

# Jefferson County Adult Education WPL for ALL EMPLOYEES

## Abstract

Jefferson County Adult Education (JCAE) recognizes the importance of not only preparing Adult Learners for the workforce but also partnering with employers to up-skill their current workforce. Through a partnership with KCC Companies, a local manufacturing company, JCAE has created two Workplace Literacy options to serve both English Language Learners and Supervisors with English Language Learner staff.

## Introduction

JCAE has always been “More than the GED” with a significant number of English Language Students and a strong partnership with the local Community college. Although we’ve had a number of employer partners we’ve never offered Workplace Literacy opportunities with employers. This year PLC requirements gave us the opportunity to explore launching WPL’s and strengthening our employer partners.

Recently KentuckianaWorks, our local workforce investment board, published an article titled “Immigrants are an important, but underutilized segment of the workforce.” By providing immigrants opportunities to increase their English Language Skills while also improving the organizations supervisors cultural humility, we intend to improve both outcomes for the employee and the employer and specifically increase the utilization of immigrants in the workforce.

Through the increase of WPL opportunity we are working to diversify the types of MSGs available to our students This increase also lends itself to an increase in our MSG performance from recent years and improved employer relationships. Prior to this year JCAE had 0 employer partners and 0 WPL or IET projects.

Table1: Performance through the Years

	2020 (EOY)	2021 (EOY)	2022 (EOY)	2023 (YTD)
Enrollment	1754	658	1475	1837
MSGs	458	146	393	612
GEDs	96	97	112	133

## Goals

- Launching both WPL and IET’s was the primary focus of our PLC.
- WPL Goal: launch at least one WPL project with one employer partner.
  - IET Goal: submit at least one IET.
- Our key takeaways from the project were to:
- Submit and receive approval of at least one WPL planning tool
  - Begin implementation of one WPL at an employer partner leading to at least 20 WPL MSGs
  - Create a WPL package that could be utilized with future employer partners

### WPL: KCC Manufacturing Cultural Competencies

KCC Manufacturing selected salaried supervisors and team leads to participate in a cultural competency focused WPL in an effort to improve their managements skills when working with non-native English speaking employees. Milestones included:

- Demonstrating the ability to interact with others in a professional manner.
- Demonstrating proficient understanding of Cultural Competency training components related to working with non-native English speakers

Our initial plan was to have 3 cohorts of 15 participants each with a total of 12 hours / cohort. Year to date we’ve hosted two cohorts with a total of 15 students and will launch the final cohort of this fiscal year on May 31<sup>st</sup> with a plan to have up to 15 students. Out of the 15 students 11 have received a WPL MSG.

### WPL: KCC Manufacturing – ESL in Manufacturing

KCC Manufacturing selected staff to participate in Adult Education life skills English classes, on site during work hours, with a special focus on KCC Manufacturing safety, production / operations, and Human Resources vocabulary. Milestones included:

- Participants will be able to read, understand, and follow safety signage.
- Participants will be able to distinguish and demonstrate the difference between various work-related objects and materials and use them appropriately.
- Participants will be able to read, understand, and communicate vocabulary about human resources.

Our initial plan was to have 2 cohorts of 20 participants each with classes offered 2 days / week for 3 hours / class. Year to date we’ve hosted 3 cohorts with a total of 46 students receiving 24 WPL MSGs and 17 CASAS MSG’s - for a total of 29 MSG’s counting towards our performance measures.

## Results

- JCAE continues to build partnerships and grow our WPL JCAE continues to build partnerships and grow our WPL and IET opportunities for our students. Identifying opportunities for students to gain the skills they need for sustainable career opportunities is at the core of what we do and WPL and IET’s can help get us there while improving our performance metrics.
- At this time we have 2 approved WPL projects with one employer, KCC Companies, that have led to 34 MSGs.
  - We are currently working with a total of 7 employers to build WPL for their organizations.
  - Through our KYAE Strategic Partnership staff member we are regularly connected to new potential employer partners.
  - JCAE now has a Coordinator that is dedicated to WPL projects with employers.

## Conclusions

Although we have had success building partnerships with employers it takes an extensive amount of time to:

- Complete the Planning Tool
- Launch offerings with an employer partner

Through the work we’ve completed this year with IET’s and WPL’s, JCAE will be able to launch at a quicker rate in the new FY and for years to come. We plan to continue all of the WPL projects we’ve started and resubmit for approval in the new year. We’ve also been able to build a template “pitch” that we can use when working to launch new WPL projects with employers.

Our focus to provide WPL for both entry level employees and supervisory level employees has been an innovative approach that can be replicated through the state. Our goal was both reasonable and achievable. As you can see in Table 1 we have made a significant increase in the number of MSGs our students have earned and only expect this number to increase as we implement more IET’s and WPL projects.

## References & Acknowledgements

**Acknowledgments:** Ashley Pierce and Ana Lam have been instrumental in the launch of our WPL program.  
**References:** Ehresman, S. (2023, May 4). *Immigrants are an important, but underutilized segment of the workforce.* KentuckianaWorks. <https://www.kentuckianaworks.org/news/immigrants-brain-waste>