



# Annual Report

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STATE FISCAL YEAR 2018

Oklahoma Works: Building Oklahoma's future workforce.  
[WWW.OKLAHOMAWORKS.GOV](http://WWW.OKLAHOMAWORKS.GOV)

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## Contents

About Oklahoma Works.....	1
Introduction .....	2
INCREASING CAREER EXPLORATION AND EXPOSURE.....	3
INCREASING EDUCATION AND TRAINING ATTAINMENT .....	5
BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS.....	7
STRENGTHENING BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS .....	10
IMPROVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM.....	11
CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS .....	15

# About Oklahoma Works

Oklahoma Works is an initiative designed to increase the wealth of all Oklahomans through providing education and training for citizens to obtain quality employment. Our aspiration is to implement wealth-generating policies across the state, helping all Oklahomans to achieve the American Dream.

Since 2014, Oklahoma Works has been striving to create a better workforce development infrastructure in the state by aligning education and training with employer needs and coordinating private and public strategic priorities and plans across education, training and economic agencies. The initiative aims to facilitate quality employment for workers and improve the availability of highly skilled talent for business and industry. The initiative is a coalition of state agencies, educational institutions, businesses and other partners working together on four main objectives:

- Aligning and connecting the education and training pipeline with the needs of the state's regional economies;
- Integrating and using workforce and economic development data to inform policy, track progress and measure success;
- Building partnerships between local industry and education at the regional level; and
- Optimizing the use of resources and incentives.



# Introduction

Oklahoma faces a substantial gap between the skilled workforce we currently have and what will be needed in less than a decade. Data indicate 46 percent of Oklahomans have only a high school diploma or less; but by 2025, 70 percent of the state's jobs will require post-secondary certificates, credentials, and degrees. That means the majority of jobs will not be available to those without education and training beyond high school. Since 2014, Oklahoma Works has been implementing strategies to close this gap.

The Oklahoma Works Strategic Delivery Plan acts as a blueprint for building a stronger, more streamlined system. The plan includes critical strategies focused on: career exploration and exposure; increasing education and training attainment; strengthening career pathways; expanding business and education partnerships; making data-informed decisions; and optimizing resources. Partner agencies have been committed to the Oklahoma Works Initiative goals for four years and have invested resources to break down silos and build collaborative partnerships. All agency partners are aligning to the same priorities, including the state's 100 Critical Occupations, to maximize impact. Examples include:

- Adopting common outcomes reporting and shared measures of success;
- Prioritizing education and training programs that result in high-wage, high-growth jobs; and
- Strengthening the talent pipeline into Economic Systems that drive the state's economy.

As a result of aligned efforts and strong partnerships, the state has received more than \$5.5 million in outside investments to move the initiative forward and created policies to better support Oklahomans entering and succeeding in the workforce. Oklahoma has also been elevated on the national stage, being selected to participate in several national groups and initiatives.

Additionally, as a result of the initiative efforts, local business leaders in the state's Key Economic Networks (KENs) have forged relationships with partners to address regional workforce needs, including:

- Creating internships, apprenticeships, job shadows, industry tours and other career exposure opportunities;
- Educating teachers about local well-paying, in-demand careers in key regional industries and economies; and
- Collaborating with educators to build partnerships and guides for connecting education and training to workforce needs.

To ensure ongoing progress toward the initiative goals, 18 state agencies, the Oklahoma State Chamber, and the Office of the Governor meet monthly to share information, discuss barriers, and determine next steps. All of these partners are embedding the Oklahoma Works strategies and metrics into their own agency strategic plans and performance metrics to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Oklahoma Works initiative.

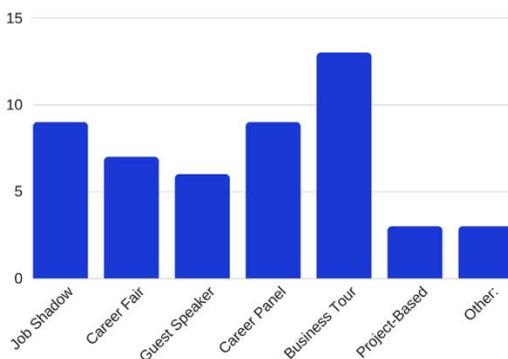
# INCREASING CAREER EXPLORATION AND EXPOSURE

## Career Expo Week

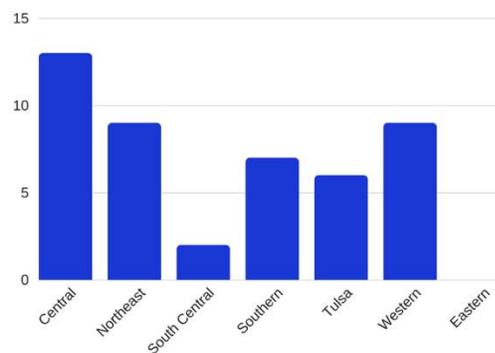
In November 2017, Oklahoma held the first statewide Career Expo Week. This week-long event connected students with businesses to give future talent an opportunity to explore the possibilities that await them in Oklahoma. Events during Career Expo Week also allowed local employers to showcase critical careers in demand industries to inspire and recruit new talent. Nearly 50 events were registered on our website, taking place in communities across the state, allowing students of all ages to tour businesses, shadow professionals from varied industries, and learn about high-demand careers in industries that drive our state’s economy. By growing Career Expo Week, Oklahoma hopes to:

- Introduce people to careers in businesses and industries in Oklahoma’s driver and complementary ecosystems and critical occupations;
- Empower Oklahoma businesses and industries in the state’s ecosystems and KEN regions to engage with educators, students, parents, and others about career opportunities;
- Change misconceptions of Oklahoma’s demand and critical occupations and the businesses and industries in Oklahoma’s driver and complementary ecosystems;
- Draw attention to the roles businesses and industries play in communities across the state; and
- Underscore the economic and social significance of demand and critical occupations and businesses and industries in Oklahoma’s ecosystems.
- Recognize the important roles apprenticeship, work-based learning, and career exploration play in developing a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs of Oklahoma’s growth and demand industries and occupations.

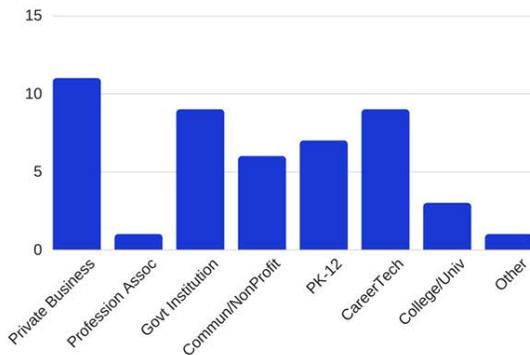
### Career Exposure Week Events By Type



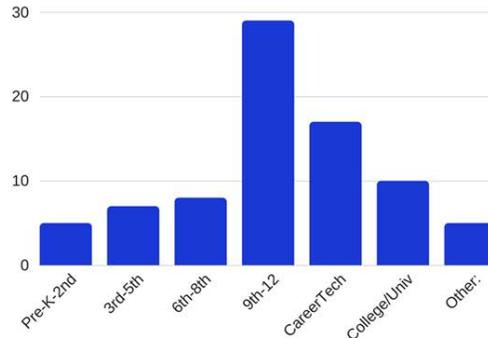
### Career Exposure Week Events By Region



### Career Exposure Week Events By Host Organization



### Career Exposure Week Events By Target Audience



### Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) and Advising

The Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) was recently developed by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) with input from students, families, educators and other partners. The ICAP equips students with the awareness, knowledge and skills to create their own individualized, meaningful exploration of college and career opportunities. In order to reflect students’ changing passions, aptitudes, interests and growth, the ICAP is a flexible, evolving document.

OSDE is currently in the second year of a three-year phase in process. The number of ICAP districts increased from 28 to 74 districts and from 59 sites to 134 sites for the 2018-2019 school year. As part of the ICAP expansion, counselors created a Career Advising Toolkit and will be creating an ICAP Implementation Guide for the upcoming statewide implementation of ICAP beginning in 2019-2020.

### Earn and Learn Oklahoma

In 2017, Governor Fallin issued Executive Order 2017-34 establishing a statewide goal, known as “Earn and Learn Oklahoma,” to increase the number of work-based learning experiences in the state to 20,000 by 2020. To pave the way toward achieving this goal, legislation was introduced to allow for long-term planning and work-based learning system development.

Governor Mary Fallin signed Senate Bill (SB) 1171, establishing a work-based learning program as an official duty of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development. This bill creates a dedicated funding stream for expanding and diversifying work-based learning opportunities in the state and established a Registered Internship program similar to the Registered Apprenticeship program. Funds will be used for pilot programs, local outreach efforts, public awareness campaigns, and services for employers and job-seekers.

## **Interactive Career Pathway Tools**

### Oklahoma Edge

The Oklahoma State Department of Education developed an online Learning Community for ICAP pilot school districts to use. Known as Oklahoma Edge, the one-stop interactive learning platform engages students, parents, educators, business, and the community to learn about careers in high-demand, high-skilled areas. Explore videos, infographics, and careers in the classroom. More information:

<https://osde.nextthought.com/app/>.

### OKCareerGuide

OKCareerGuide is an online tool available to all Oklahomans to explore and guide their future. Users can use the tool to take assessments, identify occupations, establish education plans and, ultimately, connect to employers. This year, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (ODRS), ABLE Tech, and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) partnered to address accessibility issues within the OKCareerGuide web application. The partners worked with the product vendor, Kudor, to improve accessibility in its implementation of the tool after ABLE Tech provided a high level accessibility evaluation to ODCTE and Kudor. Technical assistance on technology accessibility was provided to the ODCTE to ensure accessibility of OKCareerGuide.

### Oklahoma Works

Oklahoma Works launched a new searchable website with more interactive functionality and mapping capability. The improved site is more navigable and incorporates better integration of all partner resources and services. The site is designed to connect employers, employees and job seekers to information and programs that help build Oklahoma's workforce. The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development collaborated with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services to ensure the new site is fully accessible to Oklahomans with disabilities.

## **INCREASING EDUCATION AND TRAINING ATTAINMENT**

### **Launch Oklahoma**

Since being created through Executive Order 2016-41, the Launch Oklahoma initiative has been working to increase the number of Oklahoma workers with education or training beyond high school to 70 percent by 2025. During the summer of 2018, a marketing campaign was launched to promote this goal and connect more Oklahomans with the education and training they need to succeed in the workforce. The Launch Oklahoma campaign features a new website, [LaunchOklahoma.org](http://LaunchOklahoma.org), with the goal of creating a one-stop-shop for information related to certificate, credential and degree programs that lead to Oklahoma's Critical Occupations and Ecosystems. This includes a searchable database with program and occupational information and career exploration resources. A Launch Oklahoma promotional toolkit was

also created and is available to partner institutions, including videos, social media graphics, and other media content.



The Launch Oklahoma initiative established outcomes metrics to track progress toward achieving the state’s attainment goal. These measures examine success related to postsecondary enrollment, persistence, remediation, graduation/credential attainment, postsecondary credit earned in high school, work-based learning, and equity. This data dashboard is available on the Oklahoma Works website and is updated annually.

### **Military and Veteran Student Barriers**

Surveyed military and veteran students to determine barriers to accessing benefits or other challenges that keep them from completing education and training;

The Oklahoma Works Veteran Survey was conducted in September 2017 to better understand the obstacles and challenges military and veteran students face when accessing benefits or attending college. The survey was fielded to student veterans at postsecondary institutions across the state of Oklahoma. Among the notable findings were:

- The majority of students had college credits earned before enrolling in their current institution, however most reported not being given the opportunity to test and demonstrate skills gained from military service to receive credit.
- Many first generation students indicated they did not understand how to utilize their G.I . Benefits.
- A majority of students feel a one-stop-shop at educational institutions where veterans can go to receive assistance and access all resources needed is beneficial.

These survey results will be used to inform the work of Launch Oklahoma as we plan and implement strategies to increase adult education and training attainment. Find the full results here:

<https://oklahomaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Veterans-Survey-Results-one-pager.pdf>.

## **Reach Higher DirectComplete Program**

In 2017, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education were awarded a \$777,000 grant over a three-year period from the Lumina Foundation to support the Oklahoma Adult Promise pilot program. The grant builds on the work of the State Regents' Reach Higher adult degree completion program, which offers three discrete degree plans for working adults who have earned a minimum number of credit hours and want to complete an associate or bachelor's degree. Branded as Reach Higher DirectComplete, the pilot program will offer assistance to adult students willing to pursue degree programs deemed by business, industry and other state partners to meet specific workforce needs as defined by Oklahoma Works' 100 Critical Occupations. The State Regents are working with a variety of key stakeholders in the implementation of this grant, including Oklahoma Works, tribal education offices, local workforce boards, colleges and universities, and core state agencies.

## **STEM Degree Production**

The number of STEM degrees and certificates conferred at Oklahoma's public colleges and universities reached a record high during the last academic year, with more than 6,700 students receiving degrees and certificates in STEM fields. This represents a 47 percent increase in STEM degree and certificate production over the last seven years.

# **BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS**

## **Youth Apprenticeship**

Through a partnership with Dell and ASTEC Charter School, Oklahoma launched its first youth apprenticeship program in 2017. The program allows high school seniors to work 30 hours a week while completing the remaining high school credits to graduate on the campus of OSU-Oklahoma City. While on campus, students also enroll in college courses to allow them to obtain the technology certifications needed to enter and advance in the Dell program. Students start off making \$15 per hour and receive wage increases as certifications are completed. Students also earn college credit toward an Associate's Degree.



*Students at Oklahoma City's Advanced Science and Technology Charter School and OSU-OKC, from left, Corina Mejia, Mayra Viezcas, Brenda Oleveda and Juan Ruiz, are part of the Dell Youth Apprenticeship Program. Photo credit: OSU-OKC*

### **Word-Based Learning Accounting Pilot**

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) have partnered with the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development to establish a pilot program to increase work-based learning opportunities in the accounting field. Through this pilot, students will have the opportunity to earn a paycheck and receive college credit for a degree while learning skills immediately relevant to the accounting profession in an approved internship. Businesses, in turn, have the chance to develop a relationship with and retain highly skilled graduates in the accounting field. This pilot program directly aligns with Governor Fallin's "Earn and Learn Oklahoma" initiative to increase the number of work-based learning experiences to 20,000 by the year 2020.

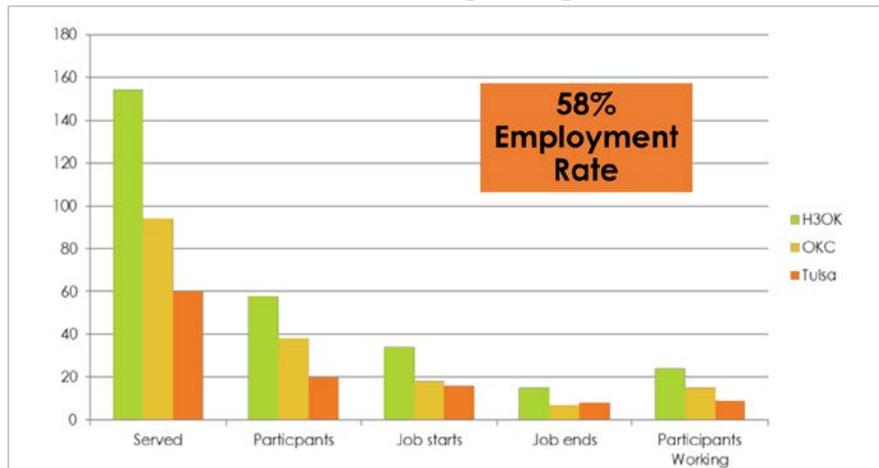
### **Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists**

Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS) fulfill a unique role in the support and recovery from mental illness and substance abuse disorders. A PRSS is a person in recovery from a mental illness and/or substance abuse disorder, who has been trained to work with others on his/her individual road to recovery. The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) increased participation in job-skills training for Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists by 25% in partnership with the Southern Workforce Board and Carl Albert Community Mental Health Center, bringing the total to 100 participants receiving valuable on-the-job training and support in their recovery.

## Individual Placement and Support Program

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) implemented the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program in Oklahoma City and Tulsa in order to link individuals struggling with addiction to employment. Research indicates consistent employment helps individuals achieve and sustain sobriety. The IPS program promotes job readiness, employment and education. In its second year, IPS has achieved a 58 percent employment placement rate among participants and has served a significant number of individuals with barriers to employment, including homeless veterans.

## IPS Annual Employment, 2017



Source: OK Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

## Teacher Certifications

As a way to overcome Oklahoma's teacher shortage, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) partnered with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Network to Transform Educator Preparation (NTEP) to fund professional development and test fee waivers for alternative and emergency certified teachers.

OEQA also partnered with Troops to Teachers to provide test fee waivers for veterans wishing to enter the classroom as teachers, as well as the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence to provide test fee waivers for candidates wishing to become English as a Second Language teachers.

# STRENGTHENING BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

## State Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award

In March 2018, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) recognized 27 innovative business and higher education partnerships with the Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award, which is designed to highlight partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants. Colleges and universities involved in these partnerships provide \$500 for tuition waivers to employees of partnering businesses; internships that enable current students to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents, in turn, provided a \$500 match to the waivers.

## Teacher Externships

Teacher externships offer educators unique opportunities to learn about and explore jobs in diverse industries throughout the state. Teachers then use this knowledge to help inform students of their career options after high school, including the kinds of skills, education and training required to succeed.

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education (ODCTE) collaborates with partners to coordinate the successful Oklahoma Education and Industry Partnerships (OEIP). Dozens of teachers participated in events in Woodward, Pryor and El Reno. The multi-day events allow teachers to learn about STEM industries and occupations vital to the state and share real-world applications of classroom learning with students. The events included industry tours, speakers, and workshops. Participants received a \$100 stipend, \$200 Pitsco gift card, and had the opportunity to receive a \$750 grant.

Additionally, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) received a grant from the Oklahoma Business Roundtable to offer paid teacher externships during the summer. A total of 21 teachers participated, gaining valuable knowledge about different kinds of careers and industries. Businesses offering teacher externships include: Terracon, Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, AAON, Kimray, and American Castings.

## Key Economic Networks (KENS)

Oklahoma's Key Economic Network (KEN) Champions have prioritized the goals of increasing internship and apprenticeship opportunities, increasing participation in teacher externship programs, increasing employability skills, and hosting partner engagement events to spearhead efforts to align and connect education and industry to meet regional workforce needs. Through KEN networks, business and industry have:

- Created a new Registered Apprenticeship Program;
- Hosted dozens of teacher externs from numerous high schools;

- Hired interns, hosted job shadows, and offered bridge to college programs following high school graduation;
- Participated in career exposure and exploration events, including the Oklahoma Educator Industry Partnership (OEIP), 3<sup>rd</sup> graders go to work, career days, Career Expo Week, and more;
- Collaborated to develop an Education and Business Partnership Toolkit; and
- Leveraged partnerships to expand career pathways initiatives through the local Career Tech and higher education institutions.

## IMPROVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

### State, Local and Administrative Policy

#### State Occupational Licensing Task Force

In December 2016, Governor Fallin called for the formation of the Occupational Licensing Task Force to study the issue of occupational licensing in Oklahoma and provide recommendations. In 2017, the Task Force released a draft blueprint for analyzing occupational licensing. The blueprint serves as a guide to evaluate whether government licensing is necessary in a particular area. The blueprint takes factors such as public health and safety risks, means to protect public interest, and board member participation in to consideration to determine if a license is appropriate or if a less restrictive means could be applicable. In Jan. 2018, the Task Force released its final report outlining recommendations for reform:

<https://www.ok.gov/odol/documents/FINAL%20Report.pdf>.

Since that time, SB 1475 was passed establishing the Occupational Licensing Advisory Commission. The Commission is tasked with reviewing all occupational and licensing regulations in the state at least once every four years and making recommended changes to the Legislature. As a result of this work, the Oklahoma Department of Labor also received a \$450,000 U.S. Department of Labor grant to implement strategies to reform state occupational licensing.

#### State Regents' Task Force on the Future of Higher Education

At their meeting on February 1, 2018, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) accepted the Task Force on the Future of Higher Education's Report on the Future of Higher Education, which outlines the Task Force's recommendations to strengthen Oklahoma's state system of higher education. The report was unanimously approved by the 68-member Task Force at its meeting on January 31, 2018. Formed by the OSRHE in March 2017, the Task Force examined system operations, including academic models, online education, structure, fiscal services and operational efficiencies, workforce development and technology. As part of the report, the Task Force identified several recommendations designed to strengthen workforce development and further enhance the relationship between higher education and business. Recommendations from the Task Force include:

- Working with the Council of Presidents and various chambers of commerce to develop a statewide strategy for engaging business and industry to better align academic programs to meet current and projected workforce needs;
- Requiring any new degree program request to demonstrate that the program will produce graduates for the 100 Critical Occupations identified by Oklahoma Works or related to one of the five key wealth generating ecosystems (aerospace and defense, energy, agriculture and biosciences, information and financial services, and transportation and logistics); and
- Developing policies and procedures to expedite the approval process for new workforce-oriented programs needed by business, including microcredentials.

For more information about visit: <https://www.okhighered.org/future/docs/final-report.pdf>.

### State Guidance Documents for Career Pathways and Work-Based Learning

In 2017, the Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development released guidance documents to help inform the work of Career Pathways and Work-Based Learning partners. These documents establish common definitions and a shared vision for the creation and sustainability of a statewide career pathways system and work-based learning activities.

## **State and Local Programs**

### Specialized Recruitment for Webstaurant Store

Faced with the challenge of filling close to 200 job openings in a short window of time Webstaurant partnered with the workforce development system in recruitment of job seekers. The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) identified innovative ways to educate the community on the tremendous opportunities Webstaurant was providing, including targeted social media messaging, job seeker emails and career fairs.

Because of this collaborative effort Webstaurant met its goals. The Durant facility currently employs 170 associates with an average payroll of \$5.59 million flowing back into the local economy. Starting wages begin at \$14-\$16.50 per hour and the earning potential of over \$20 per hour after five years, in all positions. The community has since seen other employers raise their respective starting wages in order to remain competitive.

### Decreased Wait-Time for TANF

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) began allowing Carl Albert State College to administer the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) at the same time as the Educational Assessments. For those who test as low probability for substance abuse, it allows the Worker the opportunity to certify the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) much sooner, and in some instances that same day. This eliminates the need for clients to leave OKDHS and wait up to a week or more for their SASSI to even be scheduled. Decreased time certify TANF allows OKDHS to get benefits into the home much sooner, promoting family stabilization and getting the TANF recipient engaged in an appropriate TANF Work activity in a timely manner.

### TANF Orientation Program

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) launched a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) orientation program in Oklahoma County to familiarize participants with the program. The two-week work readiness program introduces the concepts and goals of TANF, assists with informed decision making, and removes barriers to employment and education and training prior to the beginning of their work activity. Partner education and training entities have noted since the program began, TANF recipients arrive to their activity more settled and focused than before. This will ultimately lead to higher completion rates of TANF work activities, which in turn, leads to more skilled workers trained for Oklahoma's workforce.

### SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) program was rebranded as *OK SNAP WORKS* and underwent a significant expansion from 1 to 5 contractors in Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties. *OK SNAP WORKS* provides unemployed SNAP recipients with opportunities to reduce barriers to finding and maintaining employment through job search, training and support, vocational education, job retention services, on-the-job training, support services and soft skills development. Concentrated efforts have been placed to help unemployed Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) SNAP recipients achieve economic self-sufficiency by automatically referring them to a provider. However, any interested SNAP recipient able to work and not receiving TANF may participate in this program. *SNAP WORKS* is a completely voluntary program funded by the US department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

### Work Experience for Disabled Oklahomans

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (ODRS) established a 10-month apprenticeship program in Tulsa to offer jobseekers a chance to work as a receptionist in a local office to gain work experience, practical experience for resume building and build personal skills. To date, all five participants enrolled in the program have been successfully employed with businesses in Oklahoma after the completion of the program.

## **Professional Development**

The Oklahoma Works Initiative has elevated Oklahoma on the national stage. As a result, Oklahoma has been nationally recognized as leaders among states and selected to participate in several national groups and initiatives, as well as recognized for national awards.

### National Skills Coalition Work-Based Learning Academy

Oklahoma was one of five states selected to participate in the National Skills Coalition Work-Based Learning Academy. As part of the cohort, state teams will advance state policies to expand work-based learning opportunities for low-income communities.

### Skillful State Network

Oklahoma was one of 20 founding member states for the State Skillful Network. The initiative marks the national expansion of Skillful, an initiative to create a skills-based labor market that better serves all Americans in a rapidly changing economy. Skillful, a non-profit initiative of the Markle Foundation with many partners, is working to achieve a skills-based labor market to help millions of Americans overcome barriers to obtaining better-paying jobs in today's digital economy. Skillful helps employers achieve the workforce they need by providing data, tools, and resources that enable the adoption of skills-based hiring and training practices. Coaches and digital services enable job seekers to learn what skills are in demand and access training at any stage of their career. At the same time, Skillful aligns employers and educators so that their training programs teach the skills required to succeed in today's economy.

### U.S. Department of Labor Peer Cohorts

Oklahoma was one of eight states selected to join the U.S. Department of Labor's Future of the American Job Center peer-learning cohort to identify ways to improve services to job-seekers. Oklahoma was also one of eight states selected to join the U.S. Department of Labor's Youth Cohort Challenge to identify solutions for effectively engaging and retaining out-of-school youth in workforce programs. These peer learning opportunities aim to spur innovation in service delivery and allows Oklahoma to be on the forefront of national improvement efforts.

### Integrating Innovative Employment and Economic Stability Strategies (IIEESS) demonstration

The Oklahoma Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program was one of eight states selected by the Office of Family Assistance to participate in the *Integrating Innovative Employment and Economic Stability Strategies* (IIEESS) demonstration. This is a program where Oklahoma TANF is setting up two pilot programs in Oklahoma and Pittsburg Counties utilizing motivational interviewing and coaching skills with the goal of moving an increased number of TANF recipients into the workforce and reducing the number of people returning to the TANF roles.

### SNAP 2 Skills Technical Assistance project

In conjunction with the Oklahoma SNAP WORKS expansion, Oklahoma took part in a SNAP 2 Skills Technical Assistance project. SNAP 2 Skills is a National Education and Training (E&T) project to help states have successful expansions of E&T programs via providing tool kits, on site visits, mentoring, technical assistance, webinars, guidance, etc. This project goes through September 2018. Oklahoma was one of 10 states selected to receive/take part in this project. Our SNAP 2 Skills partner is Seattle Jobs Initiative, Inc. (SJI). With SJI's guidance and feedback, SNAP WORKS has developed a thorough provider handbook, onboarding manual, a tool kit for providers, and multiple templates for reports. In addition, Oklahoma was able to send someone to SNAP 2 Skills Academy. The academy teaches participants how to expand a program from beginning to end. Oklahoma's next phase of expansion is the participants project, anticipated to launch by the end of 2018.

### Other National Recognition

The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission's own Jeff Fryer, of Muskogee, received the Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award for the 2018 Outstanding Local Veterans Employment

Representative. Jeff regularly conducts outreach to employers and veterans in eighteen counties across Oklahoma, the largest area of responsibility in the state. He has built a network of veterans seeking employment, hiring managers, local chambers of commerce, and rotary clubs which enables him to pass along information regarding candidates and job openings and connect veterans with employers seeking veteran talent.

## CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

### Governor's STEM & Entrepreneurship Summit 2017

The 2017 STEM and Entrepreneurship Summit was held in November 2017. The event brought together business and education leaders to focus on the intersection of entrepreneurship, apprenticeship and STEM education in Oklahoma communities.

### Oklahoma Works Partners Conference

More than 300 Oklahoma Works System Partners attended the annual Oklahoma Works Partners Conference in May 2018. The purpose of this conference was to strengthen the Oklahoma workforce development system through innovation, alignment and improvement of employment, training, and education programs in the state, as well as to promote individual and statewide economic growth. The conference brought together a variety of partners for education, professional development and collaboration. Subject matter experts including representatives from different federal agencies offered expertise to improve the knowledge of the individuals working to serve Oklahoma.

### Western Governors Association (WGA) Workforce Development Initiative

Oklahoma was selected as one of four regional meeting sites to host the WGA Workforce Development Initiative Meeting in October 2017. The meeting focused on the many workforce efforts, challenges and successes happening in Western states. Participants explored innovative ideas and best practices related to career pathways, education and training attainment, and work-based learning. Learn more: <http://westgov.org/news/gov-fallin-urges-closing-of-skills-gap-at-oklahoma-workforce-workshop/>.

### National Governors Association (NGA) Talent Pipeline State Leader Forum

Oklahoma hosted the NGA Talent Pipeline State Leader Forum in Oklahoma City in July 2017. The purpose of this meeting was to facilitate cross-state discussions regarding progress made in talent pipeline system change within the 8 participating Talent Pipeline Policy Academy cohort. The group reviewed, discussed, and generated ideas to be incorporated in the Talent Pipeline Systems Change Roadmap. See full report here: [https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NGA\\_Talent-Driven-Economy\\_RoadMap.pdf](https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NGA_Talent-Driven-Economy_RoadMap.pdf).

### OK Essentials Training

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development hosted the Oklahoma Essentials training for partners of the Oklahoma workforce system. In partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and the Center for Work Ethic Development, Oklahoma Essentials was a one-day workshop for front line staff and local partners held in five locations across the state. The series was made up of one-day “train the trainer” workshops on soft skills, financial literacy & entrepreneurship.

### TechAccessOK Conference

Oklahoma ABLE Tech, ODRS, and other partners sponsored the TechAccessOK Conference was the second in a series of annual technology accessibility conferences for web developers, policy administrators, purchasers, and others, to assure public accessibility of Oklahoma state agencies, higher education institutions and the career and technology education centers.

### Equal Opportunity Officer Summit

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development hosted a statewide Equal Opportunity Officer Summit.