

Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board (LTWDB)  
3-Year Strategic Plan



## Letter from the Chair

Dear Lincoln Trail Community,

It is my pleasure to present you with the three-year strategic plan for the Workforce Development Board. The plan reflects the hard work and insight of our Board and many of our regional stakeholders and is informed by a recent analysis of the regional labor market. This document provides an overview of the planning process, findings from stakeholder engagement and market analysis, as well as goals and objectives, and recommendations for implementation.

The plan was developed by [Strategy Matters](#), a woman-owned consulting company with whom we've been working since 2017. Over the last four years we have developed and updated a strategic plan for the region; launched the Workforce Crisis Task Force; hosted four Annual Summits; and continued to grow relationships between businesses, the workforce, and educational opportunities.

We have managed to make great progress in many areas despite the true difficulties of the last several years. COVID has challenged us in our work, disrupted schools and business, and, of course, has touched many personally. Despite the unprecedented nature of these challenges, many of the issues facing employers and the workforce in the Lincoln Trail area remain the same: there are not enough qualified and willing prospective employees to fill the positions that local businesses need to be filled. This plan outlines our best thinking about this issue and lays out some strategies for addressing it in new, bold ways.

I thank Board members, Task Force Chairs, Committee members, and the entire Lincoln Trail community who contributed their insights, questions, and ideas to this plan. I look forward to how this plan will inform the next chapter for the people and businesses of Lincoln Trail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dean Schamore". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Representative Dean Schamore  
Board Chair, Workforce Development Board



Representative Dean Schamore  
Board Chair, Workforce Development Board



## Content

<b>Overview</b>	5
About the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board	5
History of the challenges	5
The Issues Addressed in This Plan	8
<b>State of the Workforce</b>	8
What Does the Future Look Like for Lincoln Trail?	10
Climate Haven	10
Workforce Incentives	11
<b>Strategic Priorities</b>	11
Goal 1: Partner with businesses to develop solutions to the regional workforce shortage	12
Objectives + Actions	12
Goal 2: Increase workforce participation by implementing solutions to common problems preventing prospective employees from entering the workforce	13
Objectives + Actions	14
Goal 3: Retain and expand local talent by connecting people with the education, training, and work experience necessary to promote success in the local economy	14
Objectives + Actions	15
<b>Recommended Implementation</b>	15
<b>Appendix</b>	17
Appendix A: References	17
Appendix B: SWOT Analysis	19
Appendix C: WCTF Summit Deck	31
Appendix D: 2021 State of the Workforce	63
Appendix E: Workforce Crisis Task Force 4th Annual Summit Report	63
<b>About the Consultants</b>	64
The Team	64
<b>Contact Us</b>	65



## Overview

### About the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board (LTWDB) consists of 23 businesses and community leaders across Central Kentucky promoting a thriving, responsive workforce system supporting business success, growth and job creation.

The LTWDB has convened leaders in business and industry, education and training and the non-profit community to form the Workforce Crisis Task Force. As the need for skilled, available workers continues to grow, the task force is creating new paths for residents of our region to enter the workforce.

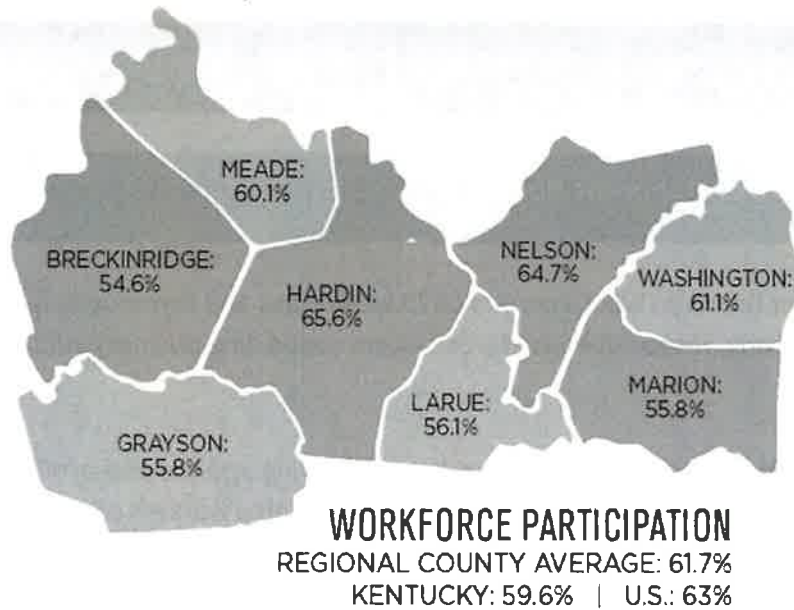
More than 40 percent of the region's working-age adults are not working nor are they trying to find employment. The reasons are complex.

### History of the challenges

For years, the number challenge of the Lincoln Trail area has been the shortage in an available, skilled workforce.



**Figure A. An Illustration of the Shortage by Lincoln Trail Area County<sup>1</sup>**



To address the workforce shortage, the Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board engaged the services of [Strategy Matters](#) consulting firm to map the challenges to the workforce in accessing employment and address employer needs, and to assist in implementing the next steps.

The partnership began in 2017 and so much has happened including the establishment of the Crisis Task Force, which is the basis for this Summit, a strategic plan, and updates to the existing plan, [ltadd.org/about](http://ltadd.org/about).

**Figure B. Strategic Plan Implementation Since 2017**





## The Issues Addressed in This Plan

A lot has changed since 2017—such as the COVID pandemic—but many of the issues remain the same. Over the last four years, Strategy Matters has gotten to know the Lincoln Trail community, making Kentucky their second home. The consultants have met with employers, business owners, the workforce, and service providers to understand the landscape of the community.

This year, the Workforce Development Board went back to the drawing board to see what has (or hasn't) changed in light of COVID and to create a new, more functional strategic plan that paves the way for implementation. Key to the development of the new plan was the involvement of the Taskforce and the Annual Summit.

The strategic plan that follows addresses the continuing challenges of the workforce shortage, answering the strategic questions:

- What modifications might we need to make to the WCTF's approach to raising labor force participation rates, if any?
- What is the role of youth training investments in our strategy? (Where should we invest?)
- If we had more funding for adult training, where should we invest? (Think geography, host institution, focus of skills/credentials, etc.)

## State of the Workforce

To address the strategic questions, the consultants looked at a variety of data sources including:

- Interview and focus groups — 19 participants;
- Workforce participation and business demand survey — 26 responses;
- Research;
- Labor market analysis;
- Review of past efforts and implementation strategies; and
- Annual Summit Participation





A summary of the 2021 State of the Workforce is available in [Appendix C](#).

## Findings

The consulting team sought to develop a snapshot of the most important factors influencing the region's opportunities to ensure a prepared, skilled, and available workforce for our employers and businesses. Below we outline some of the many forces driving the workforce shortage and note some emerging potential opportunities for addressing that shortage.

COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on the labor force in Kentucky. In 2021, the national labor force participation rate dropped to its lowest rate since 1976 (61.76%)<sup>2</sup>. Lockdown contributed to a sharp decline in participation rates in the state. While much of the national decline can be attributed to COVID, the regional decline preexisted COVID.

Many of the people entering the workforce now are children of those who have been most impacted by the opioid crisis. Many of them have been raised under traumatic circumstances, either losing parents or seeing parents struggle (Bardstown Chamber of Commerce focus group, 2021).

Many potential members of the workforce lack rudimentary skills related to job performance (like using a hammer or screwdriver) and basic life skills (like how to comport oneself during an interview, showing up on time to work, not taking an entire day off for 30-minute court appearance, driving, etc.) (Bardstown Chamber of Commerce focus group, 2021).

Part of the low workforce participation rate is related to a culture developed over time: generations of unemployment and families knowing how to get the most out of the system (focus groups and interviews, 2021).

Substance abuse continues to be a huge issue contributing to cycles of childhood trauma and generational mental health challenges (focus groups and interviews, 2021).

Findings from the workforce participation and business demand survey indicate that not all employers that are hiring are in desperate need of workers. That is, for some, business is not currently compromised due to the shortage of workers, though most note that they are still at risk in the future if workforce supply does not expand. The roles with the most openings are entry-level and require unskilled labor, which matches the

---

<sup>2</sup> Kentucky's participation rate fell to 55.78% (5.98% below the national rate) and Lincoln Trail's rate fell to 54.8% (.98% below Kentucky's rate and 6.96% below the nation rate).



education profile for the region—the highest level of educational achievement for most residents of the Lincoln Trail area is a high school diploma or equivalent.

In terms of potential solutions, there are things that the Task Force and its partners might consider which could expand the availability of workers. Specifically, continued efforts to eliminate the “cliff effect”<sup>3</sup> will re-engage some portion of the latent workforce and increase labor force participation rates. Additionally, the continuation of the regional efforts to engage young people early in their working lives through work-based learning opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships) should result in more young adults opting to stay in the region and build a career here rather than leaving for other opportunities. Finally, a worker attraction strategy, focusing on supporting people in moving to the region could focus on Lincoln Trail’s many assets: good housing stock, good educational options, plenty of family-sustaining wage jobs, and a stable, temperate climate free from some of the catastrophic events of climate change.

## What Does the Future Look Like for Lincoln Trail?

The desire to make a better workforce system is widespread and shared. The culture of the communities in Lincoln Trail creates familiarity across the region; people know each other (and often like/trust each other). This is a strong platform for action and impact.

Below are some of the strategies that the Task Force will consider and explore in the coming three years, testing and refining as data is collected on efficacy.

### Climate Haven

McKinsey & Company has dedicated a series to exploring the impact and implications of climate change for individuals, businesses, and policy. Part of the series highlights how cities most impacted by climate change (e.g. flooding, fires, frequent rain) may adapt. The flip side of these studies is how cities not impacted by climate change may take advantage of individuals and families fleeing—a climate haven or climate refuge.

Climate havens and refuges are places that are protected from extreme weather and have the room and resources to grow (Quartz, 2021).

---

<sup>3</sup> “The cliff effect occurs when a pay raise at work triggers a disproportionate loss of government assistance. Even a small raise can “push people off the cliff” when it comes to benefits. Suddenly ineligible for subsidized food, housing, healthcare, or childcare, the family is worse off than before receiving the raise.” (Circles USA).



Some cities like Ann Arbor, MI<sup>4</sup> and Buffalo, NY<sup>5</sup> are already embracing the concept of becoming a climate haven/refuge and investigating what may need to happen to prepare a municipality for an influx of new residents and better position regions to attract workers.

As a temperate and shielded region, Lincoln Trail may see more migration to the area. Tom Kimmerer published an op-ed in the Lexington Herald Leader (2021) suggesting that Kentucky explore this avenue.

Lincoln Trail offers more than just a climate haven but has a host of other incentives for a workforce such as a lower cost of living than larger cities enabling remote workers to call the region home.

## Workforce Incentives

Another way in which Lincoln Trail may incentive workforce participation is through redesigning monetary. Instead of ending the \$300 extra weekly benefits, Beshear has rolled out another incentive for people to get a job instead. The new incentive would offer up to as many as 15,000 Kentuckians on unemployment insurance a one-time \$1,500 bonus to rejoin the workforce by July 30 (Sargent, 2021).

Early research indicates that ending the \$300 weekly benefit doesn't bring people back to the workplace (Casselman, 2021).

## Strategic Priorities

The Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board envisions a vibrant local economy and an engaged, well-prepared, and actively participating local workforce. To achieve these things, we have work to do, and we will have to do it collaboratively. The following section of the strategic plan outlines the goals and objectives developed by members of the Workforce Crisis Task Force and associated stakeholders. This work was undertaken over the summer of 2021, culminating in the Annual Task Force Summit.

As in years past, the focus of this strategic plan is on three primary areas of strategic intervention:

- 1) Engage directly with businesses to understand their workforce needs (business engagement) and develop a legislative education agenda to enable the state to better support business needs;

---

<sup>4</sup> See ["Will climate change turn Michigan into a 'climate haven'?", Holland Sentinel, 2021.](#)

<sup>5</sup> See ["As Earth warms, Buffalo becomes viable destination for climate refugees", WGRZ, 2021.](#)



- 2) Find ways to support (increase the supply of affordable housing, childcare, transportation options) and motivate (eliminate cliff effect) members of the latent workforce in participating in employment with local businesses (removing obstacles); and
- 3) Develop, expand, and retain local talent (unlocking local retention)

**Goal 1: Partner with businesses to develop solutions to the regional workforce shortage develop a legislative education agenda to enable the state to better support business needs**

**Related Task Force Committee: Business and Civic Engagement**

<b>Wildly Important Goals (WIGS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure broad and deep collaboration among business, civic, and economic development leaders, focused on the opportunity to build regional solutions to the workforce shortage</li> </ul>
<b>Leading Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of engaged organizational leaders increasing over time (current # is <i>insert # from BizComm mailing list</i>)</li> <li>• Increasing local interest in the work of this committee by the general public as indicated by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ a) press coverage and</li> <li>◦ b) attendance at public events/conferences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Lagging Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of regional or multiple county-level plans to engage new business members and/or economic development officials in a new strategy for             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ a) attracting new residents to the region, and</li> <li>◦ b) engaging employers in new strategies for workforce attraction and retention</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Objectives + Actions**

- 1) **Create opportunities for regional businesses to work collaboratively to share best practices to co-create solutions to shared problems**
  - A. Continue work subcommittees using a refined meeting structure (4DX) outlined in the "recommended implementation" section



- B. Periodically convene “best practices forums” where local businesses can meet to discuss what is and what is not working regarding their engagement of the local workforce
- C. A member of the WCTF, a staff member at LTWDB, or a chamber representative should consider researching emerging best practices from other parts of the country facing similar challenges to see if solutions developed in other areas can be useful in the Lincoln Trail area

**2) Engage committee members in consideration of regional branding strategies designed to support people in deciding to relocate to the Lincoln Trail region**

- A. Determine messaging by considering the unique value the Lincoln Trail area may offer people considering a move, e.g. climate haven, great schools, affordable housing, employment opportunities, wide-open spaces, etc.
- B. Engage economic development organizations in working toward refining those messages
- C. Identify target audiences
- D. Work with economic development teams to disseminate messages

**3) Engage businesses and civic leaders in legislative agenda and pursuit thereof**

- A. Develop (or confirm) relationships with area senators and representatives
- B. Work with businesses, committee members, and other stakeholders to identify the most urgent priorities for legislative and/or regulatory support
- C. Develop proposed legal or regulatory changes for priority topics

**Goal 2: Increase workforce participation by implementing solutions to common problems preventing prospective employees from entering the workforce**

Related Task Force Committee: Removing Obstacles	
<b>Wildly Important Goals (WIGS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage community members to understand the “real world” obstacles preventing them from getting and keeping employment</li> </ul>
<b>Leading Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● # of community members engaged through outreach attempts</li> <li>● # of additions to the inventory of obstacles and proposed solutions for local workforce engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Lagging Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Measurable increase in workforce participation rate among members of the latent workforce</li> </ul>



## Objectives + Actions

- 1) Ensure that all prospective employees have access to affordable childcare**
  - A. Recruit businesses as partners in solving the challenges of affordable childcare
  - B. Coordinate local efforts to manage the challenge of affordable childcare with state and federal level efforts (like state-funded childcare and universal pre-K)
  
- 2) Support the behavioral health and wellbeing of community members hoping to enter or return to the workforce**
  - A. Continue to provide venues for community members to share stories about the barriers they have faced in entering the workforce (while labor market research and analysis is important, it is also important to hear directly from stakeholders with real-world experience)
  - B. Recognize the trauma and mental health needs of employees and sponsor treatment
  - C. Host a forum to discuss the kinds of "life skills" they most commonly see employees struggling with
  
- 3) Support regional businesses in understanding and adopting best practices for workforce recruitment and retention**
  - A. Convene employers to share and learn from peers
  - B. Convene employers to create new initiatives for regional work in priority areas of removing obstacles, (transit, expungement, childcare, affordable housing) and unlocking local potential (work-based learning opportunities)
  - C. Convene employers to work toward a legislative agenda to support workforce availability (e.g. around the cliff effect, other state-level policy)

### Goal 3: Retain and expand local talent by connecting people with the education, training, and work experience necessary to promote success in the local economy

During this planning cycle, members of the Task Force and the LTWDB identified the need to go beyond the activation of the latent workforce and retention of local talent, and have included the need to attract outside talent to the Lincoln Trail area to help meet the workforce needs of local businesses.



## Related Task Force Committee: Unlocking Local Potential

<b>Wildly Important Goals (WIGS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor emerging needs of local business</li> <li>• Support the development of targeted training and education to prepare the local workforce for the local job market</li> </ul>
<b>Leading Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of programs developed to meet the needs of local businesses</li> <li>• # of outreach and engagement attempts with youth (for chamber meetings, etc)</li> </ul>
<b>Lagging Indicator(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in regional attrition rate (i.e., fewer young people are permanently leaving the area)</li> </ul>

## Objectives + Actions

### 1) Facilitate partnerships between local businesses and local educational institutions to develop programming tailored to the needs of local businesses

- A. Maintain regular communication with local businesses (and establish communication with new business) to understand their evolving needs
- B. Facilitate connections between local businesses with unmet needs (e.g., new technology of manufacturing companies that require a workforce with specific types of training and experience) and local high schools and ECTC

### 2) Facilitate increased participation on the part of youth in the local economy

- A. Invite high school students from different districts to Chamber meetings, and create space in meeting agendas for youth participation
- B. Continue to invest in the availability and usage of work-based learning opportunities within high schools, and career awareness in middle schools
- C. Examine work requirements and barriers to early participation in regional employment through working with businesses to reduce restrictions on youth in the workplace

## Recommended Implementation



Implementation of a newly drafted strategic plan requires the adoption of an approach to keep the team on track; especially if the plan relies on big changes in the team's focus or overall organizational strategy. The consultants recommend that the Task Force adopt the approach below and that each committee uses a version as well.

To support implementation with fidelity to the plan, we recommend adopting practices outlined by Stephen Covey in *The Four Disciplines of Execution (4DX)*. In 4DX Covey explains the practices consistently embraced by organizations who are successful in implementing their plans, and which differentiate them from organizations whose plans were too quickly ignored after drafting.

The 4DX model is a framework for keeping a focus on what's required to put a newly minted strategic plan on a solid foundation for implementation.

The Four Disciplines are summarized below:

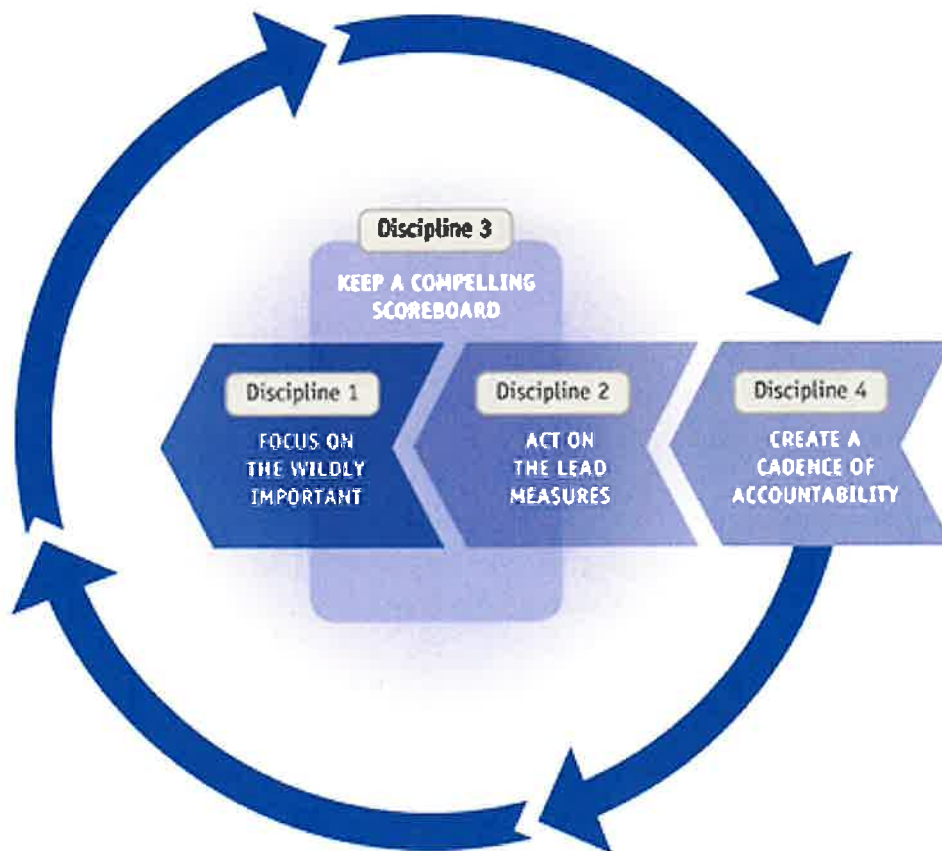
1. **Focus on the wildly important:** identify 1 or 2 wildly important goals (maximum!), that are fundamentally important to your organization<sup>6</sup> and give them your focus and energy.
2. **Act on lead measures:** a lead measure is a type of activity that (a) is proven to be positively correlated with progress towards your goals, and (b) can show the need for course corrections if results are not materializing.
3. **Keep a compelling scoreboard:** 3-5 important and intuitively compelling metrics of success, showing that you are achieving your WIGs and track them somewhere highly visible to the whole team.
4. **Create a cadence of accountability:** commit to periodic check-ins on progress on wildly important goals, lead, and lag measures.

#### Figure C. SThe Four Disciplines of Execution Process

---

<sup>6</sup> To determine your WIGs, ask what is so important that if you can't accomplish it, you should close your company.





## Appendix

### Appendix A: References

(2021, July 2). *CBS Detroit*. Retrieved from <https://detroit.cbslocal.com/2021/07/02/unemployment-benefits-300-federal-end-early-dates/>.

Amanda Shendruk, A. O. (n.d.). *Welcome to leaside, the US's first climate haven*. Quartz. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1891446/welcome-to-leaside-the-uss-first-climate-haven/>.

Cutoff of Jobless Benefits Is Found to Get Few Back to Work. (2021, August 20). *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/business/economy/unemployment-benefits-economy-states.html>.



Climate change. McKinsey & Company. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/climate-change>.

Kimmerer, T. (2021, August 4). As climate change hurts other states, Kentucky must prepare as climate refugee zone. *Lexington Herald Leader*. Retrieved from <https://www.kentucky.com/opinion/oped/article253248503.html>.

Ladd, S. (2021, June 24). Beshear: Unemployed Kentuckians now eligible for \$1,500 incentive to return to workforce. *Louisville Courier Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2021/06/24/gov-andy-beshear-announces-1-500-employment-incentive-program/7778101002/>.

Sargent, E. (2021, July 14). Harlan second-highest in unemployment for May. *Harlan Enterprise*. Retrieved 2021, from <https://www.harlanenterprise.net/2021/07/14/harlan-second-highest-in-unemployment-for-may/>.

WGRZ Staff. (2021, April). As Earth warms, Buffalo becomes viable destination for climate refugees. *WGRZ*. Retrieved 2021, from <https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/as-earth-warms-buffalo-now-viable-destination-for-climate-refugees/71-01e89bb8-848d-4aa4-84aa-f4d8348760af>.

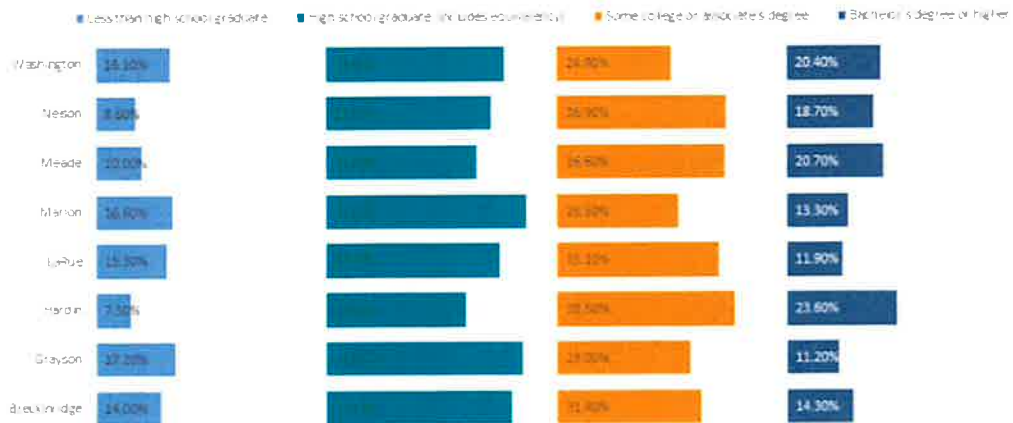


## Appendix B: SWOT Analysis

# The state of the workforce

## Educational Attainment

Education levels of adults over 25 in Lincoln Trail



Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2019 <https://api.census.gov/data/2019/acs/acs5/subject>

17



# strategy matters

Helping Those Who Do Great Work Do It Better

Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board  
Situation Analysis



## Strategic Plan Implementation

### Overview of the Workforce Crisis Task Force

2017 - 2018

- Complete strategic planning process and initial implementation planning
- Lay the groundwork for the Workforce Crisis Task Force
- Develop shared language and goals

2018 - 2019

- Outreach for Task Force participation
- Align Task Force activities with regional needs and strengths
- Partner with already-existing efforts in the region

2019 - 2020

- Expand efforts, ensuring representation across all 8 counties
- Increase alignment and mutually reinforcing activities between subcommittees
- Go big!

2020 - 2021

- Continue engagement and momentum of the WCTF
- Consider strategy revision based on changes from COVID
- Ensure continued progress on resolving workforce shortages, and develop a new strategic plan for the workforce board.



# Findings

## Our Findings

### Process Overview



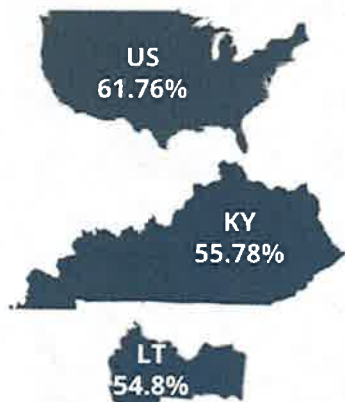
5



## Findings

### Low Labor Force Participation Rate

#### Participation rate as of April 2021



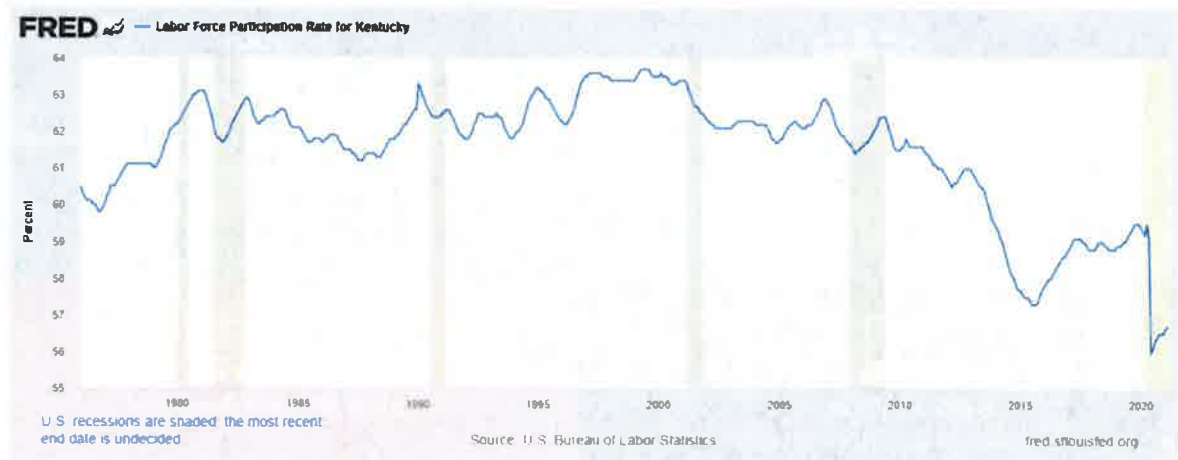
#### COVID's effect on the workforce

- COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on the labor force in Kentucky
- In 2021, the national labor force participation rate dropped to its lowest rates since 1976

6

## Findings

### Labor Force Participation Rate, COVID



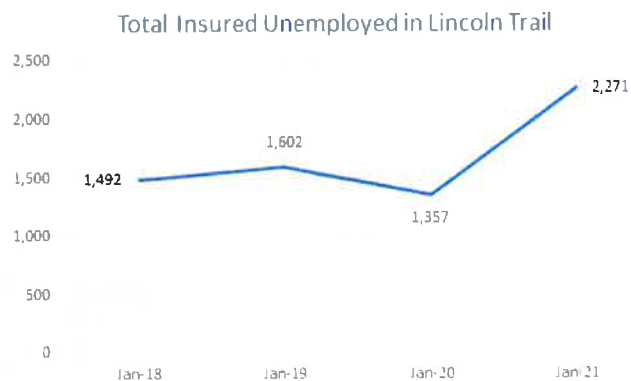
7



## Findings

### Unemployment

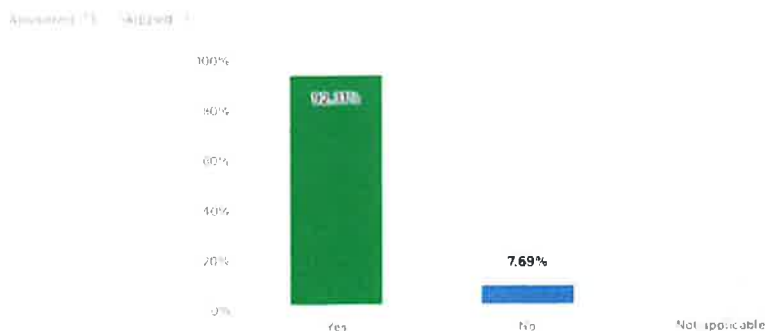
- COVID-19 has also impacted unemployment filings with an additional 900 individuals claiming benefits between January 2020 and January 2021
- Extended additional payments will end September 6. Social services providers predict this will precipitate a return to work for many.



68

## Regional business snapshot: Most are hiring

If you are a business owner or manager, are you hiring?

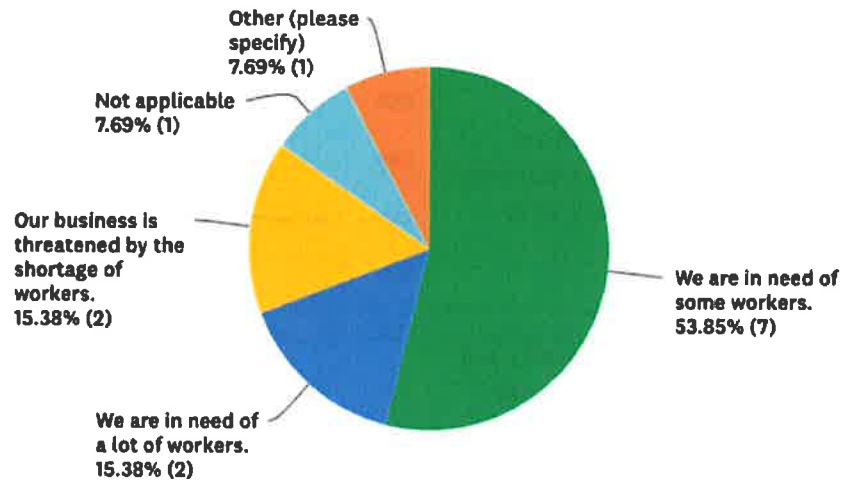


9



Please select the scenario that best applies to your hiring needs.

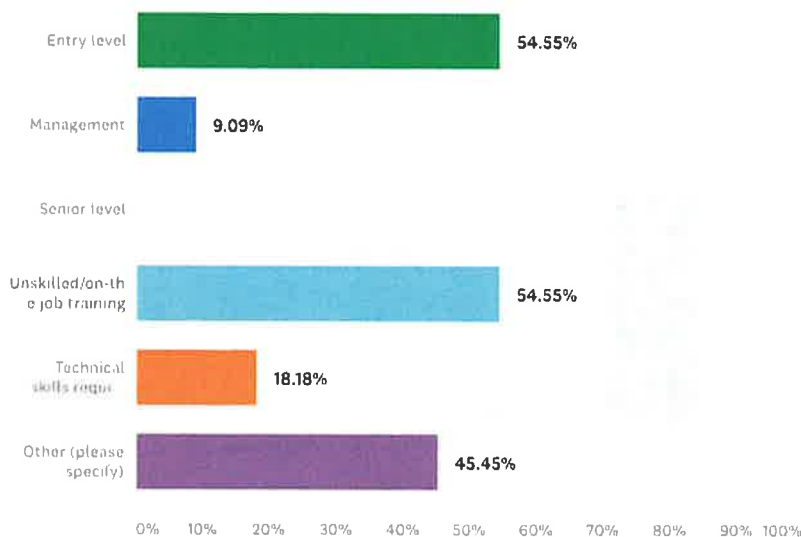
Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



10

If you are hiring, what types of positions are you trying to fill? (Please check all that apply)

Answered: 11 Skipped: 2



11





## Future Workforce Needs

- The occupations with the highest projected openings in Kentucky by 2028 are... (Labor Market Analysis)
  - Food preparation and service (340,000)
  - Office and administrative support (346,069)
  - Production (235,580)
  - Sales and related 275,893)
  - Transportation and material moving occupations (261,297)
- Checkout [this chart](#) for a full overview

12

## Business Challenges

- Some employers are starting to believe that they will need to shift to automation, even though they would prefer to hire, because they simply cannot get competent employees.
- Childcare is a major obstacle for many people considering entering the workforce, but there is a shortage of childcare, and because most jobs pay low wages
  - People can't afford to work because child care would be a huge proportion of their income, and
  - Entrepreneurs are not opening childcare centers - tough business model.
- Housing
  - Reduced supply → last housing boom/bust has left a lot of developers hesitant about development
  - Increased demand → because houses in the LT area are so inexpensive compared to houses elsewhere in the country, many retirees are moving in

13



## Business Challenges

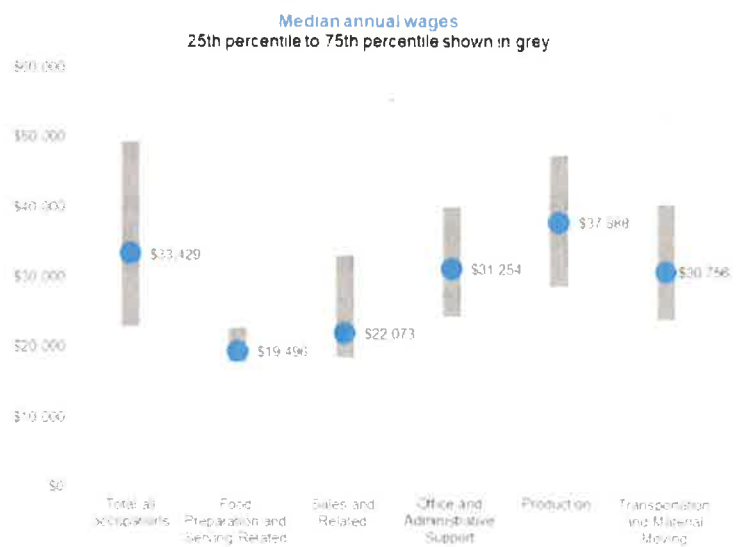
- No transportation system and limited subsidies to support private transportation among low-income job seekers
- Wages are out of sync with what people need to live. Challenge is supporting businesses in raising wages
- - None of our growing sectors provides a high enough wage, on average, for a single adult to raise a child in Kentucky.
  - Of the identified sectors, Production occupations offer both the largest number of jobs and the highest median wages. (Find all occupations and median wages for Kentucky and Workforce Investment Boards [here](#).)

14

## Business Challenges

### Wages

- Though not the average wage, the median wage shows Kentucky pays between the 25th and 50th percentile across occupations when looking at the midpoint of wages earned in the state



15



## The state of the workforce

- Many of the people entering the workforce now are children of those who have been most impact by the opioid crisis. Many of them have been raised under traumatic circumstances, either losing parents or seeing parents struggle. (Focus Group at Bardstown CoC)
- Many potential members of the Workforce lack rudimentary skills related to job performance (like using a hammer or screwdriver) and basic life skills (like how to comport oneself during an interview, showing up on time work, not taking an entire day off for 30 minute court appearance, driving, etc.) (Focus Group at Bardstown CoC)
- Workforce participation rate is very low—KY is last or second to last as a state. Part of this is related to culture developed over time: generations of unemployment and families knowing how to get the most out of the system. (Focus groups and interviews)
- Substance abuse continues to be a huge issue contributing to cycles of childhood trauma and generational mental health challenges. (Focus groups and interviews)

16

## The state of the workforce

### Educational Attainment



Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2019 <https://api.census.gov/data/2019/acs/acs5/subject>

17



## What's the future look like?

- We might see migration to the region, which will have impacts on the residents and businesses in LT. (McKinsey, 2021)
  - People are moving out of high-cost city centers to suburbs and smaller towns.
  - The move of people is prompting businesses to adopt a "work from anywhere" model or creating smaller hubs and satellites offices close to the distribution of their employees to reduce commute times.
- Redesigning incentives to return to the workforce
  - Instead of ending the \$300 extra weekly benefits, Beshear has rolled out another incentive for people to get a job instead. The new incentive would offer up to as many as 15,000 Kentuckians on unemployment insurance a one-time \$1,500 bonus to rejoin the workforce by July 30. (Sargent, Harlan Enterprise, 2021)

13

## What has/hasn't worked in the past 5 years?

- The desire to make a better workforce system is widespread and shared
- The culture of the communities in Lincoln Trail creates familiarity across the region; people know each other (and often like/trust each other). This is a strong platform for action and impact.
- Employment preparation work in secondary and high schools

19



## Early strategies emerging

- Form a legislative committee for this strategic plan. For many of the most important issues, real change will require state laws.
- More affordable housing
- Early childcare that involves some partnership with employers
- Focus on essential workplace skills focusing on family dynamics, responsibility, and accountability
- Support a shift in mindsets where employment is part of a meaningful life
- Marketing, outreach and communication may pay big dividends
- Expanding existing strong partnership with local employers to focus on career awareness/exposure and apprenticeships, internships, etc. may yield substantial near term gains in engaging the emerging workforce
- Connecting to State Chamber to post openings ([May 2021 Who's Hiring](#))

21



## Next Steps

- Take and share the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LT2021>
- Annual Summit: Wednesday, August 11 @ 9 am EDT | RSVP at <https://ltcareercenter.org/rsvp/>

22

## 7. What can LT do differently?

- The Nashville Model: can we (do we want to become a bedroom community for higher-income commuters to Louisville? Do we want to fill in the blanks between here and there?) (*Though this doesn't solve the workforce shortage unless the Louisville workers have family members or household members who are working locally!*)
- Extended additional benefits to offset compounding needs such as the lack of access to affordable and accessible childcare (Watkins, Louisville Courier Journal, 2021)
- Reframe the conversation around benefits and labor force participation rate; ending extra benefits doesn't raise it (Ponciano, Forces, 2021)
- Get residents and businesses acquainted with the upcoming policy change
  - Regardless of the incentive for getting to work by July 30, KY is set to end its extra unemployment on Sept. 6 (CBS Detroit, 2021)

25



# 2021 Workforce Crisis Task Force Summit

## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT





(virtual)

## 2021 Workforce Crisis Task Force Summit



Welcome!

Before we get started...

1. Please mute yourself when you're not speaking.
2. Update your display name so we know what county you're from or representing.
3. This year's Summit will be recorded for use by the Task Force.
4. Strategy Matters staff is here to help you with any technical needs, just send us a message.

2





# Agenda

- 9:00 Welcome and Overview
- 9:25 The State of the Workforce and Current Employer Needs
- 10:00 What's at Stake? Employer Panel
- 11:00 Examining the Findings: Small Group Discussion
- 12:00 Summary of the Day
- 12:10 Closing Remarks

3



## Strategic Plan Implementation





# Goals

## **Convene the Lincoln Trail Community to...**

- 1) Consider the state of the regional workforce;
- 2) Identify opportunities to expand the prepared workforce for local businesses; and
- 3) Share emerging strategic plan for Workforce Crisis Task Force (WCTF)



# State of the Workforce and Current Employer Needs

6



## Strategic Questions

---

- 1) What modifications might we need to make to the WCTF's approach to raising labor force participation rates, if any?
- 2) What is the role of youth training investments in our strategy? (Where should we invest?)
- 3) If we had more funding for adult training, where should we invest? (Think geography, host institution, focus of skills/credentials, etc.)

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

7



## State of the Workforce: Data Sources

---



Interviews +  
Focus Groups  
(19 participants  
total)



Workforce  
Participation +  
Business Demand  
Survey (26 responses)



Research



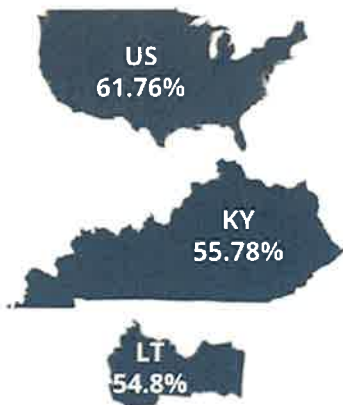
Labor Market Analysis

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



# Findings

Low Labor Force Participation Rate



## COVID's effect on the workforce

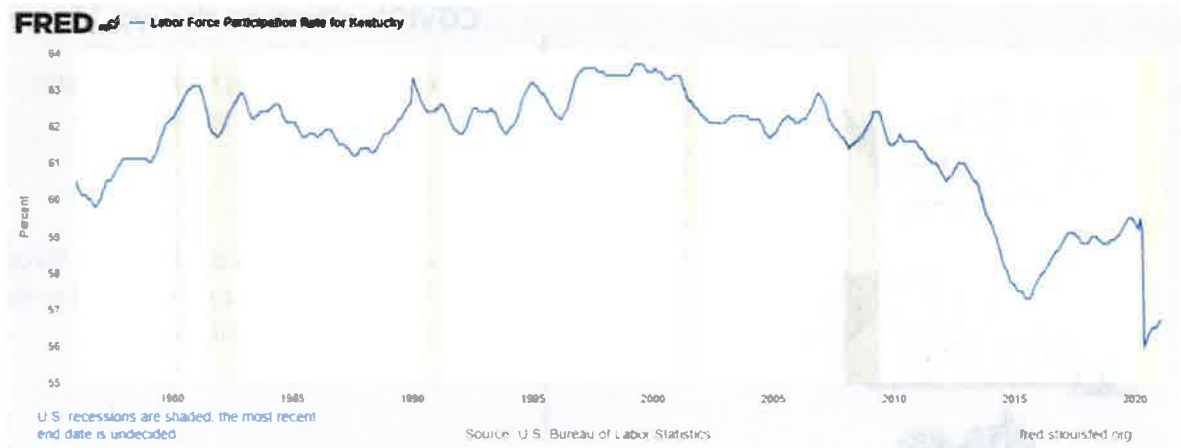
- COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on the labor force in Kentucky
- In 2021, the national labor force participation rate dropped to its lowest rates since 1976

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



# Findings

Low Labor Force Participation Rate, COVID



## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT



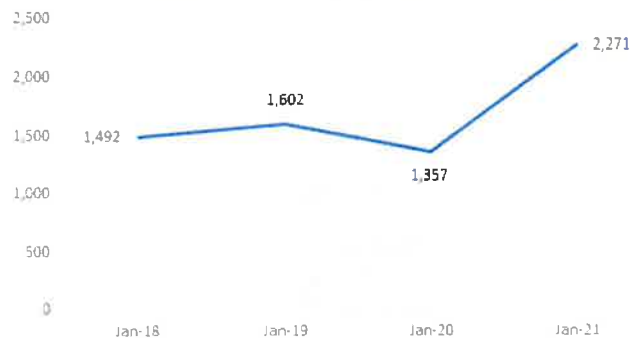


# Findings

## Unemployment

- COVID-19 has also impacted unemployment filings with an additional 900 individuals claiming benefits between January 2020 and January 2021
- Extended additional payments will end September 6. Social services providers predict this will precipitate a return to work for many.

Total Insured Unemployed in Lincoln Trail

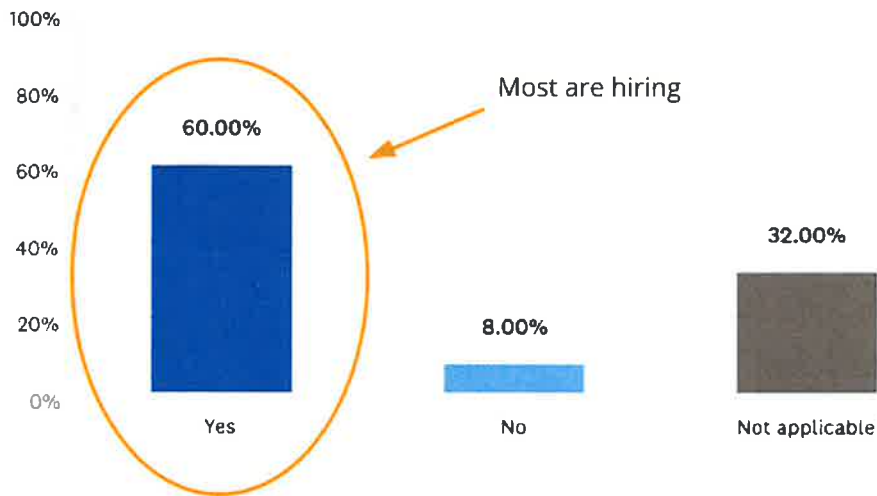


## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT



# Regional Business Snapshot

Survey Question: If you're a business owner or manager, are you hiring?

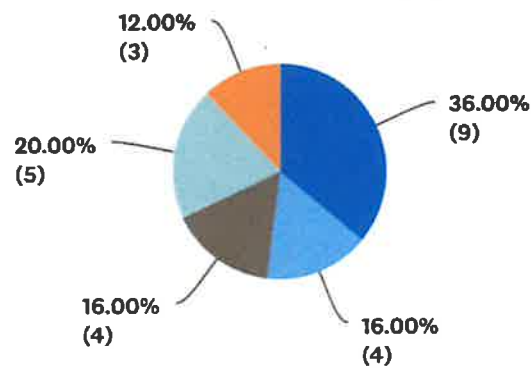


**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



# Regional Business Snapshot

Survey Question: Please select the scenario that best applies to your hiring needs.



Of those hiring, most are in need of "some workers" but are not at risk of business being threatened by a shortage.

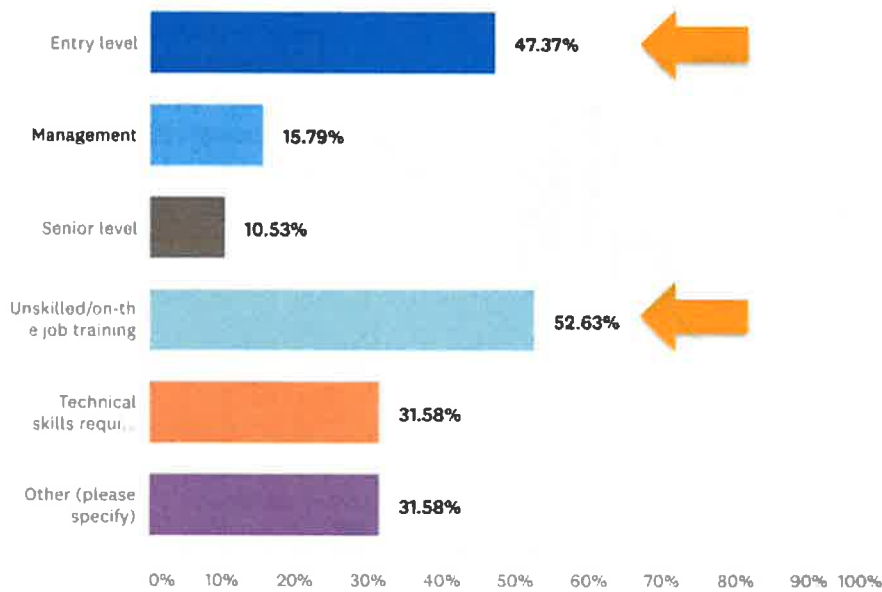
- We are in need of some workers.
- We are in need of a lot of workers.
- Our business is threatened by the shortage of workers.
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify)

## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT



# Findings

Survey Question: If you are hiring, what types of positions are you trying to fill?



## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT



## Future Workforce Needs

---

- The occupations with the highest projected openings in Kentucky by 2028 are... (Labor Market Analysis)
  - Food preparation and service (340,000)
  - Office and administrative support (346,069)
  - Production (235,580)
  - Sales and related 275,893)
  - Transportation and material moving occupations (261,297)
- Checkout [this chart](#) for a full overview

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

15



## Business Challenges

- Some employers are starting to believe that they will need to shift to automation, even though they would prefer to hire, because they simply cannot get competent employees.
- Childcare is a major obstacle for many people considering entering the workforce, but there is a shortage of childcare, and because most jobs pay low wages
  - People can't afford to work because child care would be a huge proportion of their income, and
  - Entrepreneurs are not opening childcare centers - tough business model.
- Housing
  - Reduced supply → last housing boom/bust has left a lot of developers hesitant about development
  - Increased demand → because houses in the LT area are so inexpensive compared to houses elsewhere in the country, many retirees are moving in

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

16



# Business Challenges

Continued

- No transportation system and limited subsidies to support private transportation among low-income job seekers
- Wages are out of sync with what people need to live. Challenge is supporting businesses in raising wages
- - None of our growing sectors provides a high enough wage, on average, for a single adult to raise a child in Kentucky.
  - Of the identified sectors, Production occupations offer both the largest number of jobs and the highest median wages. (Find all occupations and median wages for Kentucky and Workforce Investment Boards [here](#).)

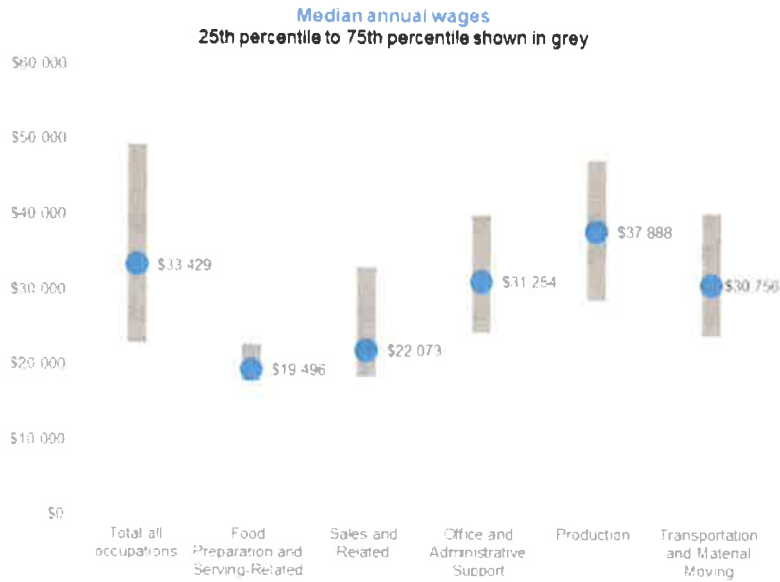
**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

17



# Business Challenges

## Wages



Though not the average wage, the median wage shows Kentucky pays between the 25th and 50th percentile across occupations when looking at the midpoint of wages earned in the state.

### WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT





## State of the Workforce

---

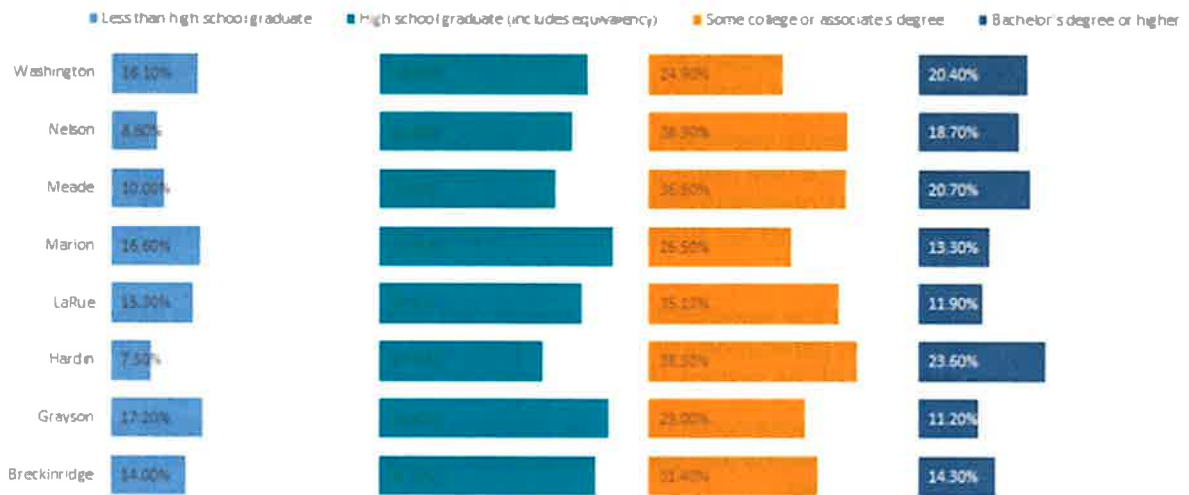
- Many of the people entering the workforce now are children of those who have been most impacted by the opioid crisis. Many of them have been raised under traumatic circumstances, either losing parents or seeing parents struggle. (Focus Group at Bardstown CoC)
- Many potential members of the Workforce lack rudimentary skills related to job performance (like using a hammer or screwdriver) and basic life skills (like how to comport oneself during an interview, showing up on time to work, not taking an entire day off for 30 minute court appearance, driving, etc.) (Focus Group at Bardstown CoC)
- Part of the low workforce participation rate is related to a culture developed over time: generations of unemployment and families knowing how to get the most out of the system. (Focus groups and interviews)
- Substance abuse continues to be a huge issue contributing to cycles of childhood trauma and generational mental health challenges. (Focus groups and interviews)

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



# State of the Workforce

Educational Achievement of Adults over 25 in Lincoln Trail



Source: ACS 5-year estimates 2019 <https://api.census.gov/data/2019/acs/acs5/subject>

## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT



## What's the Future Look Like?

- We might see migration to the region, which will have impacts on the residents and businesses in LT. (McKinsey, 2021)
  - People are moving out of high-cost city centers to suburbs and smaller towns.
  - The move of people is prompting businesses to adopt a “work from anywhere” model or creating smaller hubs and satellites offices close to the distribution of their employees to reduce commute times.
- Redesigning incentives to return to the workforce
  - Instead of ending the \$300 extra weekly benefits, Beshear has rolled out another incentive for people to get a job instead. The new incentive would offer up to as many as 15,000 Kentuckians on unemployment insurance a one-time \$1,500 bonus to rejoin the workforce by July 30. (Sargent, Harlan Enterprise, 2021)

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

21



## What Has/Hasn't Worked in the Past 5 Years?

---

- The desire to make a better workforce system is widespread and shared
- The culture of the communities in Lincoln Trail creates familiarity across the region; people know each other (and often like/trust each other). This is a strong platform for action and impact.
- Employment preparation work in secondary and high schools

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



## What Can LT Do Differently?

- The Nashville Model: can we (do we want to become a bedroom community for higher-income commuters to Louisville? Do we want to fill in the blanks between here and there?) *(Though this doesn't solve the workforce shortage unless the Louisville workers have family members or household members who are working locally!)*
- Extended additional benefits to offset compounding needs such as the lack of access to affordable and accessible childcare (Watkins, Louisville Courier Journal, 2021)
- Reframe the conversation around benefits and labor force participation rate; ending extra benefits doesn't raise it (Ponciano, Forces, 2021)
- Get residents and businesses acquainted with the upcoming policy change
  - Regardless of the incentive for getting to work by July 30, KY is set to end its extra unemployment on Sept. 6 (CBS Detroit, 2021)

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

23



## Early Strategies Emerging

---

- Form a legislative committee for this strategic plan. For many of the most important issues, real change will require state laws.
- More affordable housing
- Early childcare than involves some partnership with employers
- Focus on essential workplace skills focusing on family dynamics, responsibility, and accountability
- Support a shift in mindsets where employment is part of a meaningful life
- Marketing, outreach and communication may pay big dividends
- Expanding existing strong partnership with local employers to focus on career awareness/exposure and apprenticeships, internships, etc. may yield substantial near term gains in engaging the emerging workforce
- Connecting to State Chamber to post openings ([May 2021 Who's Hiring](#))

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

24



**BREAK**  
**5 minutes**

**WORKFORCE CRISIS**  
**TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

25



# What's at Stake? Employer Panel

26





# Examining the Findings

Business Engagement | Removing Obstacles |  
Unlocking Local Potential

27  
27



## Committee Overview

---

- **Business engagement** — also called “grow business engagement”, this committee works to increase the likelihood of success in employee recruitment and retention across multiple companies.
- **Removing Obstacles** — focused on clearing pathways for those who face barriers to employment such as unreliable transportation and criminal records.
- **Unlocking Local Potential** — dedicated to ensuring all regional students have access to high-quality education and on-the-job learning opportunities with local industries.

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



## Small Group Discussion

---

- Select an area of interest among the Task Force Committees:
  - Business Engagement
  - Removing Obstacles
  - Unlocking Local Potential
- Once in a group, designate a notetaker and reporter to share with the larger group when we reconvene.
- **Discussion question:** what are some of the things this committee can do to positively impact workforce participation, worker retention, and attracting talent? How can we help businesses cope with the challenges of the region?

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**

29



## How to Select Your Breakout Group

- Navigate to the bottom panel to find "breakout rooms". (If you're on your phone, this will be at the top.)



- A pop-up will appear with the name of each breakout room with the number of participants in each room. Hover over the number (highlighted in blue).

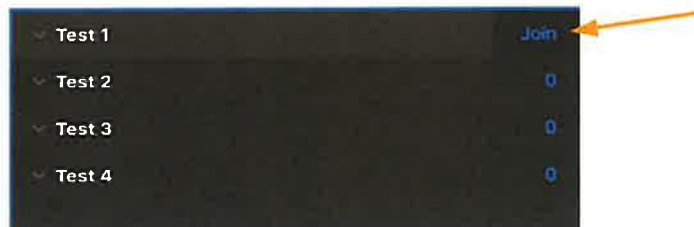


**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



## How to Select Your Breakout Group

- The number will then turn into "join". Select this to choose your preferred breakout room.



- Once in a room you can leave to return to the main room (and select a new room) by selecting "leave room" in the bottom right corner of the screen.



**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



## Next Steps

---

- ❑ We want to hear from you! Give us your feedback:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LT2021Summit>
- ❑ There's still time to engage with LT workforce survey. Tell us about your employment and workforce needs:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LT2021>
- ❑ Report from today forthcoming.
- ❑ Stay up-to-date with the Task Force!
  - ❑ Visit us and sign-up for our newsletter:  
<https://ltcareercenter.org/taskforce/>
  - ❑ Facebook and Twitter: @ltcareercenter
  - ❑ YouTube:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_r6hAetku07\\_jpuwtt-Z](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_r6hAetku07_jpuwtt-Z)  
A
- ❑ The 2022-25 Strategic Plan will be published late Fall 2021!

**WORKFORCE CRISIS  
TASKFORCE SUMMIT**



# Thank You!

## WORKFORCE CRISIS TASKFORCE SUMMIT

33

### Appendix D: 2021 State of the Workforce

The 2021 State of the Workforce is available on the Lincoln Trail Workforce Crisis Task website, [here](#).

### Appendix E: Workforce Crisis Task Force 4th Annual Summit Report

The 2021 Workforce Crisis Task Force 4th Annual Summit Report is available on the Lincoln Trail Workforce Crisis Task website, [here](#).



## About the Consultants

Strategy Matters, LLC is a consulting group working with organizations to develop creative solutions to complex problems. Expert at working across issue areas, our consultants work with businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, collaboratives, and public-private partnerships to address organizational and societal challenges.

Using custom-designed approaches and instruments, we work collaboratively with organizations to build teams and their capacity, expand resources and reach and sharpen strategy. Leveraging insight derived from years of cross-sector experience, we bring new ideas, energy, and approaches to the obstacles and opportunities critical to an organization's necessary breakthroughs in the areas of stability, expansion, and future success.

## The Team



Liz O'Connor

### Principal

With 25 years of multi-sector experience that crosses and connects issue areas, Liz works hands-on with clients while leading the Strategy Matters team. Liz is trained in many facilitation and change methodologies including Future Search, Open Space, Technologies of Facilitation, Facilitative Leadership, and Appreciative Inquiry. She is also skilled in convening teams and supporting their work navigating challenging conversations. She has a track record of success in building consensus across differences and in supporting teams in the design of creative new approaches. Liz holds a BA in philosophy and politics from Mount Holyoke College, and an MA in Philosophy from the University of Washington.



Josh Moulton, PhD

### Senior Consultant

Josh has an eclectic background that spans the philosophy of science and grassroots international development. His experiences in these fields inform his approach to strategy development, team building, and facilitation. Josh also speaks on topics of human resilience, survivorship, and addiction and recovery. Josh was appointed to the board of directors for the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance by Governor Patrick in 2013 where he served two terms overseeing





funding decisions on behalf of victims of crime. Before joining Strategy Matters, Josh was Founder and Director of Ayuda Directa USA, an international nonprofit that plans and executes healthcare, education, and infrastructure projects in rural South America. He holds a PhD in Philosophy of Science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a BA in Philosophy from Reed College.



**Khadiyjah Jordan, MSW**

**Project Manager**

Khadiyjah joined the Strategy Matters team in 2021. She brings a background in international development, communication, evaluation, fundraising, and advocacy with a special focus on environmental justice and sustainable development. Prior to joining Strategy Matters, Khadiyjah worked at global organizations that acted as conveners of civil society organizations around prioritizing sustainable development priorities as especially as it related mitigation and adaptation in response to climate change. Core to her work was advocating for marginalized groups most impacted by the disproportionate effects of climate change and unsustainable development practices. Khadiyjah completed her MSW at the Boston College School of Social Work, and she holds a BA in Psychology and Political Science from Wheaton College.



**Lupita Acevedo**

**Administrative Assistant**

Lupita's background in business development, customer service, and public education brought her to Strategy Matters as an Administrative Assistant in 2021. Prior to joining the Strategy Matters team, she served as a Bilingual Paraprofessional Educator where she supported faculty, assisted in analyzing student comprehension, and implemented revised lesson plans built to resolve apprehension difficulties. Prior to her work in public education, Lupita served as a business development intern for Staples Inc., where she assisted in market research and brand extension. She holds a BS in Marketing Communications from Emerson College.

**Contact Us**



**Lincoln Trail Workforce Development Board**

Sherry L. Johnson, Deputy Director [sherry@ltadd.org](mailto:sherry@ltadd.org)  
270.769.2393

@LTADD  
[www.ltadd.org](http://www.ltadd.org)

**Strategy Matters, LLC**

[Info@strategymatters.org](mailto:Info@strategymatters.org)  
617.826.6008

@560strategy  
[www.strategymatters.org](http://www.strategymatters.org)