

Freight Workforce

Kansas City Regional Freight
Study

CONNECTED FREIGHT KC 2050

A Plan in Action



Prepared for:

Mid-America Regional Council

In coordination with

**Lawrence-Douglas County
Metropolitan Planning
Commission**

And

**Pioneer Trails Regional Planning
Commission**

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1. Introduction

The Connected Freight KC 2050 plan study area encompasses a region with a significant and growing workforce, particularly within the supply chain industry. This sector is one of the major private sector employers in the study area, contributing greatly to the local economy through both direct and indirect employment. Supply chain businesses span a wide range including warehousing, logistics, and freight distribution, all of which require a diverse, skilled workforce. The study area workforce strategy aims to support the growth and development of this vital industry by coordinating efforts to address its workforce needs.

The supply chain industry in the study area is a major private sector employer, experiencing significant growth. Both population and employment are expected to increase steadily over the coming decades. However, recent years have seen a slight decline in overall employment. In contrast, the supply chain sector has added many jobs and is projected to continue this growth, becoming one of the fastest-growing sectors behind healthcare. This growth highlights the need for a workforce strategy to address the industry's future needs and ensure there are enough workers to fill new positions.

Table 1. Freight Workforce Summary

Year	Total Population Growth (%)	Total Employment Growth (%)	Total Population	Total Jobs	Supply Chain Jobs Added	Supply Chain Jobs Expected
2017-2021		-0.21			10,243	
2022-2050	0.82	1.07	2,921,279	1,385,057		43,138

1.1. Workforce Strategy Overview

The regional workforce strategy includes comprehensive planning to attract, educate, and retain workers. Regional educational institutions play a crucial role in this effort, collaborating with supply chain businesses to ensure the curriculum aligns with industry demands. Technical schools, community colleges, and universities will need to focus on offering programs ranging from certifications to advanced degrees, preparing individuals for various roles in the supply chain sector. These roles include truck drivers, logisticians, warehouse managers, and executive positions.

The supply chain industry in the study area is projected to experience substantial employment growth. Direct employment in the sector is poised to increase significantly between 2021 and 2050, adding thousands of jobs and becoming one of the highest growth sectors in the region. This job growth is critical to the area's economy but also presents challenges in finding qualified workers to fill these positions.

1.2. Educational Institutional Programming

The workforce strategy includes initiatives for ongoing professional development, ensuring that workers can adapt to evolving technologies and practices within the industry. By fostering strong partnerships between supply chain businesses and educational institutions, the strategy seeks to create a robust pipeline of qualified workers, ready to meet the demands of this rapidly growing sector.

The workforce staffing strategy primarily focuses on the workforce coming out of the formal education system. The strategy should involve regional organizations (stakeholders) focused on specific populations, such as veterans, high school dropouts, and others. These stakeholders may require a strategy unique to local supply chain industry needs and functions.

This workforce strategy leverages the regional educational structure to address staffing needs at all levels. Existing national policies on migration and language requirements for truck drivers highlight the importance of a regional approach to workforce development. This involves collaboration with universities, community colleges, high schools, and technical schools to provide a steady pipeline of qualified workers. Identifying champions within each educational institution is crucial for the successful implementation of the workforce strategy.

1.3. Stakeholder Engagement

The success of the workforce strategy depends on the involvement of diverse stakeholder groups, including supply chain stakeholders, educational institutions, and regional organizations. Regular meetings, established goals, and ongoing staff support are essential to understand and address the specific workforce needs of the supply chain industry. Coordination with established regional organizations is also vital to avoid duplication of efforts. There are several stakeholder groups that need to be organized with established goals, regular meetings, and on-going staff support. The primary objective is to understand the industry's workforce specific needs and address a portion of these needs via the region's education structure.

Stakeholders include:

- **Colleges/Universities:** Provides degreed staff ranging from PhD, Master of Sciences (MS), and Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts (BS/BA) with logistics and Information Technology (IT) degrees. Supports staffing at the executive level to skilled office positions (logisticians, operations, IT systems). There is an opportunity for the freight industry to share up-to-date staffing skill needs and business challenges for realignment of curriculum and internships. There is an opportunity for staff upskilling with specific certification webinars and AB/AS (Associates) and BA/BS degrees with a logistics emphasis.

- **Community College:** Provides degreed staff with AB/AS. Supports staffing at skilled office positions (i.e., logisticians, operations, IT systems) and warehousing/terminal operations management and support positions. There is an opportunity for the freight industry to share up-to-date skill needs; business challenges for curriculum realignment or development; share right sizing of education degrees for specific staff position (BA/BS vs AS/AB); offering of targeted certifications with and without AB/AS degree; and internships. There is an opportunity for staff to be upskilled with specific certification webinars.
- **High School/Technical School(s):** Provides diploma. Supports warehousing/terminal operations positions and carrier operations (all levels) positions. There is an opportunity to create and offer supply chain-oriented curriculum, supply chain orientation workshops/webinars for career consideration (ranging from post-graduation employment to university/community college path), internships, and selected certification for employment post-graduation.

1.4. Workforce Guide

Providing resources is a crucial component to the proactive planning process. Listed below are workforce training resources within the study areas. These resources are essential to developing a skilled workforce equipped to meet the needs of the supply chain industry, ensuring the region remains competitive and innovative.

1.4.1. Workforce Training Resources

- [Bachelor of Business Administration: Supply Chain Management Emphasis](https://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/henry-w-block-management/undergraduate-programs/bachelor-of-business-administration/supply-chain) – University of Missouri-Kansas City
(<https://catalog.umkc.edu/colleges-schools/henry-w-block-management/undergraduate-programs/bachelor-of-business-administration/supply-chain>)
- [Distribution and Logistics Management](http://www.ed2go.com/kckcc/online-courses/distribution-and-logistics-management) – Kansas City Kansas Community College
(www.ed2go.com/kckcc/online-courses/distribution-and-logistics-management)
- [Freight Broker/Agent Training](https://careertraining.ed2go.com/jccc/training-programs/freight-broker-training/?Category=business) – Johnson County Community College
(<https://careertraining.ed2go.com/jccc/training-programs/freight-broker-training/?Category=business>)
- [Freight Broker/Agent Training Program](http://www.kansasworks.com/etp/public-intitution-programs/6650) – KansasWorks
(www.kansasworks.com/etp/public-intitution-programs/6650)
- [Freight Broker/Agent Training](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/pdcenter/courses/freight-broker-agent-training.htm) – Northwest Missouri State University
(www.nwmissouri.edu/pdcenter/courses/freight-broker-agent-training.htm)
- [Freight Broker/Agent Training](https://careertraining.park.edu/training-programs/freight-broker-training) – Park University
(<https://careertraining.park.edu/training-programs/freight-broker-training>)

- [Freight Broker/Agent Training – Peaslee Tech](https://careertraining.ed2go.com/peasleetch/training-programs/freight-broker-training)
(<https://careertraining.ed2go.com/peasleetch/training-programs/freight-broker-training>)
- [Freight Broker Agent Training – University of Missouri Kansas City](https://careertraining.umkctalentlink.com/training-programs/freight-broker-training)
(<https://careertraining.umkctalentlink.com/training-programs/freight-broker-training>)
- [Logistics Management Certificate](http://www.kansasworks.com/etp/public/institution_programs/6780)
(www.kansasworks.com/etp/public/institution_programs/6780)
- [Panasonic Energy and University of Kansas to collaborate on \[electric vehicle\] EV battery technology and talent development](https://cms.ku.edu/news/article/panasonic-energy-and-university-of-kansas-to-collaborate-on-ev-battery-technology-and-talent-development)
(<https://cms.ku.edu/news/article/panasonic-energy-and-university-of-kansas-to-collaborate-on-ev-battery-technology-and-talent-development>)
- [Panasonic’s battery plant is already transforming De Soto, Kansas. It’s only halfway built](http://www.kcur.org/housing-development-section/2024-06-22/panasonics-battery-plant-is-already-transforming-de-soto-kansas-its-only-halfway-built)
(www.kcur.org/housing-development-section/2024-06-22/panasonics-battery-plant-is-already-transforming-de-soto-kansas-its-only-halfway-built)
- [Transportation and Logistics – Metropolitan Community College](https://mccckc.edu/continuing-education/transportation.aspx)
(<https://mccckc.edu/continuing-education/transportation.aspx>)
- [Warehouseman Training Inc.](http://www.warehousemantraining.com)
(www.warehousemantraining.com)
- [Workforce training, roads coming together as Kansas Panasonic plant construction starts](https://fox4kc.com/news/workforce-training-roads-coming-together-as-kansas-panasonic-plant-construction-starts)
(<https://fox4kc.com/news/workforce-training-roads-coming-together-as-kansas-panasonic-plant-construction-starts>)

1.5. Implementation Plan

The primary goal of the workforce strategy implementation plan is to cultivate a robust and responsive talent pool within the supply chain industry. By leveraging the regional educational structure and engaging diverse stakeholder groups, the strategy aims to address workforce needs at all staffing levels. Through an integrated approach that includes universities, community colleges, high schools, and technical schools, the plan endeavors to align educational programs with industry requirements, thereby ensuring the region remains a competitive and innovative player in the supply chain sector. This effort, supported by regular meetings, established goals, and active collaboration with regional organizations, seeks to enhance economic growth and create ample job opportunities for local residents.

Regular meetings and established goals are essential for the successful implementation of the workforce strategy. Engaging diverse stakeholder groups, including supply chain businesses, educational institutions, and regional organizations, ensures that specific workforce needs of the industry are understood and addressed. Coordination with established regional

organizations helps to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize the impact of the workforce programs.

1.5.1. Workforce Strategy Plan Template

The workforce strategy plan aims to cultivate a robust talent pool in the supply chain industry through collaboration with educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and regional organizations. It includes establishing an organization to lead the effort, benchmarking exercises, developing an operating plan with goals and a governance structure, and engaging diverse stakeholders. The plan involves regular meetings, stakeholder discussions, implementing the operating plan, and preparing annual reports to ensure alignment with industry needs and continuous improvement.

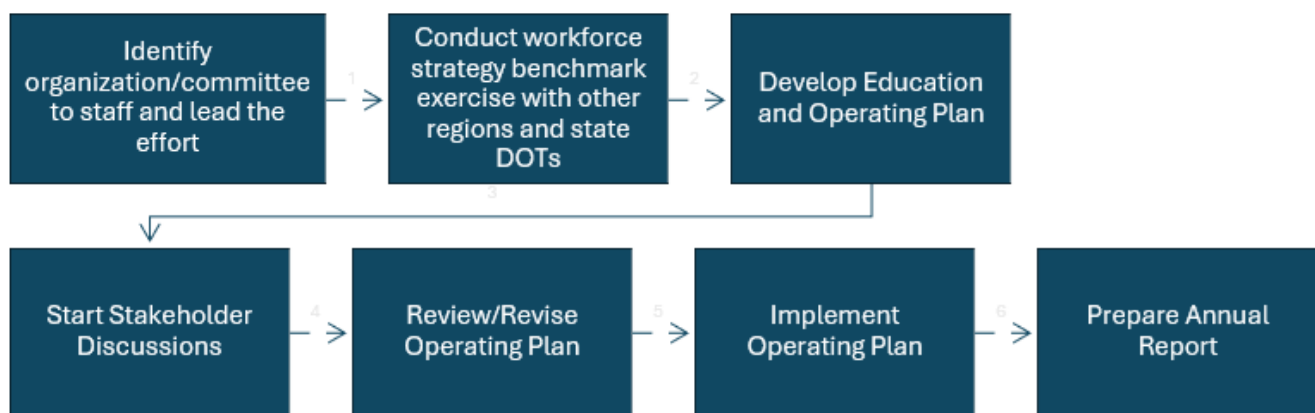


Figure 1. Workforce Strategy Template

2. Conclusion

The Connected Freight KC 2050 Plan workforce strategy aims to support the growth of the supply chain industry through carefully planned educational initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing professional development. This approach ensures the region remains a key player in the supply chain sector, contributing to economic growth and providing ample job opportunities for its residents.