administration**
- ▶ **Health Science**
- ▶ **Hospitality and Tourism**
- ▶ **Human Services**
- ▶ **Information Technology**
- ▶ **Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security**
- ▶ **Manufacturing**
- ▶ **Marketing**
- ▶ **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**
- ▶ **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics**

“If someone were to ask me, ‘Why would you invest or participate in youth apprenticeship program?’ I would answer that number one, it’s great for the student. It empowers them. It gives them confidence. They get to move forward. It’s also great for the family. Number two, it produces a skilled and well-trained workforce. That is the common dialogue across not just Russell County or our region here in Kentucky but, really, nationwide. Without question, we need a trained workforce. A youth apprenticeship program provides that opportunity for business and industry.”

MICHAEL FORD
SUPERINTENDENT

Spotlight on Russell County School District

Russell County School District, led by Superintendent Michael Ford, is located in Jamestown, Kentucky, in the south central part of the state. The school system has 3,130 students and the percentage of students qualified for freed and reduced lunch is 73.4%.

The Russell County School District has a close working relationship with the Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center, serving both middle and high school students. Superintendent Ford and the Russell County Board modified curriculum and created flexible schedules to allow students to participate in their on-site apprenticeships and to finish their high school coursework. These changes were key to the program’s success: “As superintendent, it’s my responsibility to remove obstacles to make it work. Schedules need to be different for students who are working in the youth apprenticeship program. We have to get out of that mindset of 7:30 to 2:30 that everybody needs to be in a seat. Students have flexible scheduling. Some students may come to school every other day. They have an online curriculum, or we just make it work for them. Again, the Kentucky Department of Education affords us the opportunity to offer performance-based credits versus seat-time credits. It’s my job and the school district’s job to remove barriers to make that work for our industry and our schools.”

A Russell County student apprentice shared, “My experience as an apprentice was life changing for me. I had to really make a dedication to a balance of education as well as work. At times, it can be a struggle to find the required number of hours in a day, but to understand also that the reward at the end of it was going to be something that propelled me into several different opportunities”

Leadership

Superintendent Michael Ford:

Youth apprenticeships are growing in Kentucky and leadership across the needed stakeholders is a clear reason why: “One of the key parts of that process is the Kentucky Department of Education working with the Kentucky Department of Labor. Somebody has to connect the dots, including industry and corporate needs, relationships between school districts and the Department of Labor and the Kentucky Department of Education, and a complex variety of other issues. We are very fortunate in Kentucky to have the support of the Kentucky Department of Education and the TRACK program. We can pick up a phone call and talk directly to someone who serves as a liaison.

David Horseman, Associate Commissioner of Career and Technical Education:

...all industries in Kentucky are struggling to find employees and skilled employees are what is in highest demand. Youth apprenticeships represent one of those opportunities that in the past has been offered for training purposes for adults, but we want to speed up feeding the pipeline by starting youth apprenticeships, and we’ve had great success with it up to this point.”