



# Annual Report

Kentucky Innovative  
Scholarship  
Pilot Program

November 2023

TEAM   
KENTUCKY

# Introduction

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to present the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Program Report for academic year 2022-23. In summer 2022, Kentucky made history when it piloted the nation's first statewide scholarship for displaced individuals. The Kentucky General Assembly deserves a special thank you for investing in this pilot project, our future workforce and the economic competitiveness of our state and its people. Moreover, the funding came at a critical time: Kentucky ranks fourth in the nation for its number of displaced persons compared to other states.

Through this pilot program, our state has demonstrated its leadership to the nation by supporting the inclusion of displaced persons not only in Kentucky higher education, but eventually in careers across the Commonwealth. These fresh perspectives can strengthen our talent pipeline, drive statewide innovation and increase our capacity to meet our continually evolving workforce needs.

As we move into the second year of the pilot, we are pleased to share the progress and achievements of our postsecondary institutions in fulfilling the goals of this transformative scholarship program. Our collective commitment to making higher education more accessible, affordable and empowering remains steadfast, and this report underscores our dedication to this mission.

We look forward to discussing the report findings with you and welcome any questions or insights you may have. Together, we can continue to make significant strides in advancing our shared vision of a prosperous, innovative and empowered Kentucky. The stories of the over 300 students who have benefited from the program are truly inspirational. We look forward to your continued support of this program in the upcoming budget session.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in this remarkable endeavor.

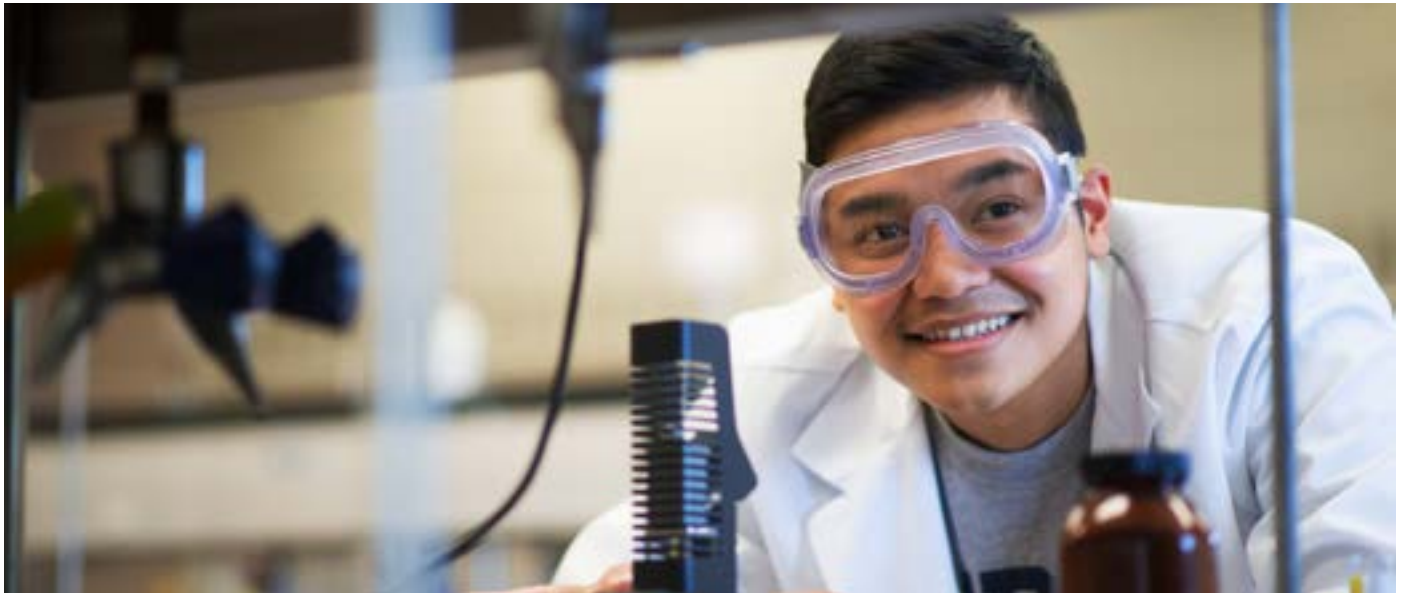
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## Background

House Bill 1 (2022) contained funding for the “Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project” which included the following language: “Excluding any unclaimed prize money received under Part III, 20. of this Act, there is hereby appropriated from the KEES Program Reserve Account Restricted Funds for the amount of \$10,000,000 in fiscal year 2022-2023 for the Innovative Scholarship pilot project from fiscal year 2020-2021 excess lottery receipts. The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) shall work in coordination with the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to develop and implement the Innovative Scholarship pilot project. Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, any portion of funds that have not been expended by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 shall not lapse and shall carry forward into fiscal year 2023-2024.”

As a result, KHEAA and CPE launched the pilot project on June 10, 2022, through an announcement to all of Kentucky’s campuses informing them of the funding opportunities to provide college access and promote undergraduate student success for displaced students and students participating in international exchange programs. The pilot project funds were used to support three efforts:

- 1. Scholarships for Displaced Students (Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship)**

Funds were allotted to Kentucky campuses to provide scholarships for displaced students pursuing an undergraduate postsecondary certificate or degree at a Kentucky institution of higher education. For this program, a “displaced student” is defined as a traditional or non-traditional age student who is a foreign national who has received U.S. asylum (asylee), submitted a U.S. asylum application (asylum-seeker), or is a resettled refugee, or is in the

U.S. under Temporary Protected Status (TPS), humanitarian parole, or through a special immigrant visa (SIV). The scholarship amount can go up to the total cost of attendance, minus any other federal or state aid the student is eligible to receive.

## 2. Scholarships to Promote Cultural Exchange (Kentucky Scholarships for Cultural Exchange)

Each institution was allowed to use up to 25% of its total allocation to provide scholarship funds to support U.S. native and foreign undergraduate students participating in international exchange and study abroad programs. These programs were designed to create opportunities for participants to learn with others from different areas of the world and help develop citizens and a culturally competent workforce that appreciate the value of cultural differences and international collaboration. Similar to the Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship, scholarship amounts could go up to the cost of attendance minus other aid.

## 3. A Community of Practice

A portion of funding was used to establish a state-level community of practice for representatives of Kentucky postsecondary institutions who were serving or sought to serve displaced students. The community of practice was designed to provide a forum to share and scale proven practices, offer professional development for faculty and other campus practitioners serving displaced student populations, and provide academic and technical resources to help leverage other state, federal or private resources.

On July 7, 2022, KHEAA and CPE along with national partners hosted a webinar offered to all campuses to learn more about the program and provide a forum for questions and answers. Based on the institutions that expressed interest, KHEAA began sending participating agreements to those institutions during the week of July 11, 2022. Once the participation was fully executed, institutions could begin requesting funds (up to the total allotted amount) from KHEAA as scholarships were awarded to eligible students.

*“The scholarship and higher education have made a positive impact in my life. They have helped me elevate my status from a refugee with few hopes and resources to aspiring to be a changemaker in my community.*

*I hope to give back as much as I can to Bowling Green and the great state of Kentucky for all the support, aid and assistance I have received from them.”*

*– Issa Mtetebawa, Democratic Republic of Congo  
Student at Western Kentucky University*



# Funding Allocation

Funds were initially allocated to institutions based on their size and perceived geographical vicinity to the intended populations. The amounts for Kentucky's public universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) were based on the overall percentage of undergraduate students. \$8.7 million of the \$10 million was reserved for Kentucky's public institutions. The chart below shows the funding levels for the public institutions based on the proportion of total undergraduate student enrollment at each institution:

Public Colleges and Universities	Amount
Eastern Kentucky University	\$743,000
Kentucky State University	\$163,000
Morehead State University	\$456,000
Murray State University	\$502,000
Northern Kentucky University	\$664,000
University of Kentucky	\$1,500,000
University of Louisville	\$934,000
Western Kentucky University	\$915,000
Kentucky Community and Technical College System	\$2,823,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,700,000</b>

Private, Non-Profit Campuses: \$1 million from the Innovative Scholarship Program was allocated to assist students attending one of Kentucky's private, non-profit, Title IV-eligible independent colleges and universities. The chart below shows the funding levels distributed to the participating institutions:

Private, Non-Profit Colleges and Universities	Amount
Asbury University	\$92,000
Bellarmino University	\$92,000
Brescia University	\$90,000
Campbellsville University	\$90,000
Centre College	\$92,000
Kentucky Wesleyan College	\$90,000
Lindsey Wilson College	\$90,000
Midway University	\$92,000
Spalding University	\$92,000
Thomas More University	\$90,000
University of the Cumberlands	\$90,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

By the end of FY 23, KHEAA had disbursed roughly 30% of all funds allocated to the participating institutions. The chart below shows the FY 2023 allotments and the FY 2023 net amount disbursed for each institution, providing a side-by-side comparison for year one activity:

Grantee	Total Allotted	FY 2023 Net Disbursed
KCTCS - Systemwide	\$2,823,000	\$1,204,184
<i>KCTCS - Bluegrass CTC</i>		\$469,587
<i>KCTCS - Jefferson CTC</i>		\$591,859
<i>KCTCS - Owensboro CTC</i>		\$105,244
<i>KCTCS - Southcentral CTC</i>		\$37,494
Asbury University	\$92,000	\$33,378
Bellarmino University	\$92,000	\$46,160
Brescia University	\$90,000	\$19,108
Campbellsville University	\$90,000	\$35,367
Centre College	\$92,000	\$38,820
Eastern Kentucky University	\$743,000	\$111,351
Kentucky State University	\$163,000	\$ 0
Kentucky Wesleyan College	\$90,000	\$ 0
Lindsey Wilson College	\$90,000	\$21,895
Midway University	\$92,000	\$45,076
Morehead State University	\$456,000	\$61,000
Murray State University	\$502,000	\$ 0
Northern Kentucky University	\$664,000	\$23,858
Spalding University	\$92,000	\$ 0
Thomas More University	\$90,000	\$ 0
University of Kentucky	\$1,500,000	\$720,404
University of Louisville	\$934,000	\$131,836
University of the Cumberlands	\$90,000	\$29,638
Western Kentucky University	\$915,000	\$266,719
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,700,000</b>	<b>\$2,819,612</b>

The remaining \$300,000 of the pilot program’s \$10 million appropriation was used by CPE to contract with national partners in the establishment of the statewide community of practice.

## Funding and Program Challenges

In August 2023, KHEAA requested FY 24 funding commitments from each campus, along with program feedback, to gain a clearer sense of whether all of the monies allocated would be spent in the 2023-24 academic year. The goal was to ensure no dollars were left on the table at the end of the pilot period. Overall feedback indicated that standing up the program with little staff and getting it running the first year was a challenge as the efforts were complex, challenging and new, resulting in a steep learning curve.



Specific feedback included that the turn-around time from the announcement of the scholarship and availability of funds from the General Assembly in July 2023 relative to implementing the program in Fall 2023 was difficult. For many institutions, recruitment for this program was not feasible until later in the Spring 2023 semester, so some were not able to award funds during the first year. However, after recruitment efforts became more robust in the Spring 2023 semester and into the summer term, students quickly began to be identified.

As a result of these challenges, several institutions, public and private, indicated they did not anticipate using all of their allocated funding while other institutions indicated they were experiencing increases in eligible students and could use additional funds. Using the feedback provided and in coordination with the institutions, KHEAA adjusted the amounts allocated to participating institutions for FY 24 to help the program maximize its reach and serve the most students possible while ensuring the highest return on investment for the state.

## Scholarships for Displaced Students

Under the Kentucky Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship Program (KHAS), scholarships up to the total cost of attendance were provided to support displaced students pursuing an undergraduate postsecondary certificate or degree at a Kentucky institution of higher education. At its September 2022 board meeting, the Council approved the Kentucky resident rate of tuition for KHAS recipients. This action ensured each scholarship would cost less, allowing the appropriated funds to support more students.

### **Allowable Use of Funds**

To best support this student population, the KHAS maximum award amount was established as the full cost of attendance minus any other financial aid the student received. The full cost of attendance is defined as the allowable costs that are used to package a student's financial aid, including tuition and fees, room and board, books, supplies and transportation costs.

In addition, to ensure displaced students were able to obtain the support needed to succeed on campus, universities and colleges were permitted and encouraged to provide wrap-around supports. The majority of the students served by the KHAS indicated they received both English as a Second Language (ESL) services and other support services including dedicated academic advisors, peer-to-peer mentors, mental health services, etc.

## Enrollment Information

The students served through the KHAS at both two- and four-year institutions participated in a wide variety of career-focused programs. For those students enrolled at a KCTCS institution, the most popular programs included computer and information technologies, business administration, computer engineering technology, education and welding technology. Further, for those students enrolled at a four-year institution, the most popular programs were early childhood/elementary education, pre-finance, psychology and computer science-prep.

In FY 23, the institutions that served the most KHAS students included: Jefferson Community and Technical College, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, the University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University. The chart below details the total number of displaced students who received KHAS funds by participating institution:

Postsecondary Institution	Students
KCTCS - Jefferson CTC	146
KCTCS - Bluegrass CTC	98
University of Kentucky	21
Western Kentucky University	19
KCTCS - Owensboro CTC	16
University of Louisville	9
KCTCS - Southcentral CTC	8
Eastern Kentucky University	5
Northern Kentucky University	4
University of the Cumberlands	3
Asbury University	2
Campbellsville University	2
Midway University	2
Bellarmino University	1
Brescia University	1
Centre College	1
Lindsey Wilson College	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>

Overall enrollment data indicated the KHAS benefited 339 students whose education had been disrupted by conflicts and crises occurring in every corner of the globe, from Afghanistan to Venezuela, 34 countries in total. The bulk of the recipients came from the following home countries: Afghanistan, Cuba, Venezuela, Congo and Ukraine. The chart below details the number of students served by the KHAS by their home countries:

Scholarship Recipients by Home Country	Total
Afghanistan	71
Cuba	56
Venezuela	37
Congo	33
Ukraine	33
Democratic Republic of Congo	24
Tanzania	13
Haiti	10
Colombia	8
Syria	7
Rwanda	6
Sudan	4
Uganda	4
Guatemala	3
Mexico	3
Angola	2
Burma	2
Burundi	2
El Salvador	2
Mauritania	2
Nigeria	2
Russia	2
Somalia	2
Benin	1
Cameroon	1
China	1
Eritrea	1
Honduras	1
Iraq	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Libya	1
Myanmar	1
Nicaragua	1
Peru	1

## **Student-Level Impact**

Overall student-level feedback on the program was incredibly positive. Two students served by the KHAS, Husna Ahmadi and Issa Mtetebawa, shared additional insights into the benefits of the program. Husna Ahmadi, a sophomore from Afghanistan at the University of Kentucky, said this: “The scholarship and higher education have had a profound positive impact on my life, empowering me with the knowledge, skills and experiences that have shaped my professional and personal growth. I am immensely grateful and committed to utilizing my education to make a positive impact in my community and beyond.”

Issa Mtetebawa, a junior from the Democratic Republic Congo at Western Kentucky University, shared this: “The scholarship and higher education have made a positive impact in my life. They have helped me elevate my status from a refugee with few hopes and resources to aspiring to be a changemaker in my community. I hope to give back as much as I can to Bowling Green and the great state of Kentucky for all the support, aid and assistance I have received from them.”

## **Recruitment and Outreach**

Up to 5% of reserved funding for each campus was permitted for recruitment and outreach purposes for students from displaced student populations. These funds played an important role in the pilot project as, for many of Kentucky’s postsecondary institutions, this was the first time they had intentionally begun to engage with the community, leaders and influencers to help inform potential students about educational opportunities.

Campuses indicated that the most promising practices they discovered included visiting local high schools with high refugee and/or immigrant populations, presenting scholarship information to academic ESL enrolled students, providing personalized advising, hosting local refugee partner organization meetings, hosting community and civic meetings, engaging in local networks and workforce councils and building out peer-to-peer outreach. Two examples of promising practices included community forums and civic meetings, such as those hosted by the University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University; whereby the campuses worked to inform the community of educational opportunities and develop ecosystems of support to help displaced students not only survive but thrive as they continue their studies and make Kentucky their home.

Additionally, campuses indicated that the biggest challenge was that recruitment and outreach take time in terms of developing relationships and raising awareness. Just as significant, campuses shared that without a guarantee of continued scholarship funds beyond 2023-24, it was difficult to attract students who may not have funding to complete a credential or degree.

# Innovative Scholarship Community of Practice

As part of the pilot project, CPE and KHEAA applied \$300,000 of the funding appropriated to establish a state-level community of practice for representatives of Kentucky postsecondary institutions who served or sought to serve displaced students. The community of practice provided a forum to share and scale proven practices, offered professional development for faculty and other campus practitioners serving displaced student populations, and provided resources to help leverage other state, federal or private resources.

To accelerate statewide efforts around serving displaced students and to encourage collaboration among postsecondary institutions, CPE partnered with several organizations to facilitate the Scholarship Community of Practice (CoP): the National Association of System Heads (NASH), the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and the Community Sponsorship Hub. The partner organizations convened monthly workshops to connect institutions to relevant subject matter experts and resources in both Kentucky and at the national level.

Specifically at the state level, the CoP drew heavily on resettlement agencies and other organizations already engaged with helping displaced populations. One key partner involved in launching the program was the Kentucky Office for Refugees, the state-designated refugee

*“The scholarship and higher education have had a profoundly positive impact on my life, empowering me with the knowledge, skills and experiences that have shaped my professional and personal growth. I am immensely grateful and committed to utilizing my education to make a positive impact in my community and beyond.”*

*- Husna Ahmadi, Afghanistan  
Sophomore, University of Kentucky*



coordinator's office. Housed within the Catholic Charities of Louisville, the office manages funding from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) with the goal of assisting refugees with career development. The limited federal funding is distributed to refugee resettlement agencies within Kentucky, as well as some other partners who serve refugees.

The five resettlement agencies participating in the refugee resettlement program, and serving displaced populations across the state, include the Kentucky Refugee Ministries - Louisville, International Center of Kentucky – Bowling Green, Kentucky Refugee Ministries – Covington, Kentucky Refugee Ministries – Lexington and International Center of Kentucky – Owensboro.

## **Community of Practice Workshops**

To best meet the needs of Kentucky institutions, IIE distributed a survey in August 2022 to gauge interest and identify the most critical needs of the institutions implementing this scholarship. The following topics of interest emerged from this survey in order of priority and framed the topics of the monthly CoP convenings: 1) recruitment; 2) student support services for displaced persons; 3) understanding immigration policies; 4) financial aid; and 5) scholarship operations.

To date, a summary of the CoP workshops includes:

- Sept. 2022: CoP Launch and Overview
- Oct. 6, 2022: Scholarship Operations Workshop
- Oct. 21, 2022: Recruitment Tactics and Networks
- Nov. 2022: Student Support and Fostering Belonging
- Jan. 2023: National Updates and Local Partners
- Feb. 2023: Eligibility and Status
- March 2023: Transfer Success
- April 2023: Career Laddering and Recredentialing
- May 2023: Ethical Storytelling

Workshops will continue through the 2023-24 academic year. A [toolkit](#) has been developed to consolidate content from CoP workshops in an accessible, multimedia format, allowing readers to easily reference each session and serve as a case study from which others can learn.

## Community of Practice In-Person Training

Supported by the CoP, in April 2023, Western Kentucky University co-organized a training-of-trainers with Every Campus a Refuge (ECAR) and NASH, with representatives from WKU, the University of Kentucky, Southcentral Community and Technical College, Jefferson Community and Technical College, CPE, and KHEAA. The training entitled, “Creating Inclusive Communities Together: Transforming Higher Education Through Refugee Integration,” served to equip higher education “champions” with the skills and knowledge to comprehensively support displaced populations on their campuses.

## Scholarships to Promote International Exchange

Kentucky Scholarships for Cultural Exchange (KSCE): A portion of the scholarship funds were used to support U.S. native and foreign undergraduate students participating in international exchange programs. The rationale was to create opportunities for participants to learn with others from different areas of the world and help develop citizens and a culturally competent workforce that appreciate the value of cultural differences and international collaboration. In FY 23, the institutions that served the most students through the KSCE included: the University of Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University and Morehead State University. The chart below details the total number of students who received KSCE funds by each participating institution:

Postsecondary Institution	Students
University of Kentucky	60
Western Kentucky University	22
Eastern Kentucky University	21
Morehead State University	18
KCTCS - Bluegrass CTC	15
University of Louisville	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>

Students who received KSCE funds in the spring or summer semesters of 2023 participated in various programs across 20 countries. The bulk of the recipients attended institutions in the following countries: Ireland, England, Brazil, Costa Rica and South Africa. The chart below details the number of students served by the KSCE and the exchange institution’s location:

Scholarship Recipients by Institution Country	Total
Ireland	47
England	32
Brazil	14
Costa Rica	11
South Africa	11
South Korea	7
Senegal	5
Spain	4
Japan	3
Bahamas	2
Germany	2
Tanzania	2
Amsterdam	1
Australia	1
Austria	1
France	1
Greece	1
Italy	1
Mexico	1
Uruguay	1





## Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project Summary

While the pilot project was slow to start due to the intersection of the timing of available funds from the General Assembly with the start of the 2022-23 academic year, campuses have demonstrated an increased financial need for the funds and a benefit to the state overall. This program has put Kentucky in the spotlight as no other states are providing this level of higher education assistance for displaced populations while providing a transformative way for them to become thriving members of the Commonwealth. To name a few highlights since the program's launch, Kentucky has been mentioned in the Chronicle of Higher Education and featured at national events like the 2022 NASH Superconvening and the 2023 Association of International Education Administrators conference.

Of greater importance, however, are the benefits the program has been able to provide to its recipients, both humanitarian and cultural. Specifically, the KHAS benefited 339 students whose education has been disrupted by conflicts and crises occurring in every corner of the globe, from 34 countries, from Afghanistan to Venezuela. Additionally, the KCES enabled 146 students to learn with others from 20 different countries across the world and help develop citizens who appreciate the value of cultural differences and international collaboration.

Due to student interest and campus-level commitments, KHEAA and CPE project a significant increase in the number of students who will receive assistance in FY 24 and beyond. Given the unprecedented size and growth of the global displacement crisis and Kentucky's ranking as 4th in the nation in the number of displaced persons compared to other states, continued funding for postsecondary opportunities for displaced students is a crucial step in providing greater social and economic mobility for these populations in the state of Kentucky.