

Overview

Written by Administrator

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Regional Kentucky Works Program

Overview

In 1996, the federal government passed national welfare reform legislation aimed at decreasing the cash welfare assistance roles in the U.S. by changing the rules and regulations by which recipients can receive TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) funds. This philosophy of “movement toward self-sufficiency,” is promulgated by the partnership between the Big Sandy Area Development District and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. This arrangement provides KTAP (Kentucky’s Transitional Assistance Program) recipients in a 56-plus county service area in eastern and southeastern Kentucky with training and employment opportunities.

By utilizing TANF monies, The Regional KY Works Program department of the BSADD provides training opportunities through the planning, development, and contractual securing of various short-term trainings through area colleges, technical schools, adult educational centers and businesses.

Support personnel in the field work closely with KTAP recipients and area employers to ensure effective “employment matches”. These 'Employment Specialists' provide job development, placement, retention, and job advancement services to the participants. A continuous part of the Employment Specialists' responsibilities is facilitating self-sufficiency through employment and improving the lives of their clients.

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Additionally, Employment Specialists serve as valuable resources to employers and their “new hires” alike. Serving as liaisons and mediators, Employment Specialists continue their relationship with the KTAP recipients for nine months after they find employment to ensure they retain their jobs. They work closely with employers to resolve potential issues before they become disruptive in the workplace.

The Regional KY Works Program utilizes a wage reimbursement program as an incentive to employers to hire KTAP recipients. Under the wage subsidy agreement, KY Works will reimburse 75% of the participant’s wages for the first four months of employment and 50% of the wages will be reimbursed for the last two months of the six month period. Also, through this initiative, participating employers may receive training for their employees at little or no cost to them, interview screening services and referral, support personnel for their new employees, federal tax credits, and other appropriate employment related services.

The Regional KY Works Program of the Big Sandy Area Development District is a very successful program. In the years since its inception, it has grown from just a few counties in the Big Sandy Area to a much larger area now encompassing 56 counties across the eastern and central part of the Commonwealth. The services that are provided not only help low income individuals obtain employment, but it also assists businesses by offsetting costs associated with hiring. During the past 20 years, these services have directed individuals that were dependent on government aid and transformed them into working members of our society with financial stability. Having successfully moved many individuals off the roles of welfare into self-sufficiency continues to make the program strive to do their very best every day. The Employment Specialists continue daily work on job development and retention while constantly looking for ways to improve the lives of their clients through trainings and various projects. The Regional Kentucky Program is an organization that makes a difference in the lives of their clients, businesses, and society.

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