

Ready to Work
End of Semester Report
Spring 2013
(Submitted June 20, 2013)

Ready to Work (RTW) served 1,200 K-TAP clients in the Spring 2013 semester and 1,694 clients year-to-date. This represents a 5% increase over Spring 12 semester enrollment and a 12% increase in year-to-date enrollment over last Spring. An even larger increase occurred in the K-TAP funded work-study enrollment, which was 18% larger than Spring 12 semester with year-to-date work-study enrollment 26% higher than the same time last year. KCTCS served 1,014 K-TAP work-study students in the Spring semester and 1,405 year-to-date.

Colleges with the largest overall caseload increases from Spring 2012 to Spring 2013 semester included Hazard (38), Bluegrass (30), and Jefferson (30). Colleges with the largest RTW work-study increases from Spring 2012 to Spring 2013 included Jefferson (111), Hazard (41), and Bluegrass (33). Statewide, 85% of the spring caseload was placed in a TANF funded work-study position with nonprofit and private sector employers. TANF work-study placements are designed to support both the student's career interest and program of study. Fifty-four of the RTW students also accessed federal work-study resources.

The reported number of DCBS referrals this fiscal year was 1,996 generating a reported 1,617 RTW enrollments. DCBS referrals appeared to be especially strong this program year in the Jefferson (376), Bluegrass (215), Gateway (184), Hazard (167) and Maysville (162) areas. Additionally the Spring 13 caseload included 104 students who had been transitioned from the Work and Learn (adult education) component (bringing the year - to-date total to 175) and 80 students whose K-TAP eligibility was discontinued during the semester. In the Spring 13 semester, tracking efforts estimate that 1,615 K-TAP parents were enrolled in the 16 KCTCS colleges and RTW served 1,200 or 74% of those eligible students.

In the Spring 13 semester the KCTCS statewide within-semester retention rate (the number of students registering for class, attending class, and completing the semester) for RTW students was 95%, which exceeded the statewide average college within-semester retention rate of 93%. A recently implemented Title IV (federal financial aid) policy that is less flexible and forgiving of students who are struggling to meet the federal "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP) standard, is definitely impacting a significant number of the RTW students and raises the bar for retention efforts. However, the Fall 12 to Spring 13 retention rate was even stronger in comparison with a RTW student retention rate of 83%, which was 11% higher than the statewide retention rate of 72% for that same period.

While retention has become an even greater challenge, these retention rates for RTW students are accomplished through aggressive academic and student support including mentoring, tutoring, advising, counseling, advocacy, and referrals to community and

campus services. Seven hundred forty one (741) RTW students received supplemental academic mentoring services; 945 received supplemental advising services; 403 participated in tutoring and study groups; and 303 participated in other academic support services. RTW Coordinators also made over 553 referrals to other community-based agencies. The Coordinators continue to work with their college retention committees to identify and implement improved retention strategies. They also work with DCBS Case Managers to communicate that Ready to Work is primarily a post-secondary education/academic initiative that also has a work-study opportunity. Southeast RTW program successfully collaborated with “*Goodwill Cars to Work*”; to help establish reliable transportation through donated cars for deserving RTW students. *Goodwill Cars to Work* is a non-profit program to help student’s access loans to purchase donated and refurbished cars. Southeast submitted several referrals to date resulting in one student who successfully purchased a car.

Positively impacting student academic performance while ensuring students are meeting their TANF work participation expectations remains the greatest of challenges. The statewide RTW grade point average (GPA) in Spring 13 was 2.56 and the statewide institutional GPA was 2.66. Fifty three percent (53%) of the RTW students had GPAs that exceeded their institutional GPA. Nine of the sixteen colleges (Ashland, Big Sandy, Bluegrass, Gateway, Hazard, Henderson, Jefferson, Madisonville, and Maysville) had collective RTW GPAs that met or exceeded the collective institutional GPA. The System RTW Coordinator will continue to work with the colleges to identify strategies to support and improve student academic performance as well as retention. System RTW staff will work with the colleges in FY14 to develop special projects aimed at improving RTW student’s GPAs.

This Spring semester 88 current and former RTW students graduated from the sixteen KCTCS colleges with degrees, certificates, and/or diplomas bringing the FY13 year-to-date total of RTW graduates to 121. Seventy percent (70%) of the RTW graduates earned associate degrees and many of them earned additional embedded certificates. This percentage of associate degree earners is much stronger than for the overall population of KCTCS graduates where certificates are the more common credential.

Ninety nine (99%) of the RTW students with a reported K-TAP work requirement met their designated work participation expectation and an additional 80 RTW students voluntarily worked while attending college. Coordinators provided career counseling and related support services to all 1,200 RTW students in their caseloads including career interest and aptitude assessments to 771 students, employment interview training to 798 students, and other work readiness experiences to 748 students.

The System Office RTW Coordinator provided intensive technical assistance to Big Sandy as they developed and worked a corrective action plan to increase referrals and enrollments with five action steps:

1. Place more posters/brochures on campus and within the community
Such as laundry rooms, local health departments, doctors’ offices, local DCBS offices.

2. Focus on DCBS offices in Pike, Magoffin, and Martin counties to target for increased referrals. (Schedule meetings with them to build rapport and provide information on benefits of RTW and WL Programs, not only for clients, but for DCBS Case managers as well.)
3. Attend existing DCBS staff meetings on a monthly basis. If no current monthly meetings, RTW/WL staff will request joint meetings.
4. Request regularly scheduled time to be on site at the DCBS offices to meet with students who are interested in and/or referred to RTW.
5. Attend and participate in Job Expos and other Community Resource Fairs for outreach and recruitment.

The System Office (SO) Coordinator made a subsequent site visit on May 30 to confirm the RTW/WL program at Big Sandy was making progress: enrollments have improved and partnership meetings and outreach/recruitment opportunities have increased. She also provided technical assistance on PeopleSoft flagging and DSS access to the new WL Case Manager at Big Sandy. (See Big Sandy Program Update for additional information.)

The SO Coordinator also provided special technical assistance and support to Bowling Green to assist in meeting student needs while the college worked through position vacancies and medical leave. Additionally the SO Coordinator provided new employee orientation to staff at Big Sandy, Bluegrass and Bowling Green and completed annual site visits to Ashland, Bluegrass, Gateway, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Maysville, Owensboro and Somerset in the Spring semester.

Statewide, RTW Coordinators' outreach and recruitment efforts included communication with over 1,557 clients at orientations (including DCBS orientations), and 890 potential students through other community events including career and resource fairs and workshops. Additionally, the RTW Coordinators continued to offer services to RTW students after they graduated. RTW tracking efforts reflect that 180 RTW graduates received services post-graduation/separation including mentoring; 27 were assisted in finding unsubsidized employment; 99 received job retention services; and 37 transferred to four year institutions post separation.

Owensboro again delivered the only special project funded this semester, "*Operation Retail: Five core areas of accountability for the entry-level front-line worker*". This was a customer service training for 20 students. The program goal was to provide the opportunity to obtain the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a National Professional Certificate in Customer Service (NPCSS), and the National Retail Foundation course in Retail Operations. The five-part operation course included a certified facilitator and participant guides targeting specific areas of skill and knowledge: Retail Industry Overview, Customer Service, Store Operations, and Getting the Job. Students were provided instruction in basic skills, soft skills, job readiness and employability skills through direct classroom activities. Upon completion, they took the WorkKeys test that leads to the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as well as the NCRC Plus. Ten out of the 18 students that competed the WorkKeys assessment will receive the NCRC certificate. After training in Customer Service, students sat for the exam that leads to the "*National Professional Certificate in Customer Service*" (NPCSS). Eighteen of the 19 students that completed the NPCSS exam will receive this certificate.

As the RTW and WL coordinators continue to work closely with DCBS offices to implement the new OTIS system, SO RTW staff has requested one time targeted funding from KCTCS in FY14 to ensure all contract staff at the colleges have the necessary technology (laptops) to most effectively utilize the new system.

You will find additional information and data in the accompanying spreadsheets and program updates.