



Career Services in Kentucky Summer Convening

From Placement to Partnership: Building Employer Relationships that Power Kentucky's Workforce

July 23, 2026

KCTCS System Office, Versailles



About the Council on Postsecondary Education

The Council on Postsecondary Education is Kentucky's higher education coordinating agency committed to strengthening our workforce, economy and quality of life. We do this by guiding the continuous improvement and efficient operation of a high-quality, diverse and accessible system of postsecondary education.

Key responsibilities include:

- Developing and implementing a strategic agenda for postsecondary education that includes measures of progress.
- Producing and submitting a biennial budget request for adequate public funding of postsecondary education.
- Determining tuition rates and admission criteria at public postsecondary institutions.
- Collecting and distributing data about postsecondary education performance.
- Ensuring the coordination and connectivity of technology among public institutions.
- Licensing non-public postsecondary institutions to operate in the Commonwealth.

8 – 9 a.m. | Registration and Networking Breakfast

Attendees reconnect, exchange ideas, and begin discussing how their campuses are currently engaging employers across the Commonwealth.

9 – 9:30 a.m. | Welcome and Small Steps, Stronger Pipelines

CPE's Mary Jackson and Miles Feroli open the day with a look at how small, intentional actions build stronger employer relationships and more sustainable talent pipelines — setting the stage for a day focused on practical partnership-building across Kentucky's campuses.



Mary Jackson, Senior Associate,
Workforce and Economic
Development, CPE



Miles Feroli, Executive Director,
Workforce and Economic
Development, CPE

9:30 – 10:15 a.m. | Beyond Job Placement: Why Employer Relationships Matter More Than Ever

Career services continues to play an important role in helping students move from college to meaningful work and sustainable careers. Drawing on her work building partnerships between education and industry, Heather Yocum will explore what it takes for campuses to move beyond job placement and help students find careers that last.



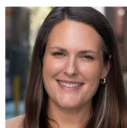
Heather Yocum, Campus Director and Associate Professor, Jefferson Community and Technical College, Carrollton Campus

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. | Where the Jobs Are: Aligning Career Services with Kentucky's Key Industries

Kentucky's workforce needs are growing across several key industries. Mary Jackson and Meg Fister will share where opportunities are expanding, and how career services can help connect students to the jobs and industries shaping the Commonwealth's future.

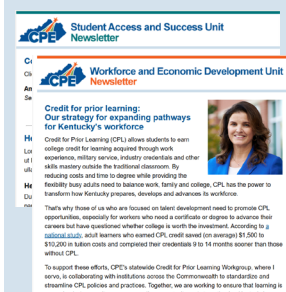


Mary Jackson, Senior Associate,
Workforce and Economic
Development, CPE



Meg Fister, Executive Director,
Kentucky Film Office

10:45 – 11 a.m. | Coffee Break



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Agenda

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. | From Recruiter to Partner: Building Meaningful Employer Relationships

Employers from several Kentucky industries will share how they connect with colleges, what they need from career services, and what makes a campus a strong partner. The conversation will focus on practical, realistic ways colleges can build relationships that support students and strengthen future talent pipelines.



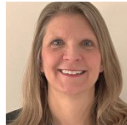
Kristi Kilday, Co-founder, Kentucky Soundstage



Drew Underwood, Airport Manager, Capital City Airport



LaDaya Owens, HR Business Partner, Home of the Innocents



Ruth Moore, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Lofted Spirits



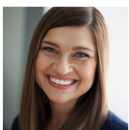
Lauren Sparrow, Community Relations Manager, Keeneland

12 – 1 p.m. | Groovy Networking Lunch

Vote for your lunchtime soundtrack!

1 – 2 p.m. | Leveraging Employer Partnerships for Long-Term Institutional Impact

Strong employer partnerships can support more than individual student job placement. UK's Nicole Keenan and Tori Summey will share how meaningful employer engagement can strengthen programs, support institutional goals, and create lasting opportunities for students.



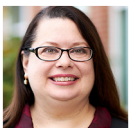
Nicole Keenan, Director, Stuckert Career Center, University of Kentucky



Tori Summey, Associate Director, Employer Engagement, University of Kentucky

2 – 2:30 p.m. | Futuriti in Focus: Transforming How Kentucky Learners Plan Their Future and Careers

CPE's Jessica Fletcher will share new developments and features connected to Futuriti.org, with a focus on how the website can support career exploration, student engagement, and career readiness efforts on campus.



Jessica Fletcher, Chief Communications Officer, CPE

Find your Kentucky future.

I am a...

Choose Career Changer or Adult Learner, College Student

Looking for...

Select one

→

Explore Futuriti

Check out the state's college and career website, Futuriti, which includes Future Finder, a tool designed to help Kentuckians explore careers that suit skills and interests, and learn the credentials needed to qualify.



2:30 – 3:15 p.m. | Kentucky Companies Doing Interesting Things: Highlighting the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers (KAM)

Through discussion led by Zach Morgan, panelists will share their stories and offer insight into how they attract and develop talent, with takeaways on strengthening workforce pipelines from two- and four-year institutions across the Commonwealth.



Zach Morgan, Workforce Development Director, KAM



Heather McClanahan, Director of Workforce Development, Fives



Richard Shultz, Vice President of Manufacturing, Link-Belt



Tim White, Senior Director of Manufacturing, Hyster-Yale

3:15 – 3:30 p.m. | Closing Reflections

As the convening comes to a close, Leslie Sizemore will reflect on the day's key themes and celebrate the ideas shared, while encouraging the attendees to carry the momentum back their campuses. Participants will leave with practical takeaways and renewed commitment to strengthening employer partnerships that support Kentucky students and workforce needs.



Leslie Sizemore, Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development, CPE



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