

Worksession Agenda Item: VII.

DATE: April 22, 2015

SUBJECT: LEAP Program Update

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) is a state funded grant program for Community Colleges and Colleges of Applied Technology throughout the state. Administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, these grants are designed to provide resources to regional collaborations consisting of partners across education, economic development, and workforce sectors so that they may address skills gaps throughout the state.

Last fall, an RFP was issued to foster higher education’s collaboration with local workforce boards, employers, and high school career and technical education administrators to address workforce “skills gaps.” In December, the Workforce Subcabinet announced twelve awards to regional collaboratives from all across the state. Contracts for all twelve projects were finalized in January.

Funds for these proposals are eligible to be used to enhance, expand, or create new academic programs that fill a critical and demonstrable workforce need; to acquire equipment demonstrated to be crucial to the development of new workforce-essential competencies; and to build employer-driven career pathways bridging k-12/higher education.

Since January, grantees have commenced purchasing and hiring procedures for relevant activities throughout February, March, and April. Multiple groups have hosted or plan to host formal kick-off events to formally announce the LEAP projects and provide forums to showcase and strengthen partnerships between local industry partners and educational stakeholders.

Staff will update the Commission on recent developments in the LEAP Program.