



# Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas

a partnership of the Kansas Board of Regents and Kansas Department of Commerce

January 2016

*Accelerating Opportunity* changes the way adult basic education is delivered by putting adult students on track to earn a postsecondary credential, seize the opportunity to earn family-sustaining wages, and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

## BACKGROUND

- There are nearly 173,000 adults in Kansas between the ages of 18-64 without a GED® or high school diploma, and over 700,000 working-age adults (ages 25-64) with no meaningful postsecondary credential.
- Employers continue to report the need for a skilled workforce: to increase the state’s economic standing and the quality of its workforce, **Kansas is committed to increasing the number of Kansas adults who have a certificate, associate or bachelor’s degree to 60 percent by 2020.**
- *Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas (AO-K)* transforms the delivery system for adult education in Kansas by delivering career and technical education at the same time as adult basic skills instruction within a career pathways framework.

## QUICKFACTS

- AO-K is a partnership between the Kansas Board of Regents and Kansas Department of Commerce.
- Short-term certificate programs are aligned with labor market needs, leading to industry-recognized credentials and immediate jobs with family-sustaining wages.
- AO-K is part of the national *Accelerating Opportunity* initiative managed by Jobs for the Future and initially funded by national philanthropies including: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Open Society Foundation, and University of Phoenix Foundation.

## AO-K SUCCESSES

- **Agency support:** The Kansas Department for Children and Families supports AO-K with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to provide tuition scholarships for TANF-eligible students who enroll in approved AO-K pathways.
- **Legislative support:** Beginning July 1, 2014, the AO-K Proviso and GED Accelerator [HB 2506] provide tuition assistance and college incentives for students co-enrolled in career technical education and adult education career pathway programs.
- **Major sectors for AO-K career pathways leading to industry-recognized credentials aligned with the Kansas economy include: Healthcare, Welding, Aerostructures, and Manufacturing/Machining.**
- Kansas is the national leader among states in the *Accelerating Opportunity* initiative and has produced dramatic results after four years of implementation:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Cumulative*
Enrollments	1,069	994	1,173	910	438	4,253
College Credentials	184	456	710	321	116	1,785
Industry Recognized Credentials Awarded	1,191	1,086	1,514	695	262	4,741
Individuals Completing a 12-Credit Hour Pathway	341	450	325	98	68	1,282
Number Employed	366	247	229	138	61	1,031

\* Enrollment headcount is unduplicated

For more information about *Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas (AO-K)*, contact us at [kansasregents.org](http://kansasregents.org).



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas