



Building Oklahoma's Future Workforce

What is a KEN Champion?



The Role of the KEN Champion

Each Key Economic Network (KEN) has a Champion, an individual appointed by the governor who is familiar with regional economies and able to identify challenges currently impeding area businesses.

To be successful, the Champion must have strong relationships in the community and a willingness to work with other leaders to identify workforce training needs unique to their own community and industry. The Champion must also bridge the gap between business and education by building partnerships with education leaders.

Leading Regional Partnerships

The KEN Champion's initial task is to help develop a strong network of regional business and community leaders. Regional networks link employers from industry with education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations that focus on issues related to the region's high demand industries and critical occupations.

Data-Driven Discussions

Oklahoma Works provides Champions with current quantitative and qualitative data on workforce, industry and education trends in a profile of the regional

economy. The profile supports cross-sector, collaborative strategies and initiatives among network partners, based on historical data and projections.

Identifying Needs and Career Pathways

Along with Oklahoma Works partners, Champions help lead strategic discussions to identify workforce needs, education and training resources, and how gaps can be filled. The network's long-term objective is to align regional education and training systems with the needs of the regional workforce.

Ongoing Leadership

As networks are developed and career pathway programs are implemented, Champions routinely engage with their network to monitor progress, discuss new growth opportunities and identify any new barriers or challenges in the region. Champions also participate in statewide Oklahoma Works meetings to share lessons learned and regional best practices with their regional counterparts.

Oklahoma Works Ambassadors

From time to time, KEN Champions and network partners may be asked to speak about Oklahoma Works programs at community meetings or with the media to help promote the initiative.

"The most important thing is to create forums whereby dialogue can occur. Then we can start to move the needle in important ways. Without that level of dialogue and collaboration, we're never going to make progress."

Stuart Solomon
Tulsa Region KEN Champion



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