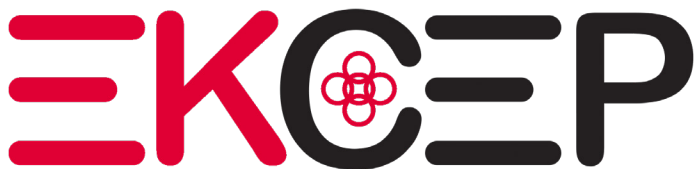




ANNUAL REPORT

PY 2024

EASTERN KENTUCKY



CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, INC.



WELCOME TO THE CUTTING EDGE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

It is my privilege to share EKCEP's Annual Report for Program Year 2024. This year marked progress, innovation, and a renewed commitment to our 23-county region. Every initiative reflects our belief that investing in our workforce is investing in Eastern Kentucky's future.

Our network of providers helped individuals in recovery build stable careers, while our new in-school youth program brought career guidance directly into classrooms. At the same time, our business services team and contractor partners supported more than 700 employers, strengthening talent pipelines.

These accomplishments were possible through the collaboration of our staff, contractors, and partners who share our vision of transforming lives through workforce development. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to build tomorrow's workforce, today.



Rebecca Carnes-Miller
Rebecca Carnes-Miller
Executive Director
EKCEP, Inc.

A Year of Resilience and Progress

EKCEP has long been committed to building opportunity in Eastern Kentucky, and this year we have witnessed the powerful impact of that mission. From supporting individuals in recovery to opening doors for young people, EKCEP's work continues to reflect the resilience of our region. The progress outlined in these pages demonstrates how collaboration among staff, partners, and communities creates lasting results that benefit both workers and businesses.

Looking ahead, the Board remains dedicated to ensuring EKCEP is equipped to meet the changing needs of our workforce. It is a privilege to work alongside such a committed team, and I am honored to share in the vision of building a stronger, more prosperous Eastern Kentucky.



Gilbert Holland
Chairman
EKCEP Board of Directors

Workforce Innovation in Action

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board represents a vital cross-section of local business, education, and community leaders committed to guiding EKCEP's mission. This year, we saw that mission come to life through job fairs connecting Kentuckians with employers, on-the-job training that built hands-on skills, and introducing youth to career pathways close to home.

The EKWIB remains steadfast in providing the oversight, guidance, and vision that keep our region at the forefront of workforce development. Every investment strengthens the long-term vitality of our communities. I commend the work of EKCEP's staff, contractors, and partners, and look forward to the continued progress we will achieve together in service to Eastern Kentucky.



Keith Gabbard
Chairman
Eastern Kentucky Workforce
Innovation Board

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EKCEP launched its first-ever fund development effort, including a new online giving portal for private, tax-deductible donations that directly support workforce activities.

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A transparent review of EKCEP's finances, including participant costs, funding streams, and overall expenditures supporting workforce programs across Eastern Kentucky.

Our Organization

Founded in 1968, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) is the workforce development agency for Eastern Kentucky, providing a range of employment services for adults, youth, and dislocated workers. EKCEP also connects employers to a skilled workforce through recruitment and job placement, along with financial incentives such as on-the-job training wage reimbursements, making it easier for businesses to invest in their employees.

In recent years, EKCEP has expanded its reach to include specialized support for people in recovery from substance use disorder and for individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration. EKCEP also operates a new in-school youth component of its Prosper Appalachia youth program that helps high school students explore careers, learn about opportunities close to home, and begin building pathways to success.

The Concentrated Employment Program

Concentrated Employment Programs (CEPs) are federally recognized initiatives that combat unemployment and poverty by providing job training, education, and support services to help individuals achieve lasting self-sufficiency. Especially effective in areas with persistent poverty, CEPs address barriers to employment while strengthening communities. EKCEP is one of only three CEPs nationwide—and the only one in Kentucky. In Eastern Kentucky, this model honors the region’s challenges, builds on its strengths, and serves as a tool for transforming lives.



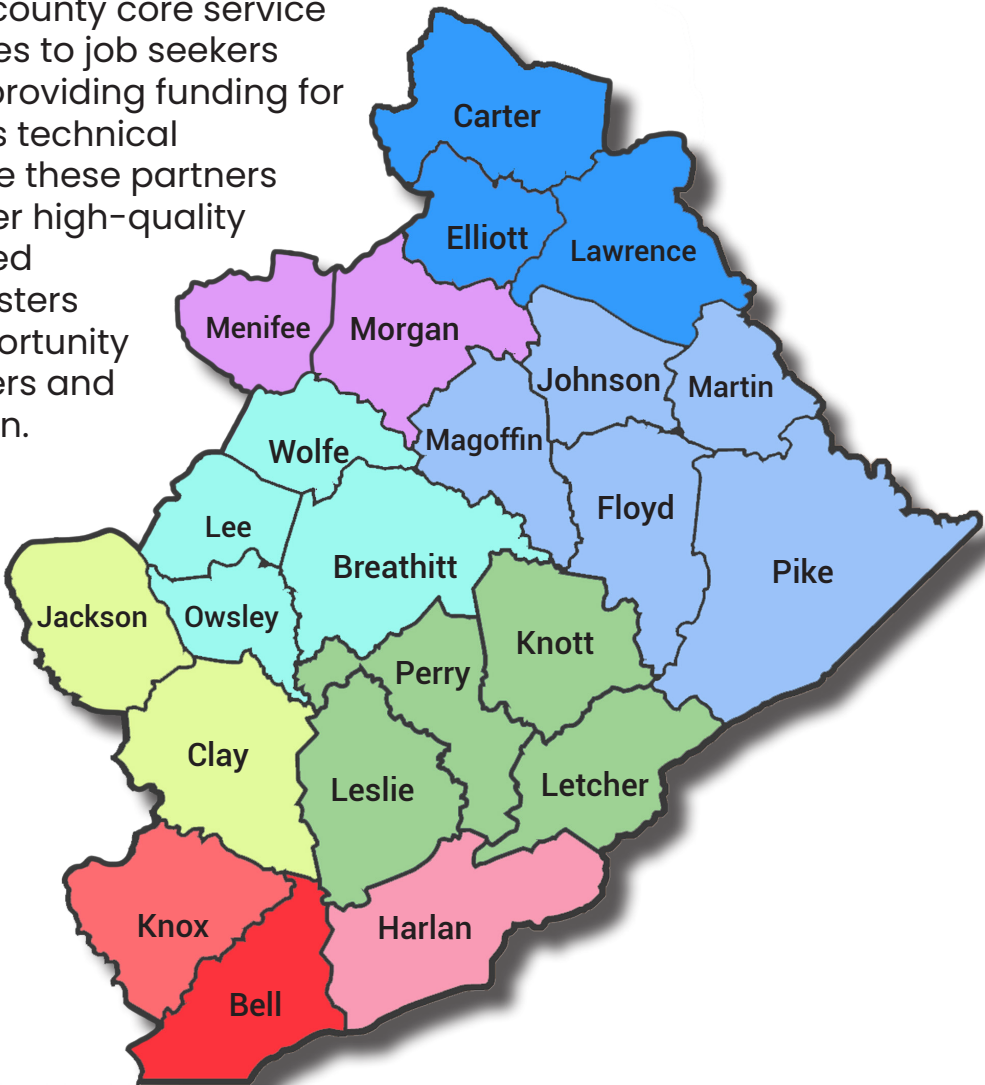
Pictured: Perry County resident Jeffrey Hartzler enrolled for EKCEP services and received support for training to become a lineman.

Partnerships in Service Delivery

EKCEP currently partners with local Community Action agencies across its 23-county core service territory to deliver direct services to job seekers and employers. In addition to providing funding for contractor staff, EKCEP supplies technical expertise and training to ensure these partners have the tools needed to deliver high-quality services. As one of 10 designated workforce areas, EKCEP administers Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs for workers and employers throughout its region.

WIOA Contractors

- Bell-Whitley CAA
- Big Sandy Area CAP
- Daniel Boone CAA
- Gateway CAA
- Harlan County CAA
- KCEOC CAP
- Middle KY CAA
- LKLP CAC
- Northeast CAA

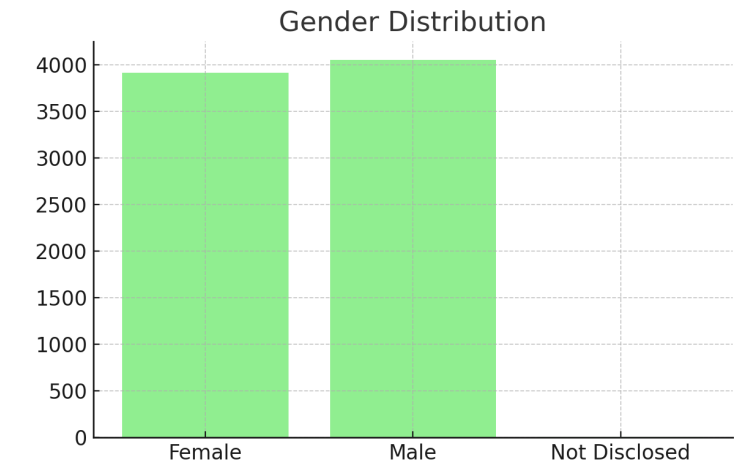
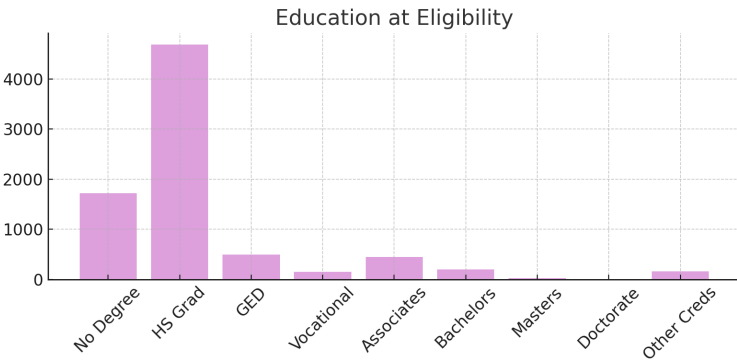


Kentucky Career Center EKCEP

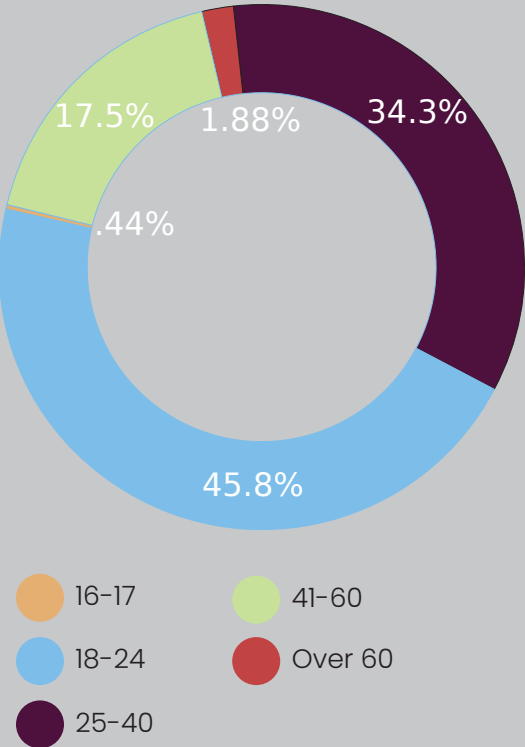
EKCEP’s contractor network forms the backbone of the Kentucky Career Center system in Eastern Kentucky, delivering workforce services in person across all 23 counties. Through nine Community Action agencies, this network brings career guidance, training, and employer services directly into communities. By maintaining a presence in every county, EKCEP and its partners ensure Kentuckians can access support close to home, strengthening the workforce and economy.

The People We Serve

Understanding who we serve is central to shaping EKCEP’s workforce development strategies. Demographic data from Program Year 2024 highlights the diversity of participants across age, gender, and education. These charts illustrate the makeup of individuals who accessed Kentucky Career Center services in Eastern Kentucky.



EKCEP Participant Age Distribution

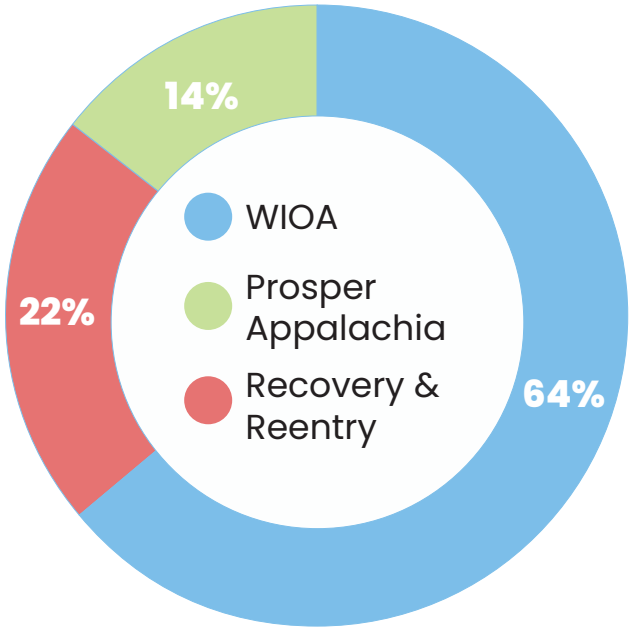


This Year's Highlights

Program Year 2024 marked a year of growth and meaningful impact for EKCEP across all of its programs. From helping young people explore career pathways, to supporting individuals in recovery and reentry, to providing vital training and job placement services for workers and employers, EKCEP strengthened its role as a trusted partner in workforce development. These efforts opened doors for individuals to achieve their career goals, and also helped build a stronger, more resilient economy for Eastern Kentucky.

DIVERSIFIED PROGRAMS

Most enrollments in EKCEP programs came through federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding. Yet, for the first time, over 30% of participants were served through non-WIOA programs, reflecting EKCEP’s success in blending funding streams for greater impact.



Pictured: Job seekers attend the Mega Job Fair in Pikeville, hosted annually by the Big Sandy Area Kentucky Career Center.

TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

12,820

Total unduplicated clients served for PY 2024 include all funding streams and programs.

TOTAL JOB PLACEMENTS

3,332

Total unduplicated placements for PY 2024.

CREDENTIALS EARNED

1,411

AVERAGE PARTICIPANT COST

\$2,113



Eastern Kentucky at Work

At EKCEP, the true measure of our work is in the lives we impact. Behind every program is someone with a dream, a family to support, and a future to build. These stories highlight just a few Eastern Kentuckians who, with EKCEP's services and partners, overcame challenges, gained skills, and secured meaningful employment—proof of both the power of opportunity and the resilience of our region's workforce.

In Perry County, Charles Spence experienced a life-changing transformation through Project REACH, EKCEP's recovery and re-entry initiative. Rebuilding his life post-addiction, he gained not only job readiness and placement support but also a sense of dignity and stability. His return to the workforce underscores the power of compassionate, comprehensive recovery services.



Kameron Collier, supported through EKCEP's Kentucky Career Center network, landed a rewarding lineman job—a career path that offers both technical skill development and strong earning potential. With the center's guidance, he overcame barriers and entered a high-demand trade, demonstrating how targeted support can launch meaningful, long-term employment.

Pineville native Ally Jones turned career uncertainty into opportunity with support from the Bell-Whitley Kentucky Career Center. After struggling to find work, she gained guidance and confidence that led to a position at Pineville Community Health Center. Her dedication soon earned promotions, and she now serves as Billing Coordinator and APRA Coordinator.



Ashley Stamper of Elliott County earned multiple healthcare certifications, thanks to the Northeast Kentucky Career Center. With full support for training, supplies, and transportation, along with resume help and job leads, Ashley earned SRNA, Phlebotomy, and EKG credentials. Her persistence paid off when she secured a position as an Attendant Care Aide at The Marion House, turning uncertainty into a sustainable career path.



Pictured: Abigail and Tracy Fee of Barbourville earned their CDLs with support from EKCEP and the Kentucky Career Center, launching new trucking careers and a brighter future together.

EASTERN KENTUCKY



CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, INC.

WIOA Programs

EKCEP administers the delivery of three core services under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Through its network of Kentucky Career Centers and Community Action partners, EKCEP provides career advising, job search support, training, and work experience opportunities to help individuals find employment and meet employer workforce needs.



SERVICES FOR ADULTS

The Adult program connects eligible job seekers with training and support to secure good jobs while helping employers meet their workforce needs.



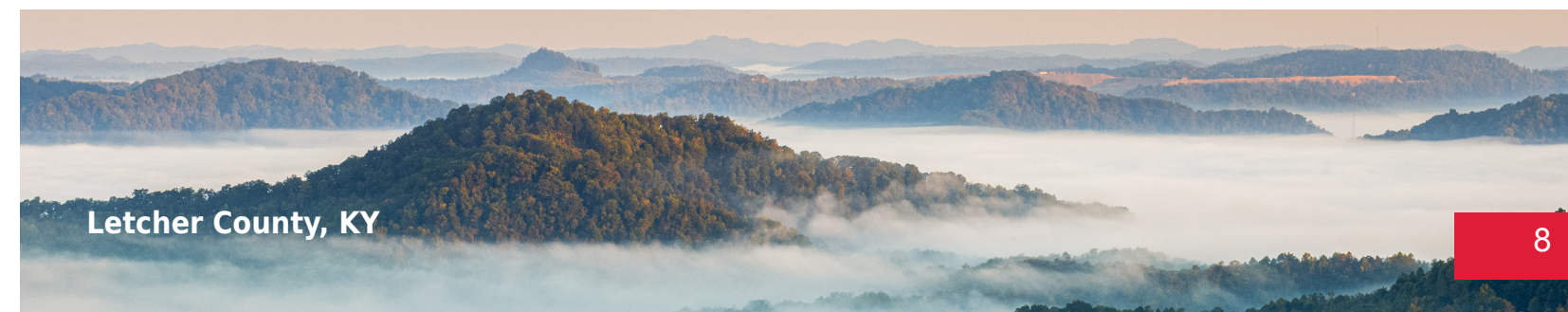
DISLOCATED WORKERS

Provides laid-off workers with career guidance, training, and job search assistance to re-enter the workforce.



SERVICES FOR YOUTH

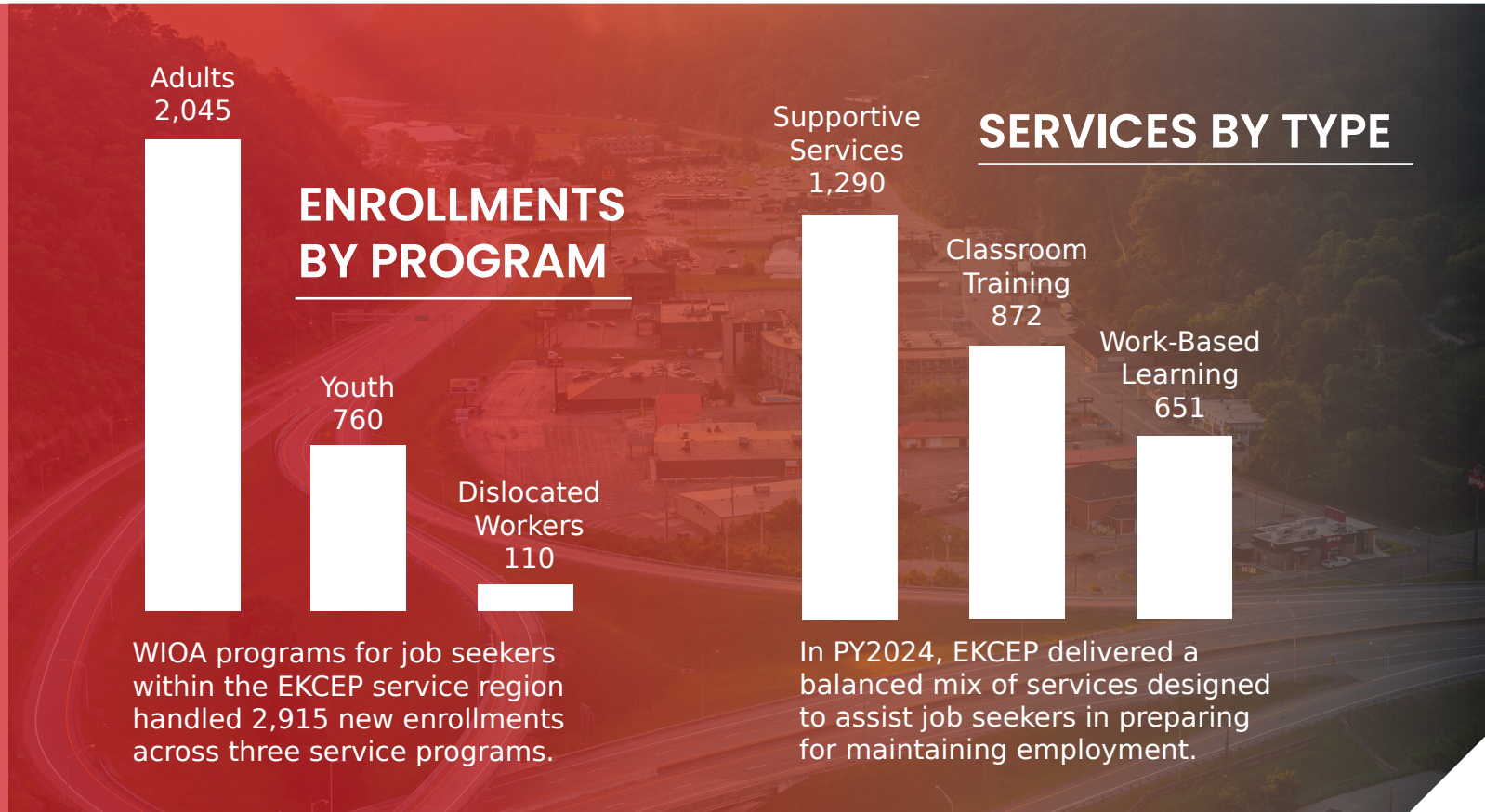
Supports in-school and out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-24 with training, work experience, and career exploration to build strong futures.



Letcher County, KY

WIOA Programs Driving Opportunity Across Eastern Kentucky

In Program Year 2024, EKCEP’s WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs continued to drive meaningful outcomes for individuals and employers across Eastern Kentucky. Through a mix of training, work-based learning, and supportive services, these programs helped participants overcome barriers, build new skills, and connect with sustainable career opportunities. Together, they form the backbone of our workforce system, ensuring that residents of all ages and circumstances can access the resources they need to succeed and that employers benefit from a stronger, more prepared talent pipeline.



Credentials Driving Workforce Readiness

Credential attainment is a key WIOA measure and indicator of how well programs prepare participants for success. In PY2024, WIOA-enrolled participants earned 959 credentials, including high school equivalencies, industry certifications, licenses, and degrees. These achievements validate skills gained through training and work-based learning while assuring employers that participants are job-ready.

959 CREDENTIALS EARNED

630 PY 2024 GOAL

152% GOAL ATTAINMENT



Job placements are a key outcome of EKCEP’s WIOA programs, reflecting how training and support translate into real employment opportunities for participants. These results demonstrate the direct impact of workforce services in connecting job seekers to sustainable careers, and helping employers meet their talent needs.

2,558 TOTAL JOBS

2,518 PY 2024 GOAL

101.6% GOAL ATTAINMENT

EKCEP’s WIOA programs set a goal of 2,518 job placements and achieved 2,558, reaching a 101.6% attainment rate, underscoring the effectiveness of aligning services with employer demand and ensuring that clients are not only trained but successfully connected to meaningful job opportunities. It also reflects EKCEP’s commitment to exceeding expectations and strengthening the region’s workforce pipeline.

The average cost per job placement across EKCEP’s WIOA programs was just over \$8,700. This figure reflects more than simply connecting participants to employment, it represents the investment in training, work-based learning, and supportive services that help individuals build skills and overcome barriers to work. The cost per job captures the full range of supports that make employment possible and sustainable for participants and served as the foundation for long-term success.

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

\$22,260,031

AVERAGE COST PER JOB

\$8,702



Pictured: Alex Torres (Fire/EMT) and Chandler Davis (Water Treatment) are among the first apprentices in Olive Hill’s new program, launched through EKCEP and the Northeast Kentucky Career Center to build local career pathways.

Business Solutions



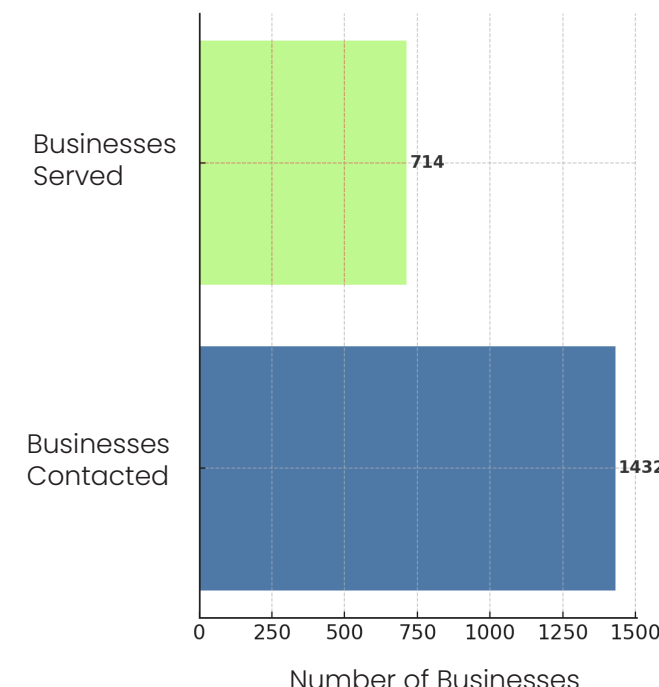
Pictured: Representatives from EKCEP, LKLP, and the KY Governor's Office of Early Childhood celebrated the launch of Eastern Kentucky's first Registered Apprenticeship in early childhood education in December 2024.

Also part of its stable of WIOA services, EKCEP's Business Solutions division offers a full range of services to help employers recruit and prepare workers who meet their specific needs. These services are delivered by certified business solutions consultants based in Kentucky Career Center locations across EKCEP's core 23-county region.

- Apprenticeships
- Incumbent Worker Training
- On-the-Job Training
- Recruitment & Screening
- Job Fairs
- Internships
- Customized Training

In Program Year 2024, EKCEP continued to strengthen its role as a trusted workforce partner for employers across Eastern Kentucky. Through our network of Business Services teams and our nine Community Action partners, we engaged with more than 1,400 businesses throughout the region. Of those, 714 businesses received direct workforce services, including needs assessments and connections to career seekers.

Business Engagement at a Glance

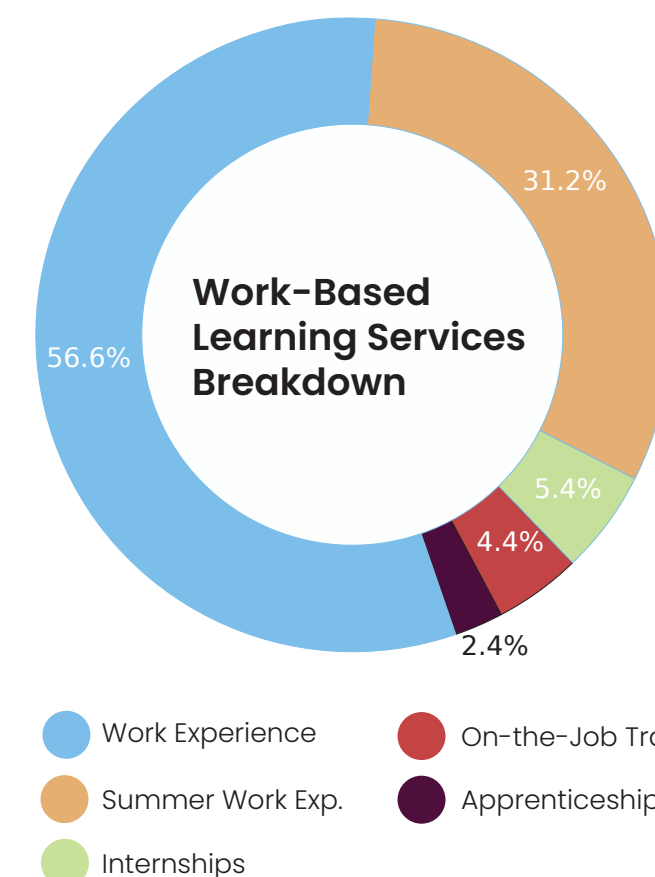


50%

In Program Year 2024, EKCEP and partner teams connected with more than 1,400 businesses across Eastern Kentucky, with half of them choosing to engage further by accessing direct workforce services. More than 700 businesses benefited from tailored support—ranging from needs assessments and work-based learning opportunities to incumbent worker training and hiring assistance.

689

Work-based learning was a focus of EKCEP's services in PY 2024, with more than 689 work-based learning opportunities provided by businesses through work experience, summer jobs, internships, apprenticeships, and OJTs. These programs gave job seekers valuable hands-on skills while helping employers in key industries strengthen their talent pipelines and address immediate workforce needs.



Businesses Served by County

Employers in every county within EKCEP’s 23-county service area had access to services through EKCEP’s Business Solutions team. Ensuring availability across the entire region is vital to ensure that even the most rural and hard-to-reach communities can connect to the same resources as larger population centers.

County	Businesses Served	County	Businesses Served
Bell	84	Leslie	12
Breathitt	39	Letcher	27
Carter	32	Magoffin	8
Clay	58	Martin	2
Elliott	12	Menifee	19
Floyd	15	Morgan	47
Harlan	161	Owsley	10
Jackson	31	Perry	21
Johnson	5	Pike	13
Knott	7	Wolfe	7
Knox	61		
Lawrence	28		
Lee	15		

714 Total Served

294
Needs
Assessments

In PY 2024, EKCEP conducted nearly 300 assessments with employers across Eastern Kentucky, providing customized guidance on workforce challenges and opportunities. Assessments are critical for businesses to identify skill gaps, training needs, and staffing priorities. Tailoring solutions to each employer, EKCEP ensures that workforce strategies are responsive and aligned with long-term business growth.

50
Job
Fairs

EKCEP and partner teams also coordinated 50 job fairs during the program year, connecting employers directly with hundreds of job seekers in their communities. For businesses, these events offer an efficient way to meet qualified candidates, streamline recruitment, and fill open positions quickly. For many employers, job fairs are a vital tool in addressing immediate staffing needs while building visibility as a local workplace of choice.

Special Programs

In addition to its core WIOA programs, EKCEP administers a diverse portfolio of special initiatives designed to meet urgent workforce needs and expand opportunities for job seekers. These include National Dislocated Worker Grants, Prosper Appalachia, Recovery and Reentry Services, and other targeted projects.

Collectively, these programs extend EKCEP’s reach by providing training, supportive services, and work-based learning opportunities while connecting thousands with employment. The following section details the scope and impact of these initiatives, illustrating how they complement EKCEP’s core programs and drive regional workforce development.

Special Program Enrollments

6,346



Pictured: Lee County residents Cassandra Arnold and Kyle Taulbee found stable careers and a fresh start through EKCEP’s Project REACH and the Middle Kentucky Career Center after overcoming addiction.



Breathitt County, KY

RECOVERY & REENTRY

A DIVISION OF EKCEP



In Program Year 2023, EKCEP formalized its longstanding work with individuals in recovery and reentry by establishing a dedicated Recovery & Reentry Services division. This structure consolidated all related initiatives under a single framework, enhancing oversight and program administration. During PY24, the division operated five programs providing services in more than 80 Kentucky counties.



The **Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment (SITE)** connects people in recovery with employment opportunities, pairing intensive case management and support services with direct links to participating employers.



Funded by an Opioid Abatement grant, **Project REACH** provides people in recovery with career services, training opportunities, and supportive resources to help them successfully transition back into the workforce and their communities.



Through its **Barrier Relief** program in 11 counties, the **Floyd County Drug Court Enhancement** initiative, and the **Crisis Stabilization Community Reentry** Grant in Hardin County, EKCEP provides targeted supports to help individuals in recovery or reentry overcome barriers, complete treatment, and transition into the workforce.

Pictured: Inmates in Knox County earned welding credentials through a Southeast Kentucky CTC course, a partnership with EKCEP and KCEOC, to boost employment prospects after release.



Pictured: Through Prosper Appalachia, Shelby Stump completed a paid internship at a local orthodontist's office, an experience that confirmed her interest in the field as she prepared for college.

SHAPING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE OF EASTERN KENTUCKY



1,783
High School Seniors Enrolled

1,211
Career & Skills Assessments Completed

803
Seniors Receiving Career Exploration

511
Work-Based Learning Services

283
Supportive Services

Prosper Appalachia is a key element of EKCEP's youth services and a key part of Kentucky's Putting Young Kentuckians to Work initiative. The program operates in more than 30 high schools across the region, providing students with hands-on work experiences, internships, and career exploration opportunities that prepare them for success after graduation. In addition, Prosper Appalachia is supported in five counties through an ARC POWER grant as part of EKCEP's Career Pathfinder Network pilot program, further expanding in-school career services and pathways to the workforce for young people in Eastern Kentucky.

Prosper Appalachia delivered a range of career readiness and supportive services to more than half of the region's graduating seniors in PY2024. Through personalized planning and hands-on experiences, students gained essential tools to prepare for long-term career success.



Pictured: Ashley Burke of Letcher County secured an internship with a Head Start program in Mayking that soon led to a full-time job.

PY24 IMPACT

3,752 CLIENTS SERVED

702 TRAININGS COMPLETED

4,104 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

762 EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

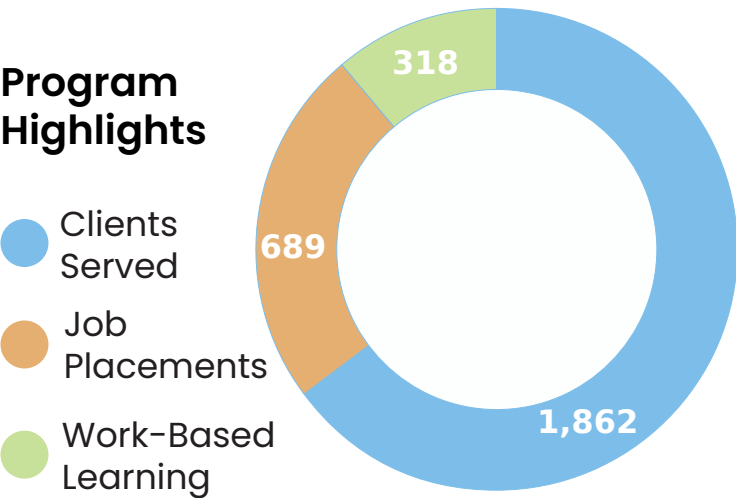
Special Grants Leave Lasting Impact in Eastern Kentucky

EKCEP administered three targeted grant programs that expired in PY 2024, including two National Dislocated Worker Grants and one H-1B Rural Healthcare initiative. Each was designed to meet urgent needs in our region. These programs provided critical support to communities grappling with disaster recovery and to healthcare systems facing persistent workforce shortages. All three programs concluded during PY24, but not before making a lasting impact on both participants and employers.

EKY FLOOD (Finding Local Opportunities for Overcoming Disaster)

Funded through a National Emergency Grant, this initiative assisted workers in counties devastated by the July 2022 floods. The program served 1,862 clients and helped place 689 individuals into employment. Participants gained hands-on work experience through 318 work-based learning placements.

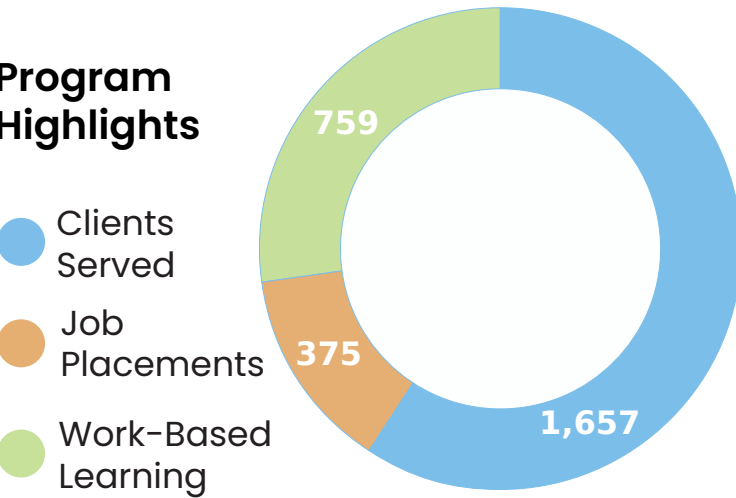
Program Highlights



Storm Program

Established following Governor Beshear’s emergency declaration after severe weather in February 2023, the Storm program provided employment assistance in affected counties until its conclusion in June 2025. The program served 1,657 clients, supported 375 job placements, and created 759 opportunities for work-based learning that helped stabilize families and communities.

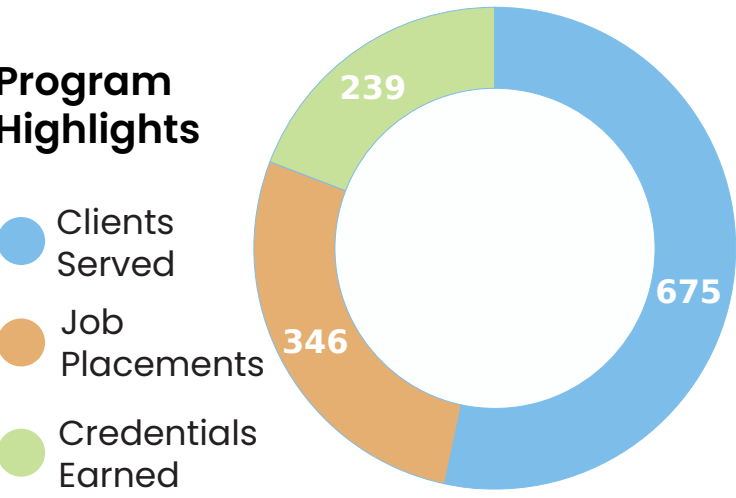
Program Highlights



H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant

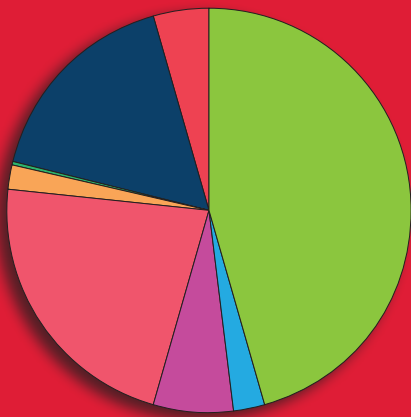
Addressing the region’s critical shortage of healthcare workers, especially nurses, this program linked EKCEP with partners including Appalachian Regional Healthcare, Pikeville Medical Center, Galen College of Nursing, and KCTCS to directly strengthen Eastern Kentucky’s healthcare workforce pipeline.

Program Highlights



Performance

New Enrollments by Funding Stream



- Adult 2,045
- Dislocated Worker 110
- EKY FLOOD 291
- Storm 988
- H-1B 87
- In-School Youth 20
- Out-of-School Youth 740
- Wagner-Peyser 194

CREDENTIALS EARNED

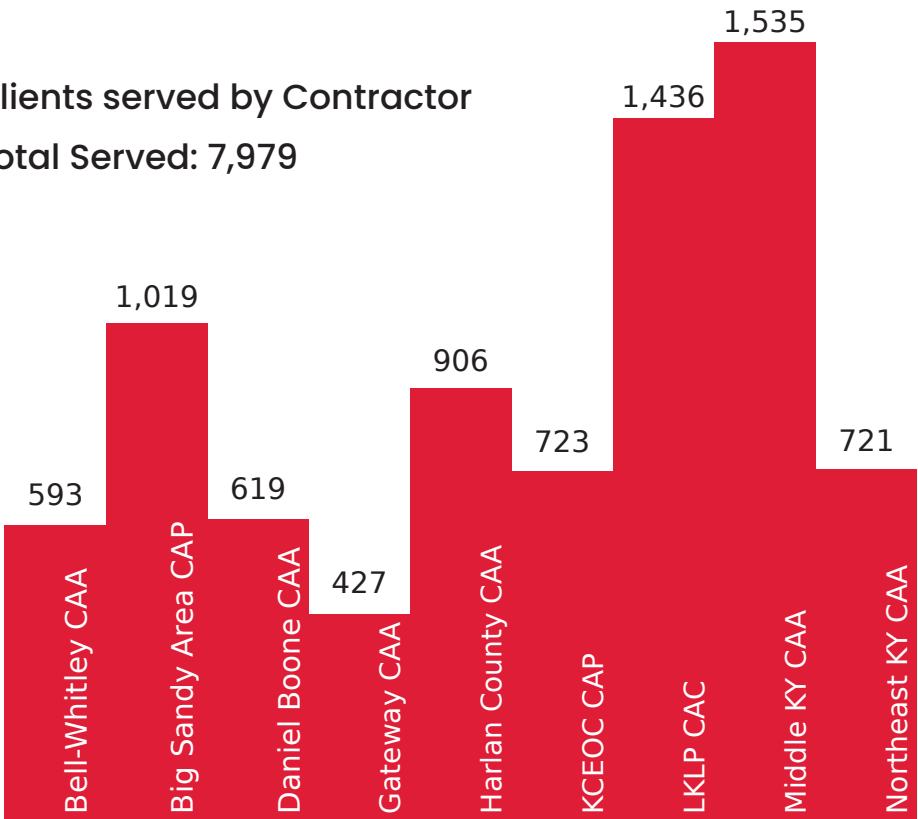
1,411

AVG. PARTICIPANT COST

\$2,113

Clients served by Contractor

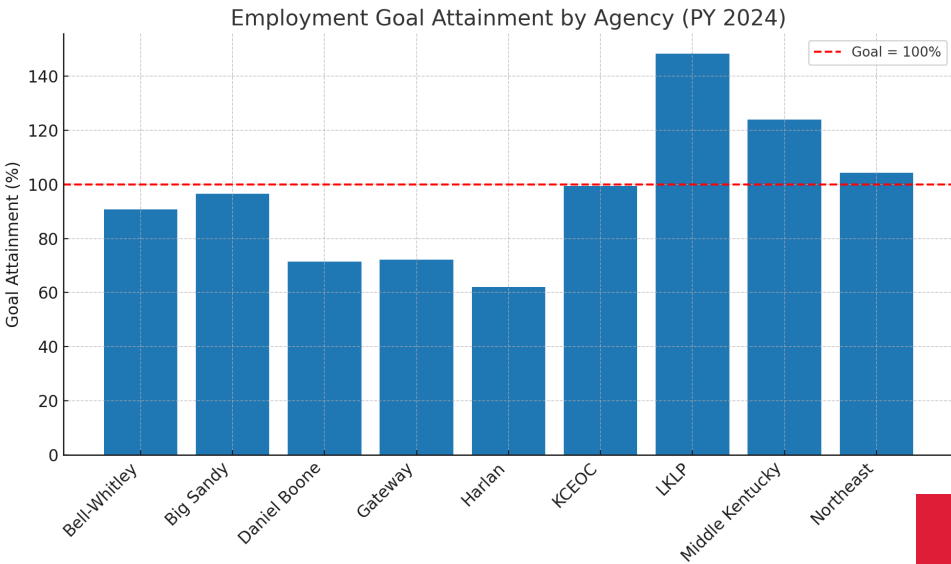
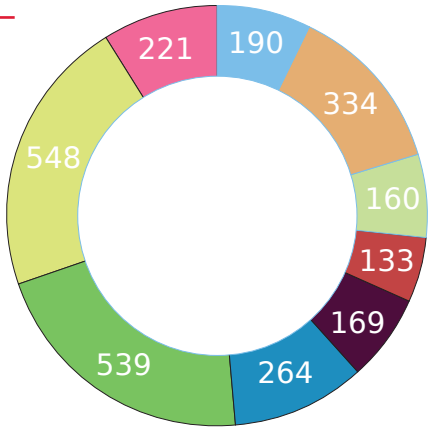
Total Served: 7,979



*Figures represent new and carryover enrollments.

WIOA Jobs by Agency

- Bell-Whitley CAA: 190
- Big Sandy Area CAP: 334
- Daniel Boone CAA: 160
- Gateway CAA: 133
- Harlan County CAA: 169
- KCEOC CAP: 264
- LKLP CAC: 539
- Middle KY CAA: 548
- Northeast KY CAA: 221



Fund Development

In Program Year 2024, EKCEP took important steps to expand its capacity by launching a dedicated fund development strategy. This effort includes exploring private grant opportunities and establishing a process to accept private donations.

To make giving accessible and transparent, EKCEP developed a secure on-line donation portal, allowing individuals and organizations to directly support our mission of preparing, expanding, and advancing Eastern Kentucky's workforce. Every contribution is invested in programs that provide participants with training, career pathways, and the support they need to succeed.

EKCEP remains committed to ensuring that 100% of private contributions directly benefit participants in their journey to meaningful employment.

Early Results

EKCEP's fund development officially kicked off in April 2025 during the annual Kentucky Gives Day campaign. During PY 2024, EKCEP collected \$8,809.93 in donations, including \$7,862.52 in in-kind contributions.



Floyd County, KY

Want to help?
Donate here:

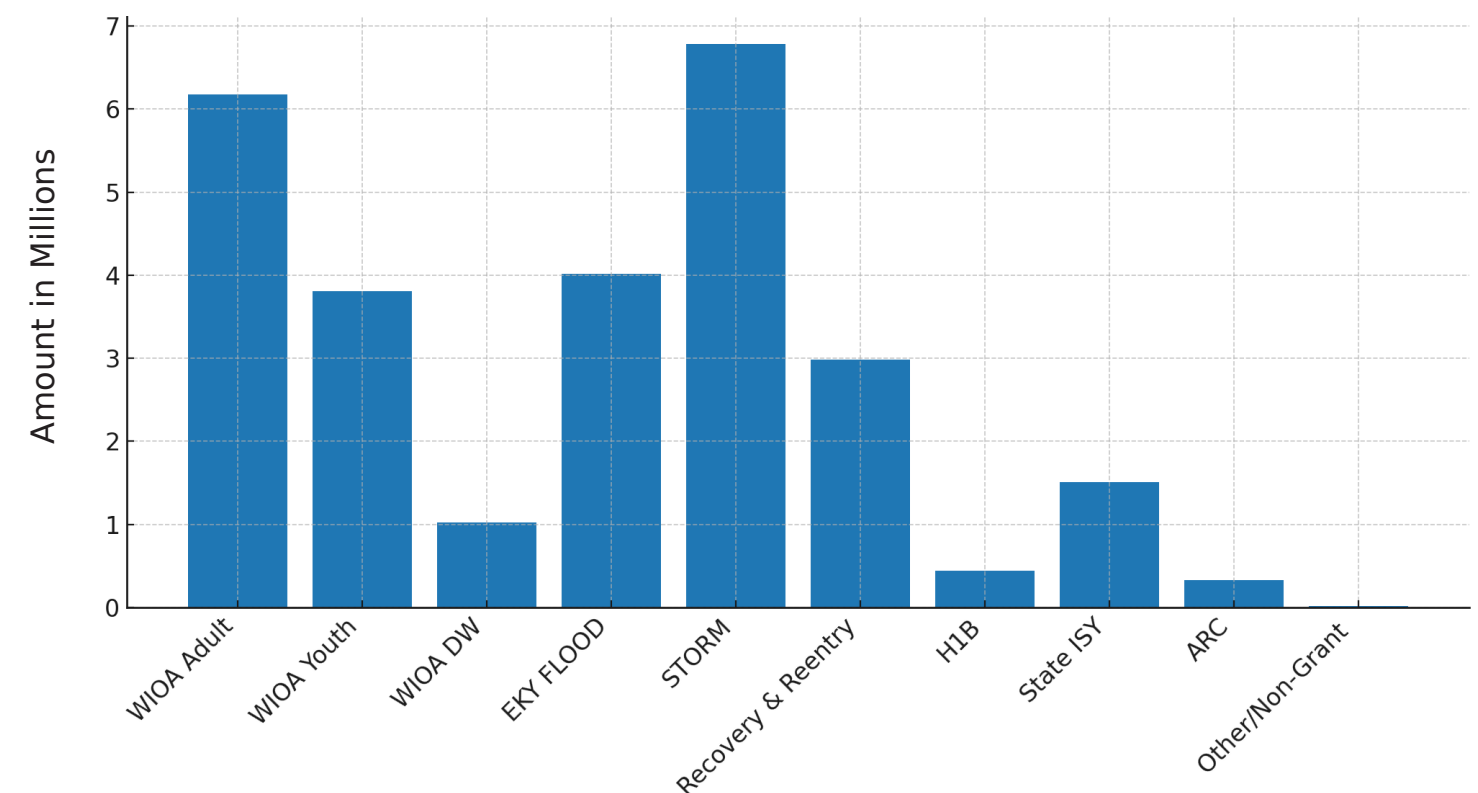


EKCEP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency. All contributions are tax-deductible, ensuring that your support provides a personal benefit and lasting impact.

Financial Summary

EKCEP maintained a balanced and transparent financial position in Program Year 2024. These funds supported a diverse portfolio of programs, ranging from core WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker services to targeted disaster recovery, healthcare, and youth initiatives. Strategic investment across multiple funding streams ensured that resources were directed where they were needed most—helping individuals train for in-demand careers, recover from economic disruption, and secure meaningful employment opportunities across Eastern Kentucky.

EKCEP Program Expenditures, PY 2024



EKCEP continues to deliver high-quality workforce services at a cost-effective rate, ensuring that every dollar invested provides meaningful training, support, and career opportunities for people across Eastern Kentucky.

Funding & Expenditures

Revenues: \$27,089,629
Expenditures: 27,089,629

Funding Stream	Total PY24 Expenditures
WIOA Adult	\$6,179,910
WIOA Youth	\$3,810,762
WIOA Dislocated Worker	\$1,026,887
EKY FLOOD NDWG	\$4,017,793
Storm NDWG	\$6,787,048
Recovery & Reentry	\$2,984,649
H-1B Healthcare Grant	\$437,631
State In-School Youth	\$1,508,547
Appalachian Regional Commission	\$324,707
Other/Non-Grant	\$11,696





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network