

# Executive Summary

## Northwest, Southwest, and Greater Memphis Local Workforce Development Areas



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 requires local and regional planning – a broad strategic approach to planning focused on the overarching vision, goals, and alignment, and shared responsibilities within the local area and region. Each Local Workforce Development Board and its respective Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) must prepare a local plan and must collaborate with other local workforce development boards and CLEOs within the respective planning region to prepare a regional plan. The regional plan includes the establishment of regional service strategies, development and implementation of sector initiatives, collection and analysis of labor market information, coordination of administrative costs, transportation and other support services, and services with regional economic development services and providers, and the establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and reporting on, the WIOA accountability measures.

The Tennessee Combined State Plan, which aspires for a results-driven skills development system providing the opportunity for the State’s jobseekers, workers, and businesses to sustain economic viability and self-sufficiency, provides background on the relationship between the state plan, regional plans, and local plans. The State of Tennessee’s Workforce Vision is to increase the competitive position of Tennessee business through the development of a high skilled workforce. The guiding principles include:

- Strong partnerships with business at all levels;
- Career pathways to today’s and tomorrow’s jobs;
- Cross-agency collaboration and alignment;
- Integrated service delivery;
- Access and opportunity for all populations;
- Clear metrics for progress and success; and
- Focus on continuous improvement and innovation.

To achieve the State’s vision, the following five key objectives have been adopted by the Regional Planning Council for West TN:

1. Increase access to education, training, and employment; particularly for people with significant barriers to employment.
2. Create a comprehensive, high-quality workforce system by aligning workforce investment, education, and economic development.
3. Improve quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts,
4. Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services.
5. Increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Tennessee.

The Plan includes an analysis of economic conditions, employer needs and the regional workforce for the twenty-one counties in the West TN regions. Top middle-skill level occupations in West TN by Industry Sector include Healthcare, Transportation and Warehousing, Manufacturing and Business Services – Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. Significant postsecondary skill level gaps are addressed, as well as, the need for “soft skills” such as active listening,

speaking, reading comprehension, critical thinking and social perceptiveness. The Plan addresses employment and population trends. West TN has historically lagged behind both Middle and East TN in job creation; however, data shows that West TN is expected to surpass East TN over the next 10 years. The population of Northwest TN is expected to decrease by 1%, Southwest to increase by 1%, and Greater Memphis to increase by 4%. A primary focus is strategies for service integration, including support of the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative, as we prepare workers for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. By offering education and training services such as needs-based scholarships, transportation stipends, on-the-job training and incumbent worker grants and apprenticeship programs, the West TN Region provides support for both new hires and current workers in need of re-training.

While West TN has many strengths and opportunities, such as abundance of training institutions and new Rural Development Programs; we also recognize we have weaknesses and threats, such as a lack of skills (both specific occupational and soft skills) and lack of adequate funding for workforce services. The Plan addresses a key element to the success of workforce initiatives in the region – collaboration and coordination of services and resources between partners. Through Infrastructure Funding Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding, partners work to reduce duplication of services, improve effectiveness and streamline services to assure alignment and integration of education, workforce and economic development. These agreements include co-enrollment of participants and a focus on providing outreach and opportunities for target populations with multiple barriers to employment. The West TN Regional has selected the Workforce and Correction Partnership as its' new planning element. The Local Boards and Regional Planning Council will work to improve labor market outcomes of formerly incarcerated and other justice involved individuals through partnerships with community-based organizations, re-entry service providers, local sheriffs, representatives of Parole and Probation Departments, and employers.

The below Program Year 2018-2020 Local Plan and Regional Plan for the West Tennessee region represent the Southwest, Northwest, and Greater Memphis Local Workforce Development Area's Workforce Development Board's efforts to maximize resources and to coordinate these resources with other state and local programs in the local workforce development area and throughout the West Tennessee region to achieve the State's vision and key objectives.

# Plan Components

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# West Tennessee Program Year 2018 – 2020 Regional Plan

Northwest, Southwest, and Greater Memphis  
Local Workforce Development Areas



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**The West TN Regional Plan was Open for Public Comment January 3, 2019 – January 17, 2019. Comments or questions were to be submitted in writing to:**

Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board

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*No comments were received during the public comment period. Any comments received in relation to the content of the Program Year 2018 – 2020 regional plan would have been addressed within the plan prior to submission to the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD).*

## West TN Regional Plan Components

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## West Tennessee Planning Region

The West Tennessee (TN) planning region is comprised of three Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs):

**Southwest Area:** Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy.

**Northwest Area:** Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley.

**Greater Memphis Area:** Fayette, Lauderdale, Tipton, and Shelby.

The Regional Planning Council (RPC) for West TN is comprised of representatives of the core partner programs of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as well as representatives from the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), career and technical education, and economic development. The following individuals have been selected to serve on the Council:

### Southwest

Jimmy Bell, Title I  
April Brown, Title I  
Stewart Stanfill, Title II\*  
Kristie Bennett, Title III\*  
Linda Randolph, Title IV\*  
Marla Rye, TANF\*\*  
Tracey Exum, ECD  
Craig Butler, LWDB Chair  
Dr. Lana Hamilton (was Horace Chase), Career and Technical Education  
Holly Wood, TN Pathways

### Northwest

Margaret Prater, Title I  
Jennifer Bane, Title I  
David Parrish, Title IV  
Blake Swaggart, ECD  
Jimmy Williamson, LWDB Chair  
David Brewer, Career and Technical Education  
Justin Crice, TN Pathways

### Greater Memphis

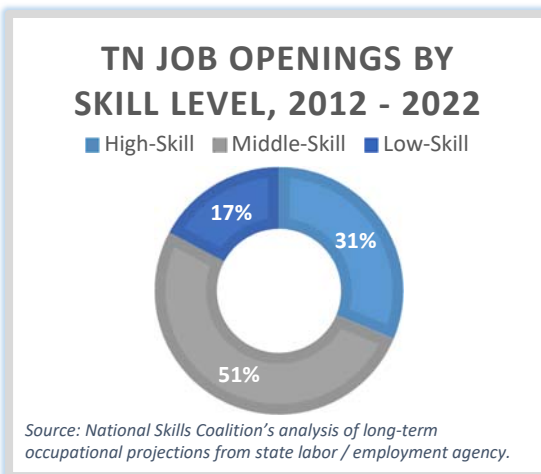
Henry Lewis, Title I  
Ron Wade, Title II  
Darryl Causey, Title III  
LaTroyal Williamson, Title IV  
Beverly Moore, TANF  
Gwyn Fisher, ECD  
Desi Franklin, LWDB Chair  
Roland Rayner, Career and Technical Education  
Kenderek Harris, TN Pathways

\*Also serving Northwest TN.

\*\*Also serving Northwest and Greater Memphis.

## Economic and Workforce Analysis

According to the National Skills Coalition, middle-skill jobs are key to TN's health, its infrastructure and its economic growth. Many of these jobs cannot be outsourced: from the care of our sick and elderly, to the repair of our



computerized cars, to the running and maintenance of our factories' advanced machinery, to the construction of our nation's bridges and buildings. Middle-skill jobs can provide good wages and career paths for TN's, and specifically West TN's, workers, yet the National Skills Coalition's analysis of May 2012 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics by State and 2012 American Community Survey data revealed that while middle-skills jobs accounted for 58% of TN's labor market in 2012, only 47% of workers were trained to the middle-skill level. The role of middle-skill jobs in the TN labor market is expected to continue through 2022 as 51% of job openings are projected to be for middle-skill jobs. To maintain a strong economy, TN must address its middle-skills gap by investing in a skilled workforce. To do this, West TN has prioritized its training resources to address the

skills gaps in key industries in alignment with the TN Department of Economic & Community Development's (ECD) strategy, which focuses business development efforts on key clusters in which the state has a competitive advantage:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace & Defense
- Automotive
- Business Services
- Chemicals, Plastics, & Rubber
- Energy Technology
- Film, Music, and Entertainment
- Food & Agribusiness
- Healthcare & Medical Devices
- Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics

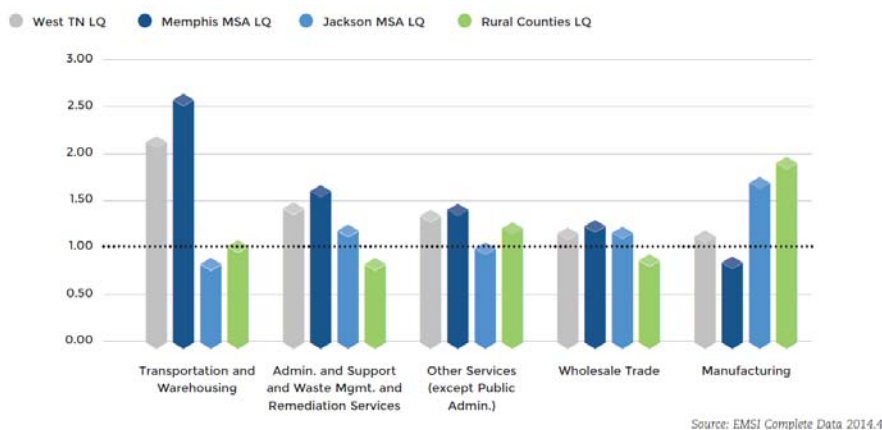
Following the guiding principles of Demand Driven and Workforce Development = Economic Opportunity, West TN uses Labor Market Information and other available data to drive decision making and to invest in initiatives that provide in-

demand training and meet employers’ needs. The TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) recognizes that local economic situations may be different from statewide trends, and that the industry composition in a particular area determines the jobs in demand.

## A. Analysis of Economic Conditions, Employer Needs, and the Regional Workforce

### 1. Existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as analyzed and agreed upon by all partners:

The [Economic Analysis of West TN](#), published in June 2015 by Economic Modeling Systems, Inc. (EMSI), outlines the economy of the twenty-one counties in the West TN region with geographic breakouts of specific metropolitan areas within the region, and comparisons with the two other Grand Divisions of TN. A thorough review of the regional economy and discussions with partners and key stakeholders in both the public and private sectors resulted in the determination that the three largest industry sectors in West TN, with a combined 315,069 jobs, are Government, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Retail Trade. Together these sectors constituted 34% of the total regional employment in 2014. While significant growth is also expected in the industries of Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services (+24,244 jobs), Other Services (+14,888 jobs), and Finance & Insurance (+8,708 jobs), the majority of these jobs are in low wage industries.



Location quotients (LQs) comparing the concentration of employment in a given industry in a region against the concentration across the nation are high in West TN in the sectors of Transportation & Warehousing (2.16), Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services (1.44), Other Services, Except Public Administration (1.36), and Wholesale Trade (1.17), making these sectors also key to the region’s economy. However, most of the region’s strengths in terms of LQs, outside of Transportation & Warehousing, are in fields that are relatively low-skill and low wage. While the Manufacturing LQ is relatively low in the Memphis MSA (0.86), it is high in both the Jackson MSA and All Other Rural Counties at 1.72 and 1.93, respectively.

Despite the fact that many manufacturing jobs have been lost in the region, the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#) revealed that 11% of the regional economy is still comprised of manufacturing related jobs and should be promoted as a legitimate career pathway. While not high in the ranking of jobs in Memphis, manufacturing ranks in the top three for both the Jackson MSA as well as the non-metropolitan counties of West TN. The tendency for Manufacturing and Transportation & Distribution sectors to co-locate within metropolitan areas, due to production industries requiring transportation industries to store and ship their products to wholesalers and retailers, adds to the value of the industry in West TN. An undersupply of workers to support this industry has been revealed by both employers in the field and EMSI’s gap analysis, indicating a need to educate the labor force and overcome the stigma of manufacturing as a dirty, dangerous industry. One such tactic to be considered as a best practice for replication includes encouraging high schools and employers to participate in “Manufacturing Days” to expose students to careers in manufacturing.

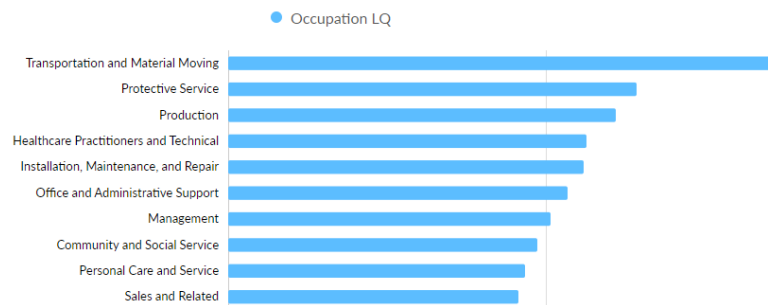
In looking at key occupation groups in West TN for 2014 to 2024, the analysis indicated the largest occupation group in the region to be office and administrative support occupations with 120,319 jobs. Sales and related occupations ranked second with 109,938 jobs, while transportation and material moving ranked third with 92,941 jobs. Unfortunately, none of the top three occupation groups are the highest paying. Healthcare practitioners and technical workers, management, and business and financial operations are the highest paying industries that offer 500 or more annual openings in the region. Across all sectors, 73% of the jobs are found in the Memphis MSA, with higher concentrations in transportation and material moving, and computers and mathematical. The Jackson MSA comprises 9% of all jobs in the

region with more concentration in healthcare and technical occupations and production occupations. The rural regions comprise 18% of all regional jobs with heavy concentration in manufacturing at 25% of all regional employment.

EMSI's Economic Overview for West TN indicates Transportation and Material Moving, Protective Service, and Production are the three occupations with the largest LQs throughout West TN as of 2018.

Additionally, between 2018 and 2028, there will be 883,409 replacement jobs, openings resulting from workers retiring or otherwise permanently leaving an occupation, throughout West TN. The top occupations with the highest number of replacement jobs, as listed below, account for 246,135, or nearly 28%, of the total replacement jobs over the next decade. While the majority of the occupations with the highest number of replacement jobs are lower skilled jobs requiring little or no postsecondary or vocational training, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers are expected to have 18,749 replacement jobs.

Top Occupation LQ



Description	2018 - 2028 Replacement Jobs
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	51,092
Cashiers	31,011
Retail Salespersons	28,931
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	27,684
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	19,735
Waiters and Waitresses	19,165
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	18,749
Office Clerks, General	18,328
Customer Service Representatives	16,447
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	14,992

Thorough analysis of the labor market data and discussions with key stakeholders have resulted in the identification of in-demand sectors in the region on which to focus workforce development efforts in order to address the middle-skills gap and meet the needs of employers: (1) Healthcare; (2) Transportation and Logistics; (3) Advanced Manufacturing; and (4) Business Services, with a particular emphasis on Information Technology. Emerging industries within these sectors to receive special attention include internet-based small businesses, call centers, food manufacturing, medical device manufacturing, and manufacturing

technology such as lasers and robotics. Additionally, in much of the region agriculture is considered a mature yet relevant and in-demand field. The LWDAs in West TN strive to engage businesses within these industry sectors in workforce development efforts to fill the in-demand occupations as listed below.

### Top Three In-Demand, Middle-Skill Level\* Occupations in West TN by Industry Sector

Sector	Occupation	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	Change	Typical Entry Level Education	Median Hourly Wage
Healthcare	Registered Nurses	12,281	13,480	1,199	Bachelor's Degree	\$28.21
	Nursing Assistants	6,501	7,118	617	Postsecondary (PS) Non-Degree Award	\$11.03
	Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses	4,319	4,647	328	PS Non-Degree Award	\$18.06
Transportation & Warehousing	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	13,881	14,107	226	PS Non-Degree Award	\$18.73
	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	106	113	7	Bachelor's Degree	\$28.60
	Logisticians	99	103	4	Bachelor's Degree	\$28.53
Manufacturing	Biomedical Engineers	63	91	28	Bachelor's Degree	\$37.89
	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	169	185	16	Bachelor's Degree	\$25.19
	Sales Representatives (Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical & Scientific Products)	311	317	6	Bachelor's Degree	\$32.32
Business Services – Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Civil Engineers	1,013	1,290	277	Bachelor's Degree	\$39.90
	Accountants and Auditors	2,405	2,567	162	Bachelor's Degree	\$26.61
	Software Developers, Applications	482	552	70	Bachelor's Degree	\$36.55

\*Occupations include those requiring no work experience and a minimum of a postsecondary non-degree award and a maximum of a Bachelor's degree. Source: EMSI.

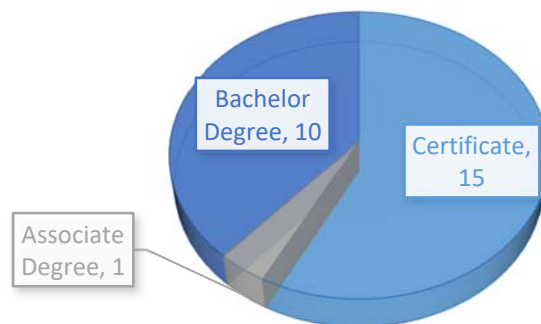


**2. Employment Needs of Employers – existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations:** In following the Governor’s Jobs and Economic Development Goal and Objectives, employers are considered the primary customer of the workforce system. Understanding and meeting the needs of employers is given the utmost importance and is achieved through a collaboration of partners serving on the Business Services Team. Team members represent various AJC partners such as Labor Exchange, Veterans Programs, Trade Act, Re-Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, Economic Development, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and staff to the LWDBs. The Business Services Team is responsible for connecting with companies in targeted industry sectors and occupations, and other employers that have hiring needs, in order to understand and meet their needs through a variety of employer-driven initiatives and services, such as Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training opportunities, Employer/Education partnerships, apprenticeships, job order placement through Jobs4TN, applicant screening, and facilitation of job fairs.

To understand and meet the needs of employers, Business Services Team members connect with area employers by participating in regional economic development groups comprised of training providers, Chambers of Commerce, plant managers, and economic developers to determine high-growth jobs and industries that are adding substantial jobs to the local economy. Business Services Team members and other AJC partner staff also utilize labor market information to identify and meet employer needs. According to the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#) there were 55,783 unemployed workers in West TN as of February 2015 and only 25,921 unique job postings. The simultaneous existence of both high unemployment and high job vacancies indicates the presence of a mismatch between the jobs available and the skills demanded in the region. Recognizing that data lags, Business Services Team members throughout the region utilize formal and / or informal employer surveys in order to better identify and meet the immediate and upcoming needs of area employers. It is the goal of the Regional Planning Council to develop a common survey to be used region-wide.

**3. Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs:** Careful consideration must also be given to both the education and skills needed for key occupations to ensure the workforce is prepared to meet the needs of area employers. The gap in the number of annual openings and the number of annual completers of corresponding training programs must be analyzed to determine if educational programs are producing too few, or too many, graduates to fill the openings for related occupations. In total, 26 occupations were found to have significant gaps of 10 or more, as noted in the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#) and displayed in the diagram to the right, with the most number of gaps occurring at the postsecondary certificate level, typically among high turnover, low wage positions. In coordination with the Business Services Team, the Career Development Services Team strives to fill these gaps by ensuring participants’ fields of study are in high growth mode according to research using current labor market information. Potential candidates for training must also show interest and aptitude aligned with targeted occupations and industries through the use of formal and informal assessments and evaluations of need.

NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT POSTSECONDARY SKILL LEVEL GAPS



While each position requires a unique skillset, several skills are commonly needed across occupations. The TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020 highlights the importance of the specific soft skills of active listening, speaking, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and social perceptiveness. Combined, these skills are expected to relate to nearly two million employment opportunities.

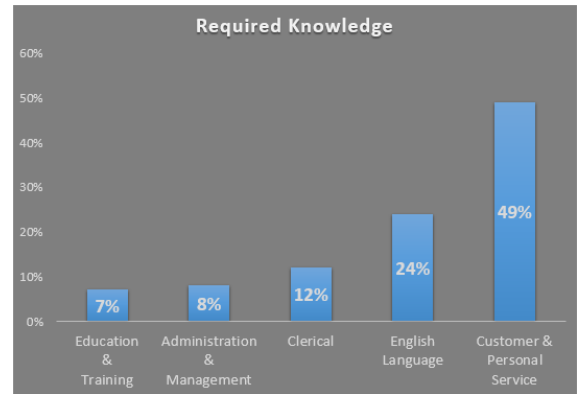
Soft Skills by Employment Opportunities per WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020

Skill Category	Projected Year Employment	Openings Due to Growth	Replacements
Active Listening	620,506	19,396	1,1748
Speaking	615,215	20,001	1,1490

Reading Comprehension	358,712	11,393	6,465
Critical Thinking	221,946	7,597	4,204
Social Perceptiveness	179,595	6,177	3,754

Furthermore, customer and personal service, English language, clerical, administration and management, and education and training were cited as the top five required knowledge categories for projected jobs through 2022.

Among the 95 critical occupations in the region cited in the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#), the table below indicates the top skills, classified



Source: TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020

**Top Skills Among 95 Critical Occupations**

SKILL	% OF POSTINGS WITH SKILL	CATEGORY
Business	20%	Business
Sales	16%	Business
Driving	15%	Technical
Communication	14%	Soft
Commercial Driver's License	13%	Technical
Customer Service	13%	Business
Finance	12%	Business
Retail	10%	Other
Health	10%	Technical
Projects	9%	Other
Transportation	9%	Technical
Training	9%	Other
Planning	8%	Business
Trucking	8%	Technical
Technology	8%	Technical
Medical	8%	Technical
Nursing	7%	Technical
Marketing	7%	Business
Truck Driving	7%	Technical
Accounting	6%	Technical
Healthcare	6%	Technical
Documentation	6%	Other

as either soft, business, technical, or other skills, required as found in job postings for these occupations

nationwide. To address the soft-skills gap, the LWDA in West TN will partner with various postsecondary and community agencies to ensure appropriate skills training is available, preferably at the AJC via workshops, electronic courses, etc. Each LWDA will also continue to utilize mentoring and work experience opportunities to engage customers in real-world soft-skills training.

**4. Analysis of the Regional Workforce – employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment:** [Data profiles for each ECD Base Camp](#), which align with each LWDA, effective July 1, 2018 were analyzed during the planning process. Over the next decade, the population of Northwest TN is expected to see a 1% decrease, Southwest TN is expected to see a 1% increase, and the Greater Memphis area is expected to see a 4% increase. The State is expected to see an 8% growth during the same time period.

increase, and the Greater Memphis area is expected to see a 4% increase. The State is expected to see an 8% growth during the same time period.

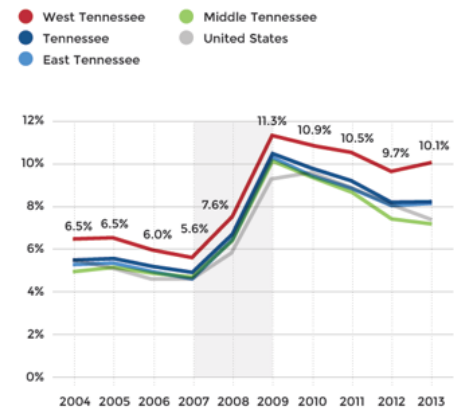
Of the 2018 total West TN population of 1,572,438, 52% are females while 48% are males, 51% are White, 40% are African American, 5% are Hispanic, and the remaining 4% are Other, Non-Hispanic. By 2028, the total West TN population of 1,618,430 is expected to consist of the same percentage of females, 52%, and males, 48%, but the White Race / Ethnicity group is expected to decrease to 47%, while the African American population will increase to 41%, the Hispanic population to 7%, and the Other, Non-Hispanic to 5%. West TN is also expected to see a growth in the number of individuals within or nearing retirement age (age 60+), while key working aged adults, those between the ages of 15 and 59 are expected to decline.

Area	2018 Population	2028 Population	Population Change	% Change
Southwest	250,212	251,493	1,281	1%
Northwest	249,530	247,595	-1,935	-1%
Greater Memphis	1,072,696	1,119,342	46,646	4%
West TN	1,572,438	1,618,430	45,992	3%
TN	6,769,368	7,295,507	526,139	8%

Area	Age Range	2018 Population	2018 – 2028 # Change	2018 – 2028 % Change
Southwest	60 and Up	64,094	9,327	15%
	25 - 59	107,767	-6,385	-6%
	15 - 24	33,844	906	3%
Northwest	60 and Up	66,248	6,808	10%
	25 - 59	105,924	-7,020	-7%
	15 - 24	32,930	256	1%
Greater Memphis	60 and Up	212,087	37,933	18%
	25 - 59	492,582	-1,688	-0.3%
	15 - 24	146,168	4,832	3%

As stated in the [Economic Analysis for West TN](#), the region has lagged behind both Middle and East TN in job creation for the previous ten years. While Middle TN is expected to continue to see the highest growth over the next ten years, West TN is expected to surpass East TN during that time. West TN has also seen higher unemployment rates each year during the previous ten years than both Middle and East TN and the nation. Despite the growth in jobs, the region continues to see the highest unemployment rates in the state. According to the TDLWD's October 2018 County Unemployment Rates, released November 21, 2018, eight of the ten counties with the highest unemployment rates are located in West TN, including the highest, Lauderdale County, at 6.8%. With a labor force of 107,720, Northwest saw the highest overall unemployment rate in the state at 4.8% with 102,530 employed and 5,200 unemployed in the area. Four of Northwest's eleven counties were among the top ten highest unemployment rates in the State. Southwest, with a labor force of 110,440 individuals, saw an unemployment rate of 4.5%, tying with Greater Memphis for second highest unemployment rate in the state, with 105,460 employed and 4,980 unemployed. Three of Southwest's eleven counties were among the top ten highest unemployment rates in the State. Rounding out the top three, Greater Memphis, with a labor force of 505,920, had an unemployment rate of

Annual Unemployment Rates across TN Grand Divisions, 2004-2013



4.5%, with 483,360 employed and 22,540 unemployed, with 88%, or 19,860, residing in Shelby County. With a total of 32,720 unemployed individuals in the region, a substantial workforce is available for existing and emerging business and industry in the region. While 12% of the unemployed individuals in the labor force in West TN have a disability, individuals with a disability constitute 33.5% of the individuals no longer in the labor force in West TN per the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016-2020.

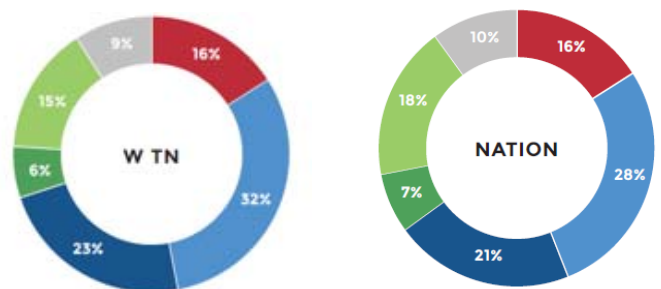
October 2018 County Unemployment Rates



4.5%, with 483,360 employed and 22,540 unemployed, with 88%, or 19,860, residing in Shelby County. With a total of 32,720 unemployed individuals in the region, a substantial workforce is available for existing and emerging business and industry in the region. While 12% of the unemployed individuals in the labor force in West TN have a disability, individuals with a disability constitute 33.5% of the individuals no longer in the labor force in West TN per the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016-2020.

In addition to high unemployment rates, West TN serves a population with multiple barriers to employment, such as low postsecondary educational attainment, low income and underemployed individuals, recipients of public assistance, ex-offenders, single parents, individuals with transportation and substance abuse issues, and those lacking necessary soft

- Less than HS diploma or equivalent
- High School Diploma
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate Degree or Higher



skills and work ethic. The [Economic Analysis for West TN](#) indicates that while Middle TN sees 10.7 graduates per 1,000 people and East TN 10.4, West TN sees only 10 graduates per 1,000 people, with the biggest lags at the associate's and bachelor's degree levels. For adults aged 25 years and older, 32% of the West TN population have a high school diploma or equivalent, while 16% have less than a high school diploma or equivalent. In total, 737,253 individuals, or 71% of the region's adult population fall into the "less than high school diploma," "high school diploma," or "some college" categories. Between 2009 and 2014, West TN saw a decrease of 1.1 percentage points in those with "less than a high school diploma" while adults with between an associate's and master's degree increased by 1.3 percentage points. By supporting strategies under the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative to align education and training with the needs of business and industry and assisting West Tennesseans in accessing training opportunities, West TN is working towards achieving the initiative's goal of 55% of Tennesseans earning a postsecondary credential by 2025.

With the implementation of WIOA on July 1, 2015, West TN has already seen a significant increase in targeted populations, including individuals with barriers to employment, being served in the AJCS. Per the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020, the West TN Region also has the highest percentage of individuals living in poverty, at

**Poverty Rates for West TN, State, & Nation**

Area	Poverty Estimate, All Ages	Population, All Ages	% of Population in Poverty
West TN*	335,058	1,570,077	21.34%
State*	1,165,247	6,549,352	18.25%
Nation**	47,755,606	306,226,394	15.6%

\*Source: TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016-2020 / Economic and Workforce Analysis

\*\*Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

335,058 or 21.34%, among the three grand divisions of the state. Furthermore, per the [Transparent Tennessee](#) website, the West TN region has four counties classified as distressed – Lake, Lauderdale, Hardeman, and McNairy, and an additional nine counties classified as at-risk – Obion, Weakley, Gibson, Carroll, Benton, Haywood, Henderson, Decatur, and Hardin. These classifications, made using the Appalachian Regional Commission’s standard based on comparisons of a county’s poverty rate, three-year average unemployment rate, and per capita market income to national average, indicate that a county ranks in the bottom 10% of the nation as a distressed county, or between the bottom 10% and 25% as an at-risk county.

Eliminating the barriers to employment, particularly those created by poverty, historically high unemployment, and low educational attainment, requires addressing numerous factors such as transportation, childcare, healthcare, education, and work ethic through policy and service strategies. Given the large percentage of the population of West TN living in poverty, it is critical for the workforce system to address these barriers in order to not only assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient, but also to ensure the employment needs of employers in the region are met. As part of this effort, the RPC supports the TN Department of ECD’s goal of improving the economy in all rural communities thereby eliminating distressed counties and reducing the number of at-risk counties in TN. Each local area in West TN will also continue to provide priority of service to priority populations, including individuals with barriers to employment.

**B. Development and Implementation of Sector Initiatives**

**1. Regional Priorities for Sector/Industries/Occupations/Skills – how this was determined and how the status of growing, maturing, and emerging was factored into the ranking:** Through labor market data, strategy meetings, and other data gathering methods, West TN determines the regional industries/occupations that fit into the high-growth, high-skill category, and then focuses training initiatives on those in-demand occupations. Growing, maturing, and emerging industries and occupations are also factored into the regional priorities. Recognizing that data lags, Business Services Team members throughout the local areas in the West TN region utilize formal and / or informal employer surveys to better identify and meet the immediate and upcoming needs of area employers. Based on this data, West TN focuses education and training on these sectors: Healthcare and Social Assistance, Business Services, including Information Technology, Transportation and Logistics, and Advanced Manufacturing. These sectors are shown to have positive job growth through labor market information provided by local employers, the TDLWD, and an economic analysis tool from EMSI.

**2. Partners Participating in the Sector Strategy Development – meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged:** Being in the business of workforce development and involved directly with training partners, the AJs and LWDBs must be ever mindful of employment trends in local areas and the region. During the planning process, administrative leadership in the region works with local education providers including TN Colleges of Applied Technology, Community Colleges, Universities, and private providers, economic developers, and key employers in those regional sectors that align with the Governor’s Jobs4TN Sector Strategies plan. During the development of the transitional regional plan and the modification to the regional plan, partners and stakeholders participated in meetings as listed in the Attachments section. Since the implementation of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) during the development of the transitional regional plan, quarterly meetings have been held. The RPC, comprised of representatives from each of the core partner programs of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title II Adult Education, Title III Wagner Peyser, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF, as well as representatives from economic development, career and technical education, and LWDB members, guides the development of regional sector

and service strategies, and plays a vital role in the certification process for the AJCs as effective and efficient service delivery is key to the success of the region’s AJCs. Additionally, the RPC will continue to ensure the sharing of best practices for the purposes of identifying service delivery strategies to be expanded throughout the region. New service strategies to address regional education and training needs will also be developed by the RPC as needed.

**3. Public-Private Partnerships – supporting sector strategies and roles in planning:** Each of the local boards are comprised of at least 51% private business representatives. Local boards are charged with leading efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers:

- a. To promote business representation (particularly representatives with optimal policymaking or hiring authority from employers whose employment opportunities reflect existing and emerging employment opportunities in the region) on the Board;
- b. To develop effective linkages with employers in the region to support employer utilization of the local workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities;
- c. To ensure that workforce development activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region, by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, and service providers;
- d. To develop and implement proven or promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers (such as the establishment of industry and sector partnerships); and
- e. To develop and implement career pathways, with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs, within the local area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

As unemployment rates have continued to decline in the region, preparing individuals with criminal backgrounds to return to work has become an even greater priority as employers seek skilled applicants to fill vacancies. In partnership with local jails, and support from private-sector partners, West TN has incorporated several programs for currently incarcerated individuals to help prepare them for re-entry into society and the workforce.

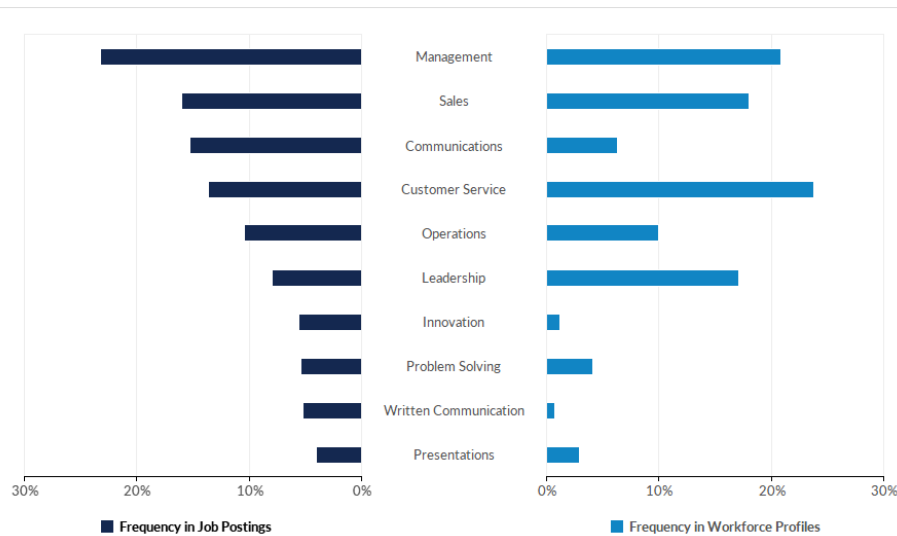
**4. Existing Skills of Jobseekers – matching them to demands of local business:** To provide insight into the supply and demand of relevant skills, West TN compares the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills present in today's workforce. Along with EMSI's job posting analytics, this comparison leverages EMSI's dataset of more than 100M online resumé and profiles, all of which have been updated within the last three years. The

skills associated with workforce profiles represent workers of all education and experience levels. Of the 50 hard skills analyzed, 29, or 58% of the skills were found to be present more in the postings than in the profiles or workers. Overall, worker profiles fell short 12% across all hard skills listed in job postings. Of the 50 common skills analyzed, including soft skills such as interpersonal skills, communication, and problem solving, 22, or 44%, of the skills were found to be present more in postings than in the profiles. Overall, common skills listed on worker profiles were 36% above the common skills



listed in job postings. There were 1.83M total job postings in West TN from September 2016 to November 2018, of

Top Common Skills



which 458,920 were unique. These numbers indicate a Posting Intensity of 4-to-1, meaning that for every 4 postings there is 1 unique job posting. Also according to EMSI, as of 2018, 14.7% of West TN residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (3.9% below the national average), and 6.1% hold an Associate's Degree (1.9% below the national average). Additionally, in 2017 there were 18,851 graduates in West TN. This pipeline has shrunk by 2% over the last 5 years. The highest share of these graduates come from Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies, Registered

Nursing/Registered Nurse, and Medical/Clinical Assistant.

**5. Future Strategy Development for Future Sectors – next sectors to be targeted, if applicable:** Existing sector strategies and the need for new strategies for future sectors will be reviewed by the RPC at its quarterly meetings. Local boards, One-Stop Operators, and / or Service Providers in West TN will also continue to monitor local labor market trends when: (1) approving new providers and / or programs to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL); (2) issuing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to fund programs on the ETPL; and (3) developing On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) contracts.

Additionally, as needed, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will be established with other service providers, to meet the requirements of the appropriate local board, and in accordance with associated local ordinance and policies, to address any identified sector strategy needs.

## Strategies for Service Integration

### A. Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

**1. Education and Training in the Region:** In support of the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative to have 55% of Tennesseans earn a postsecondary credential by 2025, West TN's strategies to prepare workers for in-demand industry sectors and occupations include:

- (1) Approving in-demand training opportunities to be included on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as WIOA fundable programs;
- (2) Encouraging all job seekers to consider these programs as career options by offering assessments, opportunities, and materials noting local employment opportunities;
- (3) Partnering with employers and high schools on career pathway opportunities in employer-driven training programs;
- (4) Considering options to partner with training providers and neighboring local workforce development areas to "buy" classes offered by training providers so that dislocated workers, adults, and disadvantaged youth have an opportunity to train in the high-demand occupation without a delay due to a waiting list;
- (5) Leveraging assets such as TN Promise, TN Pathways, and TN ReConnect in order to increase capacity and provide integrated services to increase skill development and educational attainment of area residents.

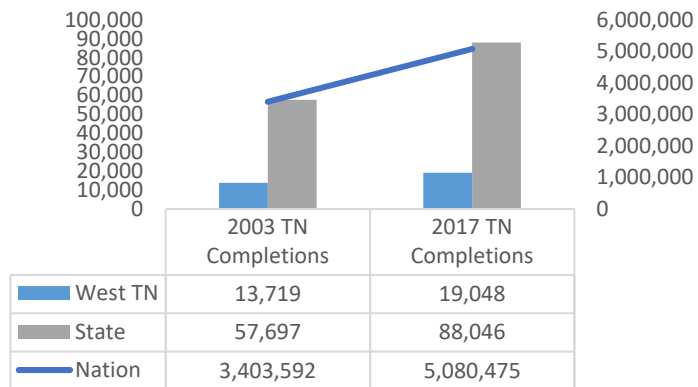
Education and training services offered throughout the region may include:

- Needs-Based Scholarships for Postsecondary Training
- Transportation Stipends for Postsecondary Training and Work Experience
- On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training Grants
- Apprenticeship Programs

Needs-Based Scholarships, issued through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for postsecondary training, are managed in the AJCs by members of the Career Development Services Team. After a thorough assessment and verification that the training plan will lead to employability in an in-demand occupation, staff obligate funds, which is documented in Jobs4TN to allow fiscal staff and the LWDBs to have a clearer picture of funds available and projected expenditures for the program year. A priority of service policy is in place in each local area to ensure the most in need receive services first.

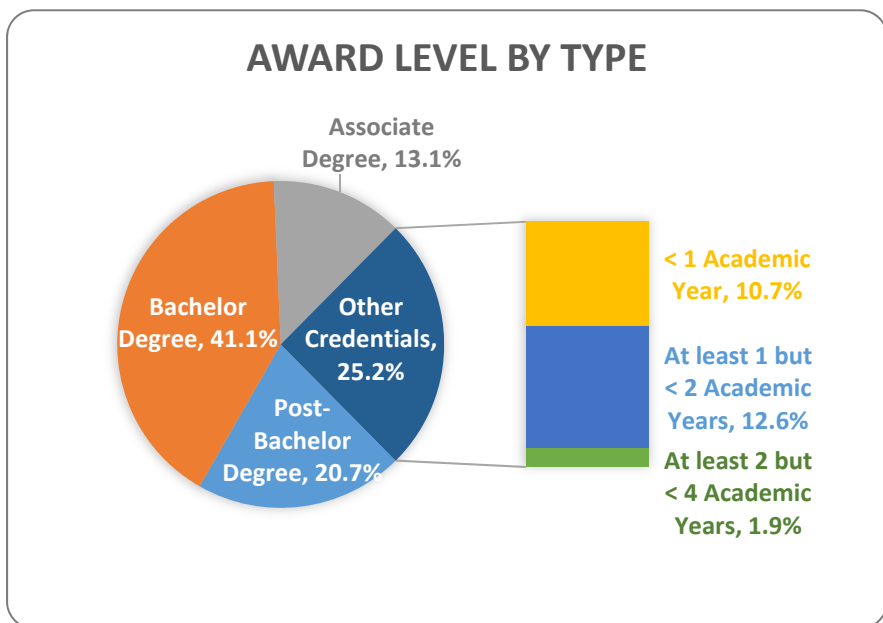
Per EMSI, throughout West TN, 70 institutions are offering a combined total of 1,720 programs. In 2017, there were 19,048 completions in the area, while there were 71,786 annual openings that year. While the number of completions in West TN increased by 38.8% between 2003 and 2017, the State saw an increase of 52.6% while the Nation saw an

2003 - 2015 Completions Trends



increase of 49.3%. Of the completions in 2017, the majority, or 41.1% earned a Bachelor degree. A Master degree was awarded to 13.7%, while an Associate degree was awarded to 13.1%. Other academic credentials were awarded to 25.2%.

West TN is sensitive to the needs of employers and makes every effort to eliminate skills gaps of job applicants. When ITAs are not appropriate or do not fully address the skills needs of a specific employer, Business Services Team members may authorize On-the-Job Training reimbursement for new hires with experience below the O\*Net Specific Vocational Preparation level. Additionally, if



a lack of sufficient providers or programs to meet training needs is identified (i.e. a large layoff resulting in extensive waiting lists for training), a “buy-out” class may be authorized. To maximize efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers, West TN utilizes groups of subject matter experts (SMEs), such as standing and/or ad hoc committees of the LWDBs, or employer-driven councils, boards, and / or groups. Such groups may include the Greater Memphis Medical Device Council, Steel Fabricators Council, Process Technology Talent Council, Commercial Driver’s License Talent Council, Public Service Technician/Blue Path Pathway Program, and various industrial boards. These groups of SMEs, comprised of board members, as well as community members, with expertise in the subject matter, provide vital information and guidance.

**Preparing Jobseekers to Enter and Retain Employment with Regional Businesses:** Training programs are designed to prepare jobseekers to enter and retain employment with local and regional businesses. In addition to serving on the local boards, private sector representatives often serve on advisory boards for training providers to ensure programs are designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills. All public training providers must also adhere to the policies of the appropriate governing agency, the University of Tennessee System or the Tennessee Board of Regents, for new academic programs, which include provisions for meeting employer needs. The TN Higher Education Commission’s

Division of Postsecondary State Authorization oversees and monitors private proprietary schools offering training programs leading to a vocation, college credit, or an educational credential. An annual report is issued each fiscal year with detailed program performance including the number and rate of students placed in the field of study. Prior to being placed on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), programs must be approved by the local boards, which review local and regional labor market information to determine if in-demand occupations exist for the program. After a one-year initial eligibility period, programs may be reviewed and renewed by the local boards every two years. To remain on the ETPL, providers must submit quarterly performance reports to the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) detailing how programs are performing in credential attainment, employment during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit, and median earnings. Before issuing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to fund approved programs, staff in the American Job Centers also evaluate the appropriateness of the training for each individual customer’s unique situation. Finally, career pathways are developed for targeted industry sectors to ensure successful transitions from secondary, to postsecondary, to employment.

**2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities:** The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of workforce development activities in the region were analyzed by staff and partners of the local areas in West TN on August 9, 2016 as part of the regional planning process. After review by the Regional Planning Council, the below items were identified as the top five priorities for each category. The SWOT Analysis is the primary basis of the planning process and enables all partners to visually review how the organization and region can grow and improve. Additionally, all partners are creating action plans to address key weaknesses and to take advantage of opportunities.

**SWOT Analysis for West TN, January 2017**

Strengths	Weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abundance of training institutions within the region</li> <li>2. Strong work ethic of the region</li> <li>3. Willingness of partners to work together</li> <li>4. Diversified pool of labor</li> <li>5. Multiple industrial sites available including the centrally located Memphis Regional Megasite</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of soft skills among job seekers</li> <li>2. Lack of skills among a portion of the workforce</li> <li>3. Perceived reputation of workforce development services</li> <li>4. Education challenges such as inconsistent quality of secondary education across the area</li> <li>5. Internal/external awareness and knowledge of workforce services</li> </ol>
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Postsecondary educational expansions / investments</li> <li>2. Employer investments in workforce training</li> <li>3. State education initiatives such as TN Promise, TN ReConnect, and LEAP</li> <li>4. Projection of future in-demand industries (new opportunities from technology-driven skills)</li> <li>5. TN Dept. of Economic &amp; Community Development’s Rural Programs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of jobs</li> <li>2. Relevance – Can the AJC supply what employers need / want?</li> <li>3. Lack of funding for workforce services</li> <li>4. Lack of alignment of training to employer needs due to continuous changes in technology and processes</li> <li>5. Loss of jobs to automation and globalization</li> </ol>

**Capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skills needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers:** West TN supports the service alignment strategy identified in the State Plan through increased coordination, leveraged funds, seamless customer service delivery, and functional alignment of services. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are maintained by each local board with the required American Job Center (AJC) partners to carry out the TDLWD Service Integration Policy. An umbrella MOU is utilized to facilitate transparent and flexible agreements that are not burdensome and allow partners to focus on service delivery. The MOU identifies the roles and resource contributions of each partner, establishes a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship among the parties, ensures that all customers are referred to unique services, and provides for a referral process between agencies. Each of the local boards in the West TN region also maintain cooperative agreements with Vocational Rehabilitation, and other Core Partners, which define how local service providers and partners cooperatively carry out the requirements for the integration of, and access to, the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system through cross training of staff, sharing of information, and cooperative efforts with employers.

According to the TDLWD’s PY18 Q1 Dashboard, during Program Year (PY) 2017, the West TN region funded 868 ITAs for Adults and Dislocated Workers, and an additional 260 ITAs for Youth. Over 5,800 enrollments into Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs occurred throughout West TN during PY 2017, and the AJCs saw nearly 43,000



unique visitors and provided over 140,400 services. Additionally, over 27,600 employer services were provided. The Jobs4TN Targeted Population Summary report indicates that 3,928 barriers to employment were present among individuals active during PY 2017, including 140 individuals with disabilities, 1,119 underemployed, 673 single parents, 490 basic skills deficient individuals, 176 offenders, 223 homeless individuals, and 563 pregnant or parenting youth.

**3. Expanding Existing Service Strategies Based on Return on Investment (ROI):** To fulfill the State of Tennessee Workforce Vision of increasing the competitive position of Tennessee business through the development of a high skilled workforce, the West TN region will continue to focus on developing and maintaining strong partnerships with local and regional businesses. As the primary customer of the workforce system, services to employers are the primary objective of the West TN region's existing service strategy. The Jobs4TN online system allows employers to access an assortment of services at no cost to the local areas, the region, or the employers:

- (a) labor market information from the TN and U.S. Departments of Labor, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- (b) access to thousands of qualified local jobseekers;
- (c) post jobs and automatically screen candidates based on specified criteria; and
- (d) contact candidates directly through the message center.

Staff serving on the Business Services teams assist employers in utilizing these services as well as work-based learning programs such as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to upgrade the skills of new and existing employees respectively. During PY 2017, each local area in West TN received funding through Consolidated Business Grants (CBGs) to fund such initiatives. According to the TDLWD's PY18 Q1 Dashboard, of the 116 CBG pre-applications obtained, 53 contracts were signed, including 40 OJT contracts, two apprenticeship contracts, and 31 IWT contracts. Of the 53 executed contracts, 43, or 81% completed resulting in 1,289 skills upgrades. During PY 2018, West TN is expected to receive a combined total of \$1,666,665 in CBG funding, a significant increase above the PY 2017 funding levels, to continue to provide services to employers. Assuming all funded is expended, if the number of skills upgrades from PY 2017 is met or exceeded in PY 2018, each skills upgrade will be at a cost of \$1,293 or less. Expanding West TN's business-focused strategy will only strengthen the ROI.

**Existing Service Strategies to be Curtailed or Eliminated Based in Minimal ROI:** West TN has not identified any service strategies to be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal ROI. Participation rates and costs of services will be continually evaluated by the local areas and brought before the RPC as needed to evaluate the need for adjustments to services.

**New Service Strategies to Address Regional and Educational Needs Based on Promising ROI:** Based on the promising ROI of business-focused strategies, West TN will adopt the Workforce and Corrections partnership with the goal of improving labor market outcomes of the state's formerly-incarcerated population, often known as justice-involved or ex-offenders. The local boards and RPC will partner with community-based organizations (CBOs), reentry service providers, local sheriffs, and representatives of State Parole and County Probation Departments to provide seamless, integrated, and effective services to the formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals. Recognizing the opportunity to work with inmates prior to release can reduce the rate of recidivism, regional partnerships to serve justice involved individuals (current or former) will interface with existing regional sector pathways efforts, including identification of and engagement with employers, industry sector partners, and labor-management partners who are willing to hire them, including those with felony convictions and those who are currently under state or county supervision. While members of the Business Services teams work with employers to develop OJT, IWT, apprenticeship, work experience, and transitional job opportunities for such individuals, members of the Career Development Team will work with the individuals and partner organizations to ensure individuals receive the appropriate basic and individualized career services and supportive services to be successful in work-based or other training learning opportunities.

**Supporting State Strategies and Goals to Align and Integrate Education, Workforce, and Economic Development:** To align and integrate education, workforce, and economic development, and in order to address the skill gaps revealed through labor market data and discussions with key stakeholders as described above in the *Skills Gap Analysis* section, the West TN region focuses on enhancing training opportunities and providing individuals with the knowledge and

resources needed to take advantage of them. Data from the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#) is used as a foundation to begin discussions and develop partnerships with educational institutions such as TN Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT), Community Colleges, and Universities to address educational needs in the area, and achieve the goal of the Drive to 55 initiative, by ensuring the availability of needed training opportunities.

To meet the needs of employers and align education and training opportunities with targeted industries and occupations, West TN also takes advantages of initiatives and opportunities such as TN Pathways TN when possible to collaborate with workforce, education, training, and employer partners. The TN Pathways initiative supports alignment among K-12, postsecondary education, and employers across the state so that students have a clear and guided pathway to gain the knowledge and experience needed to move seamlessly into the workforce. TN Pathways directly supports the Drive to 55 goal to equip at least 55% of Tennesseans with a college degree or certificate by 2025 through: 1. High-quality college and career advisement throughout K-12; 2. Rigorous early postsecondary and work-based learning opportunities in high school; and 3. Seamless vertical alignment between K-12, postsecondary programs, and career opportunities as a result of effective partnerships among school districts, higher education institutions, employers, and community organizations. West TN will partner with the TN Pathways Regional Coordinators to certify pathways high schools and work to have a majority of graduates earn a postsecondary credential. To yield a pipeline of skilled entry-level workers to address the current and projected skilled worker shortage, West TN will also:

- Research labor market information and assist in the engagement of employers in the region to determine current and future hiring needs.
- Coordinate with middle school personnel to understand, develop, and/or enhance career exploration activities for students, beginning in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to assure programs align with industry needs.
- Facilitate interaction between employers and middle/high school teachers, counselors, and/or administration to provide “real world” workforce expectations of business and industry, including career pathways, work ethic and soft skills.
- Coordinate with secondary schools and postsecondary institutions to develop career pathways for students that meet the needs of the students and employers.
- Partner regionally with economic development entities and other critical stakeholders, including TN Pathways Tennessee, to better align education and workforce development activities and policies with regional labor markets, economic growth strategies and employer demand.
- Partner with the business community, including business associations, and educational institutions (including secondary and postsecondary institutions such as community colleges) to design and implement programs and career pathways that lead to credentials and employment.
- Partner with and leverage resources from other Federally-funded programs, such as Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Small Business Development Centers, etc.
- Partner with community-based organizations, since they are key providers of basic skills training, technical skills training, supportive services, and workforce development services in communities across Tennessee.
- Sustain work experience opportunities. In addition to regular WIOA Youth formula funds, local areas can use other resources, such as Job Corps, and fund matching from private industry.

## B. Transportation and Other Supportive Services

Given the large numbers of individuals with barriers to employment in the region, transportation and other support services are of the utmost importance to ensuring successful outcomes for customers. While a range of support services is available to help customers overcome barriers to successfully complete training and / or gain employment, West TN must be ever mindful of emerging and changing needs in determining support services needed in the region. For instance, many customers struggle to access a computer and / or internet, prompting consideration of offering support services to provide internet access.

**1. Regional Organizations Providing Supportive Services:** Each local area in West TN maintains Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the required AJC partners to define the mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities of each Partner for the operation of the Tennessee One-Stop Service Delivery system. AJC partner programs providing supportive services throughout West TN may include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Job Corps,

Trade Adjustment Act, Indian and Native American Programs, State Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Community Service Block Grant programs. Examples of support services currently offered by Title I programs in West TN include:

- Test fee stipends to customers seeking to earn a high school equivalency program.
- A one-time payment for work-related expenses such as appropriate work attire, uniforms, tools, medical physicals, background checks, drug screens, industry certifications, driver's license fees, or other employment-related needs are available to Work Experience participants.
- Childcare support in the form of a weekly stipend paid to a licensed daycare facility is available.
- Transportation stipends.

Special attention to transportation support services is needed as this is perhaps the greatest barrier for many AJC customers, and thousands of individuals commute into and out of the region for employment. While mass public transportation is available in Jackson in the Southwest area and Memphis in the Greater Memphis area, it is not available in the Northwest area or other rural areas of the region. Therefore, individuals needing transportation assistance may utilize transportation services available through various community agencies such as Northwest TN Human Resource Agency, Southwest Human Resource Agency, and Delta Human Resource Agency, which provide transportation service for the citizens of the region to ensure access to medical and educational facilities, employment sites, shopping centers, and various other businesses and services. Transportation stipends for eligible participants attending an approved training provider and program for occupational skills training is currently available in each of the local areas through a stipend payment paid at intervals consistent with the training provider terms. Individuals participating in work experience through the Northwest area may also receive a travel stipend for the first 30 days of work experience to offset their gas expenses until they have received one month of pay.

**2. Coordination of Supportive Service Delivery:** As a Basic Career Service, the provision of referrals to, and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs is available to all customers of the AJCs. Based on customers' needs, staff serving in the Welcome Function make referrals to appropriate agencies for support and other services. For example, customers may be referred to the Department of Human Services or a Head Start program to apply for childcare services, to Access from AT&T for discounted home internet service, or to various community agencies regarding assistance for commodities, electric bills, and telephone access. Each AJC maintains appropriate contact and other information to facilitate referrals for services. Telephones and computers are also available for customers to access offsite partners. Staff in the AJCs also coordinate with partner programs, such as Workforce Essentials, administrator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, or Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), for participants receiving transportation assistance from another partner organization. For example, participants receiving transportation assistance through Workforce Essentials or TAA may have the total amount anticipated to be received in transportation assistance deducted from the transportation assistance amount Title I staff expects to pay. If the partner program covers the full expense, Title I staff will coordinate to provide other needed services such as case management and job search assistance, to maximize services for the customer.

To enhance the provision of transportation and other supportive services, the Regional Planning Council (RPC) will ensure the sharing of best practices for possible replication, such as the use of gas cards for the payment of transportation stipends. Additionally, West TN will continue to maximize funding available for supportive services by coordinating services through programs such as TN Promise and TN ReConnect, as well as forms of financial aid such as Lottery scholarships and Pell grants, allowing Title I funding to be awarded to customers for supportive services instead of training services. Through collaboration with programs offering supportive services West TN will also maximize customers' access to services not available through the AJC. For example, West TN will consider partnering with agencies offering transportation services on behalf of customers who lack means of transportation to coordinate schedules, arrange services, or to potentially fund such services for both individuals and groups. Coaching and mentoring services available through the AJCs and partner programs, such as TN ReConnect, will also be utilized to assist customers in obtaining needed services. Each local area maintains policies and procedures for administering and coordinating support

services to ensure funds are spent in a manner that avoids redundancy. The RPC will continue to provide oversight and guidance regarding the need for additional support services, policies, and procedures.

### C. Coordination with Regional Economic Development Services and Providers

**1. Organizations and Businesses Engaged in Regional Planning:** West TN strives to coordinate efforts with regional economic development services and providers by aligning services, participating in economic development programs, and ensuring residents have the skills and knowledge needed to meet the current and future needs of employers. Economic development representatives, including individuals from the State of TN's Department of Economic Development, and various Chambers of Commerce in the region have been invited to, and have participated in, both local and regional planning sessions. Representatives from economic development also serve on the local boards, standing committees, and the RPC, and are actively engaged in the planning process. Training providers in the region, including Dyersburg State Community College, Jackson State Community College, and various TN Colleges of Applied Technology, supply Chambers of Commerce with education and training data, including current program offerings and completion information, which is used to market the region to prospective industries. Both established and prospective employers can utilize trainings designed with their unique needs in mind. Small Business Development Centers in the region also provide valuable training to existing and potential small businesses. Private business representatives constitute 51% of the local boards, which are charged with coordinating with economic development organizations. Representatives from businesses within the below industries currently serve on a local board in West TN:

- Manufacturing
- Education
- Social Assistance
- Finance, Insurance, and Banking
- Healthcare
- Staffing Services
- Electric Power Distribution
- Electrical Contracting
- Recycling
- Food Service
- Security Services
- Legal Services
- Non-Profits
- Distribution, Transportation & Logistics
- Small Businesses including Pest Control, Marketing / Advertising / Public Relations, Agricultural Technology, Plumbing, Construction, Landscaping, Real Estate, Facilities Maintenance, and Retail

**2. Organizations or Businesses Declining to Participate:** Fortunately for West TN, all organizations and businesses invited to serve on the RPC agreed to do so.

**3. Input Provided by Regional Economic Development Organizations and Businesses:** Local Elected Officials, LWDB members, core and required partner programs, private business, postsecondary institutions, and economic development agencies, including Small Business Development Centers, Chambers, and Development Districts were invited to participate in development of the local and regional plans. The information gathered during local and regional planning sessions guided the RPC throughout the remainder of the regional planning process. During the local and transitional regional planning process, each local area in the planning region conducted a local planning session with key stakeholders in the local and regional area, including economic development organizations and businesses. Prior to the local planning session, stakeholders were asked to complete a brief survey regarding the perceived mission, vision, priorities, and goals for the local boards. The information was gathered by Thomas P. Miller & Associates, convener of the local and regional planning sessions, to shape the discussions of the sessions. During each local planning session, participants explored the role of the local boards in strategic planning, reviewed demographic and labor market information for the area, developed draft mission and vision statements, identified strategic priorities, and discussed next steps and future goal development. After each local session, the three LWDBAs in the West TN region participated in a regional planning session on August 9, 2016. During this session, participants reviewed the draft mission and vision statements and strategic priorities from the local planning sessions, conducted an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), identified regional strategic priorities, discussed next steps and future goal development, and developed a regional vision statement for the region. Upon receiving local and regional plan modification guidance, the information was shared with the RPC via email on December 6, 2018 for review and comments and feedback. Local and regional plans are also posted for public comment, with notice being given to both

the public and stakeholders, including economic development organizations and businesses. Any comments received during the public comment period are addressed in the plan prior to submission.

**4. Input Incorporated into the Regional Plan:** During the transitional regional planning process, the RPC met monthly and after the completion of the regional planning process, the RPC has continued to meet quarterly to provide continuous input to the regional plan and service strategies. Regional Council members continue to ensure the sharing of best practices for the purposes of identifying service delivery strategies to be expanded throughout the region. For instance, service delivery strategies to offenders in the Southwest area, transportation stipend delivery in the Northwest area, and “street teams” to deliver career services via access points and other methods in the Greater Memphis area, were all best practices identified by the RPC for consideration of expansion throughout the region. The RPC also identified the following as possible service strategies during the transitional planning processes which have been given further consideration in subsequent RPC meetings:

- A common application in order streamline services for both job seeker and employer customers.
- Align support service policies to ensure all customers receive similar services.
- Develop a process to jointly offer OJT contracts to employers in the region.
- Seek and utilize grant funding as a region to enhance and expand service offerings.
- Enhance methods of addressing soft-skill gaps.
- Coordinate with employers to utilize resources/funding saved through OJT/IWT grants for other training needs.
- Maximize services through coordination with, and referral to, core and other partners including K – 12, postsecondary, SNAP E&T, RESEA, TANF, and others, as described in the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020 as well as the Service Integration Policy.

The RPC also works to identify additional strategies for maximizing geographic advantages such as the Memphis Regional Megasite, the Port of Cates Landing, and the Port of Memphis. While these opportunities are attractive to prospective industries, the workforce system must be able to supply the workers needed to meet needs of employers.

#### D. Coordination of Administrative Cost Arrangements

Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) are developed with onsite partners at the AJCs in order to establish methods of cost sharing. IFAs are updated quarterly and reviewed by partner leadership for accuracy and monitoring of shared costs and expenditures. The fiscal staff for the local board invoices partners monthly to ensure timely payment of shared costs. Program funds are also braided with other Federal and State programs, such as Trade Adjustment Act, TN Promise, TN ReConnect, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T), TANF, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs, and Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) in order to eliminate duplication and leverage dollars to maximize resources and services. AJC partners also enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in order to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services, and improve effectiveness, thereby decreasing administrative and program costs. Current MOUs and IFAs reflect the sharing of infrastructure costs among partner programs, based on proportionate use of the AJCs and relative benefit received. A variety of methods to allocate costs are evaluated during the process for establishing infrastructure cost sharing agreements, possibly including: the proportion of a partner program’s occupancy percentage of the AJC (square footage); the proportion of a partner program’s customers compared to all customers served by the AJC; the proportion of partner program’s staff compared to all staff at the AJC; or a partner program’s use of equipment or other items that support the local AJC delivery system. Under the guidance of the Regional Planning Council, the local areas in West TN will also consider utilizing cost sharing arrangements when appropriate, for administrative costs such as the development of the regional plan, processing On-the-Job Training contracts, developing marketing materials and a regional Annual Report, seeking and applying for grant funding, and the selection of a one-stop operator.

### Vision, Goals, and Implementation Strategies

#### A. Strategic Vision to Support State, Regional and Local Economic Growth

Based upon input from local and regional stakeholders, including business, education, and workforce development stakeholders, the Regional Planning Council (RPC) developed a vision of the workforce boards in West Tennessee: to

*foster a region where skilled workers contribute to thriving businesses, economic growth, and a high quality of life.* To achieve this vision, the RPC, local boards, and partners strive to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers, thereby supporting, state, regional, and local economic growth, by:

- 1) Increasing the skills and knowledge of Northwest Tennesseans to meet the needs of employers now and in the future;
- 2) Creating career pathways from high school, postsecondary education / training to the workforce; and
- 3) Eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to the existing and emerging workforce.

## B. Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

### **1. Goals to prepare an educated and skilled workforce, including Youth and individuals with barriers to employment:**

To fulfill the vision for West TN, the workforce system is emphasizing serving those who are most in need. In order to reach out to members of such target populations, staff conduct outreach activities, to discuss services, distribute and / or post marketing materials, schedule outreach efforts such as group presentations or a table of information materials, and develop plans for additional outreach, at various community locations, including those specifically serving target populations. Such organizations may include Adult Education classes, libraries, Department of Human Services, Health Department, Housing Authorities, churches, Boys & Girls Clubs, schools, postsecondary institutions, and Head Start programs. Outreach efforts strive to connect regional target populations to occupational demands by engaging them in utilizing services such as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for postsecondary training, as managed in the AJCs by members of the Career Development Services Team. While many job seekers choose to attend postsecondary training to gain necessary job skills, others find that “hands on” work-based learning, such as apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training (OJT), are a better fit as they provide an income to sustain them while learning skills. OJT is available to companies with full-time job opportunities, with a focus on employment sectors identified in the Governor’s Economic and Community Development Jobs4TN Plan. The obligation of training funds is documented in Jobs4TN allowing fiscal staff and the LWDBs to have a clearer picture of funds available and projected expenditures for the program year. “Priority of service” policies are also in place to ensure individuals with barriers to employment, the most in need, receive training services such as these first.

**2. Goals relating to the Performance Accountability Measures based on Performance Indicators:** Each local area’s success in providing the services outlined in the regional plan is measured by Performance Standards developed by the US Department of Labor, which are broken out by the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding streams. These standards are then negotiated with each of the states, including TN. TDLWD then negotiates with the local areas across the State. On a local level, the local board holds subcontractors to the same performance levels. Performance levels are measured across the areas of employment rates for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters after exit and credential attainment within four quarters after exit for all programs, as well as median earnings for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. To be successful as a region, it is vital that each local area achieve the local performance goals, as well as performance dashboards developed by the TDLWD for pre and post-program outcomes. To accomplish this goal, the West TN region will ensure open communication regarding best practices that promote efficiency and effectiveness in delivering workforce services.

## C. Regional Strategies to Achieve the Vision and Goals

Strategies to achieve West TN’s vision *to foster a region where skilled workers contribute to thriving businesses, economic growth, and a high quality of life*, include:

- 1) Increasing the skills and knowledge of Northwest Tennesseans to meet the needs of employers now and in the future;
- 2) Creating career pathways from high school, postsecondary education / training to the workforce; and
- 3) Eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to the existing and emerging workforce.

The RPC, which includes members of the core partners as well as other partners, identifies regional and local in-demand and emerging sectors using available labor market data, strategy meetings, and other data gathering methods. Workforce efforts are then focused on identified sectors through services available through AJC partners, such as the development of career pathways in manufacturing and healthcare. Members of the Business Services Team also conduct outreach in order to educate employers on the services available through the AJC designed, with employers' input, to meet their needs and support talent development. Coordination between training institutions, funding sources, the local

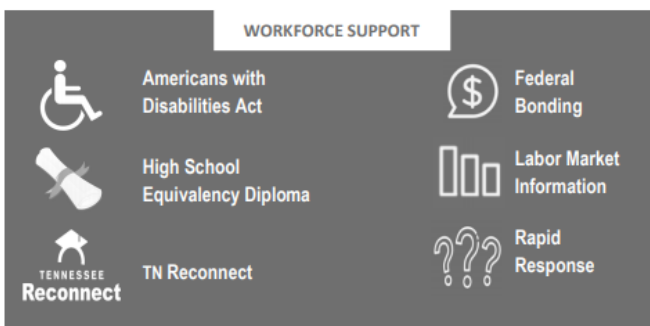
boards, and employers ensures that training is available for in-demand occupations in the local area, current and prospective students are aware of various resources for funding training, including those offered by the partner programs, and that resources are leveraged through co-enrollment and referrals to eliminate duplication.

**1. Facilitating engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations:** Understanding and meeting the needs of employers is given the utmost importance and is achieved through a collaboration of the RPC, local boards, and partners serving on the Business Services Team, such as Title I Career and Business Services, Labor Exchange, Veterans Programs, Trade Act, Re-Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, Economic Development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The Business Services Team is responsible for connecting with companies, including small employers, in targeted industry sectors and occupations, and other employers that have hiring needs, to understand and meet their needs through a variety of employer-driven initiatives and services. Business Services can assist with Recruitment & Screening, Grants and Incentives, and Workforce Support to address the needs and skills gaps as identified by local employers. Labor market information (LMI) is also available through Jobs4TN and Economic Modeling Systems, Inc. (EMSI) to help employers identify average wages for jobs in an area, which occupations are predicted to have the most future job openings, as well as unemployment rates in an area, and much more. Business Services Team members connect with area employers by participating in regional economic development groups comprised of training providers, Chambers of Commerce, plant managers, and economic developers to determine high-growth jobs and industries that are adding substantial jobs to the local economy. Local employers also serve on the local boards.

**2. Supporting a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area:** The Business Services Team assists in identifying and meeting the needs of employers in existing and emerging industries and occupations by building relationships through local and regional initiatives, identifying means of addressing human resources needs, promoting and facilitating the use of AJC services such as On-the-Job Training grants, customized training opportunities, and the availability of Incumbent Worker Training grants. Other services provided to new and prospective companies by the Business Services Team and AJC Partners include:



- Pre-screening Applicants – Analyzing job applications and pre-screening applicants based on minimum requirements, then referring qualified candidates to various pre-employment assessments.
- Job Fairs – Facilitating, organizing, planning and finding qualified labor for open positions, including joint job fairs across local areas.
- Labor Market Information – Labor Market FAQs can be found on [www.Jobs4TN.gov](http://www.Jobs4TN.gov) - an online resource that provides access to a wide variety of information about jobs in the local area, such as the average wages for jobs in an area, the occupations predicted to have the most future job openings, the salary expectations for specific occupations, and county unemployment rates.



- Virtual Career Center – Using the Jobs4TN online website to connect employers to job seekers by listing job orders and making coordinated referrals based on job descriptions.
- On-the-Job and Incumbent Worker Training – Educating employers about the availability of OJT and IWT funds to assist in upgrading skills of new and existing employees.
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Services – Using Jobs4TN to report layoffs and closures, workers to file claims, job

search, and complete weekly certifications, and connect to programs for UI recipients including Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).

Furthermore, together, the Business Services and Career Development Services Teams fulfill the needs of both the employer and the job seeker through work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships, paid work experience, and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These opportunities, providing unemployed customers with both employment and training simultaneously, make training possible to individuals who would not be capable of supporting themselves and their families without an income. In order to connect unemployed individuals with these opportunities, members of the Business Services Team focus on developing job placement opportunities with regional employers while members of the Career Development Services Team focus on preparing job seekers for these opportunities through resume assistance, interviewing skills training, and addressing soft skills deficiencies.



**3. Coordinating workforce development programs and economic development:** The Business Services Team members focus efforts by working with the Economic and Community Development team to ensure targeted industries align with the Governor’s Sector Strategies. Thorough analysis of the labor market data and discussions with key stakeholders have resulted in the identification of in-demand sectors in the local area on which to focus workforce development efforts in order to address the middle-skills gap and meet the needs of employers: (1) Healthcare; (2) Transportation and Logistics; (3) Advanced Manufacturing; and (4) Business Services, with a particular emphasis on Information Technology. Shared information and data agreements may be utilized to support access to information and information sharing between the partners as allowed by authorizing laws and regulations. All marketing material used in the AJCs include the federal brand of American Job Center Network, which has been incorporated into all flyers, brochures and outreach material.

**4. Strengthening linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs:** AJC staff are cross-trained to provide meaningful assistance for UI, including assisting customers in using Jobs4TN.gov to complete claims, weekly certifications, and utilizing the live chat feature, or submitting help desk tickets. Fax machines are also available at the AJCs to allow customers to submit needed information to the TDLWD State office if necessary. A LWDB staff member also serves as the Rapid Response Coordinator for the local area and coordinates with partners to provide assistance to employers and affected employees through Rapid Response services. Additionally, Title I and Title III staff are responsible for recording these services in Jobs4TN by entering activities into the individual's or employer's account. Marketing materials are made available at all AJCs. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA), designed to assist individuals receiving UI with appropriate reemployment services, such as referrals to education and training, that will lead to successful employment outcomes, is co-located into the AJCs when possible. Customers who receive RESEA services are automatically selected through a computer model that identifies the UI recipients most likely to benefit from receiving one-on-one services from a RESEA staff member. The program strives to assist participants in overcoming barriers so that they can make a successful transition to gainful employment. Customers receive an orientation to all RESEA and AJC services, assessments to identify customers’ needs, and assist customers in developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that the details the customer’s employment goals and objectives.

**5. Promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services:** To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, members of the Business Services Team connect with Chambers of Commerce, TN Small Business Development Centers, and other organizations serving small employers to connect with employers in targeted industry sectors and occupations, and other employers that have hiring needs, to understand and meet their needs through a variety of employer-driven initiatives and services. Business Services can assist with Recruitment & Screening, Grants and Incentives, and Workforce Support to address the needs and skills gaps as identified by local employers. A Starting Your Own Business workshop is also offered through the AJCs in partnership with the TN Small Business Development Centers. Attendees learn the skills and information they need to get started, including successful business ownership traits, assessment of the business idea, and the “mechanics” of starting a business – forms of ownership, insurance, financing, and more.



**6. Implementing initiatives, services, and strategies to meet the needs of regional employers:** The West TN region will continue to focus on developing and maintaining strong partnerships with local and regional businesses. As the primary customer of the workforce system, services to employers, such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and customized training, are the primary objective of the West TN region’s existing service strategy. Industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, and utilization of effective business intermediaries, are also primary focuses of the West TN region. The TN Pathways Coordinators for the three local areas in West TN serve as members of the Regional Planning Council (RPC), and provide guidance and coordination for connecting secondary schools to postsecondary training providers and employers in target industry sectors. In addition to the strategies listed below, best practices for offering these services will be shared and implemented when possible.

- Utilize Consolidated Business Grant (CBG) funding to offer services to eligible employers in order to upgrade the skills of new and existing employees.
- Collect and analyze data regarding employer usage of AJC services such as employer surveys and employer services reports in Jobs4TN.gov.
- Conduct informative meetings and/or listening sessions for employers and employer intermediaries such as Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers to promote knowledge and use of services.
- Utilize all available resources for publicizing and promoting AJC services including flyers and brochures, press releases, social media pages, news outlets, and the State of TN Communications office resources.
- Maximize services through coordination with, and referral to, core and other partners including K – 12, postsecondary, SNAP E&T, RESEA, TANF, and others, as described in the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020 as well as the Service Integration Policy.
- Increase communication among partners to eliminate duplicated services and leverage resources.
- Participate in related events and activities to promote services.
- Promote sharing of job openings and hiring events with internal and external partners.
- Support awareness and adoption of innovative sector models, partnership strategies, and career pathways.
- Seek and utilize grant funding as a region to enhance and expand service offerings.
- Enhance methods of addressing soft-skill gaps.
- Coordinate with employers to utilize resources and/or funding saved through grants for other training needs.

#### D. Aligning and Integrating Education, Workforce, and Economic Development

The mission on the TN Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) is to develop strategies that help make TN the # 1 location in the Southwest for high quality jobs. To fulfill this mission, ECD has set five long-term objectives and has set all of these goals for 2025:

1. To have the lowest unemployment of the dozen states in the Southeast.
2. To rank among the top 2 states in the Southeast for personal income per capita.
3. To have the highest private capital investment per capita in the Southeast.
4. To eliminate all Tennessee counties that are federally designated as distressed counties. This designation is based on poverty rates, income levels and unemployment rate.
5. To secure predominantly high-quality jobs from expanding or newly locating businesses in Tennessee, defined as 55% of job commitments paying at or above the county median wage where the private investment is made.

To support the efforts of ECD in fulfilling their goals, West TN strives to increase access to education, training, and employment, particularly for those with significant barriers to employment, align education, workforce, and economic development (ED), improve quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and ED efforts, promote the improvement in the structure and delivery of services, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of TN.

**1. Access to education, training, and employment, particularly for those with significant barriers to employment:** West TN strives to increase access and utilization of career and training services by:

- (1) incorporating programs designed to serve particular target populations within the AJCs, when possible;

- (2) developing programs to serve customers with special needs, such as offender and re-entry programs; and
- (3) ensuring access to workforce development services are available to all area residents.

Co-Location of Programs Serving Target Populations: West TN strives to incorporate programs designed to serve particular target populations within the AJCs. In addition to TANF, Youth , and RESEA programs being offered through the AJCs, the Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), a partnership between the Department of Human Services and TDLWD, allows eligible SNAP recipients to receive job readiness services such as job search assistance, training or educational placement assistance and scholarships, high school equivalency test fees, and books and transportation assistance for Adult Education classes. These funds offset the need for ITA funds to be applied towards tuition and fee costs, allowing ITAs to cover other costs such as books, supplies, tool, uniforms, and transportation stipends. Aligning services such as SNAP E&T and ITAs allows customers to receive all the help they need, but also provides a way for LWDAs to maximize the funds available and to serve more customers. A YouthBuild program is also available in the Greater Memphis area to provide participants with academic or construction training, work experience, and leadership development. Vocational Rehabilitation's and Greater Memphis area's Ticket to Work Programs strive to provide re-employment services to individuals with disabilities to facilitate a successful transition into the workplace. The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program is also available to provide services to disabled veterans.

Development of Programs for Target Populations: In addition to engaging target populations in the use of AJC services, programs are developed to serve customers with special needs, such as offender and re-entry programs. West TN will continue to enhance these efforts as described in Workforce and Connection partnership section below.

Access to Services: West TN strives to ensure workforce development services are available to all area residents by maintaining an AJC in each county throughout the region. To manage administrative costs, competitive leases are negotiated, partners co-locate in the AJCs when possible, and the LWDAs seek additional funding through grant opportunities. While brick-and-mortar AJCs are valued for cost effectiveness, availability of resources to customers, and visibility in the community, West TN also recognizes the need to bring the services to the customers who may not be able to visit the established AJC given the large service areas and transportation barriers. To bring the services to the people, the TDLWD's Mobile AJC, a mobile center with services customers typically found in a traditional AJC, is utilized to serve remote areas and individuals who are unable to commute to one of the AJCs in the region. The mobile AJC has a computer lab with up to 10 computers with internet access, a fax machine, and copier. Staff are available to offer workshops on resumes and interviewing skills, administer the HiSet exam, provide instruction on basic computer hardware and software using a large monitor and SMART board, and offer assistance with job searching, resume development, interviewing, as well as providing information about training/education opportunities. The Mobile AJC can also serve as a recruitment center for companies moving into the area.

To further enhance access to services, the implementation of "street teams" in the Greater Memphis area was identified during the transitional planning process a promising practice to be considered for replication throughout the region and has since been implemented in the Northwest area. These teams are charged with coordinating with community programs and agencies to provide AJC services via access points or other alternative sites. Customers who visit an alternative site administered by a "street team" receive the same Career Services offered in a traditional AJC, including job search assistance, resume development, workshops, etc. Possible replications of Northwest's use of Skype for "face-to-face" interactions with various one-stop partners and / or employers would allow customers in affiliate sites and access points to virtually receive one-stop services typically only offered onsite at the comprehensive centers. Jobs4TN, a Virtual One-Stop system developed by Geographic Solutions, Inc., also allows both job seeker and employer customers to remotely access secure, web-based AJC services such as labor market information, unemployment insurance, and mediated labor exchange. The system's ability to integrate seemingly different program designs, such as Title I, WP, TAA, Unemployment Insurance, and Adult Education programs also maximizes customer service and efficiency as it provides a common intake and case management information system.

**2. Creating a comprehensive, high-quality workforce system by aligning workforce investment, education, and Economic Development:** To create a comprehensive, high-quality workforce system, West TN ensures that workforce

development activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region, by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, education, and service providers. West TN develops and implements proven or promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers, as outlined in the Business Services Strategy section, such as the establishment of industry and sector partnerships.

**3. Improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and Economic Development efforts:** To fulfill ECD's goal of securing predominantly high-quality jobs from expanding or newly locating businesses in Tennessee, a steady pipeline of qualified candidates is needed. To improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment and develop the needed pipeline of candidates, West TN is aligning education initiatives such as TN Promise, TN ReConnect, and TN Pathways with workforce investment efforts to train individuals for skills in high demand. Thorough analysis of the labor market data and discussions with key stakeholders have resulted in the identification of in-demand sectors in the region on which to focus workforce development efforts in order to address the middle-skills gap and meet the needs of employers: (1) Healthcare; (2) Transportation and Logistics; (3) Advanced Manufacturing; and (4) Business Services, with a particular emphasis on Information Technology. An assortment of training services, including work-based learning, are available to train individuals in these, and other, in-demand areas to meet the needs of employers.

**4. Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services:** The AJCs are the portal to TN's workforce system and provide an array of career and business services. Partners share common performance goals and collaborate in the development and implementation of customer-focused services, where resources are leveraged for maximum efficiency and continuous improvement is the hallmark. To promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services, local boards certify each AJC to ensure employment and training programs are delivered at the highest level of effectiveness and sustainability. The AJCs also utilize the Virtual One-Stop, Jobs4TN, to collect, measure, review, and analyze data, including data regarding required performance measures and AJC service levels. Jobs4TN also allows for data regarding caseloads, AJC visits by reason, case notes, exit status, and many other items to be generated into reports which are shared with staff and stakeholders to identify both strengths and opportunities for improvement. Customer surveys such as are also utilized to gather data regarding customers' experiences in the AJC. Survey results are analyzed to determine if changes or improvements are needed in the AJC. Cross-training allows all AJC staff to share common knowledge of programs and resources and will continue to be utilized to achieve and excel in outstanding customer service through seamless functional and programmatic integration. In 2016, staff members from each of the West TN LWDAs participated in the U.S Department of Labor Customer Centered Design (CCD) Challenge, designed to improve customer service. The CCD team included partners representing Wagner Peyser, Title I, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The result of the project is what the team called "Project Same Page," a multi-phase process of internal cross-training and external marketing intended to help the departments and service providers involved in workforce development to become more integrated with each other and with our local communities. Each partner organization has a simple, single-page information sheet summarizing its services and eligibility criteria, as well as how customers can access these services.

**5. Increasing economic self-sufficiency, meeting employer needs, & enhancing TN's productivity and competitiveness:** While many areas of TN are experiencing unprecedented growth, many rural areas, particularly in West TN, are not experiencing the same prosperity. West TN was represented among the more than 120 people from 18 different agencies across economic development, tourism, local government, workforce development, small business, health, agriculture, infrastructure, banking, and education, serving on one of six committees charged with developing the strategic plan for the Governor's Rural Task Force. The Task Force's recommendations focus on capacity building and placemaking, including education programs to encourage work-based learning and a new rural teacher initiative; plans to reduce recidivism through employment programs, and offer resources for rural entrepreneurs and small businesses. The Task Force is already working to implement some of its recommendations and will also support and empower local communities to build upon these programs to develop their own local programs. West TN supports the effort of the Task

Force in building a stronger rural TN by collaborating with partners and stakeholders to continuously improve workforce development through aligning resources and offering new strategic initiatives.

# Program Year 2018 - 2020 Local Plan for the Southwest Workforce Development Area

*Serving the Counties of Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin,  
Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy*



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**Open for Public Comment January 3, 2019 – January 17, 2019**

**Submit comments or questions in writing to:**

Southwest Tennessee Workforce Board

Attn: Jimmy Bell

P.O. Box 264

Henderson, TN 38340

[jbell@swhra.org](mailto:jbell@swhra.org)

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*Any comments received in relation to the content of the Program Year 2018 - 2020 local plan will be addressed within the plan prior to submission to the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD).*

**There were no comments or questions during the public comment period.**

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## Operating Systems and Policies

- A. Through regular, structured, cross-agency meetings of the AJC Management Team, Business Services Team, and Program Operator staff and training meetings, information is shared and projects are coordinated to ensure full agency participation. The AJC Management Team is composed of representatives of partner agencies and is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring quality in service access and provision in the One-Stop Delivery System. Management team meetings are held quarterly to review service provision within the system which makes planning and implementation efforts flow more smoothly. Quarterly Business Services Team meetings are held to address employer needs and coordinate services to employers. Weekly meetings of Program Operator staff are held through web cams to provide on-going training, address any issues, and sharing of information that directly impacts programs administered by SWLWDB.

Job center partners execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) encapsulating the rules, playing field, and goals of the job center system in SWLWD area. While executed by SWLWDB, core programs and partners, via the Job Center Management Team, provide input into its development to ensure positive understanding and pro-active execution.

SWLWDB makes every effort to provide integration of services and offers collaboration and referrals to partners and programs within and outside of the job center system. As for business customers, the Business Services Team and One-Stop Operator Manager work in tandem to refer business customers to the resources and partners that will best meet their needs. The development of community partnerships with other service providers, private businesses, and institutions of higher learning will ensure that referrals and placements are both consistent and reliable. Working with these partners and other core partners will further integrate services to ensure the best leveraging of resources and to prevent unnecessary service duplication. Referrals between partners may transpire through different means to include, but not limited to, warm hand-off, electronic communication/technology, social media, and telephone.

WIOA includes a requirement that partners dedicate funding for allowable infrastructure and other shared costs. (20 CFR 678.700 – 678.760) Each partner financially contributes to the operations of the one-stop delivery system through an Infrastructure Agreement (IFA). All partner contributions are proportionate to the relative benefits received by the partner. Proportionate share, cost allocation methodologies, and any additional considerations are determined at AJC Management Team meetings. Each partner must agree to costs determined for their share at these meetings and sign the IFA denoting approval. Actual costs are billed rather than estimated budgeted amounts. Actual costs are reviewed and if any changes need to be made for any partner, the IFA can be modified at the next scheduled AJC Management Team meeting.

### Locations / Services

The eight counties of Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy comprise the SWLWD area. There is one comprehensive AJC in the area:

#### **Madison County (Jackson)**

1124 Whitehall  
Jackson, TN 38301

The seven remaining counties are affiliate sites located as follows:

#### **Chester County (Henderson)**

269 N. Church  
Henderson, TN 38340

#### **Decatur County (Parsons)**

2039 Hwy. 641 South  
Parsons, TN 38363

**Hardeman County (Bolivar)**

793 Tennessee St.  
Bolivar, TN 38008

**Hardin County (Savannah)**

1080 Wayne Rd.  
Savannah, TN 38372

**Haywood County (Brownsville)**

1151 Tammell Street  
Brownsville, TN 38012

**Henderson County (Lexington)**

340 Natchez Dr., Suite D  
Lexington, TN 38351

**McNairy County (Selmer)**

701-B Industrial Drive  
Selmer, TN 38375

Career and other program services provided at each AJC are catalogued in the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for SWLWDB. Career services consist of three types:

1. Basic career services
  - a. Job Center outreach, intake and orientation
  - b. Initial assessment of skills levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency)
  - c. Labor exchange services
  - d. Referrals to and coordination with other programs and services
  - e. Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information
  - f. Provision of information on ETP performance and related program costs
  - g. Provision of information about local area achievement in performance measures and OSO performance
  - h. Information and referrals to supportive services or assistance
  - i. Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for UI
  
2. Individualized career services
  - a. Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers
  - b. Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
  - c. Group counseling
  - d. Individual counseling
  - e. Career planning
  - f. Short-term pre-vocational services
  - g. Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers
  - h. Workforce preparation activities
  - i. Financial literacy services
  - j. Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
  - k. English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
  
3. Follow-up services – for up to 12 months after first day of employment

Training services are also available to WIOA participants who cannot find employment leading to self-sufficiency. Under WIOA, there is no requirement that a participant must receive career services prior to training services. However, at a minimum, to be eligible for training, an individual must receive an eligibility determination for training services. Training services may include: [Ref: WIOA 134(d)]

- a. Occupation skills training, including training for nontraditional employment
- b. On-the-job training



- c. Incumbent worker training
- d. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
- e. Training programs operated by the private sector
- f. Skill upgrading and retraining
- g. Transitional jobs
- h. Adult education and literacy services, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs
- i. Job readiness training
- j. Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of training

Business services are made available to employers through via the Business Services Team. These services consist of the following:

- a. Certain career services must be made available to local employers, specifically labor exchange activities and labor market information.
- b. Customized business services may be provided to employers, employer associations, or other organizations;
  - Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers
  - Customized services to employers, employer associations
  - Customized recruitment events and related services for employers including targeted job fairs;
  - Human resource consultation
  - Services, including but not limited to, assistance with:
    - Writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks
    - Developing performance evaluation and personnel policies
    - Creating orientation sessions for new workers
    - Honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance
    - Analyzing employee turnover
    - Creating job accommodations and using assistive technologies
    - Explaining labor and employment laws to help employers comply with discrimination, wage/hour, and safety/health regulations
  - Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters; and
  - Other similar customized services.
- c. Local areas may also provide other business services and strategies that meet the workforce investment needs of area employers; Allowable activities, consistent with each partner's authorized activities, include, but are not limited to:
  - Developing and implementing industry sector strategies (including strategies involving industry)
  - Partnerships, regional skills alliances, industry skill panels, and sectoral skills partnerships
  - Customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of a registered apprenticeship program
  - Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area
  - Assistance to area employers in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities with strategies for aversion of layoffs which may include:
    - Strategies such as early identification of firms at risk of layoffs

- Use of feasibility studies to assess the needs of and options for at-risk firms
- Delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors
- Assisting employers with accessing local, State, and Federal tax credits

On Demand Access - Required Career Services in Most Inclusive and Appropriate Setting and Accommodations

Carefully planned and coordinated services among all **Federally-funded workforce development programs are necessary to achieve the level of integrated service delivery WIOA envisions.** This means that all Federally-funded workforce development programs work collaboratively in partnership to optimize the quality of services provided. To assure a high-quality customer experience through aligned and integrated services and to improve service outcomes, the workforce partners in SWLWD area commit to:

- Coordinating the “welcome function” through the OSO making sure the individual is warmly welcomed and offered a menu of the services available
- Sharing customer information and data by requesting the individual register at Jobs4TN.gov
- Closely planning and coordinating services to customers by referring customers to appropriate partners through a warm hand-off
- Training frontline staff to make them more knowledgeable about other workforce development programs and to improve the efficacy of referrals
- Planning and acting strategically based on a common understanding of regional economies, key sectors, workforce demographics and employer needs
- Leveraging program resources where possible to the mutual benefit of both customers and programs

One-Stop Operator (OSO) Information

Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency (Workforce Services Division) is the name of SWLWD area’s One-Stop Operator. The appropriate procedures were followed in the procurement process as outlined in Workforce Services Guidance - One-Stop Operator and Career Service Provider Procurement; Effective Date: January 27, 2017, updated February 23, 2018. A Request for Proposal was posted for a designated time period, with public notice being provided through print media and/or electronic means, and with potential bidders being notified by email. Proposals received were evaluated by the Executive Committee of SWLWDB, and a recommendation was made to the full Board. A contract was then entered into between the chosen entity for OSO and SWLWDB and CEOs in the area. The contract outlines the scope of work of the OSO, including the methods for coordinating service delivery between the OSO and operators as: “The Grantee shall establish One-Stop Operator Services pursuant to 20 CFR 678.620(a), including at a minimum, the coordination of service delivery of the required One-Stop American Job Center (AJC) partners, and service providers. Additional roles of the OSO in SWLWD area include:

- a. Conducting ongoing analysis of SWLWD area operations and conducting appropriate problem solving, continuous improvement, and correction action activities
- b. Fostering an integrated organizational structure
- c. Identifying and communicating to all partners and staff the vision, mission and values of SWLWDB
- d. Encouraging partner collaboration which continuously strives to achieve shared ownership for success of the customer and the system
- e. Providing all partners and staff with all information and communication needed for optimal performance of the eight-county area in SWLWDB area

- f. Staff development
- g. Providing informational reports (at least quarterly) to SWLWDB staff
- h. Submission of invoices for reimbursement



The primary role of the OSO is to coordinate the service delivery of required one-stop partners and service providers resulting in a seamless customer flow based on customer's needs. Referrals and shared customer data will be utilized in facilitating co-enrollment of the customer.

## B. Local Referral Process

Per SWLWDB's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with required partner agencies, referrals do not imply automatic eligibility. The result of the referral is dependent on eligibility determination by each partner based on their unique program guidelines and fund availability. Should the partner agency be co-located in the American Job Center, a warm hand-off will be conducted when referring an individual to a Partner agency. Instances where the Partner agency is not physically located in the American Job Center, Partners will conduct a meeting to setup the following process to conduct referral services in the following manners, whenever possible:

- a. All customers referred for services (via the One-Stop Partners) will receive a written referral with the name, address, and phone number of the Partner organization receiving the customer referral. A copy of the referral form will be given to the customer and to the referring organization (via fax or email).
- b. The organization receiving the referral will make a good faith effort to contact the customer and schedule an appointment within 3 to 7 business days of the date on the referral form.

### Referral Tracking

Once a referral is made it is always useful to obtain customer feedback about the referral as well as feedback from each agency to which referrals are made. A follow-up call should be made to each to ensure the referral was effective. Discussion of next steps can also be discussed during this time.

### ADA and SBE

Auxiliary aids are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Partners will ensure services are available to populations with barriers to employment by actively conducting outreach targeting these populations in coordination with one another. The customer will be referred to the most appropriate partner to provide services based on the customer's needs and available services. Targeted populations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Displaced homemakers
- b. Low-income individuals
- c. Individuals with disabilities
- d. Older individuals
- e. Ex-offenders
- f. Homeless
- g. Youth who have aged out of foster care system
- h. Single parents
- i. Long-term unemployment individuals

### C. Provision of Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Activities

The WIOA Adult and DLW formula programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, which is the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career services to meet the diverse needs of Adults and Dislocated Workers. The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are required partners in the one-stop delivery system. Adults and Dislocated Workers may access career services and training services in any AJC in SWLWD area. WIOA provides for a workforce system that is universally accessible customer-centered and training that is job-driven.

WIOA programs are required by law to provide a priority or preference for a particular group of individuals. All WIOA programs (Adult, DLW, and Youth) are required to provide priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses of veterans. The Adult program is additionally required to provide priority of service to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals that are basic skills deficient, when providing individualized and training services. English Language Learners meet the criteria for “basic skills deficient”.

#### Statewide Rapid Response Activities

SWLWDB has a staff person who also serves as the Rapid Response Coordinator for the local area who coordinates with the OSO and partners to provide assistance to employers and affected employees through Rapid Response services (Rapid Response Team).

Dedicated staff from all partners mobilizes immediately on behalf of businesses to help the employer navigate through government regulations, take advantage of workforce resources, and coordinate employee expectations. Rapid Response activities include an initial meeting with the employer and follow-up orientations for the workers affected by a potential layoff situation. The purpose of this meeting and the orientations are to share information about available employment transition services for workers that have lost their jobs as a result of a layoff or facility closure.

The Rapid Response Team can help employees with job search assistance while also providing help to the employer by assisting in the management of the workforce reduction and transition of employees while ensuring stability in the community in a positive and productive way.

### D. Description and Assessment of Type and Availability of Youth Activities

CSP provider in SWLWD area has the discretion to determine what specific program services a youth participant receives based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. It is not required to provide every program service to each participant; the following 14 services are available to participants:

- a. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and dropout prevention services that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential. This includes secondary school dropout prevention strategies that keep a youth in school and engaged in formal learning or training
- b. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services – Alternative secondary school services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary school education. Dropout recovery services are aimed at getting youth who have dropped out of secondary education back into a secondary school or alternative secondary school/high school equivalency program

- c. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
  - 1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
  - 2. Pre-apprenticeship programs
  - 3. Internships and job shadowing; and
  - 4. On-the-job training opportunities
- d. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupation fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Occupational skills training must meet the following criteria:
  - 1. Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy
  - 2. Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal
  - 3. Lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential
  - 4. Meet the quality standards in WIOA Section 123
- e. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster – This element refers to the concurrent delivery of workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway
- f. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities, encouraging responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors
- g. Supportive services that enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities
- h. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation
- i. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation
- j. Comprehensive guidance and counseling provides individualized counseling to participants and may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs
- k. Financial literacy education includes information and activities such as creating budgets, setting up checking and saving accounts, managing spending, understanding credit reports, and protecting against identity theft
- l. Entrepreneurial skills training assists youth develop the skills associated with starting and operating a small business
- m. Services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- n. Post-Secondary preparation and transition activities, which prepares youth for postsecondary education after attaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

#### Meeting the Requirements of In-School Youth Waiver

SWLWDB elected to **not** adopt the waiver approval to move to 50% In-School Youth expenditure rate. With the continuation of the current policy to expend 75% of youth funds on Out-of-School Youth, the Career Service Provider has several process and procedures in place to refer the In-School Youth population to resources throughout the SWLWD area. One of these tools is a Common Intake Form that assesses all

individuals entering the American Job Centers and creating warm handoffs to partnering programs both in-house and throughout our area including, but not limited to, Adult Education, TN Promise and Reconnect. Services for the In-School population are thriving through implementation of programs in local schools such as:

- a. Griffin Program – implemented in Chester County Schools which provides students with career pathway courses through partnership with Jackson State Community College and Jackson TCAT
- b. L.O.O.P. – Local Options and Opportunities Program – in Jackson Madison County Schools which provides students with the opportunity for work experience and training through partnerships with companies such as Stanley Black and Decker and TBDN, as well as others.

Several schools have career coaches on staff who assist students in receiving training and connection to local resources. All school districts in the Southwest area offer some form of career and technical education (CTE) or career pathway courses and the local AJC's provide support for these programs as needed. Dual enrollment courses are available in all schools so students can receive high school and college credit simultaneously. The TN Pathway program will also provide valuable assistance for school districts and their students to increase opportunities and guidance for students as they complete secondary schooling and transition to post-secondary schooling or job training.

E. How Priority Populations Will Be Served

Southwest Local Workforce Development Board's Career Service Provider work to specifically meet the targeted populations' needs. This group includes veterans and spouses of veterans, low-income individuals, basic skills deficient persons, Adults and Youth with disabilities, and individuals who are re-entering society following incarceration. Specialized training has been developed on assisting individuals of diverse geographic and demographic populations consisting of rural and urban communities veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic-skills deficient. Services to eligible WIOA Adult Program participants will be provided in the following order:

- a. First, to Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans who are:
  - 1. Recipients of public assistance
  - 2. Low-income, or
  - 3. Basic skills deficient
- b. Second, to individuals who are not Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans but are:
  - 1. Recipients of public assistance
  - 2. Low-income, or
  - 3. Basic skills deficient
- c. Third, to Veterans and eligible spouses of Veterans who are not:
  - 1. Recipients of public assistance
  - 2. Low-income, or
  - 3. Basic skills deficient
- d. Fourth, groups established by the Governor and/or Local Board. The following populations experiencing barriers to employment are specifically targeted for services and must be provided priority for training activities per TDLWD Workforce Services Guidance/MOU/IFA:
  - 1. Individuals with significant barriers to employment
  - 2. Displaced homemakers
  - 3. Individuals with no high school diploma
  - 4. Individuals who are homeless
  - 5. Unemployed individuals, including long-term unemployed individuals who have low literacy levels

6. English language learner individuals
7. Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
8. Eligible migrant and seasonal individuals
9. Individuals re-entering the workforce
10. Older individuals
11. Single parents (including single pregnant women and non-custodial parents)
12. Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians
13. Veterans
14. Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system
15. Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
16. Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act 13

#### How Local Board Will Determine Priority Populations and How to Best Serve Them

The Workforce Development Board in combination with the CSP has a history of addressing the needs of individuals with multiple barriers to employment, specifically low-income individuals, basic skills deficient individuals and veterans. **Even though these population groups have been identified for targeted services, a coordinated response will be developed for other groups that often face multiple barriers to employment** such as dropouts and migrant and seasonal farm workers to assure their personal and professional goals are met as well.

#### F. Provision of Training Services

Under WIOA, training is not entitlement. An Individual Training Account is the mechanism by which payment for training service is made. Local policy defines an ITA to include the cost of tuition, books and fees. Tools, uniforms, supplies, and supportive services are not included in the ITA.

- They must meet provisions of WIOA eligibility regulations
- They must have been interviewed, evaluated, and assumed by a career specialist and be determined to be in need of training services. They must also have the skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the selected training program.
- They must select a program of training that is directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area as demonstrated by labor market information. If the training area is not high growth, a letter must be obtained from an employer stating that the customer will be hired upon successful completion of training or the client must agree to re-locate to a high growth area for the type of training which is being funded in order to obtain employment after training is completed.
- The training provider must be included on the state-approved list.
- The customer must be unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources or need assistance beyond what is available to pay for the cost of training **(currently \$3,500 per 12-month period for two years)**. A customer must apply for federal financial aid before being granted an ITA since WIOA funds are to be utilized as “last source”.

Southwest Local Workforce Development Board Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy is attached as Attachment 1.

#### G. Customer Choice

ITAs may be used for any training that is also approved by the LWDB. Career Specialists have received the appropriate training in the use of ITAs and the importance of customer choice.

#### H. Eligible Providers of Services

Classroom training can only be received at approved training facilities and programs. Staff must first check the Demand Occupation/Approved training list to verify that the training is approved. Staff must also verify the provider has been approved and is entered in the state VOS system prior to issuing a voucher for classroom training.

If the customer wants to attend training at a facility or in a program that is not approved, staff will inform the customer and contact the CSP Lead staff person in an effort to begin the approval process. Any questions from a facility regarding gaining approval for their facility or program should be directed to the CSP Lead staff person.

Any changes to State Policy on the local training provider list will be updated when we receive notification from the State through the VOS system. The Workforce Development Board approves the training list on a bi-yearly basis.

A copy of the Eligible Training Provider Process Policy is attached as Attachment 2.

#### I. Provision of Transportation

As the supportive services policy will be included in SWLWDB's local plan, the Board will have the opportunity to review them when the plan is presented to them at a regular meeting so they will be able to make sure they are consistent, complementary and will help enable customers to achieve their education, training, and/or career goals.

SWLWDB Policy regarding supportive services, including transportation, is attached as Attachment 3.

### **Vision, Goals, and Implementation Strategy**

#### A. Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Supportive Services

The vision of the SWLWDB and required partners is for Southwest Tennessee to become an area where business and industry thrive based on the availability of a skilled workforce and a robust talent pipeline, and where increasing wealth fuels prosperous communities and a high quality of life. To achieve this vision, the board and partners strive to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers by:

1. Increasing the skills and knowledge of Southwest Tennesseans to meet the needs of employers now and in the future;
2. Creating career pathways from high school, postsecondary education/training to the workforce; and
3. Eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to the existing and emerging workforce.

The Regional Planning Council, which includes members of the core partners as well as other partners, identifies regional and local in-demand and emerging sectors using available labor market data, strategy meetings, and other data gathering methods. Workforce efforts are then focused on identified sectors through services available through AJC partners, such as the development of career pathways in manufacturing and healthcare. The SWLWDB plans to work with the Business Services Team in creating and implementing effective methods of gathering feedback from employers, such as an employer survey, participation in various business organizations, and various methods of conducting outreach to local employers.



Members of the Business Services Team also conduct outreach in order to educate employers on the services available through the AJC designed, with employers' input, to meet their needs and support talent development. Coordination between training institutions, funding sources, the SWLWDB, and employers ensures that training is available for in-demand occupations in the local area, current and prospective students are aware of various resources for funding training, including those offered by the partner programs, and that resources are leveraged through co-enrollment and referrals to eliminate duplication. Sector studies have also been completed and career pathways developed for both the healthcare and manufacturing sectors.

By supporting strategies under the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative to align education and training with the needs of business and industry and assisting individuals in accessing training opportunities, the SWLWDB is working towards achieving the initiative's goal of 55% of Tennesseans earning a postsecondary credential by 2025. Strategies to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry recognized, thereby prepare workers for in-demand industry sectors and occupations include:

- Approving in-demand training opportunities to be included on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as WIOA fundable programs;
- Encouraging all job seekers to consider these programs as career options by offering assessments, opportunities, and materials noting local employment opportunities;
- Partnering with employers and high schools on career pathway opportunities in employer-driven training programs;
- Considering options to partner with training providers and neighboring local workforce development areas to "buy" classes offered by training providers so that dislocated workers, adults, and disadvantaged youth have an opportunity to train in the high-demand occupation without a delay due to a waiting list;
- Leveraging assets such as TN Promise, Pathways, and ReConnect in order to increase capacity and provide integrated services to increase skill development and educational attainment of area residents.

Education and training services offered include:

- Needs-Based Scholarships for Postsecondary Training
- Transportation Stipends for Postsecondary Training and Work Experience
- On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training Grants
- Apprenticeship Programs

Needs-Based Scholarships, issued through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for postsecondary training, are managed in the AJCs by members of the Career Development Services Team. After a thorough assessment and verification that the training plan will lead to employability in an in-demand occupation, staff obligate funds, which is documented in Jobs4TN to allow fiscal staff and the SWLWDB to have a clearer picture of funds available and projected expenditures for the program year. A priority of service policy is in place to ensure the most in need receive services first.

While brick-and-mortar AJCs are valued for cost effectiveness, availability of resources to customers, and visibility in the community, Southwest TN also recognizes the need to bring the services to the customers who may not be able to visit the established AJC given the large service area and transportation barriers. In order to bring the services to the people, the TDLWD's Mobile AJC is utilized to serve remote areas and individuals who are unable to commute to one of the AJCs in the region. A Title I staff member has been assigned to coordinate with the Mobile AJC staff to ensure staff from the Title I partner attend Mobile AJC events, providing customers with access to all AJC services. Jobs4TN also allows jobseekers and employer customers to remotely access secure, web-based AJC services such as labor market information, unemployment insurance, and mediated labor exchange.

In order to maximize services to populations with barriers, agencies serving these populations are targeted for outreach efforts such as distribution of marketing materials, participation in events, such as those involving "street teams" or the Mobile AJC, and invitations to participate in AJC events and strategy meetings. Such agencies may include Adult Education, Department of Human Services, Health Department, Housing Authorities, Head Start programs, and Boys & Girls Clubs. The AJC displays marketing materials for core and community partners, and provides materials to be displayed at the partners' sites. Social media accounts are also used to connect with customers and other agencies and inform them of the services available through the AJC. The Business Services Team conducts rapid response meetings to serve workers dislocated through closures or layoffs. Outreach to unemployment claimants regarding AJC services is also conducted via email when contact information is available. A standing committee of the board provides guidance for reaching and serving such populations.

## B. Business Service Strategy

The Business Services Team assists in identifying and meeting the needs of employers in existing and emerging industries and occupations by building relationships through local and regional initiatives, identifying means of addressing human resources needs, and promoting and facilitating the use of AJC services such as On-the-Job Training grants, customized training opportunities, industry and sector strategies, apprenticeships, and the availability of Incumbent Worker Training grants. Other services provided to new and prospective companies by the Business Services Team and American Job Center Partners include:

- Pre-screening Applicants – Analyzing and pre-screening job applications based on minimum requirements, then referring qualified candidates to various pre-employment assessments.
- Job Fairs – Facilitating, organizing, planning and finding qualified labor for open positions, including joint job fairs across the West TN region.
- Labor Market Information – Labor Market FAQs can be found on [www.Jobs4TN.gov](http://www.Jobs4TN.gov) - an online resource that provides access to a wide variety of information about jobs in the local area, such as the average wages for jobs in an area, the occupations predicted to have the most future job openings, the salary expectations for specific occupations, and county unemployment rates.
- Virtual American Job Center – Using the Jobs4TN online website to connect employers to job seekers by listing job orders and making coordinated referrals based on job descriptions.
- On-the-Job and Incumbent Worker Training – Educating employers about the availability of OJT and IWT funds to assist in upgrading skills of new and existing employees.
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Services – Using Jobs4TN to report layoffs and closures, workers to file claims, job search, and complete weekly certifications, and connect to programs for UI recipients including Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).
- Starting Your Own Business Workshop – Attendees learn the skills and information they need to get started, including successful business ownership traits, assessment of the business idea, and the “mechanics” of starting a business – forms of ownership, insurance, financing, and more. Offered in partnership with the TN Small Business Development Centers.

## C. Coordination of Education and Workforce Development Activities

The SWLWDB focuses on enhancing training opportunities and providing individuals with the knowledge and resources needed to take advantage of them. Data from the [Economic Analysis of West TN](#) is used as a

foundation to begin discussions and develop partnerships with core programs and educational institutions such as TN Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT), Community Colleges, and Universities to address educational needs in the area, and achieve the goal of the Drive to 55 initiative, by ensuring the availability of needed training opportunities.

In order to meet the needs of employers and align education and training opportunities with targeted industries and occupations, the SWLWDB also takes advantages of initiatives and opportunities, such as TN Pathways, when possible to partner with workforce, education, training, and employer partners. The TN Pathways initiative, part of a multi-state consortium, the Pathways to Prosperity Network, aims to address the “skills gap” that threatens the preparedness of young Americans entering the workforce. The mission of TN Pathways is to provide TN students rigorous academic/career pathways, which are linked to economic and labor market needs and trends. To yield a pipeline of skilled entry-level workers to address the current and projected skilled worker shortage, the SWLWDB will also:

- Research labor market information and assist in the engagement of employers in the region to determine current and future hiring needs.
- Coordinate with middle schools to understand, develop, and/or enhance career exploration activities for students, beginning in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, to assure programs align with industry needs.
- Facilitate interaction between employers and middle/high school teachers, counselors, and/or administration to provide “real world” workforce expectations of business and industry, including pathways, work ethic and soft skills.
- Coordinate with secondary schools and postsecondary institutions to develop career pathways for students that meet the needs of the students and employers.

#### D. Coordination of Core and Other Workforce Development Programs

The SWLWDB supports the service alignment strategy identified in the State Plan through increased coordination, leveraged funds, seamless customer service delivery, and functional alignment of services. WIOA Title I program funds are braided with other Federal and State programs, such as Trade Adjustment Act, TN Promise, TN ReConnect, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T), TANF, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs, and Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) in order to eliminate duplication and leverage dollars to maximize resources and services. The AJCs also strive to provide integrated service delivery by aligning staff by functional teams and providing cross-training on all programs and services offered in the AJC by the various partners. The Welcome Function is coordinated by the One-Stop Operator (OSO). Staff is hired by the OSO and partners are coordinated to fulfill the duties of this function. Those serving in the Welcome Function warmly greet customers entering the AJC and offer an evaluation of service need to identify the services to offer to customers in order to best meet their needs. Staff serving in the Welcome Function coordinates with Career Development Team staff and Business Services Team partners in order to seamlessly deliver career services to all customers. All core partners have staff who serves as a member of the Career Development and/or Business Services Team, whether on-site or off-site by referral or electronic connection. Each program provides a valuable service, and all are connected to reach the desired outcome for the customer. While Career Development Team members focus on performing individualized career services such as skills assessments, developing Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), and case management, the Business Services Team focuses on developing positive relationships with employers in order to identify and address their human resource needs. Staff members are also cross-trained to allow for streamlined services and reduced duplication.

AJC partners, including training providers with program authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, also enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in order to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services, and improve effectiveness, thereby decreasing administrative and program costs. The scope of services outlined in this MOU follows Workforce Services Division Policy #7 regarding Service Integration and functional alignment wherein Tennessee’s One-Stop

system shall strive to streamline workforce services functions, prevent the duplication of services and eliminate inefficient practices.

Parties to the MOU agree:

1. To endorse a single customer flow model based on customer need, not program requirements;
2. **To refer customers between Partners by methods listed in the MOU;**
3. To authorize the sharing of customer data and information in order to facilitate co-enrollment and case management across programs and funding streams; and
4. To participate in joint planning of this MOU, plan development, and modification of activities to accomplish:
  - Accessibility of the Partners' applicable services to customers through the One-Stop Service Delivery system
  - Participation in the operation of the One-Stop Service Delivery system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorized laws
  - All Partners and staff are adequately cross-trained as a result of their participation in capacity building and staff development activities
  - Continuous partnership building by requiring inclusion of all Partners involved in the One-Stop System
  - Continuous adaption to state and federal guidelines
  - Responsiveness to local and economic conditions, including employer needs
  - Meet common data collection and reporting needs via Jobs4TN
  - Involvement in special grant and/or pilot projects that impact a Partner's shared staffing resources
  - Co-branding through inclusion of "AJC identified" or "American Job Center" on any joint products, programs, activities, services, facilities, and materials used by the combined Partnership of the System

### **Performance Goals and Evaluation**

To remain a high performing board, the SWLWDB will follow the factors developed by the State Board:

1. communicate a vision;
2. build strategic partnerships; and
3. keep the local workforce system accountable

The SWLWDB's vision, developed through strategic planning with workforce system stakeholders, is for Southwest Tennessee to be an area where businesses can find skilled workers, improve the economy of West Tennessee and the residents enjoy productive careers. **To achieve this vision, the SWLWDB focuses on aligning resources and partners to support key priorities.** Locally, the SWLWDB's American Job Center partners provides **guidance for enhancing services to jobseekers and employers through the AJCs, while the Business Services Team, along with the One-Stop Operator enhance strategic partnerships and align resources.** Regionally, the Regional Planning Council, including representatives from all of the core partners, **develops the Regional Plan which includes methods for enhancing services.** The cooperation of the leadership of the core partners is echoed among front-line staff at the AJC who implements the vision and directives of the SWLWDB and Regional Planning Council by striving to align by functional purpose and thereby avoiding program silos.

Furthermore, the SWLWDB collects and analyzes **data to evaluate the one-stop system.** The AJCs utilize the Virtual One-Stop (VOS), or Jobs4TN, in order to collect, measure, review, and analyze data, including data regarding required performance measures. **The system also allows for data regarding caseloads,** Center

traffic, case notes, exit status, and many other items to be generated into reports for specified time periods, which are shared with staff and stakeholders.

## Performance

### A. Projected Local Service Levels

Expectations are to increase traffic flow in the AJCs through outreach methods such as:

- Word of mouth
- Utilization of social media
- Community events
- Referrals for program outreach

In order to build trust and strengthen the participant’s relationship with their Career Specialist, CSP staff will meet **with a participant where they are, on their terms.** Career Specialists reach out to participants by the medium they prefer and is most convenient to them. In addition, Career Specialists will frequent locations **of complementary service providers, such as Adult Education, DHS, UT Extension Offices, etc. in order to increase traffic flow and market the services provided through the AJCs.**

A participant-focused model that is both strengths-based and data-centered will be utilized in order to best provide services to underserved populations and employers. Career Specialists will work directly with each participant on a one-on-one basis to provide specialized services to remove barriers towards success. This individualized approach is further tailored to the specific needs of traditionally underserved participants by utilizing research, labor market information, and relationships established within the community to identify specific needs and solutions. **While the ultimate goal in providing services is to help individuals pursue post-secondary education, attain a credential, and acquire gainful employment, this approach works to end negative cycles of poverty, unemployment and lack of education. By providing support to a participant, future opportunities for the participant are expanded.**

Projected goals for enrollments through WIOA are allocated to each Career Specialist quarterly. The following chart denotes projected numbers by county/AJC for PY18-19:

Chester	Decatur	Hardeman	Hardin	Haywood	Henderson	Madison	McNairy
77	24	115	51	106	53	192	90

### B. Negotiated Local Levels of Performance

**The Primary Indicators of Performance for the WIOA Title I Programs, WIOA Title III, Wagner Peyser and WIOA Title II, Adult Education** will be used to measure and evaluate performance for the local area. These are federal performance indicators negotiated with the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education.

**Performance indicators for PY 17-18 are attached as Attachment 4.**

In order to ensure local performance goals are met, performance goals will be reviewed by the OSO, CSP Team Lead, management staff, and Board staff on a quarterly basis. SWLWDB members will be updated on performance goals at each Board meeting.

Career Specialists have had intensive training regarding performance measures to maintain successful outcomes.

Negotiated performance measures for PY 2019 are attached as Attachment 5.

### **Technical Requirements, Assurances, and Evaluation**

#### **A. Use of Technology in the One-Stop Delivery System**

An integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system under WIOA (§ 679.560(b)(20)).

The Jobs4TN system is the management information system used to case manage participants for the programs listed below. Each employee is required to sign a user agreement stating that personally identifiable information is to be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of job duties. Each AJC also utilizes the Greeter feature to track the number of customers using the AJC. Using this system for the majority of WIOA programs allows programs to share information and reduce duplication of data entry. Information needed to calculate all common indicators of performance resides in this system. Reports can be generated and shared with program staff to ensure that performance targets will be met. The State office has held core partner meetings and has established performance groups that will routinely meet and report out all core partner performance. This approach will allow all partners to share concerns and keep a close eye on performance as a system. TANF and Vocational Rehabilitation use other case management systems but all WIOA partners will work to share information across these systems in order to better serve participants.

- Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Title III: Employment Programs under Wagner-Peyser
- Unemployment Insurance
- Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Job Counseling, Training, Placement Services for Veterans
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)

In addition, the above partners, as parties to the MOU, agree to work cooperatively to share data to the extent necessary and as permitted or required by applicable statutes or regulations.

#### **Access to services, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.**

In accordance with the “direct linkage” requirement under WIOA, services are provided using technology available at the AJCs. Jobs4TN allows both job seeker and employer customers to remotely access secure, web-based AJC services such as labor market information, unemployment insurance, and mediated labor exchange. On-site and off-site partners also routinely make referrals via phone, email, or Jobs4TN.gov for the unemployment insurance program. Information regarding AJC services is also made available on the system's website and social media pages. The Mobile AJC provides access to services for individuals in remote areas.

#### **B. Physical Accessibility**

As detailed in the MOU, partners agree that they will comply fully with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of: (1) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 188, (2) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq), (3) Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991, (4)

Civil Rights of 1964 Title VI (as amended), (5) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 (as amended), (6) Age Discrimination Act of 1967 (as amended), and (7) Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX (as amended). Parties to the MOU must also adhere to requirements imposed by, or pursuant to, regulations implementing these laws – including but not limited to 29 CFR 37-38.

All partners also agree that they will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of gender, gender identity and/or expression, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran’s status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. Partners assure that they have policies and procedures in place to address these issues, and that such policy and procedures have been disseminated to their employees and otherwise posted as required by law. All partners also cooperate with compliance monitoring that is conducted to ensure that all AJC programs, services, technology, and materials are physically and programmatically accessible and available to all. Additionally, staff members are trained to provide services to all, regardless of range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, or comprehension or education level. The attached Title VI training is offered to the One-Stop Operator, service providers, Board and Board staff. Title VI training is attachment 6.

Reasonable accommodations are provided for all aspects of a customer’s experience in the AJCs, such as during application/registration for, and provision of, aid, benefits, services, and training. Accommodations are made according to the individual's need in order to ensure that he / she receives equal benefits from the program or activity, will be able to compete fairly in educational work settings, and in general, to have an equal opportunity. If needed, documentation of the individual's need for accommodations is obtained and maintained in a separate, secure location. In order to inform customers of the accommodations available, the following tag-line, or one similar, is included on all recruitment brochures and other outreach materials including print, newspaper ads, television, and radio commercials produced by the local workforce development board: “EOE. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request. TDD# 711.” Accommodations available include a large keyboard and calculator, a trackball mouse, software for individuals with visual impairments, Language Line for interpretation or translation services, extended time and readers for assessments, large-print and Spanish Registrant Handbooks, and IntelliKeys keyboards. NV Access Technology ([www.nvaccess.org](http://www.nvaccess.org)) has been installed for individuals with visual impairments. NV Access reads aloud what’s on the computer screen and gives the user a unique set of intelligent tools for navigating and accessing web pages and all screen content, is also available at the comprehensive center in Jackson. The system utilizes a TDD/TTY number for all centers, 711, and a TDD/TTY phone is available at the comprehensive center in Jackson. Referrals are made for additional services not offered in the AJC.

### C. Fiscal Management

- a. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)].

The SWLWDB was selected as Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent for the WIOA grant funds by a Consortium of Chief Elected Officials (CEO). As the designated entity, the SWLWDB, in accordance with Sec. 107(d){12}{B}{III} shall disburse the grant funds for workforce investment activities at the direction of the board, immediately upon receiving such direction from the local board. §679.420 states that the designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the chief elected official or Governor of liability for the misuse of grant funds. If the CEO designates a fiscal agent, the CEO must ensure this agent has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, therefore, CEOs enter into an agreement with the SWLWDB

- b. Competitive procurement processes used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I.

The SWLWDB follows the appropriate procurement and purchasing guidelines as outlined in the attached Purchasing and Procurement policy (Attachment 7). When procuring a One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider, the Board follows the guidelines for formal solicitations as listed in the attached policy (Attachment 8). Consistent with WIOA Sections 107(d)(10) and 121(d), the Workforce Services

Policy regarding One-Stop Delivery and Design System, paragraph (D) of the Local Board Responsibilities section, and in accordance with the Regional Planning Council, the SWLWDB, with the agreement of the chief elected officials for the local area, shall designate or certify one-stop operators as described in section 121(d)(2)(A). In order to conduct a competitive process for the selection of a one-stop operator and Title I Service Provider in accordance with 121(d)(2)(A), the Board, with the agreement of the CEOs, will issue, or will select a third-party contractor to issue, a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will be posted for a designated time period, with public notice being provided through print media and / or electronic means, and with potential bidders being notified of the release by email. Proposals received shall be reviewed by a committee approved by the Board and CEOs, or by the selected third-party contractor. The review committee or contractor shall make a recommendation to the Board for selection of the Operator and Title I Service Provider. The selected Operator and Service Provider, which may be separate entities, shall enter into a contract(s) with the Board and CEOs as developed by the fiscal agent.

- c. Describe how the local area will meet the required 50% minimum participant cost rate (MPCR).

Per TN WIOA 17-11 Minimum Participant Cost Rate, SWLWDB shall ensure a minimum of 40 percent (40%) of WIOA Title I formula funds allocated to the Board (WIOA Section 128(b)(4) and 133(b) is expended on allowable participant costs under WIOA funded services per WIOA Section 129(c)(2), WIOA Section 134, TEGL 19-16 and TEGL 21-16. *Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR) will be adjusted accordingly when State Policies are changed regarding the percentage.*

Qualifying expenditures under this policy are those that represent the cost of services for Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) participants that do not include administrative, personnel or operating expenditures and are listed below:

A. Qualifying Activities

In order to determine if the cost of an activity should be considered a direct participant expense (i.e., fundable activity) that will count towards the 40% MPCR, the following factors will be considered:

- a. If the activity is listed on Attachment 9 of this guidance, the activity qualifies as a direct participant cost to be included in the MPCR calculation.
- b. If the activity is not listed, conduct the analysis below:
  - But for the WIOA Youth program, in order to receive this service/activity, would the participant have to incur and out-of-pocket personal expense? If the answer is yes, count the activity as a direct participant expense. (Ex: There are no free or available financial literacy classes offered in the community, if not for the youth program offering the class, the individual would have to incur expenses to participate in a class.)

B. Youth Services

- a. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention services (20 CFR 681.460 (a)(1))
- b. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services (20 CFR 681.460 (a)(2))
- c. Paid and unpaid work experience (20 CFR 681.600)
- d. Occupational skills training (20 CFR 681.540)
- e. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation (20 CFR 681.630)
- f. Leadership development opportunities (20 CFR 681.520)
- g. Supportive services (20 CFR 681.570)



- h. Adult mentoring (20 CFR 681.490)
- i. Follow-up services (20 CFR 681.580)
- j. Comprehensive guidance and counseling (20 CFR 681.510)
- k. Financial literacy education (20 CFR 681.500)
- l. Entrepreneurial skills training (20 CFR 681.560)
- m. Services that provide labor market information (20 CFR 681.460 (1)(13))
- n. Post-secondary preparation and transition activities (20 CFR 681.460 (a)(14))

C. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

- a. Career Services defined (20 CFR 678.430) as costs directly benefiting participants (i.e. assessments) and does not include salaries of staff providing the assessments.
- b. Training services (20 CFR 680.200 through .230 and 20 CFR 680.300 through .350). Types of training services that may be provided include:
  - 1. Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
  - 2. On-the-job training;
  - 3. Incumbent worker training;
  - 4. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
  - 5. Training programs operated by the private sector;
  - 6. Skill upgrading and retraining;
  - 7. Entrepreneurial training;
  - 8. Job readiness training provided in combination with the training services described in any of clauses (a) through (g) or transitional jobs;
  - 9. Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English Language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services provided in any of clauses (a) through (g); and
  - 10. Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ and individual upon successful completion of the training.
- c. Supportive Services (20 CFR 680.900)

The base year for this policy is program year July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. Calculation of MPCR will be conducted by dividing the Total Qualifying Expenditures incurred by the Total Cumulative Expenditures – Program Only (as reported on the Monthly Expenditure Report).

Continuous Improvement steps listed below will be utilized in meeting the MPCR:

- a) This policy will be maintained to ensure compliance with the 40% minimum expenditure requirement including determination of the qualifying expenditures.
- b) The MPCR for current Program Year will be calculated and reported to TDLWD utilizing the attached MPCR Calculation Template quarterly. Once completed, the information will be emailed to [workforce.board@tn.gov](mailto:workforce.board@tn.gov) by the close of business of the last day of the quarter.
- c) Should the LWDA fall below the 40% MPCR, it is required that the issue be addressed and a plan must be developed that identifies measures to be taken in order to reach the MPCR by the end of the Base Program Year 2017 (June 2018).
- d) The 40% expenditure rate will be reviewed quarterly by the LWDB. To provide for continuous improvement, a brief narrative will be submitted along with the quarterly report explaining why the expenditure rate was not attained in instances when the area falls below the 40% MPCR. Should the local area perform the 40% rate for three consecutive quarters, SOUTHWEST LWDB must submit a board-approved Corrective Action Plan providing a detailed analysis of the inability

to attain a minimum 40% training expenditure rate. This Corrective Action Plan must include at a minimum:

- a. Local Board approved action steps to meet the minimum required rate
- b. Timeline for meeting the 40% minimum required rate
- c. Any measurable benchmarks or indicators the plan will ensure the LWDA is on track to meet the expected outcome
- d. Acknowledgement by the LWDB that the area is subject to remedies for non-compliance as outlined in 2CFR 200.207 and 200.338 until the MPCR is attained.

When meeting or exceeding the MPCR, SOUTHWEST LWDB will strive to maintain and/or improve current rate of expenditures in order to meet the State proposed regional MPCR of 50% or greater. It is intended that regions meet the regional MPCR no later than the end of Program Year 2018 (June 2019).

Action:

Forty percent (40%) of program costs of each formula contract received by SOUTHWEST LWDB is designated on the front end to be spent on participant training. This number is made a part of each formula contract assigned to the Service Provider and designated as "participant training costs". The Service Provider has been given copies of this policy and has been informed of the importance of meeting this requirement.

Board staff has requested that monthly reports from the One-Stop Operator/Service Provider denoting total expenditures versus qualifying expenditures toward the MPCR be submitted. SOUTHWEST LWDB staff will also keep track of training-related expenditures through monthly review of invoices submitted by the One-Stop Operator for reimbursement.

In the event of failure to meet the 40% MPCR, a corrective action plan denoting action steps and a timeline for meeting the 40% required rate will be submitted and approved by the SOUTHWEST LWDB. In addition to the action steps and timeline, the plan will also address the following:

- Measurable benchmarks/Indicators to ensure LWDA is on track to meet expected outcome
- Acknowledgement by the LWDB that area is subject to remedies for non-compliance as outlined in 2CFR 200.207 and 200.338 until the MPCR is attained
- Any other information beneficial for state review and comment

D. Transfer of Title I Workforce Funds

- To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Local situations differ from year to year depending upon a number of factors, e.g., employer and job seeker needs, amount of our allocation, locally and regionally-designed initiatives, etc. Therefore, the decision to transfer money will be determined on an as needed, timely basis and done in accordance with any and all policies that govern this option at the time of the transfer.

- To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

Fortunately SWLWD area has always had additional funding for Incumbent Worker Training to meet the needs of employers. Should this situation change, SWLWDB would request to utilize formula funds as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i) for Incumbent Worker Training upon available funding.

- To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

Again the strategy to determine the use of funds for transitional jobs will depend upon customer demand/need. Furthermore, depending upon total allocation, it may be necessary to weigh the need for this activity vs other work-based learning activities.

E. Cooperative Agreements

See attachment 10 for Cooperative Agreements

F. Title VI

See attachment 6 for Title VI training

### Attachments

1. Individual Training Accounts Southwest LWDB – WIOA (17-11)
2. Eligible Training Provider Southwest LWDB – WIOA (18-1)
3. Supportive Services Southwest LWDB – WIOA (17-25), Change 1
4. Performance Indicators
5. Negotiated Performance Measures for PY 2019
6. Title VI Training
7. Property Guidelines Southwest LWDB – WIOA (17-3)
8. One-Stop Operator and Career Services Provider Procurement Guidelines
9. MPCR Qualifying Expenditures
10. Cooperative Agreements
  - a. Interlocal Agreement
  - b. Partnership Agreement
  - c. SWLWDB and VR
11. Organizational Chart with Staff and Title

## New Plan Element – Workforce and Correction Partnership

### A. Local Board Partnerships

The SWLWDB supports the goal of improving labor market outcomes of formerly-incarcerated population often known as justice involved. To do so, the SWLWDB will continue to establish or enhance partnerships with re-entry service providers, parole and probation field offices, employers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, labor organizations, vocational training providers, and social enterprises that serve the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. The SWLWDB recognizes the value of all partners, especially community and faith-based organizations who have firsthand expertise in understanding and providing impactful services to the re-entry population. The One-Stop Operator (OSO), on behalf of all partners of the AJC, will reach out to the various organizations that can assist in this effort. The SWLWDB and AJC are actively working with local Sheriffs and county jails in seven of the eight counties to provide re-entry services for currently incarcerated inmates to ensure a smooth transition into the labor force upon release. The jails offer a network of community-based organizations already working with inmates for transition into society. By coupling these efforts, justice involved individuals will have a much better chance for success and reduce the recidivism rates for this population. The programs vary to meet the needs of the area and provide seamless, integrated and effective services to both current justice-involved individuals and those formerly incarcerated. Although the AJC OSO can arrange for partners to provide basic career services, including, but not limited to, labor market information, career pathway guidance, and job search assistance, etc., the SWLWDB also recognizes that justice-involved individuals may need mental health and faith-based programs. The OSO will seek to coordinate with community-based organizations currently working with justice involved individuals to blend and braid services. Additionally, the OSO will seek out new community-based organizations to provide any void in services.

### B. Assessment of Need and Population Size

Overview of Size and Demographics of Supervised Population. The following information was included in the TN Jail Summary Report, October 2018, as of October 31, 2018 – One Day Snapshot.

Facility	TDOC Back-up	Local Felons	Other Convicted Felons	Federal & Others	Convicted Misdemeanor	Pre-Trial Felony	Pre-Trial Misdemeanor	Total Jail Population
Chester	23	3	0	1	6	25	6	67
Decatur	23	0	0	0	2	15	16	54
Hardeman	177	10	3	0	20	68	10	128
Hardin	20	9	6	1	9	72	377	154
Haywood	0	52	0	13	21	68	24	178
Henderson	85	12	14	6	54	47	28	246
Madison	41	25	0	1	126	150	134	477
McNairy	11	3	0	0	3	49	44	110

### Assessment of the Types of Services Needed

In addition to the traditional career services offered by AJC partners, employing individuals with barriers requires “hard” skills and experience to get a job and keep that job. Title I partners can provide ITAs and

supportive services for occupational skills training. Southwest Local Workforce Area is finalizing a partnership agreement to meet the needs of the manufacturing industry with area Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) to provide the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) training program. The aim is to furnish life skills utilizing our current program to the same group that will be taking the (CPT) Certified Production training. We hope to have this program up and running in the spring. In the past 4 years our re-entry programs, Inside –Out Dad and Responsible Mom have graduated 179 inmates, 135 men and 44 women. Of those released, the recidivism rate was under 15%.

#### Number of Individuals Released Annually from State Prison

According to the TN Department of Correction [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2018 Statistical Abstract](#), releases increased by 423, or 3.2%, from FY 2017 to FY 2018. In FY 2018, there were 13,538 releases. Of those, 2,428 were released from local jails for reasons other than death. In West TN, a total of 2,974 individuals were released. Also in FY 2018, 24,323 individuals were admitted to some type of community supervision (probation, parole, or community corrections), while 23,792 individuals were released from community supervision.

#### Number Formerly Incarcerated Served for PYs 15-18

In the past 4 years our re-entry programs, Inside–Out Dad and Responsible Mom have graduated 179 inmates, 135 men and 44 women. Of those released, the recidivism rate was under 15%. We have conducted both men’s and women’s classes in seven of our eight county jails. Southwest Local Workforce Area hopes to start the program in Hardin County this spring. This will have our entire region covered.

#### Ways Partners Will Facilitate Information Sharing

The One-Stop Operator provides a mechanism for communication between all program partners. To date, the Sheriff’s Offices has provided documentation for eligibility for current inmates who often do not have a current driver’s license, etc. The AJC has also contacted Probation and Parole for necessary information.

### C. Services – Who, What, When and How of Alignment

#### Existing and Prospective Partnerships to Coordinate Re-Entry

Not only are all participants in our re-entry program registered in Jobs4tn, we also maintain a close relationship with all partners and share information with them on a regular basis. In several counties we have prospective employers meet with the classes to talk about their needs in employees. Several of those have been hired upon release from being incarcerated. This has been one of the most successful options for our participants.

#### Current Level of Service and Plans to Modify

The Southwest TN region has been working with justice involved programs for four years and currently has plans in place to provide additional training classes through the Tennessee College of Applied Technology. We have plans to expand those training classes into all eight of our counties.

#### Identification of Potential Barriers and Supportive Services

Multiple barriers await a justice involved individual as he/she tries to put their life back on track. Through current efforts, the SWLWDB has found the timing of release to be a real issue. Some inmates are released prior to finishing the program, some months afterwards. Most jails will not release them unless they have a “plan” for housing and a job. Generally, the faith-based and community-based organizations work with them on housing. Title I can provide transportation for schooling and work experience, but only for an approved period

of time. Referrals are made to TANF for childcare. Title I can also provide tools and uniforms and other work-related expenses.

#### Outreach and Recruitment Strategies & Collaboration with Parole and Probation Partners

Outreach and recruitment of participants for the Inside-Out Dad and Responsible Mom programs start with the county mayor, sheriff, Business Service Team, AJC Partner staff and training provider. Once all parties agree to the project, informational brochures are provided to the inmates and staff meets individually to determine if they are a right fit for the program through initial assessment and screening.

#### Intake and Case Management Needs

Case Managers work closely with all applicants to obtain current information about the education and training they have received. The SWLWDB acknowledges that those who received education and training during incarceration often have more difficult time providing information to help build the best employment plan possible. Case Managers will assist the justice involved individual by reaching out to Probation and Parole or directly to the facility or training provider to gather the information, such as transcripts of credentials.

### D. Relationship to Regional Labor Market Needs, Sector Pathway Programs, and Partnerships

#### Development of Resources and Information for Distribution

Informational materials are readily available on all of these programs for the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding. The Business Services Team currently provides information to employers on these topics as a standard part of their presentation. Through team meetings hosted by the One-Stop Operator, Business Services Representatives are made aware of the various supportive services offered by partners, CBOs, and other organizations to assist in hiring formerly incarcerated individuals. They provide this information to employers as needed, while AJC staff share the information with applicants.

#### Interface with Regional Sector Pathways Efforts

Manufacturing continues to be a strong regional sector pathway throughout West TN. To facilitate increasing the number of individuals trained and available for work in manufacturing, Southwest Local Workforce Development Area plans to initiate a Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program. TCATs and/or the community college provide onsite instruction for currently incarcerated individuals in Safety, Quality, Manufacturing Processes and Maintenance Awareness. Formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible for ITAs in various other sectors, including healthcare, transportation and business.

#### Staff and Training Needs of Regions, Boards, and Partners

All three areas in the West TN Region offer very different re-entry programs. Leadership provides periodic reviews of programs at the Regional Planning Council (RPC) meetings. The RPC plans to convene a meeting of “practitioners” throughout the region to discuss the details, challenges and successes. If additional training needs are determined beyond the region, we will seek the assistance of the TDLWD to identify training resources.

#### Identification of and Engagement with Employers and Partnerships

The SWLWDB utilizes our Business Services Team which includes our Business Services Coordinator, representatives of Voc-Rehab, Adult-Education, ECD Title I Team Lead, Wagner-Peyser Team Lead, One Stop Operator, Local Workforce Board staff, and other interested partners. These members indicated their

companies would give justice involved individuals an opportunity on a case-by-case basis. All partners are included in the planning process where priority industry sectors and occupations are identified. Further, the One-Stop Operator is aware of the priority and distributes all job order, job fair, etc. information to all partners. Further, the Business Services Team in Southwest TN has developed very good relationships with the employer community. During visits, they discuss the possibility of hiring ex-offenders or currently incarcerated (where work release programs are established). They explain the benefits of Transitional Work Experience, OJT, WOTC and Federal Bonding.

#### Shared Case Management – Services/Referrals and Support Services

The One-Stop Operator monitors case management in the Virtual One Stop system to ensure that all participants, including those serving formerly incarcerated and justice involved individuals, receive shared case management services from all appropriate partners. Partners are accustomed to the “it takes a village” methodology when working with individuals with barriers.