

“Most of the people who will determine the outcome for our economy over the next decade or so are already in the workforce.”

– *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, from the
New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce

Overview of the Initiative

- The Demand
 - Our low, medium and high skilled workers are being underbid. Serious workforce shortages in existing and growing industries.
 - Improvements in K-12 education are critical but we must also focus on educating and training adult learners because the traditional K-16 pipeline won't keep pace with workforce demands.
- SKILL UP! in Innovation Valley is a partnership among:
 - Innovation Valley, Inc. and the Knoxville Chamber,
 - Workforce Connections and the local Workforce Investment Board, and
 - the United Way of Greater Knoxville.
- The SKILL UP! initiative strives to prepare and train low skilled, low income workers to enter the healthcare, manufacturing, and energy/building-trades sectors. Workforce Partnerships for each of these sectors will be formed, comprised of employers, training providers, and management, to oversee the funds and operations of the initiative.
- A dual-customer approach identifies both the needs of employers and workers. Training and framework is provided to improve skills and help individuals move into occupations with sustainable and living wages.
 - *Example:* Los Angeles, CA-Conoco Phillips refinery-trains 100 men/women each year through community college programs to work in the refinery industry-provides paid internships while in training.
- A community match of \$600,000/year is required for each of the three years (current commitment of \$300,000 per year for three years).
- 3-year community grants are awarded (\$150,000/year for 3-years) and a workforce development expert from Jobs for the Future is assigned to our community. Jobs for the Future funding comes from various sources, including foundations such as Ford, Hitachi, Annie Casey, and Weinburg.
- Knoxville will join a national cohort of communities sharing successes and opportunities, building national metrics. UWGK was 1 of 8 United Ways invited to apply.
- Large local commitment required to create sustainability beyond the 3 year grant period
- Benefits: strengthen public workforce system, better able to meet needs of employers, decrease in working people living in poverty, and increased access to healthcare.