

**Getting Your Community Ready for Expanded Broadband and Growing Its Economy**

Our rural communities are not yet positioned to take full advantage of the New Economy (Information Age Digital Economy) as expanded broadband enables us to be even more apart of the Global Economy.

Your KY Work Ready Community (WRC) initiative is the best avenue to organize your community and work regionally to grow your economy. Essentially all six WRC criteria tie to the New Economy, however, the 90 percent broadband criteria is critical. However, getting broadband to every home and business addresses just the infrastructure issue and not the civic capacity opportunity. We must ensure our community is digital literate.

The broadband work group in your county must address the two issues: (1) plan and lobby for Fiber to the Home and (2) create and implement a plan to make your community digitally literate.

Your digital economy/broadband work group should include:

* local school district (superintendent or designee, IT coordinator. area technology center director, and appropriate other officials)
* county judge-executive, mayors or their designee dealing with technology - 911
* adult education
* librarian
* UK Extension service
* telephone and internet providers
* industry or major employers in county including health care
* higher education (including regional university assigned to your area)
* chamber of commerce and key civic organizations
* workforce investment board (East KY Concentrated Employment Program EKCEP)
* citizens engaged in e-commerce or great knowledge of IT
* youth (millennials who will build and be a part of your new economy)
* interested others

Our schools have lit fiber with high speed broadband to them representing key digital hot spots in the community. Additionally, the 17 school districts in the KY Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) Race to the Top grant award have gained valuable technology for classrooms, students and teachers as well as ongoing training in use of technology to personalize learning. Ninety-nine (99) schools have at least one Next Generation Learning Classroom. Those school districts have an Innovation Coordinator who is a valuable asset to your team.

This draft document is intended as a community tool kit for use in your county. I have included links to sites concerning broadband use and community development. Please let me know of other links or a tool kits our communities can use.

This community toolkit was produced as a part of an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to help build civic capacity in eastern Kentucky and help communities prepare for the New Economy.

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 **Community Tool Kit – Preparing for Fiber and the New Economy**

The **best on-line community kit** has been created by the Fiber to the Home Council located below. Pay particular attention to the “more info” tab beneath “Getting Started.” There is a drop down menu to find resources by state. The Kentucky link has several helpful resources.

<http://toolkit.ftthcouncil.org/>

**Kentucky Resources** under Fiber to the Home site. [http://toolkit.ftthcouncil.org/p/cm/ld/fid=127](http://toolkit.ftthcouncil.org/p/cm/ld/fid%3D127)

The KY **Work Ready Community (WRC) initiative** is the best avenue to organize your community and work to grow your economy and prepare for the New Economy. The link below is to the data resources pages for KY Work Ready. Tour the site to see the six criteria as well as best practices of other Kentucky counties.

<http://workready.ky.gov/Resources/DataTech.aspx>

**Next Generation Highway and KY Wired** site is being updated concerning advances in broadband in Kentucky and links to other resources. Under the “resources” tab there is a PDF Community Fiber planning document. It is very technical focusing on the detailed physical infrastructure of broadband. That link is below.

<http://kentuckywired.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

**Digital Literacy.gov** is the destination for digital literacy resources and collaboration. Use it to share and enhance the tools necessary to learn computer and Internet skills needed in today’s global work environment.

<http://www.digitalliteracy.gov/>

You can find **broadband information by county** on the National Broadband Map at: <http://broadbandmap.gov/>

**Broadband Communities Magazine** has great articles on the topic.

<http://www.bbpmag.com/>

**FCC- Lifeline** is a government benefit program that provides a discount on monthly telephone service for eligible low-income subscribers to help ensure they can connect to the nation's communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family and their children's schools, and call for help in an emergency. Proposal being considered to extend to broadband subsidy.

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-support-affordable-communications>

**South Dakota had a great start** on a site to promote broadband for economic and community development It has not been updated, however, it worth studying.

<http://broadband.sd.gov/Benefits-EconomicGrowth.aspx>

**EKCEP (East KY Concentrated Employment Program**) – our local workforce investment board, and federal **Tech Hire** initiative and funding

<http://www.ekcep.org/about-us>

**The Kentucky Technology Readiness Survey** provides a snapshot of technology infrastructures throughout Kentucky schools and districts. Information represents data gathered from schools and districts throughout Kentucky as of December each year. Latest report from 2013-14. Since then improvements especially Race to the Top Districts.

<http://applications.education.ky.gov/trs_reports/>

**What are the New Economy jobs of now and the future?**

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/microsoft/2015/12/10/the-top-4-it-jobs-for-2016/#6e24d94e41c7> (Forbes article talking about the latest “new” jobs in IT)

<https://www.roberthalf.com/technology/blog/most-grade-school-kids-will-have-jobs-that-dont-exist-how-should-they-prepare> (Brief article on using STEM, online communities to prepare students)

<http://ditchthattextbook.com/2013/04/25/12-ideas-to-prepare-students-for-jobs-that-dont-exist-yet/> (Tips on how to prepare kids for jobs of the future AND how this might look in the classroom)

**Community Development Planning**

A key component of effective community and economic development is building on the traditions, strengths, and assets of your community. Your planning group will compile these assets and strengths in their planning. The KY Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) is ambitiously creating county profiles to help citizens know of services and assets in their community in the KVEC service area which includes the five counties in Big Sandy, the eight counties in the KY River, and Bell and Harlan in the Cumberland Valley. The project will be launched shortly. For more information visit the KVEC web page at <http://www.kentuckyvalley.org/>

The KY Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) sponsored digital platform The Holler has numerous examples of exciting uses of technology and the Internet for learning by students and teachers.

<http://www.theholler.org/>

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has considerable helpful information on their site. [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov) and below is a community planning kit.

<https://www.arc.gov/images/programs/telecom/ARCBroadbandPlanningPrimerToolkit.pdf>

If you wish to learn more about community planning and the step by step process visit “The Community Tool Box” which is a service of the [Work Group for Community Health and Development](http://www.communityhealth.ku.edu/) at the University of Kansas. The link is below

[http://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits\](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits%5C)

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