

# **Career Assessment & Planning: A Collaborative Solution for Preparing America's Workforce**

*March 12, 2009*

*“I can’t see how we can move forward in this economy without having the right people. The purpose of education is to allow people to move up to jobs requiring high skills as quickly as possible ... there’s no alternative to teaching people.”*

**– Alan Greenspan  
Former Chairman, Federal Reserve Board**

*“The United States cannot prosper in a global economy without a larger population of highly skilled people who can handle demanding jobs and generate new ideas. If Americans don’t choose the careers of tomorrow, companies will travel where they can find people who are interested in these careers.”*

**– Edward E. Gordon  
Author of *The 2010 Meltdown***

*“We knew that solving the economic crisis we were presented with would not be easy and would not happen overnight. But the president and I believe that this nation has both the resources and the will to meet this challenge, and emerge stronger and more prosperous than before.”*

**– Hilda L. Solis  
Secretary of Labor**

## America's Endangered Workforce

The United States faces a major dilemma in developing a highly trained workforce that keeps pace with today's fastest growing jobs, now and in the foreseeable future. To create economic prosperity and opportunity, students and adults currently in the workforce must prepare for careers that demand a higher skill level than a high school degree provides. Millions of workers today, however, face an uncertain future with little awareness of the opportunities and tools available to them.

### The State of Our Nation

- **Only 40 percent** of today's workers possess the technical and learning skills required by their employers.
- Businesses spend **\$62 billion** per year to upgrade the basic skills of employees.
- Congress has been forced to **raise the ceiling on H1-B (employment) visas** to allow skilled foreign workers to fill critical high-tech jobs in the United States.
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states that **42 percent** of new, entry-level jobs will require a two-year associate degree or a technical training certificate.
- As of February 2009, 11.6 million Americans were unable to find work. From November 2008 to January 2009, the United States has lost nearly 1.8 million jobs, making our national unemployment rate rise to 8.1 percent, the highest since the recession in 1929. Unfortunately, by most accounts, these numbers will likely become even more sobering in the months ahead.
- Most states have **insufficient coordinated programs** to encourage and support the transition of students into postsecondary education.

### America's Challenge

- There is a **disconnect** between young peoples' interests, skills, and work values and the demand for jobs in high-growth, in-demand industries. Many students, especially those from lower-income families, are not even aware of America's fastest growing jobs and the skills necessary to prepare for these career opportunities.
- The importance of **early career awareness has not been embraced** by our nation, yet research shows that it is critical for students to begin the career exploration process as early as elementary school.
- Thousands of **members of the military** will be ending their tours of duty and returning to the nation's workforce, where they will compete for jobs with countless workers already struggling to find employment.
- Retired baby boomers faced with the **loss of retirement savings** are seeking to re-enter the workforce.
- The career exploration and planning process is often **overwhelming**, especially for those who have had little exposure to the professional world.

## The Kuder Solution – A Plan for Improved Career Planning & Placement

Since the 1930s when Dr. Frederick Kuder developed one of the first career interest inventory surveys, Kuder, Inc. (Kuder) has been at the forefront of career planning and workforce preparation. Today, more than 100 million people in the United States, Europe, and Asia have used Kuder assessment and career planning solutions to make and prepare for satisfying career choices.

America is at a crossroads in terms of workforce development and global competition. This workforce crisis requires a new and more coordinated approach that can assist the unemployed, underemployed, and hard-to-reach populations who are not encouraged to engage in a formal career planning process. That is why state education and economic development leaders are looking to Kuder to develop coordinated solutions that reduce high school dropouts, and encourage enrollment and graduation from postsecondary institutions.

What does it take to become a firefighter? Some will say that it's as easy as using a powerful water hose on a burning building. But there is much more – like psychological agility, physical strength and stamina, and the science of hazardous chemicals.

***What are America's fastest-growing careers? And what skills and training are required to become a home health aide, a data analyst, a skin care specialist, or a forensic science or pharmacy technician?***

***Kuder gives students and adults – from kindergarten through retirement – access to the developmentally appropriate tools and resources they need to maximize their education and career opportunities.***

- **Early career awareness** – beginning in the pre-kindergarten years.
- **Direct links to education institutions beyond high school** – from technical colleges to four-year institutions, and extended learning opportunities to virtual education opportunities, so that all can have access to education.
- **Tools and resources to access financial aid and scholarships** – offering information to prepare and inform students and adults on how to afford the cost of education.
- **Lifelong system access to an electronic portfolio** – provides the ability to create and maintain a portfolio of résumés, cover letters, work samples, and other records as a resource for their career planning and job search process.
- **Connecting individuals with businesses in high-growth and high-demand industries** – creating a pipeline of skilled workers for the future economic prosperity of all communities.
- **Building powerful partnerships** – between education and government; business and industry; community- and faith-based organizations; chambers of commerce; civic organizations; and other private and nonprofit groups that promote workforce development.

### ***Kuder provides users with a direct link to the world of education and work.***

- ***Kuder® Galaxy*** – This product introduces students in grades pre-K to five to their interests and engages them in exploration of the world of work. Age-appropriate activities and research-based goals have been assigned to each grade level in order to foster this process.
- ***Kuder® Navigator*** – Middle school and high school students need help navigating their way through the process of education and career planning. *Kuder Navigator* not only provides them with support in learning how to make career decisions, but also aids them in matching their interests with the careers.
- ***Kuder® Journey*** – The adult population requires the right tools, information, and connections to achieve career success and find employment in our economy. *Kuder Journey* enables users to choose from nine profiles that best describe their needs, and generates a customized menu of options based on their selection.
- ***Connect 2 Business® (C2B)*** – *C2B* helps students and adults connect with community businesses to find extended learning opportunities or employment; in turn, *C2B* allows businesses to access a pipeline of skilled workers.
- ***Link 2 College® (L2C)*** – *L2C* provides an efficient, effective portal for postsecondary institutions to connect with and provide information and multiple applications to prospective students.

### ***Kuder is a national leader in bridging education and economic development.***

Kuder's career planning systems work in partnership with education, economic development and workforce education agencies in the following states:

- Arkansas
- Kansas
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- South Carolina
- Tennessee

### ***Our Research Results Say It All!***

The main mission of Kuder's research department is to stimulate research on all products to ensure they are effective, reliable, and valid.

- Approximately **20 percent** of *Kuder* system users have demonstrated an increase in school performance since they started using the system.
- In one study, *Kuder* system users **transitioned into postsecondary** education at a rate significantly higher than the national average of 64 percent.
- *Kuder* users complete college faster than non-system users – over **60 percent of system users** have never changed their college major.
- The *Kuder® Career Search with Person Match* (interest assessment) predicted students' college major choice at a rate close to **68 percent** in one study. Students were in high-poverty areas around the country and all were representative of ethnic minority groups.

## The Kuder Promise – Implementing Programs That Work

Workforce and career development programs will be held to high standards in the coming years. In President Barack Obama’s address to Congress on Feb. 24, 2009, he stated that the economic stimulus package and coming reforms will “end education programs that don’t work,” in order to make room for those that are more successful. This means that programs will be held accountable and must demonstrate – and document – their success.

Kuder has a proven record of success and bottom-line results when it comes to transitioning and enrolling more students and adult workers into postsecondary education. In addition to providing education and career planning services that address the needs of multiple audiences, Kuder provides two accountability tools that allow government agencies, higher education institutions, and business organizations to monitor outcomes at any time

- **The *Community Learning Needs Assessment (CLNA)***
  - Provides accountability for Kuder career development programs, drawing on pre-existing benchmarks to demonstrate progress.
  - Demonstrates the economic impact of programs in targeted areas.
  - Gives organizations the ability to drive programs through a system of continuous process improvement.
  
- **Kuder’s Administrative Database Management System**
  - Tracks individual system progress and generates real-time reports.
  - Forecasts career trends.
  - Supports workforce planning and growth in new industries.
  - Includes quick and advanced reporting to meet federal and state requirements.

## The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act – A Window of Opportunity

The current economic crisis facing the nation has created a united concern about how to address and implement new strategies that will quickly improve education performance, workforce development, and job creation in our country. With the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 17, 2009, institutions of education and workforce development have been supplied with a brief window of opportunity through which valuable resources and funding sources can be accessed.

The career planning and placement leadership team at Kuder is committed not only to providing solutions, but also to helping organizations find the support they need to pay for them. Listed below are some of the many options afforded by the economic stimulus package that are applicable to Kuder products.

### **IDEA, Part B, Section 611 – Special Education Funding**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ensures the availability of a free public education that emphasizes special education and services that prepare individuals with disabilities up to the age of 21 for education and the transition into employment.

### **State Fiscal Stabilization Fund**

Of these funds, \$38.8 billion is earmarked for education. A portion of the grant money is devoted to making up the shortfalls of pre-K through grade 16 education. Specifically, these funds help postsecondary institutions provide the needed help for adult retraining.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational rehabilitation agencies can access funds for Kuder products to provide for vocational counseling, training assistance, and job placement. Kuder products are 508 compliant and supply individuals with specific resources through *Kuder Journey*.

### **State Incentive Grants**

The *Kuder* system meets the criteria of a statewide data system to improve elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools' academic assessment.

### **Employment Services**

These flexible funds are portioned toward helping individuals find jobs, especially those seeking services through electronic resources such as *Kuder Journey*.

### **WIA-Adult**

If the adults meet the criteria set by the WIA, the funds can provide worker training and placement in industry. Higher education institutions have access to the funds if they facilitate training for high-demand occupations.

### **Dislocated Workers**

Sector Partnership Grants work to strengthen the industries and create employment opportunities for dislocated workers. *Kuder Journey* guides these adults through the job search process, and *C2B* links industries and businesses to skilled workers.

*“The answers to our problems don’t lie beyond our reach. They exist in our laboratories and our universities; in our fields and our factories; in the imaginations of our entrepreneurs and the pride of the hardest-working people on Earth.”*

– President Barack Obama  
Feb. 24, 2009

Kuder is at the forefront in offering a **proactive response** to the economic crisis facing the United States, and, through its products, promises to:

- Bring career awareness up to the level necessary to ensure youth and adults can make **educated career choices** that will advance the economy.
- Create a **pipeline of individuals** to pursue education programs that are required in America’s high-growth industries.
- Better **prepare and equip** adults for the current and future workforce needs.
- Ensure that Kuder products are **continuously evaluated and updated** in order to provide relevant resources that meet the needs of every population.

Now is the time to initiate **positive change**. The economic crisis in America will require a long-term investment toward creating new jobs in high-growth industries that will allow the nation to compete with the global economy. This is not an unattainable goal – the opportunities for employment and training are available today, and the tools to easily find those opportunities are accessible to all.

For a personal consultation and assessment of solutions tailored to your needs, please contact one of the following members of our executive team:

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