KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

November 9, 2026 – 10:00 a.m. ET (9:00 a.m. CT)
Virtual meeting via ZOOM webinar: https://bit.ly/4BmLAjf

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

II. CPE President Update

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the Minutes....2

IV. Staff Updates

A. KCTCS Programs approved between Sept.-Nov. 2026....4
B. Three-year Degree Programs....5
C. Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund Annual Report....17
D. AERO Act Annual Report....22

V. Other Business

VI. Adjournment

Next meeting: February 1, 2027 @ 10am ET

MEETING MINUTES

To be reviewed and approved by the Committee on November 9, 2026

Who:	Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Meeting Type:	Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee
Date:	September 9, 2026
Time:	10:00 a.m. ET
Location:	Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar

CALL TO ORDER

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee met Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., ET. The meeting occurred virtually via Zoom webinar. Committee Chair Karyn Hoover presided.

ROLL CALL

There was a quorum of 8 voting Council members in attendance.

- Jai Bokey - attended
- Dr. Kellie Ellis - attended
- Dr. Meredith Figg - attended
- Sean Garber - attended
- Karyn Hoover - attended
- Dennis Repenning - attended
- LaDonna Rogers - attended
- Kevin Weaver - attended
- Michael Wheeler - absent

CPE President Aaron Thompson served as secretary of the board, per the CPE bylaws. Heather Faesy, CPE program manager, served as recorder of the meeting minutes.

CPE PRESIDENT UPDATE

Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President, provided a brief update to the Committee that focused on CPE's latest webinar regarding student basic needs, as well as staff progress on developing three-year degree programs.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the June 8, 2026, committee meeting were approved as presented.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Ms. Sheila Brothers, Senior Director for Academic Excellence, introduced three new academic programs for review and approval. KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council on Postsecondary Education to define and approve the offering of all postsecondary education technical,

DRAFT

associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees, certificates, or diploma programs in the Kentucky public postsecondary education institutions.

Council staff reviewed the proposed programs and recommended approval.

University of Kentucky – B.A./B.F.A. Creative Writing (CIP 23.1302)
Questions answered by: Dr. Shauna M. Morgan, Associate Professor and Director of Division of Creative Writing, Department of English

- The 120-credit-hour program will provide graduates with a multidisciplinary focus on writing (storytelling, creativity, and poetics), editing, critical thinking, and other professional skills that will prepare graduates for jobs requiring skilled writers, as well as for those seeking graduate-level study in creative writing.

University of Kentucky – M.S. Organizational Leadership in Coaching and Sport (CIP 31.0504)
Presented by: Justin K. Nichols, Ed.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion

- The 30-credit-hour program is designed for individuals seeking to advance their careers in sport, and for individuals transitioning into the sport industry who already possess a baccalaureate degree and want to develop specialized expertise. Students will select one of two tracks. The Coaching track will prepare future coaches to lead and inspire athletes across all levels, from youth and secondary education to collegiate and professional sports. The Sport Leadership track focuses on enhancing leadership and administrative skills across diverse sports settings, including athletic administration, sport operations, event management, sport management, and community sports.

MOTION: Mr. Weaver moved that the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed programs from the University of Kentucky. Mr. Bokey seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed. Dr. Figg abstained.

KCTCS PROGRAMS APPROVED BETWEEN JUNE–AUGUST 2026

KRS 164.020 (15) mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational/technical and occupational nature. Ms. Brothers presented the one new program reviewed and approved by Council staff between June and August 2026. No action was required by the Committee.

- Somerset Community College – A.A.S., Cybersecurity (CIP 43.0404)

ADJOURNMENT

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee adjourned at 10:20 a.m., ET.

DRAFT

TOPIC/TITLE:	KCTCS Programs approved between September 2026 – November 2026
STAFF CONTACT:	Sheila Brothers, MPA Senior Director of Academic Excellence
TYPE/REQUEST:	☐ Action ☒ Information

SUMMARY OF TOPIC

Council staff has reviewed and approved the following program. No further action is needed.

Gateway Community and Technical College – A.A.S., Cybersecurity (43.0404)
The program will prepare students for careers in network defense, security operations, and cybersecurity support. Graduates will develop competencies in networking, systems administration, ethical hacking concepts, and threat vulnerability assessments. While progressing toward the AAS, students will also earn two certificates in Cyber Defense Fundamentals and Advanced Network Defense.

APPLICABLE STATUTE(S), REGULATION(S), CPE POLICIES

- KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all technical, certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degree at public postsecondary institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational-technical and occupational nature.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Associate degree programs of a vocational/technical/occupational nature (i.e. AAS) undergo the following process for approval:

- KCTCS posts a proposal to the program approval system by the first of the month, and Council staff feedback or decisions will be made by the last business day of the month.
- If no issues are identified, the program is approved by Council staff and reported as an information item to the Council.
- If issues are identified, the institution addresses those through the program approval system, and the review period is extended. Once the issues are resolved, the program is approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting.

TOPIC/TITLE:	Three-Year Bachelor's Degree
STAFF CONTACT:	Melissa Bell, Vice President of Academic Excellence
TYPE/REQUEST:	☐ Action ☒ Information

SUMMARY OF TOPIC

Concerns around affordability and career outcomes are leading students, graduates, parents, and taxpayers to question the need for a bachelor's degree. At the same time, employers increasingly emphasize both technical and essential skills, qualities that are not always tied to credit hours or seat time. These pressures, combined with demographic shifts and rapid changes in the labor market, are driving postsecondary institutions to explore innovative ways to deliver undergraduate education.

A three-year bachelor's degree is designed to be a streamlined, workforce-oriented program with fewer than 120 credit hours. The curriculum is usually focused on general education, essential major coursework, and applied learning with less focus on electives. It is not an accelerated version of a traditional bachelor's degree that includes the same content into a condensed time frame.

At the meeting, staff will provide an overview of this new type of bachelor's degree, outline potential benefits and risks, and identify strategic questions that should be addressed before this type of degree is incorporated into the CPE New Academic Program Approval Policy.

APPLICABLE STATUTE(S), REGULATION(S), CPE POLICIES

- KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all technical, certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degree at public postsecondary institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational-technical and occupational nature.

COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Reduced Credit Undergraduate Degrees

(Three-Year Bachelor's Degrees)

Melissa Bell
Vice President, Academic Excellence

November 5, 2026

Definition

The Commission on Colleges and Universities defines three-year baccalaureate degree programs as those that typically require 90 to 100 semester credit hours or the equivalent.

Source: https://commissioncu.org/policies/three-year-baccalaureate-degree-programs/#sec-the-commission-and-the-three-year-baccalaureate

Typically considered a workforce-oriented degree.

Potential Benefits

Lower Student Cost	• One fewer year of tuition, housing, dining, textbooks • Less opportunity cost – enter workforce faster
Increased Enrollment	• Possibly engages new demographic of students not interested in traditional bachelor's degree • Market differentiation/competitive advantage – focus on cost-conscious, motivated students
Increased Degree Completion	• Structured, sequenced curricula • Shorter timeframe lowers risk of external and financial pressures
Workforce Impact	• Faster pipeline to in-demand fields • Employer involvement in program design • Work-based learning experiences



Potential Risks

Academic Rigor	• Equivalent SLOs call into question the value/purpose of traditional bachelor's degree • Loss of exploration, access to high impact practices, and skills practice • Could create two-tier system
Unknown Demand	• Employer demand • Student interest • Licensure constraints • Graduate school acceptance
Institutional Impact	• Faculty time to restructure curricula • Advising and scheduling complexity • Loss of revenue from fourth year of traditional bachelor's



Academic Quality Considerations



Accreditation



Graduate Profile



General Education



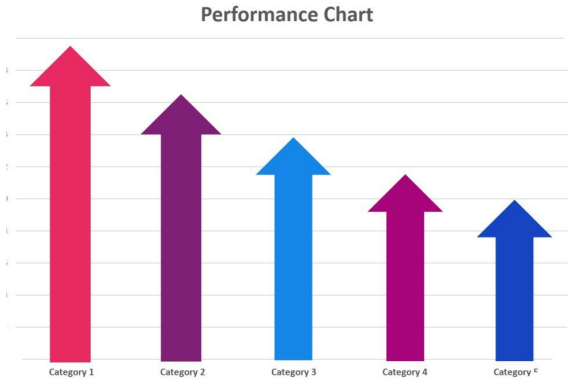
Depth of Learning

High Impact Practices

Financial Considerations



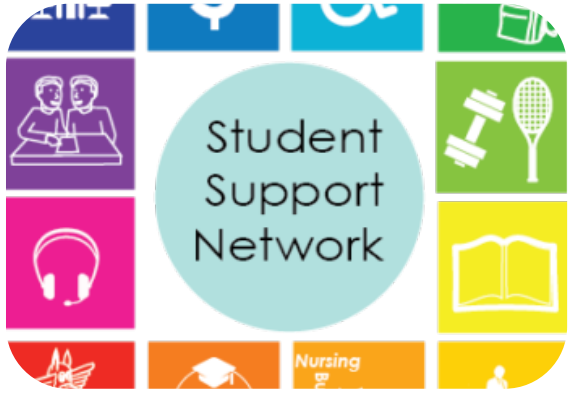
Tuition and Other Revenue



Performance Funding



Financial Aid



Advising and Student Support

National Task Force on Three-Year Degree Pathways

- **Programs should focus on outcomes over inputs.**
  - Quality must be judged on student learning mastery, completion, labor market outcomes, and ability to pursue further education rather than enrollment credits earned, and tuition paid.
- **Programs should maximize student value.**
  - Programs must be intentionally designed and integrate employer input, employability skills, and work-based learning into the shortened timeline.
- **Programs should undergo rigorous evaluation.**
  - Institutions should measure student learning, completion, debt, employment, earnings, and graduate school enrollment. States evaluate outcomes across student populations, programs, and institutions.
- **Three-year degrees are bachelor's degrees.**
  - Programs should meet general education learning outcomes but have flexibility in doing so. Institutions should carefully consider which programs are appropriate. Programs meet or exceed learning outcomes of traditional bachelor's degrees and should carry the standard bachelor's title without naming modifie

Questions

- Will employers value a three-year degree in the hiring process?
- Will a three-year degree impede a graduate's promotion prospects?
- Will graduate and professional schools accept three-year degrees?
- Will three-year degrees be accepted in fields that require professional licensure?
- What fields of study are conducive to these types of degrees?
- How do these programs accommodate transfer students?

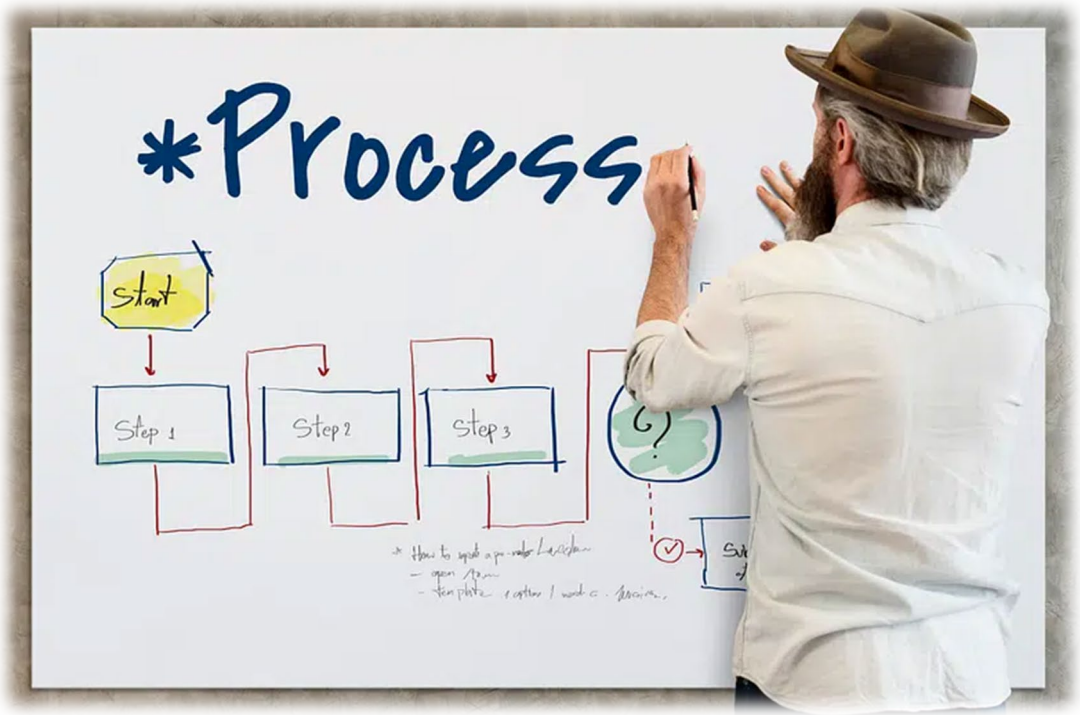


Questions

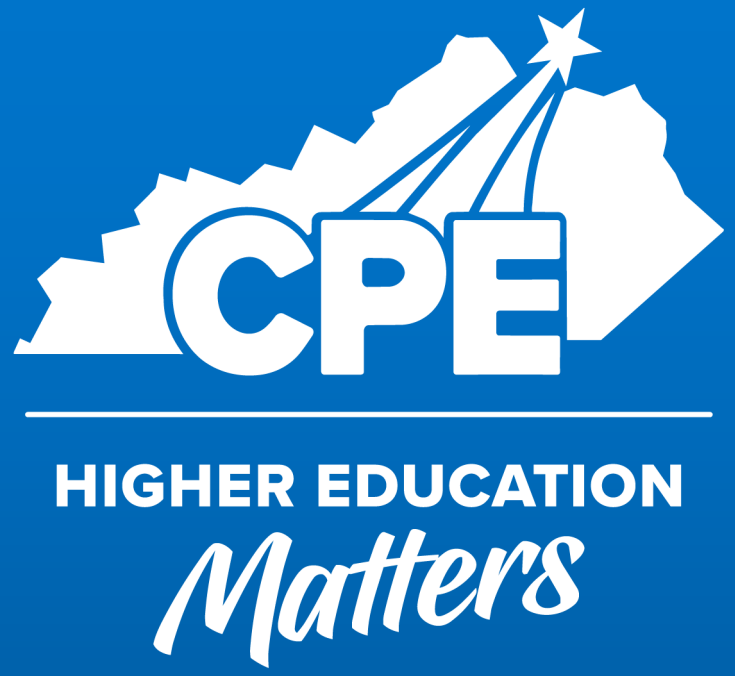
- How will three-year degrees impact the perceived value of traditional bachelor's degrees?
- What type of student would benefit most?
- What is the appropriate proportion of general education to major requirements?
- What happens to students who stop out of these highly structured programs?
- Will these programs have a positive or negative financial impact?
- Do federal financial aid regulations, state financial aid programs, and performance funding models need to change?



Process



- Surveyed provosts and asked for policy recommendations
- Researched other state policies
- Sought input from Kentucky Faculty Advisory Network
- Currently gathering employer input
- Will bring policy recommendations to ASI Committee



CPENews

cpe.ky.gov

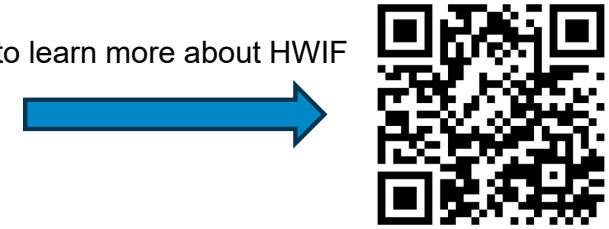
@KYCPE

Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund Annual Report November 9, 2026

Jamie Woolery, Ed.D.
Senior Associate
Workforce and Economic Development
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

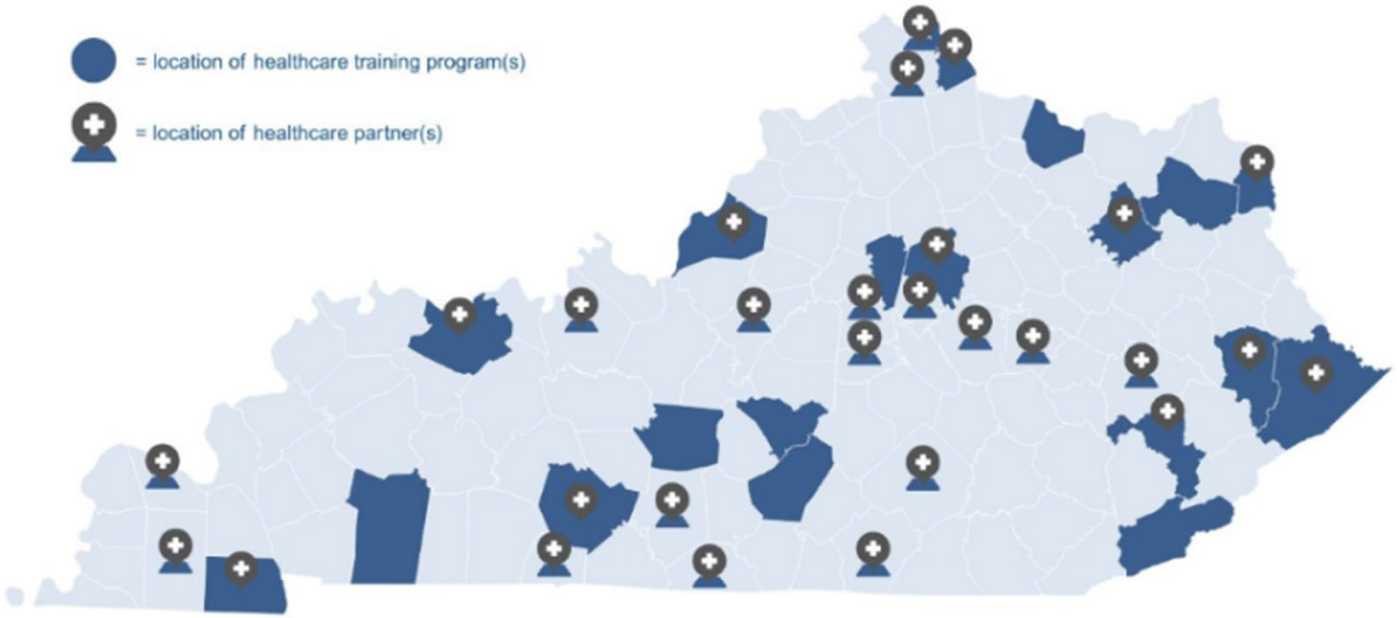
Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (HWIF)

Scan to learn more about HWIF



- HB 200 (2023)
  - Public-Private Partnerships
  - 1-1 matching funds
- Funding amount varies by year; currently in round 5 of proposals through RFP process.
- Access to public-private partnerships impact the rural healthcare workforce; in HWIF proposal review additional points are awarded based on size of healthcare organization and amount of employees.
- HWIF is helping to impact employers in rural areas with incentive funding and workforce requirements post-graduation or credential; for every one year of scholarship received as a student there is a work requirement at the partner organization for up to two years.

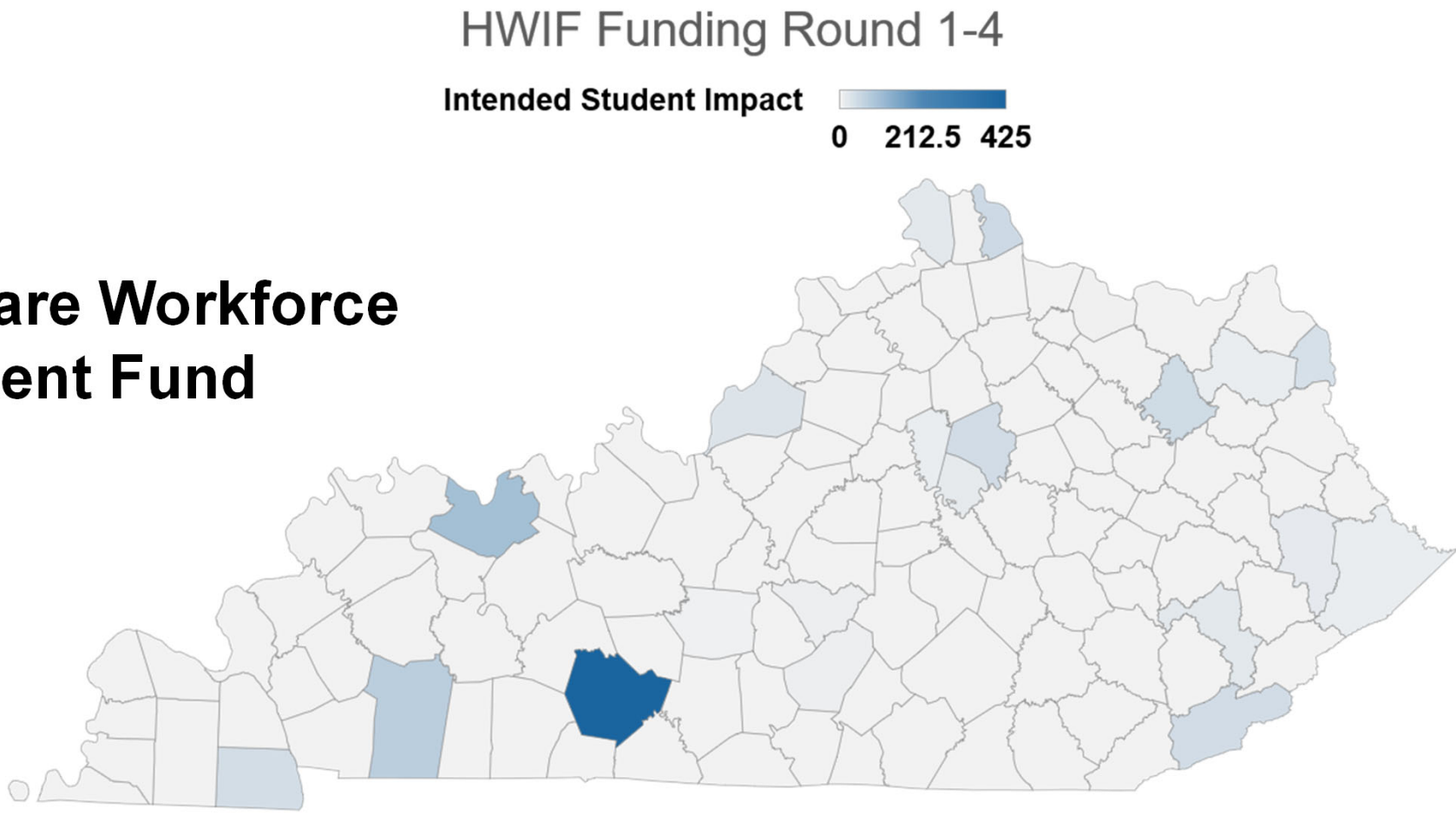
Geographic Distribution of Healthcare Training Programs & Partners Awarded Funded

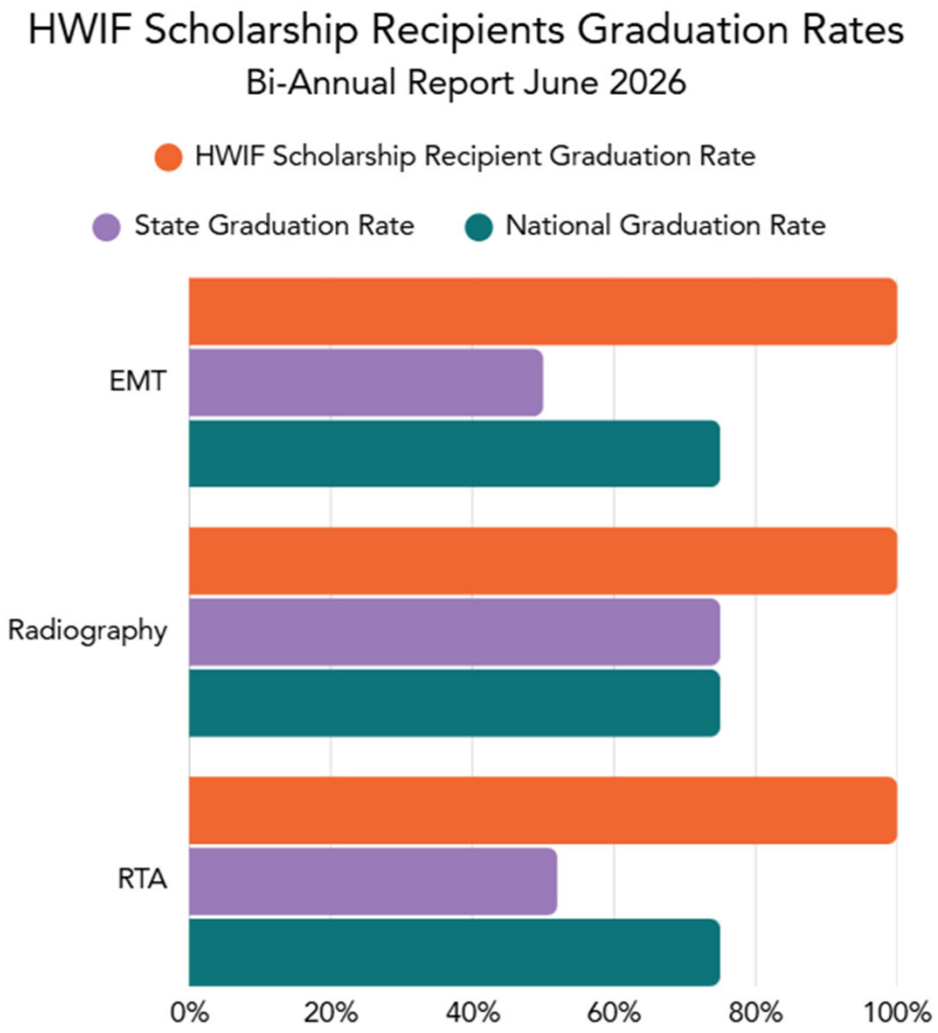


Student Impact by Institution

Asbury University - 16
Ashland Community & Technical College - 36
Bellarmine University - 22
Big Sandy Community & Technical College - 15
Bluegrass Community & Technical College - 3
Campbellsville University - 7
Central Kentucky Paramedic Education Consortium - 2
Hazard Community & Technical College - 20
Hopkinsville-Christian Co. Paramedicine Program - 86
Kentucky Christian University - 6
Lindsey Wilson College - 3
Maysville Community & Technical College - 10
Midway University - 8
Morehead State University - 75
Murray State University - 19
Northern Kentucky University - 228
Owensboro Community & Technical College - 5
Pair O Medics Emergency Training LLC - 20
Southcentral Community & Technical College - 79
Southeast Community & Technical College - 13
University of Kentucky - 64
University of Louisville - 250
University of Pikeville - 2
Walton Fire Protection District TEI-219 - 9
Western Kentucky University - 112

Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (HWIF)




HWIF Scholarship Recipients Graduation Rates
Bi-Annual Report June 2026
HWIF Scholarship Recipient Graduation Rate
State Graduation Rate
National Graduation Rate
EMT
Radiography
RTA
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%

AERO Act Annual Report

November 9, 2026

Jamie Woolery, Ed.D.
Senior Associate
Workforce and Economic Development
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

AERO Act (SB 127)

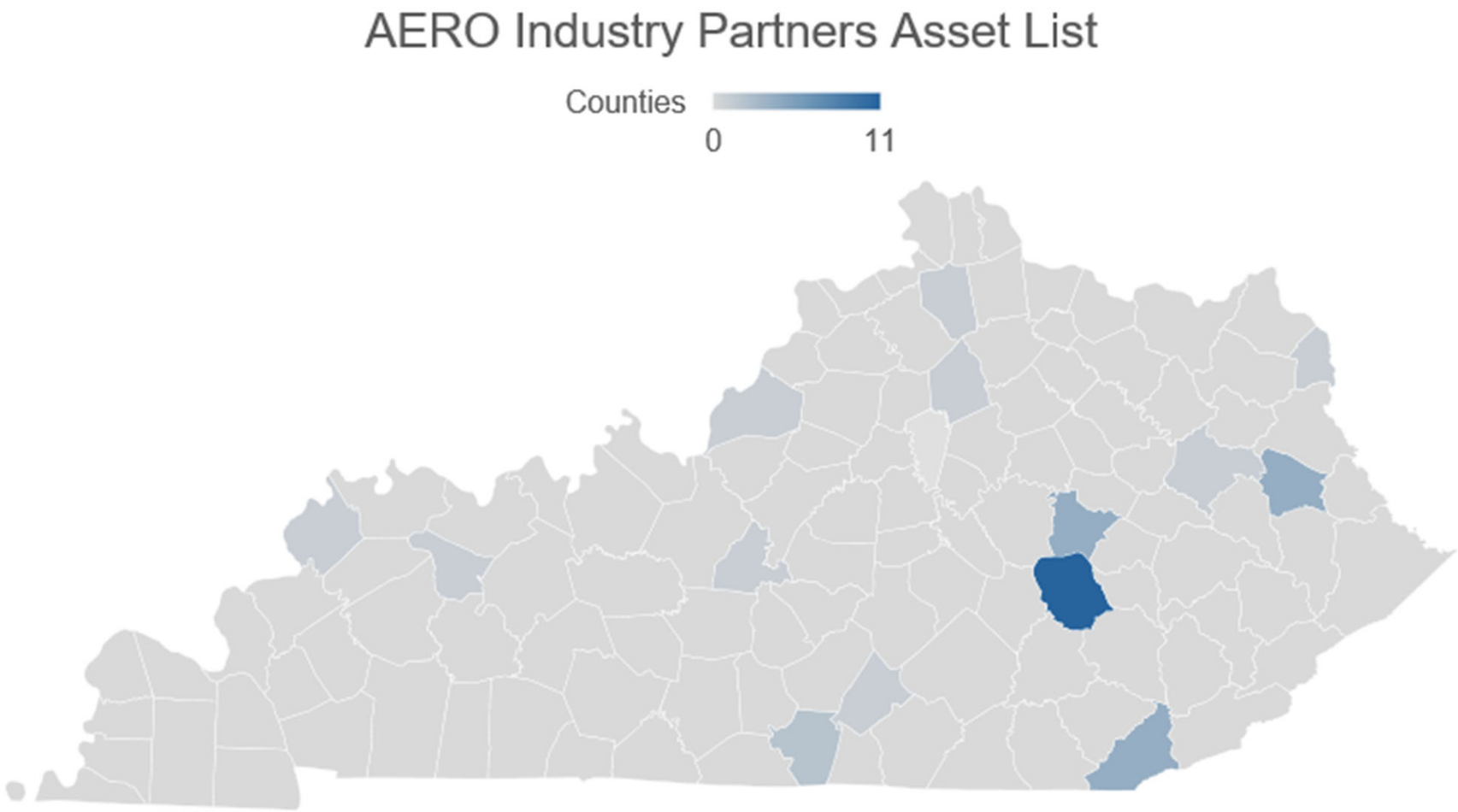
- To date, CPE's work in implementing SB 127 has aligned with the intent of the legislation that seeks to:
  - improve the ability of a broad variety of Kentucky's aviation programs to meet the workforce demands and capacity of the Commonwealth;
  - raise awareness of and interest in a broad variety of aviation occupations;
  - reduce the barriers of access to the aviation programs necessary to pursue these occupations, including financial barriers;
  - improve pathways between high school career and technical programs and aviation programs; and
  - develop strategies for aviation industry partners to support career growth and development for their employees.

AERO Act (SB 127)

- In May 2025, CPE staff hosted an informational webinar for industry and education partners to learn more about AERO Act from Senator Brandon Storm. In July 2025, CPE staff submitted a data-driven request of $15 million to the appropriations and revenue committee. **In the 2026 legislation cycle, the AERO Act was not funded, leading to the pursuit of funding opportunities for the 2028 legislative cycle.**
- As of July 1, 2026; Commissioner Todd Case was appointed to the Department of Aviation and has been asked for board appointed status replacing Deputy Commissioner Brad Schwandt on the AERO Act Advisory Committee. At the March 2026 AERO Act Advisory Committee meeting, there was a motion and approval for a vice chair position to be instated. Following the motion and approval, Lindsey Case was appointed Vice Chair of the committee.

AERO Act (SB 127)

- In 2028 with appropriation from the General Assembly, the next steps include building infrastructure and technical assistance for proposal solicitation, orienting and onboarding the AERO Act Advisory Committee, and if possible, through an appropriation, soliciting and evaluating proposals to distribute aviation scholarships and equipment grants.



Source: CPE Data, Research and Advanced Analytics Unit