



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

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Kansas Governor's Council of Economic Advisors Selected by U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and USA Funds to Join Learning Network to Close the Skills Gap

Governor's Council of Economic Advisors to Pilot-Test Talent Pipeline Management Practices

(Washington, DC) - The Kansas Governor's Council of Economic Advisors was selected today as one of seven regional partners to participate in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management initiative to close the skills gap in America. Launched in November 2014, the initiative seeks to transform the relationship between America's businesses, educators and workforce providers by pilot-testing strategies and practices that have been successful in improving products and services to address challenges in the talent pipeline related to recruiting, hiring and retaining employees.

"This initiative is focused on new approaches to ensuring employers have the skilled workforce they need to compete in the 21st century and employees have the education and credentials required to do the work," said U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation vice president, Cheryl Oldham. "With 5 million vacant jobs in the United States, the frustration level has understandably reached a new high among businesses desperate for skilled workers and with students who want to know that their education and skills training will lead to a good job and future success."

The Talent Pipeline Management learning network ("learning network") will operate like a new product test team, experimenting with different strategies and innovative practices to confirm what works and what doesn't. Each partner within the learning network will pilot one or more of the following talent pipeline practices: organizing new collaboratives that manage employer engagement; identifying the type and amount of talent needed; determining the competency and credentialing requirements for those positions; identifying where businesses get their best talent today; designating preferred providers and measuring their performance; and incentivizing continuous improvement.

In the coming months, the work of the Governor's Council, the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Board of Regents, along with their peer organizations in the learning network, will build on the knowledge base outlined in a recently released white paper by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, "Managing the Talent Pipeline: A New Approach to Closing the Skills Gap". Providing support to employers in playing the role of an "end-customer" in a talent supply chain will impart critical insight into what works and what's potentially scalable.

"The Council clearly demonstrates a commitment to better aligning the workforce with the demands of the marketplace," said USA Funds President and CEO William "Bill" Hansen. "This second phase of work is where we can really make an impact closing the skills gap not only across the state of Kansas, but across America."

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“Being a part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s ‘learning network’ supports Kansas’ continued, structured and system wide approach to solving the talent shortage and skills gaps across the state,” said Stan Ahlerich, Executive Director for the Kansas Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors. “By implementing education and training solutions that meet talent needs and provide a more skilled, credentialed workforce, we will support economic and workforce development to keep our Kansas businesses competitive.”

“This will be a great opportunity for Kansas to continue to engage our business partners across the state, through organizations such as the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, our educational institutions and our workforce and economic development partners, to more fully develop the talent pipeline and provide the best available opportunities for businesses and employees.”

The U.S. Chamber Foundation will invest both dollars through grants and manpower through planning and implementation, technical and expert assistance, and opportunities to participate in workshops and online webinars.

The research and input collected from the learning network will help complete the development of a talent pipeline management toolkit that will be released nationwide in the fall and available to employers to adopt. To learn more, visit www.thetalentsupplychain.org.

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About the Kansas Board of Regents:

The nine-member Kansas Board of Regents is the governing board of the state’s six universities and the statewide coordinating board for the state’s 32 public higher education institutions (six state universities, one municipal university, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges). In addition, the Board administers the state’s student financial aid, adult education, high school equivalency, and career and technical education programs. Private proprietary schools and out-of-state institutions are authorized by the Kansas Board of Regents to operate in Kansas, and the Board continues to administer Kan-Ed, a program for facilitating and promoting distance learning and telemedicine in schools, libraries and hospitals. Visit the Kansas Board of Regents online at www.kansasregents.org.

The Kansas Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors serves the citizens of Kansas by providing economic insights and development strategies directly to the Governor. The Council consists of 19 members who assess business conditions and trends, evaluate the significance of those conditions for Kansas, and research related topics of importance.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce dedicated to strengthening America’s long-term competitiveness by addressing developments that affect our nation, our economy, and the global business environment.

USA Funds is a nonprofit corporation that supports Completion With a Purpose, building a more purposeful path for America’s students to and through college and on to rewarding careers and successful lives. USA Funds pursues its nonprofit mission through philanthropic activities and partnerships, policy research, and programs and services that enhance preparation for, access to and success in higher education. Learn more at www.usafunds.org.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.