

Data-Driven Improvements to Resource Delivery



Project Description

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and the Education and Labor Cabinet (ELC) have partnered through the Data SAIL initiative to collaboratively and proactively address the social determinants of health (SDoH) for the state's residents. Kentucky is examining referrals to community, health, and social services through **kynect resources**, a statewide resource directory and closed-loop referral platform, to help people achieve fulfilling education and employment outcomes.

Through **kynect resources**, residents can search for community resources, complete an SDoH assessment, and track referral activity and history. Community partners – including nonprofits, community-based organizations, state and local agencies, and healthcare providers – work directly with residents by managing inbound and outbound referrals, documenting outcomes, and can be authorized by a resident to create, view, and manage referrals and SDoH information on their behalf. **kynect resources** also partners with United Way 2-1-1, whose referral specialists help ensure that no referrals are left unanswered.

Kentucky is using person-centered quantitative analyses and qualitative user experience evaluation to understand what is working and where improvements are needed. As higher volumes of resident-reported SDoH data are linked to referrals, Kentucky can better align services to residents' needs and evaluate whether provided supports translate into real outcomes.

Objectives

- 1 Improve access to services by creating faster referrals, clearer navigation, and stronger connections to programs and resources for Kentucky residents
- 2 Strengthen community partner supports by providing benefit eligibility insights and improving coordination and communication throughout the referral process
- 3 Build a foundation for data-driven, cross-agency collaboration through asset mapping, data governance, and integrated outcomes measurement to improve services for Kentuckians

Logic Model

Purpose: **kynect resources** can empower residents to achieve their goals and build lasting self-sufficiency by connecting them with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed.

Constraints	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
kynect resources closed-loop referrals don't track resident goal achievement Community partners cannot see whether a resident is enrolled in or eligible for key benefit programs Siloes between health data sets and education and employment datasets	Data linking of SDoH & referrals to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) User interviews to understand user experience Asset mapping of how/where people are accessing resources Expanding access to program eligibility and enrollment data for community-based organizations	Findings from cross-system integrated dataset Asset map tools to assess state-wide community partner and resource referral networks Case studies that highlight where kynect resources is succeeding and falling short for residents	More visibility & transparency into data Pathways to self-sustainability/success for Kentuckians Strong community-based safety net Reduced stigma to benefits access Permanent feedback loops for iterative improvements Resident outcomes data will inform state program and policy development

Background & Context

KYSTATS contains the Kentucky Labor Market Information office (LMI) and hosts the Kentucky Longitudinal Data System (KLDS) which contains linked, de-identified data for cross-sector data analysis and standard protocols for integrating new data sources. KYSTATS currently integrates subsets of CHFS data, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) data. The KLDS also contains data on postsecondary enrollments and completions, adult education, apprenticeships, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training data among others.

KYSTATS and CHFS first shared data in 2016 and have six active data-sharing agreements between the two agencies. These agreements allow the state to evaluate specified federal need-based programs for short- and long-term impacts. The shape of the collaborative process varies depending on the project, with meeting cadence increasing during the data verification and exploration phases.

KYSTATS and CHFS are also formally partnered through KYSTATS' governance structure. The CHFS secretary serves on the KYSTATS governing board with CHFS representatives assisting in the development of the next biannual research agenda for KYSTATS. The research agenda will drive KYSTATS' work over the upcoming two years. Kentucky has the foundation for a strong partnership, supported by ongoing collaborations amongst researchers in both agencies and buy-in from upper-level leadership.

Problem Identification & Target Population

Kentucky's project addresses three key challenges limiting its ability to improve outcomes for residents. First, while **kynect resources** tracks completed referrals to community services, it cannot determine whether referrals lead to meaningful employment, earnings, education or training, or credential outcomes, limiting the state's ability to identify effective programs and services gaps.

Second, community partners who assist residents through **kynect resources** may have limited insight into benefit enrollment or eligibility information for programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and CCAP. This limits their ability to connect residents to additional supports or provide timely application assistance that directly addresses the resident's SDoH needs.

Finally, health, education, and employment data are housed in separate state systems, with no connection between **kynect resources** and KLDS, which is housed in the ELC via KYSTATS. These data silos, along with privacy and data-sharing requirements under FERPA, HIPAA, and other regulations, limit evaluation of long-term education and employment outcomes.

Project Implementation Plan

Kentucky is leveraging the **kynect resources** referral system and the KLDS to improve education and employment opportunities to promote better health outcomes for its residents.

 Plan	 Collaborate
Collect qualitative feedback on kynect resources from resident users through user interviews and moderated testing Map resident SDoH needs and kynect resources usage against Community Partner locations and service availability, quantify spatial accessibility, and identify high-need/low-access gaps to target resource allocation and service delivery improvements	Link SDoH needs assessment and referral data from kynect resources to education and employment pathways and outcomes in the KLDS
 Implement	 Evaluate
Gain a clean and reusable data model for SDoH assessments, referrals, and partner sites Oversee development and implementation of an indicator to display public benefits program enrollment and eligibility status to community partners authorized to assist a resident within kynect resources	Number of residents with meaningful improvements in workforce or education outcomes following successful referral and community partner or program linkages Which resources and community partner networks provide consistent and valuable outcomes to residents Which kynect resources functions are working well for residents, and which functions are falling short

Long-Term Goals



Without a connection between **kynect resources** and education and employment data housed within the KLDS, Kentucky misses critical opportunities to measure and improve health through workforce and education pathways. Addressing these challenges opens the door to future cross-agency work that will advance the health and well-being of Kentuckians. At the end of this 12-month project, Kentucky will have actionable information to drive program and service-delivery improvements for **kynect resources**, including a better understanding of what is and isn't working, and where processes should be revised.

Kentucky will develop the first cross-sector analysis of education and workforce outcomes associated with community referrals and conduct a user-centered evaluation to identify opportunities to improve the platform for residents and Community Partners to use. An asset map will highlight strengths and gaps in education and employment resources and establish a model that can later be expanded to other SDoH pathways like food and housing.