

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION GUIDEBOOK



TEAM
KENTUCKY®

Our *New*
Kentucky
Home

[KENTUCKY CABINET FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT]

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A Preface

Our communications goal is to position Kentucky as a place of unexpected opportunity – inviting people, businesses, and families to build a better future in Kentucky, where opportunity feels like home. This strategy establishes a framework and best practices for support, peer learning, and centralized resources, outlining what the Commonwealth is doing at every level – local, regional, and state – to achieve its business retention and expansion objectives.

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[STATE & LOCAL PARTNERSHIP]

Highlighting Business Success

Kentucky is dedicated to boosting opportunities for local communities to highlight efforts to expand business opportunities for companies across the Commonwealth.

At the local level, KCED – through the Kentucky Industry Spotlight (KIS) program – has developed a mechanism that allows counties to showcase local businesses and the impact they make in their individual communities.

KCED's business and community development team coordinate with the local community to target businesses for these existing industry visits. These companies may be large employers in their region, leaders in their industry, companies with recent expansions, or are companies that KCED hasn't worked with in the past.





Kentucky Industry Spotlight (KIS) Program

The KIS program is a collaborative initiative led by KCED to:

- ▶ **Increase Awareness:** Highlight the breadth of products and services originating within the state.
- ▶ **Champion Diversity:** Showcase the diverse workforce that drives these businesses.
- ▶ **Foster Connections:** Conduct on-site visits to build direct personal connections among KCED, local leaders, and the featured company.
- ▶ **Ensure Trust:** All photographic and video documentation is shared for company review and approval before public use, and companies are free to use the materials for their own purposes.

Program highlights should be reported to regional and statewide leaders to provide them with up-to-date information on the success of local businesses, connecting local wins to the broader economic strategy.





Kentucky Industry Spotlight Case Study: Process Machinery Inc.

Process Machinery Inc. (PMI) stands as a primary example of how local community engagement can highlight the success of communities and businesses right in our own backyard.

PMI was founded in 1979 by David and Bill Miles as a small operation in Louisville, KY. Starting from a small engineering, manufacturing and processing plant for the mineral processing industry, the company has grown into a full-service provider for the aggregate industry and is currently led by third generation, co-owners, David Miles and Jennifer Ratterman. Now headquartered in Shelbyville, KY, PMI is recognized for delivering innovative, reliable solutions, trusted across the Eastern United States.

After a KIS visit in January of last year, KCED discovered that PMI was considering an expansion of its operations to meet customer demands that had been backlogged to 2028. With the help of KCED, PMI went before KEDFA in April of 2025 and held a groundbreaking ceremony in October 2025 for a new building that will double the company's paint capacity. The total investment for the project will be \$11,475,000 and create 30 additional jobs for the community.

[REGIONAL COORDINATION]

Empowering Local Economic Development

At the regional level, coordination with KCED, local economic development leaders and Kentucky's Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) play a vital role in advancing the state, its regions, and communities.

It is imperative that all parties across the Commonwealth remain interconnected and streamline information sharing to ensure that Kentucky uses its resources efficiently and effectively to bolster its business retention and expansion efforts.

These organizations serve as the primary connectors between businesses, government agencies, workforce development partners and tourism partners. This section establishes a guideline for regional and statewide leaders to provide support, peer learning and centralized resources to empower local EDOs.

Core Best Practices for Business Expansion

EDOs are encouraged to adopt the following practices to build strong business relationships and gather useful data:

► Clearly define goals and objectives.

- Research, prioritize and implement local priorities to align with state and regional priorities.
- Establish goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART).

► Establish a leadership team or task force.

- Include 4-5 coordinators from priority sectors.
- Define roles and responsibilities clearly.
- Gather and respond to findings and recommendations.

► Build Relationships and Data:

- Implement best practices for business outreach cadence and results (or adapt the document provided by KCED).
- Maintain an internal record of businesses that align with your goals and objectives, identifying most recent contacts and priorities.
- Respond to business concerns.

► Prep and debrief for each meeting.

- Clearly identify potential red flags, such as workforce availability, problems with resources, or plan to close/move.
- Assess capabilities to address the problem at the business level, and the community level.
- Discuss next steps with your team, bringing in partners as needed.
- Maintain confidentiality as needed.
- To maintain trust with the organization, facilitate timely follow up.

Collaborative Structure and Regional Coordination

To maximize efficiency and impact, local EDOs are encouraged to explore a collaborative umbrella model that brings together key community development agencies, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism, Main Street and industrial development. This structure promotes transparency, reduces duplication of efforts and presents a unified front to businesses and stakeholders.

Equity in Representation: A successful collaborative model depends on ensuring that all participating agencies – regardless of size, budget or scope – have an equal voice in decision-making. To support equity:

- ▶ Establish clear protocols for inclusive participation in meetings and planning sessions.
- ▶ Rotate leadership roles or meeting facilitation to ensure balanced representation.
- ▶ Highlight and support the contributions of smaller organizations to maintain their visibility and relevance in larger discussions.

Regionalism and Area Development Districts (ADDs):

Regional collaboration is essential for addressing shared challenges and leveraging collective strengths. Kentucky's Area Development Districts (ADDs) offer a ready-made framework for regional coordination. To strengthen regionalism:

- ▶ Encourage quarterly regional meetings among counties to share updates, best practices, and project opportunities.
- ▶ Leverage ADDs to facilitate inter-county communication.
- ▶ Document and share successful regional initiatives to inspire replication across regions and the Commonwealth.

Area Development District

Kentucky has 15 Area Development Districts, which are multi-county regional planning organizations that serve as a link between local governments, state and federal agencies, and communities to build economic development and improve quality of life by coordinating on planning efforts, securing grants and implementing regional strategy strategies for shared growth.

Regional Turfs

In 2024, the Cabinet for Economic Development released a Collaborative Blueprint report- a set of priorities and recommended actions to create a unified process for economic developers to work collaboratively to comprise a stronger Team Kentucky. The blueprint identifies five priority sectors and divides the commonwealth into four regional turfs – Central, West, South-Central and East – for data analysis and facilitation. Each turf is a grouping of ADD districts.

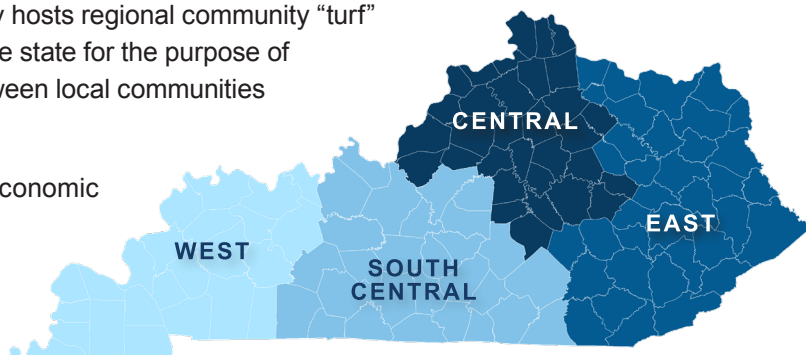
Turf Meetings

For the success of all economic development agencies across the Commonwealth, TEAM Kentucky agrees that a successful BR&E strategy's primary purpose should support the company's ongoing success that fosters strong connections with the community and assures the company knows how to navigate through state and local government services and any requirements (Permits, licenses, public utilities, etc.).

To meet that end, TEAM Kentucky hosts regional community "turf" meetings across four regions in the state for the purpose of facilitating shared knowledge between local communities and the state.

During the first quarter of 2024, economic developers were invited to attend and participate in turf meetings to work towards a shared deliverable related to business retention & expansion (BR&E).

Through conversations in these meetings, all economic developers agreed that a strong BR&E program is a vital key to our success.



CED posed the following questions to economic development professionals at the turf meetings for discussion:

- ▶ What is your current BR&E strategy?
- ▶ Does Kentucky need a more "standardized" BR&E strategy?
- ▶ What types of questions are you asking when you meet with existing industry leaders?
- ▶ What resources are you sharing (services, data, incentives, etc.) with your existing industry leaders?
- ▶ How do you decide which existing companies to target?
- ▶ What type of data could the Cabinet provide to support your BR&E strategy?
- ▶ Who are you pulling in to attend and support your existing industry meetings?
- ▶ What are the biggest concerns you're hearing from your industry leaders - consistent themes/ challenges?
- ▶ How do you track follow-up from your existing industry visits?

Please see Appendix for a list of sample questions related to a business retention & expansion (BR&E) program.

Community Spotlight Case Study: Nelson County

Nelson County's approach to placemaking stands out as a model for collaborative community development. By uniting tourism, Main Street, industrial development, and the Chamber of Commerce under a single umbrella organization, the county created a seamless experience for both businesses and visitors.

This structure allowed for coordinated storytelling, showcasing the region's cultural assets, historic downtown, and vibrant local economy. The result was a unified, welcoming environment that not only attracted new investment but also improved the quality of life for residents, demonstrating how placemaking and economic development can work in tandem.



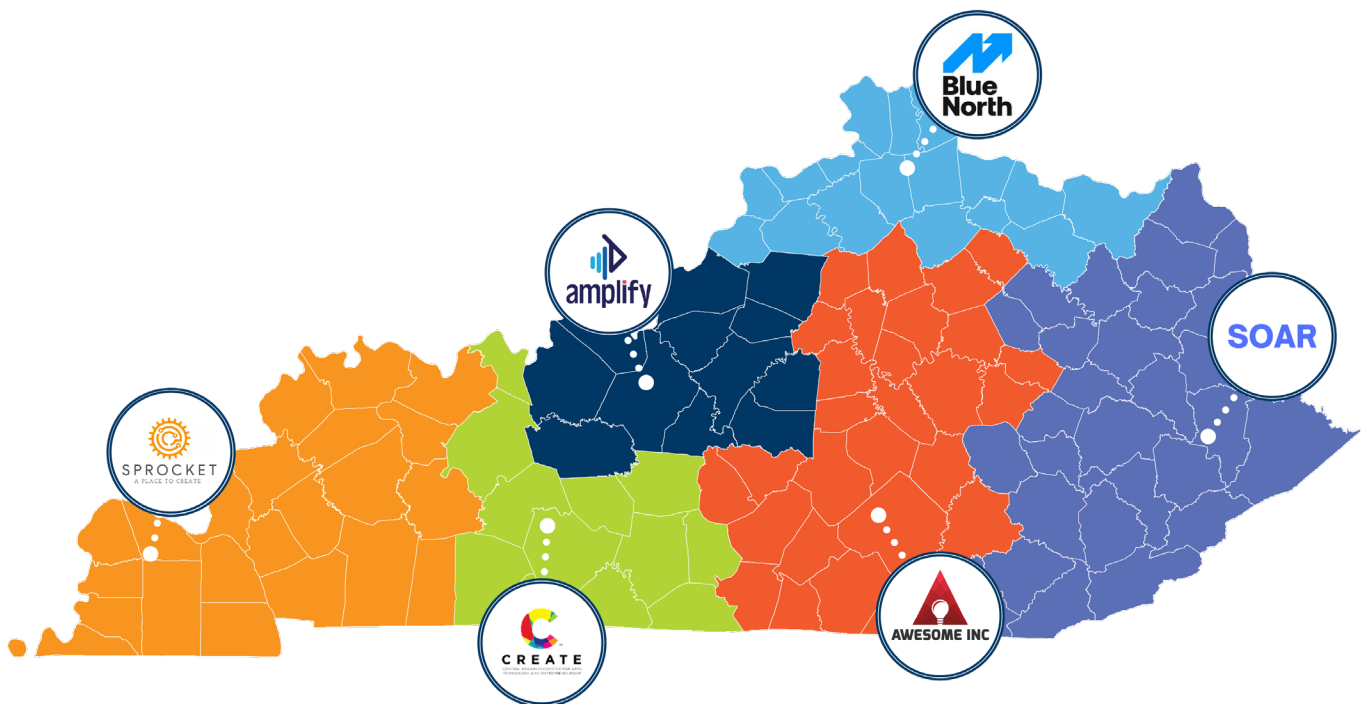


KY Innovation Hubs

The KY Innovation Hubs represent Kentucky's approach to serving Kentucky's entrepreneurs and supporting the high-growth startups that help grow the overall economy.

Six regional hubs work in all 120 counties to unite established companies, industry sectors, colleges and universities, entrepreneurs, business accelerator and incubator programs and many other public and private entities.

To learn more about programs, visit kyinnovation.com.



[ADVANCED RAPID RESPONSE]

Transforming Disruption Into Opportunity

In select cases, Advanced Rapid Response extends beyond traditional Rapid Response services to create proactive economic-development opportunities in the wake of layoffs or closures.

- When a WARN notice is issued, KCED works in close coordination with the Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC) to assess not only the immediate workforce needs, but also the potential to reposition available talent, facilities, and community assets as a turnkey solution for growing or relocating companies.
- KCED leadership then evaluates the situation to determine the appropriate level of engagement and to establish a tailored action plan for the affected company and community. This includes early outreach to local economic development organizations to share information, align efforts, and ensure consistent messaging.
- Internally, KCED mobilizes cross-functional teams to prepare for potential marketing and outreach efforts. This may include developing a preliminary property or site specification, updating Salesforce records, compiling regional demographic and workforce data, and assessing whether any active financial incentives could be impacted.

Attractive & Available Assets

Advanced Rapid Response serves as a bridge between workforce transition and business attraction – helping communities recover more quickly by connecting displaced talent and available assets with new opportunities for growth.

KCED has developed a formalized internal framework to guide its response to layoffs and closures across the Commonwealth. This framework is designed to move quickly from notification to action, with the overarching goal of minimizing long-term job loss by transforming disruption into opportunity. Rather than focusing solely on displacement, the approach emphasizes marketing the affected workforce, any available building or site, and the surrounding community as an attractive, ready-made option for employers seeking expansion.

Once a WARN notice is received, KCED's research team conducts an initial review and elevates the information to senior leadership, including the Commissioner of Business & Community Development. From there, KCED coordinates with the ELC Commissioner to align on Rapid Response activities and gather additional context that may inform next steps.

- As part of this coordinated response, KCED identifies a primary point of contact with the affected company and establishes clear ownership of ongoing communication. Where appropriate, KCED may engage directly with the company to explore any remaining opportunities to retain operations or delay layoffs, recognizing that such options are often limited at this stage. KCED may also request information about the facility or site, workforce characteristics and, when possible, a narrative or quote that helps convey the value of the affected workforce to prospective employers.
- In situations where a building, site and skilled workforce become available to market, the Advanced Rapid Response effort shifts into an opportunity-development phase. Using the information gathered, KCED may create a targeted marketing sheet that highlights the available workforce, facility details and community assets. These materials can be shared with site selectors, consultants, active prospects, and neighboring communities, and are used internally to identify potential matches with ongoing economic-development projects.



Advanced Rapid Response (ARR) Checklist

► Company Role

- ☐ Agree to collaborate on site closure notice
- ☐ Provide commentary on workforce (skills, experience, culture)
- ☐ Share closure timeline
- ☐ Share building disposition plans (selling, keeping, or giving away)
- ☐ Provide building information
- ☐ Provide employee skill sets, certifications, years of experience, and job titles for workforce resume

Cabinet For Economic Development

► State – CED

- ☐ CED Secretary or designee contacts the company to pitch ARR and gauge willingness
- ☐ Sites & Buildings team gathers building and site details, sends to WTPM for one-pager template
- ☐ Load building into Zoom Prospector
- ☐ Review active RFIs for potential matches
- ☐ Use completed “Turnkey Plant Opportunity” to pitch opportunities to prospective companies
- ☐ Distribute “Turnkey Plant Opportunity” to site selectors and consultants
- ☐ Identify nearby projects that need workers
- ☐ Reach out and invite nearby companies to job fairs
- ☐ Coordinate local elected officials and key stakeholders

► Local – Local Economic Developer/Local Stakeholders

- ☐ Provide community information and supporting quotes or references for “Turnkey Plant Opportunity” one-pager template
- ☐ Coordinate local elected officials and key local stakeholders
- ☐ Support outreach efforts

Education And Labor Cabinet

► State – ELC

- ☐ Assign a WTPM coordinator to the case
- ☐ Review and approve the one-pager (ELC Assistant Director, Division of Workforce Talent)

► Advanced Rapid Response Coordinator – WTPM or Designee

- ☐ Evaluate WARN notice or site closure for ARR criteria
- ☐ Elevate to CED if appropriate
- ☐ Coordinate and manage all ARR activities with key stakeholders
- ☐ Manage the overall ARR case
- ☐ Gather site checklist details
- ☐ Gather workforce information from the company
- ☐ Create workforce resume
- ☐ Identify relevant LWDA, local economic developer, and SWATT partners
- ☐ Contact LWDA and local ED about the ARR
- ☐ Gather community information from local economic developer
- ☐ Compile all information into the “Turnkey Plant Opportunity” one-pager template
- ☐ Submit one-pager to ELC Assistant Director in the Division of Talent for approval
- ☐ Continue standard rapid response activities
- ☐ Track progress toward placing a new company in the building

► Local – Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)

- ☐ Provide local workforce knowledge and connections
- ☐ Connect displaced workers with hiring and training opportunities
- ☐ Continue standard rapid response activities as needed including events and job fairs

When to Consider Advanced Rapid Response?

Advanced Rapid Response extends beyond traditional rapid response services when the opportunity to provide a building and/or workforce as a turnkey solution for another company arises. The goal is to minimize job loss in the affected area by marketing the workforce, building, and community to companies looking to expand or relocate.

Consider Advanced Rapid Response when:

- ▶ The company is willing to collaborate on a site closure notice with opportunity to purchase the building and retain the workforce.
- ▶ Significant job impact on a case-by-case basis.
- ▶ Building/site location or workforce with specialized criteria or skill sets as a selling point.
- ▶ CED or local economic developer identifies it as a good candidate based on site potential



Responsibility Matrix

ROLE KEY

LEAD

SUPPORT

CONSULT

#	Process Step	Description	Company	ELC / WTPM	LWDA	CED	Local ED
1	Identify ARR Candidate	Evaluate WARN notice or site closure for ARR criteria. Elevate to CED.	—	LEAD	—	SUPPORT	—
2	Initial Outreach	CED Secretary pitches ARR process to the company.	CONSULT	SUPPORT	—	LEAD	—
3	Assign RR Coordinator	ELC assigns a WTPM coordinator to manage the case.	—	LEAD	—	—	—
4	Identify Partners	Determine LWDA, local ED, and SWATT partners. Contact them.	—	LEAD	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT
▼ PARALLEL PHASE: Steps 5, 6, 7 run simultaneously							
5	Gather Workforce Info	Get skill sets, certifications, experience, job titles. Create workforce resume.	CONSULT	LEAD	—	—	—
6	Gather Building Info	CED Sites & Buildings details. Determine building disposition.	CONSULT	SUPPORT	—	LEAD	—
7	Gather Community Info	Community details and supporting quotes or references.	—	SUPPORT	—	—	LEAD
8	Create One-Pager	Compile all info into the Turnkey Plant Opportunity template.	—	LEAD	—	—	—
9	CED/ELC Approval	Submit to ELC Assistant Director, Division of Talent.	—	LEAD	—	—	—
10	Distribution	Distribute to site selectors, consultants. Review active RFIs.	—	—	—	LEAD	—
11	Identify Opportunities	Find area projects needing workers. Invite to job fairs.	—	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	LEAD	SUPPORT
12	Ongoing Coordination	Continue rapid response. Track new company placement.	—	LEAD	SUPPORT	SUPPORT	SUPPORT

Rapid Response in Action: Paragon Metal Fabrication

In the third quarter of 2024, a WARN notice was issued from Hammer Strength in Falmouth, Pendleton County, announcing their closure and layoffs of approximately 120 full-time employees.

Following this news, KCED met with the local economic developer, the company and other community partners to develop a path forward. This included a rapid response plan for affected employees, an employee survey, a marketing strategy for the building, and execution of a career and resource fair. Through this process, KCED established a more refined process for triaging with companies and communities on closures and layoffs. A template was created for this project that showcased the building asset and provided a community profile for interested buyers.

Through these collective efforts, several inquiries were received about the Hammer Strength property, ultimately leading to an existing Kentucky company, Paragon Metal Fabrication, acquiring the property in April 2025. Paragon has committed to a \$6M investment and hiring at least 40 of the existing Paragon employees. Paragon saw the opportunity to expand in their home state and tap into an existing and highly skilled workforce that fit their needs.

Fast forward to today, and Paragon has proven to be an excellent community partner in Falmouth and has plans to be 100 percent operational by the end of year. They have already hired 12 people, with priority around former Hammer Strength employees and are already ahead in their hiring ramp-up. The company has shared that at this current growth rate, they'll exceed their job and investment targets and may have future expansions at both of their Kentucky facilities.



Hammer Strength to Paragon Metal Fabricators: *Repurposing and Replacement*



ASSEMBLE | ASSESS | ACT

- Quick action and a collaborative mindset became a model for Advanced Rapid Response in Kentucky.



ALL-HANDS-ON DECK APPROACH

- Pendleton County Economic Development Director Tami Vater convened a meeting with KCED, the Education and Labor Cabinet, local elected officials, educational institutions and community organizations.



AGREEMENT

Together, they developed a comprehensive plan to Support the Workers and Market the Opportunity

- Provide unemployment assistance, retraining programs, certifications, career counseling, and direct connections to employers through job fairs.
- Create a "resume" for the workforce, building, and community to attract a replacement company to the 15-acre facility.



RESULTS

In April 2025, Governor Andy Beshear announced that Paragon Metal Fabricators would establish a new manufacturing facility in the former Hammer Strength building.

- A KY company (Erlanger-based) expanding within their home state
- Same type of work (metal fabrication), direct skills transfer
- \$6.1 million investment
- Mitigated 120 job losses by hiring 40 existing Paragon employees
- Continued a significant manufacturing presence in a rural community

[STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: WORKFORCE, PLACEMAKING
AND RESOURCES]

Workforce Talent Project Managers

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is implementing a new model to better integrate workforce and economic development through the deployment of Workforce Talent Project Managers (WTPMs).

This initiative aims to streamline support for businesses, particularly those with 250 employees or more, by assigning specific WTPMs to provide concierge-level service that engages EDOs, workforce partners, and other workforce-related partners. While each project has different needs, WTPMs are essential to business retention and expansion and should be included at any point when a business expresses workforce issues to local EDOs.

► **Dual Project Management Model**

- Each major business project will be supported by two leads, one for project due diligence and one for workforce (WTPM), ensuring seamless navigation of both systems.

► **Threshold-Based Support**

- Companies with 250+ employees will receive direct WTPM support. Smaller companies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis with support from EDOs.

► **Matrix Structure: (recommended).**

- See example on Page 19.

Statewide Workforce and Talent Team

Kentucky's Statewide Workforce and Talent Team (SWATT) delivers an employer-first approach to workforce development. Workforce Talent Project Managers (WTPMs) act as dedicated navigators, connecting employers to workforce solutions that strengthen talent pipelines and accelerate skill development.

SWATT serves as a bridge to Kentucky's workforce solutions built to strengthen talent pipelines, expand skill development, and offer targeted support via access to specialized expertise offered by statewide partner networks.

► **Partners**

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC) | System (KCTCS) |
| • Cabinet for Economic Development (CED) | • Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (KY CPE) |
| • Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) | • Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) |
| • Kentucky Chamber of Commerce | • Local Workforce Development Boards |
| • Kentucky Community & Technical College | • Regional Partners |

► Key Objectives

- **BUSINESS-CENTRIC:** Adopt an industry-focused, data-driven approach to address workforce challenges.
- **COORDINATION:** Improve communication and confidence among workforce entities.
- **WORKFORCE STRATEGIES:** Deliver impactful solutions to companies tailored to industry demands.
- **EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS:** Foster and

maintain strong ties to address workforce needs.

► Employer Engagement

Contribute to creating statewide standards for employer engagement, such as a shared

needs assessment tool, workforce planning templates, and a framework for streamlined relationship management.

- Simple
- Structured
- Repeatable

► State and Local Integration

Help coordinate and shape the regional SWATT framework to strengthen collaboration among business service providers and drive workforce system alignment.

- Assess
- Guide
- Scale

► Priority Areas of Focus

- Assist new and expanding companies in navigating Kentucky's workforce system resources; develop needs-based talent strategies
- Employer-focused projects, as requested by employers and/or statewide partners,

Immediate concierge-level service for Kentucky businesses

- Through market insight data, develop both responsive and proactive strategies that assist companies in preventing or redirecting layoffs



Supply Kentucky

Supply Kentucky is a collaborative partnership between KCED, Kentucky Manufacturing Extension Partnership (KY-MEP) and Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM), to strengthen support and enhance resources for the manufacturing industry in Kentucky:

- ▶ Share resources, coordinated outreach, and other targeted initiatives to deliver industry expertise and technical assistance to Kentucky manufacturers.
- ▶ Promote growth, innovation, and competitiveness within the manufacturing sector.
- ▶ Establish a Manufacturing Committee to ensure Kentucky manufacturing opportunities and needs are met and to support small and medium sized manufacturers.
- ▶ Collaborate through Manufacturing Expos across the Commonwealth to foster business to business relationships and connect small to medium-sized manufacturers with resources.
- ▶ Develop a supply chain database to support business to business relationships and to help provide procurement opportunities for Kentucky manufacturers.



KY Innovation and Venture Capital

The Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, a division of the Cabinet known as KY Innovation, manages and administers the state's comprehensive initiatives for entrepreneurs, innovative ventures and associated research.

KY Innovation focuses on supporting Kentucky's future economy by building the pipeline of tech-enabled, high growth potential companies and directly supporting the traditional businesses that make up many of Kentucky companies and employ more than 40% of our workforce. KY Innovation supports these businesses through a variety of programs that include:

- ▶ KY Small Business Credit Initiative 2.0
- ▶ The Kentucky Small Business Tax Credit
- ▶ KY Selling Farmers Tax Credit
- ▶ Kentucky's Angel Investment Tax Credit
- ▶ The Kentucky Investment Fund Act
- ▶ Kentucky's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Funds
- ▶ State Trade Expansion Program (STEP)

Venture Capital

KY Innovation provides venture capital programs through several avenues, most notably via a contract with the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC) to manage the state's programs. KSTC's venture capital division, Keyhorse Capital, invests in early- and growth-stage companies to manage two primary funds:

- ▶ The Kentucky Enterprise Fund (KEF), which provides pre-seed and seed-stage venture capital-type investments to high-growth startups and entrepreneurs based in, or interested in relocating to, Kentucky.
- ▶ The Kentucky Growth Capital Fund, which makes direct equity investments in early-to-growth-stage Kentucky technology-based companies seeking private funding from angel and venture capital investors.

For questions or to connect with KY Innovation team members, email us at info@kyinnovation.com.



State Workforce & Training Programs

While each community and region offer their own unique set of tools and resources to support existing industry, there are many statewide resources that can be accessed all across the Commonwealth. KCED is happy to make connections with the appropriate contacts if needed. WTPMs can be the coordinators for these programs.

► Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) Workforce Solutions

- A statewide initiative that partners with businesses to deliver customized training and workforce development services. These programs are designed to upskill current employees, onboard new talent, and align workforce capabilities with evolving industry needs.

To find a Workforce Solutions professional in your area, visit [KCTCS Workforce Solutions](#).

► KCTCS-TRAINS

- A state-funded program that provides financial support to Kentucky companies investing in employee training. Through TRAINS, businesses can access high-quality, tailored training at a significantly reduced cost, typically requiring only a 25% company match and a small administrative fee.

To learn more about TRAINS, visit [KCTCS-TRAINS](#).

► Bluegrass State Skills Corporation (BSSC)

- A state-funded program that provides grants and tax credits to employers for training new and existing employees.

Learn more at [BSSC at newkentuckyhome.ky.gov/workforce/BSSC](#).

► Kentucky Works

- The Kentucky Career Center offers a full suite of services designed to help you grow and manage your workforce so that your business runs more efficiently and profitably.

Learn more at workforce@ky.gov.

► Peer Resources for Smaller Companies

- This is a potential remedy for companies with fewer than 250 employees. If there is not already a program, the U.S. Small Business Administration will partner/establish cooperative agreements so that start-ups/growth-minded firms can receive web-based off-the-shelf support.

Learn more at [Small Business Association](#).

Trade Association Involvement

Trade Associations can be a helpful partner in supporting your local businesses. These groups are often industry led, and a great way to communicate with a larger group of employers. These associations often can share data on industry trends and challenges, and advocate for change when needed. “

► **Manufacturing Extension Partnership (UofL)**

- KY-MEP is a leading partner for Kentucky manufacturers, providing comprehensive solutions for growth, innovation, and operational efficiency.
- KCED has also worked together to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with KY-MEP. The Supply Kentucky Initiative will be a collaborative partnership between KY-MEP, KCED, and the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM) to strengthen support and enhance resources for the manufacturing industry in Kentucky.

► **Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**

- The state's largest business association, advocating for pro-business policies and offering workforce development resources.

► **Kentucky Association of Manufacturers**

- Supports the state's manufacturing sector through advocacy, training, and networking.

► **Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA)**

- Represents hospitals and health systems, focusing on healthcare workforce and policy.

► **Kentucky Nurses Association (KNA)**

- Represents the Commonwealth's 90,000+ nurses, focusing on the nursing workforce, policy, education and advocacy for the largest segment of healthcare workers.

► **Kentucky Distillers' Association**

- Promotes the state's signature bourbon industry, including workforce training and tourism development.

► **Kentucky Association for Economic Development (KAED)**

- KAED is a statewide organization that unites public and private leaders to advance economic growth through professional development, policy advocacy, and strategic initiatives.

► **Metals Innovation Initiative (MI2)**

- MI2 is a Kentucky-based nonprofit that drives innovation, sustainability, and workforce development in the metals industry through cross-sector collaboration and research.

Key Communication Messages: Why Kentucky?

When our messages are aligned, our business audience listens; when they don't, we risk being ignored. Our communications goal is to position Kentucky as a place of unexpected opportunity – inviting people, businesses and families to build a better future in Kentucky, where opportunity feels like home.

Please incorporate these key messages into your business development conversations:

► **Speed to Market**

- Kentucky expedites approvals to get your business up and running faster than other states.

► **Logistics Advantage**

- Kentucky is within a day's drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population, and its nation-leading logistics and strong infrastructure mean products reach their destination faster.

► **Cost of Business**

- The Commonwealth ranks in the Top 5 nationally for cost of doing business.

► **Team Kentucky Partnership**

- Businesses that invest here become a part of Team Kentucky, receiving long-term support from responsive and invested local and state leaders.

► **Collaborative Spirit**

- Our interconnected communities have a collaborative spirit that brings all partners to the table to meet the individual needs of businesses.

► **Workforce Access**

- One-quarter of the Commonwealth's workforce commutes more than 30 miles every day, which means you have even greater access to skilled workers.

► **Quality of Life**

- In Kentucky, business and speed to market are fast, but the pace of life is just right, with leading companies, great people, and vibrant communities calling it home.

► **Education and Training**

- Kentucky has a strong network of higher education institutions with eight public universities, over 70 community and technical college campuses, and 18 private/non-profit colleges.



[APPENDIX]

BR&E Sample Questions

This list is meant to serve as a baseline sample of information that is commonly used in a BR&E program. The data can be helpful for state and local coordination. KCED suggests collecting as much of this data as possible via internal research to maximize the time during a visit with an existing company.

This list is by no means exhaustive and may not fit every project and is offered simply as a guide:

- ▶ What is the history of the company? Where was it founded?
- ▶ Is this a domestic or international company? Where is it headquartered?
- ▶ Where does the company have other locations? (In KY, nationally, globally?)
- ▶ What products or services does the company offer?
- ▶ What is the company's decision-making process for capital projects?
- ▶ Does the company utilize local financing? Could they use support in this area?
- ▶ How is the company structured? LLC? Sole ownership? Minority ownership?
- ▶ Is the company publicly traded?
- ▶ Who are their main competitors?
- ▶ Who are their suppliers? Do they use Connex, or would they like to learn more about resourcing locally?
- ▶ Who are their customers?
- ▶ What type of supporting industry would the company benefit from having in the region/state?
- ▶ How many full-time employees does the company employ? Do they use temporary or part-time employees?
- ▶ What types of jobs do they offer? (Administrative, general labor, engineers, quality, etc.)
- ▶ What is the average hourly wage of their employees? With or without benefits?
- ▶ How does the company "tell their story" in the local community?
- ▶ Does the company have a leader for talent recruitment and development?
- ▶ Overall, what are the positives and concerns relative to the local workforce?
- ▶ How does the company conduct onboarding and training? Are they using local workforce providers?

- ▶ What is the company's recruiting strategy?
- ▶ Does the company have any seasonal trends to their employment?
- ▶ Are any layoffs, WARN notices, or workforce reductions being contemplated?
- ▶ Does the company have a union membership?
- ▶ Could the company benefit from support through social media campaigns?
- ▶ What recent capital investments have occurred?
- ▶ Are there future plans for investment? If so, how much? How is this broken out into land/building/equipment, etc.?
- ▶ What trends is the company seeing in its industry?
- ▶ What challenges are the company facing? Industry-wide, or locally?
- ▶ Who is the company using as its main local point of contact? State contact?
- ▶ What products/services does the company need from a state or local partner?
- ▶ Are there any local or state permitting issues that need help being resolved?
- ▶ What trade organizations is the company involved with?
- ▶ Is there certain legislation (local/state/federal) that the company is tracking that that could impact their business?
- ▶ Does the company have a good relationship with local utility partners, or require any support in this area?
- ▶ Does the company have any specific goals around renewable energy?

If an expansion is identified, further questions about site/building requirements and project drivers would be necessary. At this juncture, KCED may be a worthwhile partner to begin working with the local ED professional.

About the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development Team

We're in this together

As the primary state agency encouraging job creation, retention and business investment in Kentucky, the Cabinet for Economic Development leads efforts to attract new industries and assists existing companies in growth and expansion.

To best serve Kentuckians, the Cabinet works with economic development organizations across the Commonwealth to show the world Kentucky is **the** place to do business.

Our Business Development Team



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International Offices

In addition to the Cabinet's central office in Frankfort, we have international offices in Europe and Asia. The Cabinet's Europe office is located in Hamburg, Germany, and the Asia office is located in Tokyo, Japan.



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“

We move through the process from concept to completion to operations faster in Kentucky than any other location.

”



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