

# Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board

## Annual Report 2020-2021



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# • THE NORTHWEST TN WORKFORCE BOARD •



The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board (NWTNWB) is designated by the local elected officials and charged with administering workforce development services in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) in nine counties in Northwest Tennessee: Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley.

## LOCAL CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Gary Reasons* - Chair, Crockett	Mayor Joseph Butler, Carroll	Mayor Denny Johnson, Lake
Mayor Chris Young* - Vice-Chair, Dyer	Mayor Tom Witherspoon, Gibson	Mayor Benny McGuire, Obion
Mayor Brett Lashlee, Benton	Mayor John Penn Ridgeway, Henry	Mayor Jake Bynum, Weakley

The majority of the members of the NWTNWB are private business leaders from throughout the nine-county service region and include business owners, chief executives, operating officers, and other executives with optimum policymaking and hiring authority. Representatives from Labor Organizations, Education & Training, Government, Economic & Community Development, and other community organizations also serve on the board. The NWTNWB, with the agreement of the chief elected officials for the local area, designates a one-stop operator and provider(s) of Career, Business, and Youth services for the local One-Stop Delivery System, operated through the American Job Centers (AJCs), where job seekers and employers connect.

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD MEMBERS

New Members	One to Five Years	Six to Nine Years	Ten or More Years of Service
Melinda Goode (Regional)	Angela Hollingsworth (Regional), 1 Year	Glad Castellaw* (Crockett), 6 Years	Keith Cursey (Weakley), 10 Years
Monica Heath (Carroll)	Amy McDonald (Regional), 1 Year	Jon Dougherty (Dyer), 6 Years	Rita Alexander* (Gibson), 11 Years
Willie Huffman (Carroll)	Dr. Randy Shannon* (Benton), 1 Year	Bedford Dunavant (Obion), 6 Years	Ted Piazza* (Gibson), 16 Years
Brendan Powell (Gibson)	Eddie White (Henry), 1 Year	Lindsay Frilling (Obion), 6 Years	Brad Hurley* (Carroll), 20 Years
Jordan Spraggins (Crockett)	Neely Ashby* (Henry), 3 Years	Landy Fuqua (Weakley), 6 Years	Jimmy Williamson* (Dyer), 22 Years
Tommie St. John (Henry)	Lana Hammons (Dyer), 3 Years	Ben Marks* (Benton), 6 Years	
	Kristie Bennett (Regional), 5 Years	Kristy Mercer (Gibson), 7 Years	
	David Parrish (Regional), 5 Years	Gayanne Williams (Lake), 7 Years	

\*Board Officer or Committee Chair

## NON-BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Karen Bowyer	Mark Chandler	Ronnie Gunnels	Alvin Smothers
Justin Crice	Sherry Fowler	Janna Hellums	Blake Swaggart

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD STAFF

<b>Jennifer Bane, Executive Director</b>	<b>Gina Johnson</b> Director of Finance & Administrative Services	<b>Laura Speer</b> Director of Performance & Compliance/EO Officer
<b>Lana Burchfiel</b> Public Information Specialist	<b>LeAnn Lundberg</b> Director of Facilities & Computer Services	<b>Terry Williams</b> Finance Coordinator
<b>Theresa Ethridge</b> Business Services Representative, PRN	<b>Ginger Powell</b> Deputy Director	
<b>Maleia Evans</b> Business Services Representative	<b>Derrick Quinn</b> Compliance Officer	<b>Lana Wood</b> Business Services Representative

<b>Sector Strategies</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Business Services</b>	<b>American Job Centers</b>	<b>Postsecondary Training</b>	<b>Youth Services</b>
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# • PERFORMANCE & FISCAL •

Performance Report for 2020-2021	WIOA Performance Metrics	PY 2020 Goal	PY 2020 Actual
Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	82%	90.8%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	82%	81.8%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,650	\$6,906
	Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After exit	63%	85.3%
	Measurable Skills Gains	52%	68.6%
Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	82%	97.7%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	82%	88.1%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,600	\$6,788
	Credential Attainment Within 4 Quarters After Exit	66%	85.7%
	Measurable Skills Gains	48%	75.0%
Youth	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	76%	85.4%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	75%	80.9%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,300	\$3,719
	Credential Attainment Within 4 Quarters After Exit	69%	66.7%
	Measurable Skills Gains	45%	60.9%

Fiscal Report for 2020-2021	PY 2020 Funding Available	Total Expenditures	Percent Expended	De-obligated Funds	Carryover July 1, 2021
Administration	\$599,298.03	\$446,257.91	74%	\$1,574.05	\$151,466.07
Adult Formula	\$1,291,135.04	\$1,021,811.16	79%	\$0	\$269,323.88
Dislocated Worker Formula	\$1,095,796.65	\$884,066.64	81%	\$0	\$211,730.01
Youth Formula	\$1,283,570.44	\$1,183,772.47	92%	\$0	\$99,797.97
RESEA	\$300,383.10	\$298,481.61	99%	\$1,901.49	\$0
SWA/Apprenticeship	\$1,066,532.36	\$797,436.12	59%	\$24,279.52	\$244,816.72
National Dislocated Worker Grant	\$647,758.00	\$251,628.84	39%	\$0	\$396,129.16
CARES	\$578,040.00	\$578,040.00	100%	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL ALL GRANTS</b>	<b>\$6,862,513.62</b>	<b>\$5,461,494.75</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>\$27,755.06</b>	<b>\$1,373,263.81</b>

\* The de-obligated Administration funds were RESEA Administration funds. The de-obligated statewide funds include \$3,844.71 in National Career Readiness Certificate funds and \$20,434.81 in AJC Reopening funds.

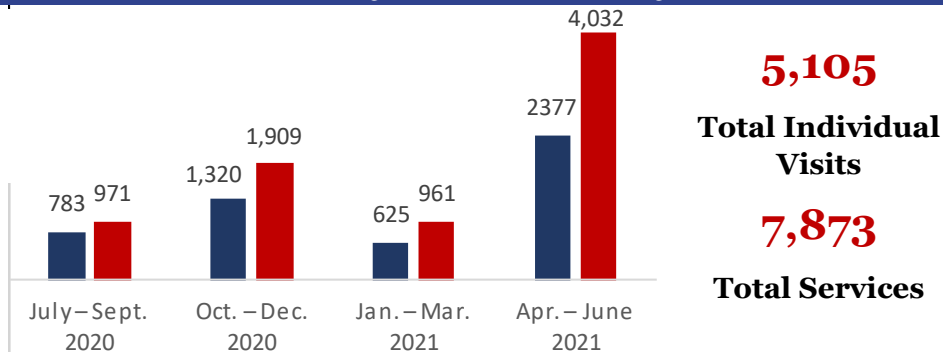
Participant Funding	Minimum Requirement	Actual
Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR)	40%	<b>44.6%</b>
Youth Work Experience	20%	<b>40.8%</b>
PY 19 Youth Out-of-School	75%	<b>92.7%</b>
PY 20 Youth In-School (by 6/30/22)	35%	<b>27.4%</b>

Local Area on track to meet all performance and participant funding requirements.

# • AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES •



## NW TN American Job Center (AJC) Visits



## Top 10 Reasons for Visits

1. Job Search/Resource Room (3,040)
2. Unemployment (2,256)
3. Cr. Coaching/WIOA Title I (779)
4. Networking Event (487)
5. Job Search Assistance (366)
6. Adult Education (244)
7. Job Fair (189)
8. Cr. Coach WF Essentials (76)
9. Resume Assistance (66)
10. HiSET (64)

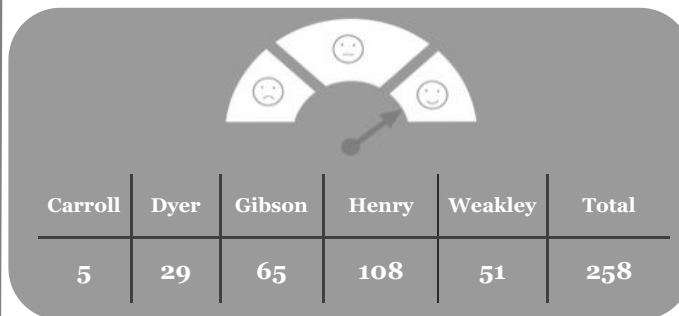
## AJC Surveys Results

Overall, how satisfied were you with our services?

**98%**

253 out of 258 answered "Completely Satisfied"

Number of Completed AJC Surveys by County for 2020-2021



## Northwest Workforce Area Selected for Program Integration Project

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board (NWTNWB) was selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA), Region 5 Chicago partnerships and program integration technical assistance project. Participation in the project included a short online questionnaire and a 90-minute phone interview with Maher & Maher staff overseeing the project. The case study focused on ways to bring workforce partners together to better leverage staff and funding and provide better services to employer and job seeker customers, and is available on the Department of Labor's WorkforceGPS website.

As a result of the case study, NWTNWB Executive Director, Jennifer Bane, was also asked to participate as a panelist in a training for the state of Arizona to highlight our area's success with the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement process, and for the state of Florida on how Board staff effectively support Board Chairs and members to fulfill their roles around convening, strategizing, managing and optimizing. Bane will also participate in a similar training for the state of Iowa in the upcoming program year.

## Business Services 2020-2021

**27**  
Total On-the-Job Training Contracts as of 6/30/21

**228**  
Enrolled in Training

**161 (70.6%)**  
Completed

**47 (20.6%)**  
Did not complete\*

**20 (8.8%)**  
Still in Training

**31**  
Total Incumbent Worker Training Contracts with 25 employers

**717**  
Proposed to train

**697**  
Trained (97%)

**650**  
Job seekers attended Job Fairs

**35**  
Total Job Fairs hosted

**6**  
Registered Apprenticeship Occupations

**73**  
Apprentices Trained

## Current Unemployment Rate by County (June 2021)

Benton 6.6% | Carroll 6.1% | Crockett 4.7% | Dyer 6.2% | Gibson 5.7% | Henry 5.3% | Lake 7.5% | Obion 6.3% | Weakley 5.2%

# • AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES •

## *Title I Career & Training Services*

	Adult & Dislocated Worker	Youth	Total Title I	Re-Entry Enrollments
Goal	311	54	365	104
YTD (Jul-Jun) New Enrollments	396	142	538	70

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) consists of five core partner programs: Titles I—IV, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). These partners provide services through the American Job Center network in order to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers.

## *Title III & Other Employment Services*

New Enrollments	Goal	YTD (July-June)
Wagner Peyser	1,355	1,347
SNAP E&T	112	79
Jobs for Veterans	22	8
Re-Entry Participants	103	3

Co-Enrollments with Title I	Goal	YTD (July-June)
RESEA	21	4
Trade Adjustment Assistance	100%	0 / 1

## *Title V*

Participant Exits	Goal	YTD (July-June)
Senior Employment (SCSEP)	13	5

## *Title II Adult Education Enrollments*

New Enrollments	Goal	YTD July-June
Jackson State	203	215
Weakley County Schools	285	162

## *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*

As of 6/30/21, TANF had 241 active cases with 79 employed and 16 closed in successful employment.

## *Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*

As of 6/30/21, Title IV served 655 participants with 289 new enrollments and 126 closed in successful employment.

## *Families First Program Assists Single Mother Achieve Career Goals*



Being a single parent to a 3-year-old son and working 25-35 hours as assistant manager of a local gas station, Anne Kimbrell knew she wanted a brighter future for her child. She enrolled at Bethel University, working throughout college, and even going on mission trips while on school breaks. In Anne's last semester in March 2020, COVID-19 changed the way individuals could attend school, forcing her to find a way to do all classes by distance learning. However, Anne was able to persevere and graduated May 9, 2020. After being promoted at her current job, Anne continued working as an essential employee while looking for a career in Criminal Justice. In July 2020, she secured a job in her field as a Correctional Officer for the Weakley County Sheriff's Department. After working for a year as a Correctional Officer, she accepted a new position in June 2021 as a Probation and Parole Officer. "Anne is determined, resourceful, and a great team player," said her Career Coach Kristen Havener. "I had no doubt she would start a career in criminal justice, and succeed in her new career."



# TARGET SECTORS & OCCUPATIONS

## INDUSTRIES BY GROWTH

Industry	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2021 - 2026 Change	2026 Location Quotient	Avg. Earnings per Job (w/ Benefits)	2020 Payrolled Business Locations
Manufacturing	16,017	17,169	1,152	2.38	\$61,155	307
Accommodation and Food Services	6,576	7,268	692	1.03	\$17,120	425
Transportation and Warehousing	3,912	4,302	390	1.08	\$61,401	157
Health Care and Social Assistance	9,088	9,409	321	0.71	\$42,828	582
Retail Trade	10,776	10,994	218	1.24	\$34,908	868
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,700	1,887	187	0.28	\$61,685	259
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	3,373	3,508	135	3.09	\$35,616	126
Educational Services	1,142	1,274	132	0.50	\$39,083	15
Government	18,150	18,279	129	1.29	\$56,327	423
Wholesale Trade	2,713	2,836	123	0.84	\$62,033	277
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	586	661	74	0.46	\$35,805	53
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	883	952	69	0.59	\$55,301	151
Information	587	656	69	0.39	\$46,525	66
Utilities	181	193	12	0.61	\$100,203	9
Construction	4,817	4,822	5	0.88	\$49,033	384
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,616	4,617	1	0.94	\$24,967	360
Management of Companies and Enterprises	289	283	(5)	0.20	\$71,489	13
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	203	175	(29)	0.49	\$82,689	12
Finance and Insurance	2,687	2,631	(56)	0.66	\$66,488	330
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,605	3,456	(149)	0.60	\$38,295	233

## MIDDLE-SKILL OCCUPATIONS BY GROWTH

Occupation	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2021 - 2026 Change	Avg. Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,552	2,811	258	327	\$23.08	Postsecondary nondegree award
General and Operations Managers	1,289	1,369	80	114	\$41.43	Bachelor's degree
Registered Nurses	666	704	38	52	\$29.95	Bachelor's degree
Managers, All Other	377	410	33	39	\$31.78	Bachelor's degree
Nursing Assistants	1,267	1,298	31	140	\$12.61	Postsecondary nondegree award
Financial Managers	127	158	31	15	\$36.68	Bachelor's degree
Accountants and Auditors	1,042	1,070	28	78	\$23.52	Bachelor's degree
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	283	309	27	31	\$26.16	Bachelor's degree
Firefighters	332	357	25	28	\$46.33	Bachelor's degree
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	530	553	23	52	\$19.26	Postsecondary nondegree award

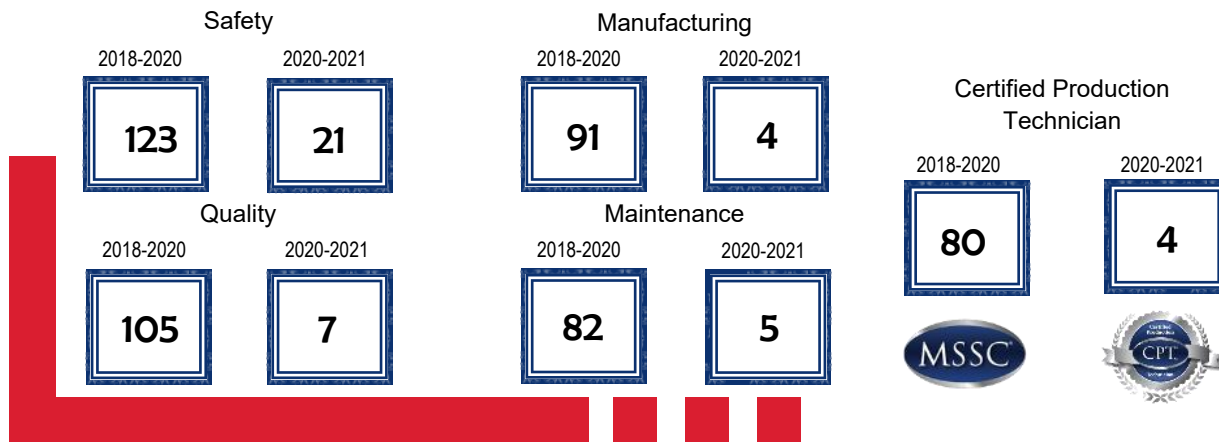
Source: Economic Modeling Systems, Inc. (EMS)

## INDUSTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

<b>Hydro-Gear, Carroll County</b> 375 New Jobs by 9/2021 \$10 Million Investment	<b>Hargett Materials Inc (HMI), Gibson County</b> 50 New Jobs \$2.2 Million Investment	<b>Silicon Ranch, Henry County</b> Plans to open Dec 2022
<b>Tyson, Gibson County</b> 1500 New Jobs by 2023 \$425 Million Expansion	<b>ERMCO, Dyer County</b> 150 New Jobs \$48.25 Million Expansion	<b>Profile Metal Forming, Carroll County</b> 23 New Jobs by 2025 \$2.5 Million Expansion

# • SECTOR STRATEGIES •

## CERTIFICATES EARNED



## NEW REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ENHANCES RE-ENTRY ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PROGRAM **RAMP** Re-entry Advanced Manufacturing Program

The Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP), implemented in the summer of 2018, established a manufacturing career pathway for incarcerated individuals as a response to the overwhelming needs of area employers for skilled workers, and high recidivism rates among individuals released from local county jails. RAMP offers industrial readiness training by providing instruction in the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC) Certified Production Technician (CPT) program to incarcerated individuals onsite at the jails. The credentials include four (4) nationally recognized certifications – Safety, Quality, Manufacturing Processes, and Maintenance Awareness. Students may then put their skills to use by working with private employers through county jails' work-release programs.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic halted the expansion of the program in Carroll, Lake, and Weakley Counties, RAMP continued in Dyer and Gibson Counties and was also implemented in Obion County utilizing the Rural Initiative Grant, which focuses on target populations in at-risk and distressed counties. The program is also now being

used as the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) for the Production Technician Registered Apprenticeship program at Alliance Staffing Group, LLC in Gibson County. In addition to the 144 hours of RTI, apprentices will complete 2,000 hours of On-the-Job Learning (OJL) which they will accumulate as they work and learn through mentorship on their job site as part of the work-release program or upon release to The Orchard House, which serves incarcerated and previously incarcerated men to help them gain employment and learn skills. At the successful conclusion of their 1-year apprenticeship, apprentices will receive a national and industry-recognized certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor acknowledging their skill attainment in the Production Technician occupation.

As of June 2021, 177 participants have been served through 18 completed RAMP classes with 144 of those tested earning a credential in Safety, 112 in Quality, 95 in Manufacturing Processes, and 87 in Maintenance Awareness. Eighty-four individuals have earned all four credentials to earn the full CPT credential.

## Manufacturing Day 2020 Goes Virtual, Increases Students Reached

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the typically in-person events were conducted in a virtual format this year with presentations by 38 local businesses viewed by a total of 3,383 high school students and parents, an increase from 1,382 students last year. The presentations were also shared on social media, further expanding the reach of the events.

Crockett Co. High School	233 students		Dyersburg High School	140 seniors + parents
South Gibson Co. High School	200 students enrolled in CTE classes + parents		Dyer Co. High School	1,000 students + parents
Gibson Co. High School	275 in-person 75 virtual + parents		Union City High School	95 students
Trenton Middle School	5th grade- 77 6th grade- 58 8th grade- 30		Lake Co. High School	25 students
Milan High School	45 students		Obion Co. Central High School	750 students
Peabody High School	72 students in-person; 26 students virtual		S. Fulton High School	49 seniors
			Weakley Co. Schools	73 in-person 160 students virtual

# • YOUTH SERVICES •

#WORKLIFE

The Work Opportunities for Rural Kids (WORK) program, branded as #WORKlife, allows participants to work up to 37.5 hours for up to six months. In addition to gaining valuable hands-on experience and learning general work skills (i.e. soft-skills), such as attendance, punctuality, professional communication, teamwork, etc., participants earn the higher of \$8.00 per hour or the typical wage paid for the position. In Carroll, Lake, Obion, and Weakley Counties, the remainder of the Rural Initiative Grant funds, which can be used to promote career exploration, increase educational attainment and labor workforce participation rates, and to expand technical education and employment opportunities to target populations in at-risk and distressed counties, were repurposed from RAMP to implement #WORKlife, similar to the program offered in Benton County last year.

In order to promote the program, the Northwest area partners with secondary schools to promote local career opportunities through promotional / hiring events highlighting career pathways and opportunities available within the area. Through hiring events,

employers are able to market summer, part-time, and full-time positions to graduating seniors, and other young adults, with a focus on those up to 24 years old. This initiative aligns with the West Tennessee regional plan strategy of focusing on special populations such as unemployed youth. Unemployment rates among youth (ages 16 to 24 years old) are higher in the West Region at 18.45%, more than five times the overall state rate.

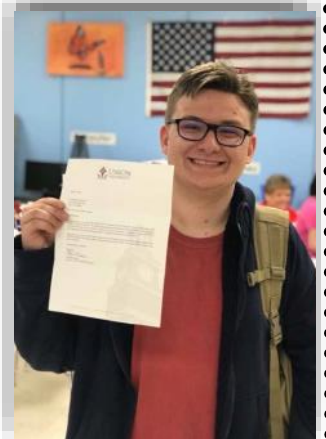
Through the #WORKlife program, Benton County has utilized 100% of the \$48,978.24 allotted to the county for 14 individuals to participate in paid work experience. As of June 30, 2021, an additional 28 participants have been enrolled in #WORKlife utilizing Rural Initiative funds in the other at-risk and distressed counties. Last year, over 60 employers served as worksites for a total of 28 youth work experience participants and \$188,402.51 of youth formula funds were expended on the program. Worksite sectors included Business Services, Education & Social Services, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation, Retail, Hospitality, and various public city and county offices.

## Where are they now?.....

At the time of enrollment, **Mitchell Johnston** was a high school graduate with very little work experience. The high school staff had helped him find volunteer work positions, which he enjoyed, but they did not provide any financial compensation. He was a little lost as far as determining what path to take as he embarked on his future life out of high school.

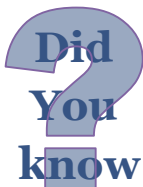
The high school referred Mitchell to the American Job Center where he was able to enroll in the Youth Work Experience Program. Mitchell went to work at the local Food-Rite in Trenton, TN, where he began to gain meaningful employment experience. He was able to gain maturity as he learned life lessons related to earning an income. He also learned important job skills related to punctuality, teamwork, and professionalism.

One of Mitchell's biggest accomplishments was that he developed money management skills. Mitchell is able to use his debit card and maintain the balance of his checking account. Mitchell also began the EDGE program at Union University this fall with help from WIOA funding. Mitchell's father, Mike Johnston stated, "I don't know where we'll end up, but you helped us to get started on our journey." Mitchell hopes his story will encourage someone. "Even if you do not know your path, you can always reach out for help," he added.



**Samuel "Sammy" Perry** came to the Camden Specialized American Job Center for assistance with employment. He was a 19-year-old with little work experience and needed assistance in gaining full-time permanent employment. Sammy was referred to the WIOA-funded Youth Work Experience program beginning in July 2020, a program that assists youth who face barriers to education, training and employment. Sammy was placed with Birdsong Resort & Marina in Camden in a temporary position as a Groundkeeper. He completed a total of 24 weeks of work experience in December 2020 gaining work skills such as leadership, teamwork, and decision-making. Owner-Operator Bob Keast was so pleased with his progress and work performance that he hired him through the On-the Job Training program, which Sammy successfully completed in March 2021 and was hired full-time.

According to Mr. Keast, Sammy even showed him ways to save money on some supply expenses, which enabled Mr. Keast to purchase a side-by-side ATV for the resort for Sammy to use. "He just can't stop talking about what a wonderful person Sammy is and how grateful for the programs that brought Sammy his way," said Maleia Evans, Business Services Representatives for Benton County. "Employers certainly don't mind investing in great employees and that is exactly what Sammy is to us," said Mr. Keast.



Under the NW area's Supportive Services policy, Youth and other participants may receive assistance with transportation, supplies, uniforms, accommodations, testing, child or dependent care, housing, and more, to enable participation in training activities such as occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeships, and work experience. This year, 32 Youth participants received over \$6,600 in assistance with transportation and 55 youth received over \$9,600 in other supportive services while participating in training services. Additionally, the NW area's Incentive Policy rewards Youth participants for reaching certain academic or occupational milestones, during and after participation in the program. This year, 25 Youth participants received \$2,875 in incentives for their achievements during program participation, and 11 participants received \$2,700 in incentives after exiting the program.



# • YOUTH SERVICES •

## Career Exploration Funding Offers Two Events for Weakley County Schools



Utilizing Career Exploration funding, the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB) partnered with Weakley County Schools, ATA Employment Solutions, and the Weakley County Economic Development Board (WCEDB) to offer two career exploration events with eighth graders and seniors

as the target audiences. The first event included a set of age-appropriate training videos on soft-skills such as interviewing and resume writing for the school system's five middle schools and the second provided the opportunity for seniors to experience a virtual interview in real-time. The **Mock It till You Rock It** virtual mock interviews were offered to 33 of the 45 Seniors at Greenfield School utilizing the Premier Virtual job fair software provided by the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Volunteers from the NWTNWB, ATA, WCEDB,

the University of TN at Martin, and County Mayor Jake Bynum served as interviewers and were impressed with the students' performance. Maleia Evans, NWTNWB Business Services Representative for Weakley County, stated "All of our high schools are producing a quality workforce and Greenfield students are setting the bar high. Those of us who were on the Interviewer side of the event got to see that firsthand." Evans said the follow-up assessments from the interviewers stressed the politeness and professionalism of the Greenfield students. All seniors in the county's four high schools also received a bag of information including USB drives loaded with information regarding applying for youth services, job search assistance, labor market information, and career pathways. The interviews, along with additional information supplied to Title I staff, were used to pair eligible students with summer work experience opportunities.



## Partnership with Dyersburg State Community College Promotes Nursing Career Pathway



In December 2019, Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC) was awarded a \$1 million Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) grant to expand and enhance an educational pathway in nursing for rural northwest Tennessee that begins with the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification through high school dual enrollment and goes all the way to the Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from a four-year accredited university. In order to help achieve this, the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB) proposed to coordinate with high schools and employers in the five counties covered under the GIVE grant – Dyer, Lake, Obion, Lauderdale, and Tipton, to offer career exploration events for each county to promote healthcare careers and training programs to participating high school students.

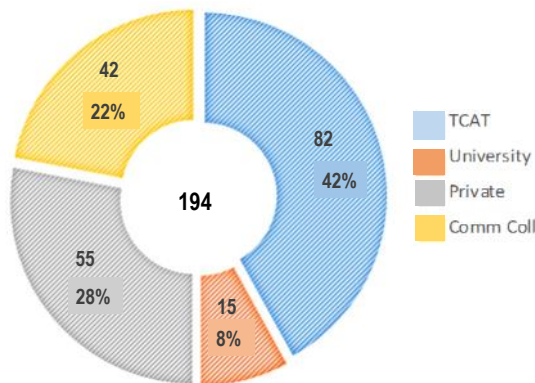
In April 2021, the first event took place virtually for students in Dyer and Lake Counties. The event consisted of students viewing two pre-recorded videos – an educator panel and an employer panel, both narrated by Shari Tidwell, Nurse Practitioner and owner of Family Practice Clinic in Dyersburg. The employer panel consisted of representatives from Signature Healthcare, Volunteer Home Health, and West TN Healthcare who discussed the various nursing career opportunities available in northwest TN across numerous settings such as home health, nursing homes, hospitals, and medical clinics. The educator panel consisted of representatives from DSCC, the TN College of Applied Technology-Ripley, and the University of TN at Martin, as well as a UT Martin nursing program graduate. The panel discussed the levels of career and education opportunities in nursing, the training opportunities available for these occupations, as well as the entry requirements into these programs.

In addition to the video panels, with the NWTNWB's Career Exploration funding, 200 Lake and Dyer County High School students received bags full of informational materials including labor market information on nursing career and training opportunities and services available through the American Job Centers. Educator and employer panelists also contributed materials for the students.

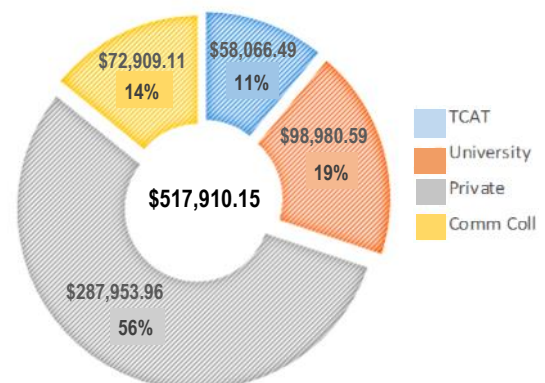
# • TRAINING SERVICES •

Often times when a job seeker cannot find employment it is because they do not possess the skills to qualify for technical jobs. American Job Center partners can provide scholarships to eligible participants to attend training of their choice. This past year, 194 new participants received scholarships to attend 17 different institutions. Of the 194 new participants, 42% chose to attend TN Colleges of Applied Technology, 22% community colleges, 8% universities, and 28% private certification institutions for occupations such as Truck Driving, Lineman, and Certified Nursing Assistant. In total, nearly \$518,000 was expended this year on Occupational Skills Training for new and existing participants.

**NEW Participants By Training Provider Type  
2020-2021**

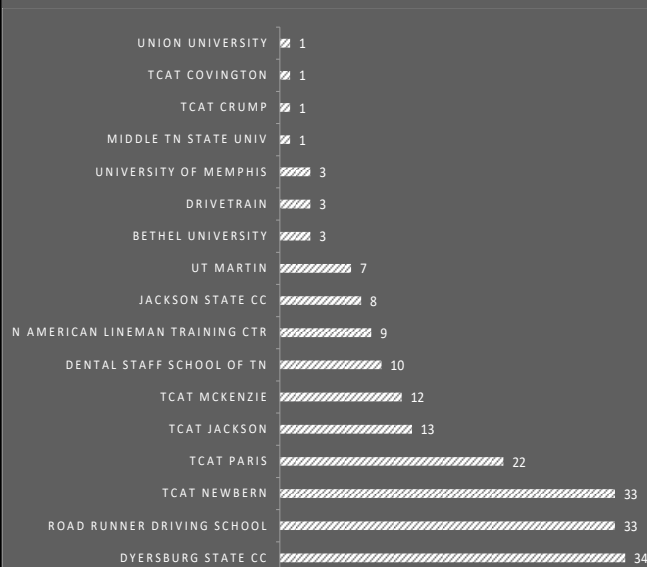


**Investment By Training Provider Type (all participants)  
2020-2021**

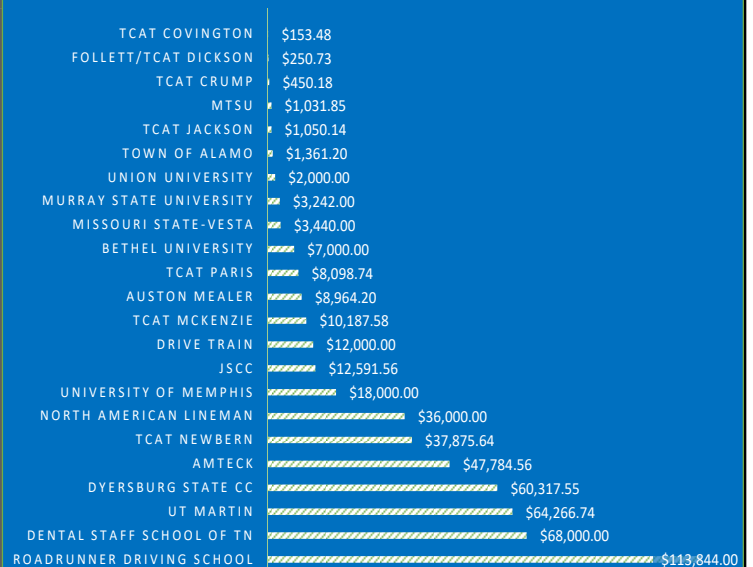


## Training Providers 2020-2021

**Providers by New Participants**



**Providers by Investment (all students)**

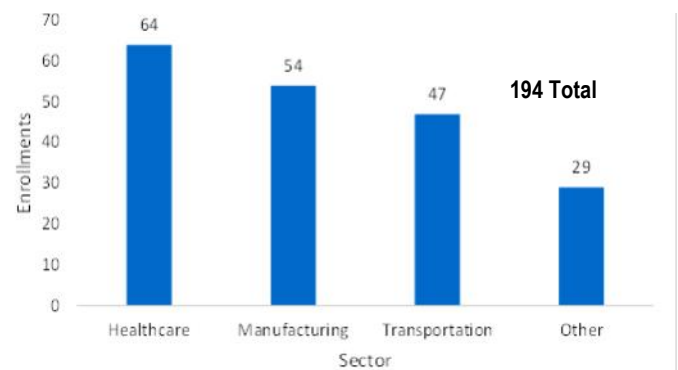


## Transportation Stipends Assist Students Cover Commuting Costs of Training

Over 176 students used gas cards to help them attend school last year, with a total of more than \$69,380 expended. Most students attending postsecondary are eligible to receive a gas card. The Career Advisor determines the mileage they will travel daily and establishes the amount they are eligible to receive on their gas card. The program requires a monthly verification of attendance before loading the card.

Additionally, 76 participants received other supportive services, such as work attire, tools, or equipment, to participate in work-based training, such as work experience, transitional jobs, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships.

## New Classroom Training Enrollments by Sector





# • TRAINING SERVICES •



Auston Mealer's Restaurant Equipment Service in Dyersburg (AMES), recently partnered with the Tennessee Office of Apprenticeship to develop and launch a new training program for HVAC / Refrigeration Technicians.

The program, registered through the US Department of Labor, combines both classroom and on-the-job training. Apprentices accrue over 430 classroom hours of related

technical training along with 3,000 hours of hands-on work experience under the tutelage of a journeyman level technician.

Currently, Auston Mealer has 13 apprentices growing professionally in the training program joining the more than 500,000 apprentices across the country. TN Department of Labor Commissioner Jeff McCord recently announced, there are more apprentices in Tennessee today than any time in the last ten years. Employers are flocking to the model as they explore new strategies for talent development.

Registered apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. It is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of every business. Apprenticeships can be integrated into current training and human resource development strategies. Most important to recruitment, apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" model ensuring apprentices receive a paycheck from day one, so they earn wages while they learn on the job.

Every graduate of the HVAC / Refrigeration Apprenticeship will receive a nationally recognized credential issued by the United State Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship. The apprenticeship program is designed to ensure apprentices master every skill and have all the knowledge needed to be fully proficient in the occupation.

Auston Mealer's Restaurant Equipment Service offers residential and commercial HVAC, plumbing, electrical, installation, preventative maintenance, refrigeration, hot & cold side commercial equipment services and more and are located on Troy Avenue in downtown Dyersburg.

For more information about developing apprenticeship programs email Ginger Powell, Deputy Director for the Northwest TN Workforce Board at [powell@nwtworks.org](mailto:powell@nwtworks.org). In addition to assisting employers with developing new apprenticeship programs, the Northwest TN Workforce Board offers assistance with connecting to qualified jobseekers and accessing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and other American Job Center partner funds to support apprenticeships. Funding may include partial wage reimbursements for new apprentices, and other new hires, as well as assistance with covering costs of related-technical instruction for apprentices.

In Summer 2020 as AMES was rapidly growing but finding skilled service technicians was proving difficult, they hired their first work experience, **Jon Ross Baker**. Jessica Barham, AMES Director of Operations said, "At first I was unsure how it would go, then after the 6 months we rolled him over to the OJT program and added him to our Apprenticeship at the same time because of the progress he was making! We knew he was going to make a great technician one day!" In addition to earning a wage while participating in OJC through AMES new registered Apprenticeship, Baker also received a scholarship to assist with the cost of the related-technical instruction (RTI), or classroom training, portion of the program.



Allen Powell was impressed by how well Baker was able to receive and comprehend information quickly, but also how Baker unselfishly "comes alongside his classmates and helps them understand the content as well."

AMES owner, Auston Mealer, stated, "This program was designed for youth like Jon Ross. Because of this program that offers some classroom time mixed with hands-on in-the-field training, he is now two years ahead of a youth that attended a vocational school only. He's able to work independently and make more money faster."

**Luke Blankenship** came into the American Job Center-Huntingdon for WIOA assistance for training. He had been working in the construction field on and off and realized he needed training for a skilled trade to successfully gain full-time permanent employment. He was only making \$10.00/hour and knew that he could earn more by attending training and receiving a certification.

Career Advisor Connie Wright assessed Luke to see what services would best meet his needs and discovered his interest in the Industrial Maintenance field. In September 2020 Luke entered the Industrial Maintenance program at TCAT McKenzie.

Upon completion of the 1,620 hour program in February 2021, Luke interviewed with Tyson Food, Inc., for their new facility in Humboldt, TN, and was hired in March in an Industrial Maintenance position making \$20.32 an hour. He was very excited about the opportunity. Luke stated that training paid off as he was able to become employed in the field of his training and is making twice what he was making at his previous employment.



**Sara Poiner** always wanted to be a nurse but adulthood started quite early for her. "I had my first child at age 16 and that delayed my dreams of becoming a nurse, but it did not stop it," Poiner stated. As a single mom, Sara wasn't sure how she would achieve her dream of going back to school. "Even with a full-time job, there wasn't much money left for tuition and books and that became a challenge for me," she stated. Sara sought the help of the WIOA scholarship at the American Job Center-Dresden, and was able to complete the LPN program at the Union City campus of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology Center-Newbern.

Sara has been an LPN since 2017 and worked at Dyer Nursing Home from May 2011-December 2020 but knew her next step and ultimate goal was to become a Registered Nurse. "Thanks to Career Advisor Rhonda Mitchum for being instrumental in helping relieve the financial pressure so that I could focus on my academics, I now have completed the Dyersburg State Community College LPN to RN fast track program with the help of the WIOA Scholarship," Poiner said. "During this pandemic, I have discovered my passion for helping and providing support to those who need it. I have learned a lot about myself, especially about my strong work ethics, my strength and my love for helping others and the nursing profession. It has truly taught me how to care for, love and respect other human beings to the highest level," Poiner added.

# • REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES •

## Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding Provides Reemployment Services to Workers Displaced by COVID-19 Pandemic

Utilizing the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development's Reemployment Services Grant, funded through the CARES Act, the Northwest area received **\$108,482.11** to provide reemployment services to individuals displaced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the grant period, Northwest TN Workforce Board and American Job Center staff conducted an email campaign and made individual contact attempts to **over 5,000 individuals** receiving unemployment benefits.

Eight individuals received over **\$29,500** in training scholarships and supportive services to earn a credential before returning to the workforce. Seven individuals attended CDL Truck Driver training at Roadrunner Driving School, LLC and one individual attended Pharmacy Technician training at Bethel University.

**"The Reemployment Services Grant provided additional resources to address an increase in demand for services due to the COVID-19 pandemic" said Jennifer Bane, Executive Director. "The staff in the American Job Centers went above and beyond to reach out to individuals in need and offer them services."**

## New Claimants & Unemployment Rates by Month

Month	New Claimants	NW Rate	State Rate
July 2020	3,472	8.6%	9.4%
August 2020	2,453	7.4%	8.8%
September 2020	1,787	5.5%	6.3%
October 2020	2,113	7.5%	6.8%
November 2020	1,137	5.3%	4.9%
December 2020	1,147	6.0%	5.6%
January 2021	2,662	5.8%	5.3%
February 2021	1,544	5.3%	4.8%
March 2021	1,104	5.6%	5.1%
April 2021	1,943	4.4%	5.0%
May 2021	1,343	4.6%	4.6%
June 2021	1,005	5.8%	5.6%
<b>PY 2020 Total</b>	<b>21,710</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>

## Dislocated Worker Returns to Work in New Truck Driving Career



After being laid-off from Liberty Oilfield Services LLC in April 2020 due to the unanticipated and dramatic downturn in the industry due to COVID-19, **Gerald Snell** sought reemployment services through the American Job Center in Dyersburg. With the assistance of his Career Advisors, Olivia Capps and Wilma Capps, Gerald identified truck driver training as the best way to reenter the workforce quickly. "I chose truck driving because I knew it was an industry that was always in need and will never go away so there would always be job opportunities," Snell stated.

Through the American Job Center, Gerald received a scholarship of \$3,284 to cover the tuition and fees of attending Roadrunner Driving School in Sharon, TN, as well as a transportation stipend to assist with the costs of commuting to training.

"The experience at Roadrunner was second to none," said Gerald. "(I) had a lot of hands-on with this class, which I think was great because when it was time for me to take my road test I had all the confidence I needed to pass." After successfully completing training in September 2020, Gerald went to work in November with Indiana Transport as an On Road Driver. He said, "My salary now basically comes down to how much I want to drive...so it's really in your hands how much you make."

## Rapid Response for Dislocated Workers

When layoffs occur, companies can choose to hold mass employee meetings or distribute materials from the American Job Centers (AJCs) about services available for dislocated workers, such as Unemployment Insurance, Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment services, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Title I Dislocated Worker training services. Rapid Response Teams often provide onsite services including resume assistance, career fairs, and other customized partner services.

This year, Rapid Response services were offered to approximately 111 individuals affected by the closure of four companies. In Gibson County, the closure of Dura Automotive affected 43 individuals. The closure of Save-A-Lot and upcoming closure in July 2021 of Tecumseh LLC in Henry County has / will affect 12 and 51 individuals respectively. Finney's Flooring's closure in Weakley County affected an estimated five individuals. While up from the 43 individuals served last year, the 111 served is still significantly less than the 418 served in the 2018-2019 program year.



# • REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES •

## National Dislocated Worker Grant Provides Funding for COVID-19 Relief

As part of the state of Tennessee's Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) for COVID-19 Relief, the **Northwest area was awarded \$799,700** to provide Disaster-Relief Employment (DRE) and career and training services to an estimated **123 participants** between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2022.

DRE provides temporary employment of eligible individuals in clean-up and recovery positions at public worksites. During the first year of the grant, a total of 16 individuals were enrolled, or 88.9% of the proposed goal of 18, to provide cleaning and screening services at 12 public worksites. Additionally, 52 individuals have been enrolled in training services, or 49.5% of the goal of 105. Of the 52 enrolled, 20 were enrolled for On-the-Job Training and 32 were enrolled for classroom training or work experience. A total of \$274,271.31 was expended on participants, program staffing, and administrative costs during the first year of the grant.

"We are excited to see so many individuals taking advantage of the training opportunities available to them," said Connie Stewart, Career Service Provider Executive Director. Interested individuals can contact their local American Job Centers to find out if they qualify for the DWG or other services.

### NUMBERS SERVED BY COUNTY & PROGRAM

County	Disaster-Relief Participants	Training Services Participants	Total Participants Served
Benton	2	4	6
Carroll	2	4	6
Crockett	1	0	1
Dyer	2	13	15
Gibson	2	6	8
Henry	1	12	13
Lake	1	0	1
Obion	4	9	13
Weakley	1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>68</b>

## Co-Enrollment Helps Dislocated Workers Succeed



The **Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program** assists individuals receiving unemployment insurance with appropriate reemployment services that will lead to successful employment outcomes, strives to assist participants in overcoming barriers so that they can make a successful transition to gainful employment. The program is offered in all nine American Job Centers and was offered virtually through the COVID-19 pandemic. Between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 there were 446 individuals selected to participate in the program with 314 or 70.4% successfully completing the program. Forty-three Individuals were successfully placed in employment during program participation.

**Laura Rogers** was selected for the RESEA program in February 2020 after she was laid off from her employment in December 2020 due to closure of business. Laura's work history consisted for working in the restaurant/food industry. She applied for numerous jobs but was not having any return calls and then the pandemic hit.

Career Advisor Connie Wright assessed Laura to see what services would best meet her needs, including completing a more functional resume, assisting with job search, and discussing the Disaster-Relief position through the Dislocated Worker Grant Program. Laura was sent for an interview for a disaster relief position, providing administrative support and general assistance services for relief and recovery projects resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. She was very interested and was co-enrolled through Title I to start the job on 10/05/2020.

Laura completed the Disaster Relief program in February 2021 and was hired full-time at the worksite where she was placed, the Benton County Courthouse in Camden. They were very pleased with her work performance and Laura was excited about the opportunity to be full-time permanently employed again. Laura states that she was very appreciative for the program.

## Virtual Job Center Makes Program Information Available to Tennesseans Anytime, Anywhere



The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) launched the Tennessee Virtual American Job Center, bringing information about job services and programs to Tennesseans anytime, anywhere. The unique website guides users to not only the employment assistance available to them but also other services offered by multiple state agencies.

When individuals go to the site, either on their desktop or mobile device, they can explore a list of services and programs that have the potential to improve their employment situation or provide financial assistance that will help them join the state's workforce. Each program page contains information on eligibility requirements, reviews documents needed to apply, and provides the next steps to take to participate in the program.

The Tennessee Virtual American Job Center is located at [www.TNVirtualAJC.com](http://www.TNVirtualAJC.com). Users can visit the site on their schedule and at their own pace. Once they find the information they are looking for, they can take the next steps needed to improve their employment situation and their future.

# • BUSINESS SERVICES •

Understanding and meeting the needs of employers is given the utmost importance and is achieved through a collaboration of the NWTNWB and partners serving on the Business Services Team, such as Title I Career Services, Labor Exchange, Veterans Programs, Trade Act, Re-Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, Economic Development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

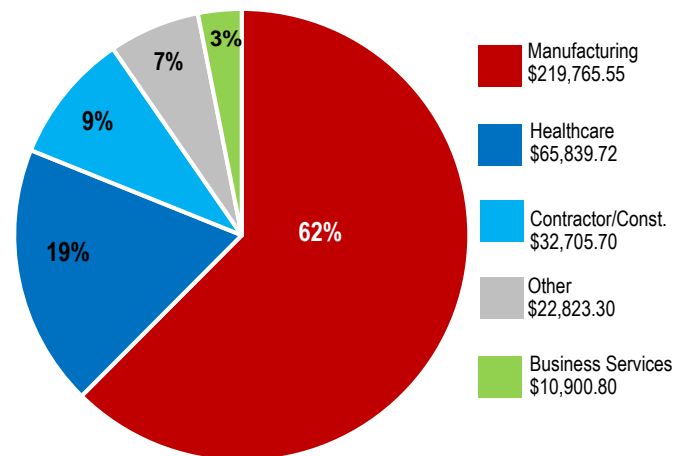
Business Services can assist with Recruitment & Screening, Grants and Incentives including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Workforce Support to address the needs and skills gaps as identified by local employers. Labor market information (LMI) is also available and customizable to both the local area and surrounding region. Economic Modeling Systems, Inc.'s (EMSI) labor market information software, utilized by the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB) for many years, is a valuable resource of local and regional current, customized, LMI. LMI and FAQs can also be found on Jobs4TN.gov.



## Local Employers Receive 50% Wage Reimbursement for New Hires through OJT Grants

Companies in Northwest TN have received wage reimbursements in excess of **\$352,000** to train their own workers. For new hires with little or no experience in the occupations, this gives employers an opportunity to save money while training the employee. Business Services staff with the American Job Center developed contracts with 27 companies, placed job orders, and referred eligible job applicants to fill 228 positions. Additionally, funding for OJT grants was available this year through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding and the National Dislocated Worker Grant for COVID-19 Relief. The majority of On-the-job Training is focused on the Advanced Manufacturing Sector. Other target sectors primarily train through postsecondary opportunities.

## On-the-Job Training Expenditures by Sector



## OJT Employer Participation by COUNTY

**Benton**  
Birdsong Marina

**Carroll**  
Allegion  
Granges Americas, Inc.

**Crockett**  
ABB

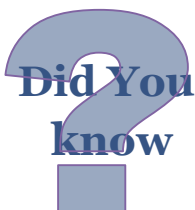
**Henry**  
Dana Sealing Products, LLC  
Ellis Mechanical  
Henry County Medical Center  
PML

**Dyer**  
Amteck, LLC  
Auston Mealer  
City of Dyersburg  
Develey Mustard and  
Condiment Corporation  
NSK Steering Systems  
West Tennessee Healthcare-  
Dyersburg Hospital

**Weakley**  
Allergy Lab Solutions

**Gibson**  
Alliance Staffing  
Allied Memory Foam LLC  
CableSouth Construction  
Crown Winery  
Kaiyuh Services, LLC

**Obion**  
Cox Oil  
Excel Boats  
Greenfield Products  
Maverick, Inc  
Twin Oaks Technology



Similar to Youth Work Experience program, **Ready, Set, Hire! Work-Based Training** targets Adults and Dislocated Workers with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. Designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment, the program includes up to 320 hours each for both a paid internship and On-the-Job (OJT). Last year, 33 individuals participated in paid internships and earned over \$90,600 in wages. "Not only do participants get a chance to demonstrate their skills to potential employers, but if hired, employers may qualify for a Work Opportunity Tax Credit ranging from \$1,200 to \$9,600 for hiring individuals with barriers who are members of a qualified targeted group" stated Jennifer Bane, Executive Director.



# • BUSINESS SERVICES •

## Grants Awarded for Training Incumbent Workers

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding was made available to employers to provide training for their current workforce to improve processes and upgrade skills. Nearly \$340,000 was awarded to 25 companies to train 717 workers, with 697 employees completing training and over \$322,600 paid to participating employers. The majority of expenditures, 72.4%, were made in the Manufacturing sector, followed by Healthcare at 11.5%, Business & Other Services at 8.8%, and Construction & Electrical Services at 7.4%.

IWT  
Employer  
Participation  
by COUNTY

**Benton**  
Covia  
Arnold's Fabricating  
**Carroll**  
Southern Chiropractic  
Carroll Bank & Trust  
**Weakley**  
MTD

**Dyer**  
Choctaw Transportation  
Colonial DPP  
Develey Mustard  
Firestone Industrial  
First Citizen's Bank  
Ford Construction  
**Obion**  
Cox Oil  
Kohler  
Maverick, Inc  
Tyson  
Vaughn Electric

**Henry**  
Dana Sealing Products, LLC  
Henry County Medical Center  
Pepsi Mid-America  
**Gibson**  
AADG/Ceco Door  
Alliance Staffing  
Coltek Services, LLC  
MacLean Power Systems  
Tyson  
Jones Family of Companies

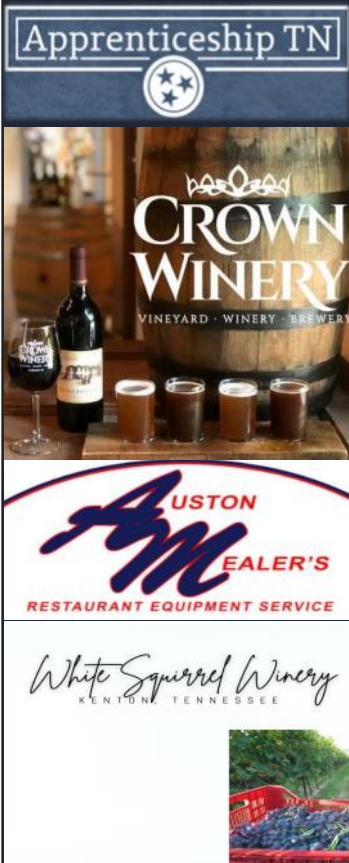
Over 40 Employers received nearly \$675,000 in OJT and / or IWT Grants





# •TALENT PIPELINES•

## Apprenticeship Programs Help Employers Build Their Workforce



The Expanding Apprenticeships in Rural Northwest TN (EARN\$TN) Initiative, funded through a \$150,000 Delta Regional Authority grant, is focused on expanding apprenticeship opportunities by increasing awareness of employers to the benefits, assisting employers with developing apprenticeship standards, connecting qualified job seekers to employers, and facilitating access to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) Grant, and other American Job Center partner funds to support apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are registered and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor and are proven work-based training programs for recruiting, training, and retaining talent. Apprentices have supervised on-the-job training, along with job-related education, all while working full-time and earning a wage that increases during the progression of the program. In addition to highly-skilled employees, employers also benefit from increased productivity and worker versatility, reduced turnover costs, a safer workplace, and enhanced employee retention.

Since the initiative began in December 2019, 12 of the 18 proposed employer outreach events have been held, and 19 jobseeker recruitment events were held, exceeding the 12 proposed. To date, 73 new apprentices have been served, greatly exceeding the 24 proposed. A total of \$93,240.21 of WIOA and ASE grant funds have been utilized to support the apprentices. The proposed goal of six new apprenticeships developed has also been met, including an HVAC Technician at Auston Mealer's Equipment Service, a Tasting Room Associate and Vineyard Foremen at Crown Winery, a Production Technician at White Squirrel Winery, a Production Technician at Alliance Staffing, and an Industrial Machine System Technician at United Ammunition Container. A pre-apprenticeship will also be used by Auston Mealer's Equipment Service HVAC Technician Registered Apprenticeship program. The EARN\$TN Initiative also supports Apprenticeship TN, a statewide initiative to help foster a better understanding of the benefits of apprenticeships. Three Regional Directors work directly with employers, communities, associations, and organizations to develop and implement new programs.



## City of Alamo Employees Receive Specialized Training



Apprentices Michael Kee (L) and Will Perry (R) sign an agreement at the City Hall in Alamo with Facility Operator/Mentor John Gorman (Center).

The City of Alamo entered into an apprenticeship training agreement with the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts, The National Rural Water Association, and the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The 24-month program will prepare two Alamo Water & Sewer employees for state certification in wastewater treatment operations. The goal of this apprenticeship program is to produce highly trained system operators that will support existing facility operators and replace retiring operators.

The apprentices, Michael Kee and Will Perry, will follow specific curricular guidelines by completing 4,000 hours of on-the-job training under the supervision/mentorship of plant operator John Gorman and 288 hours of related technical instruction

(RTI) that is provided by Tennessee Association of Utility Districts. These specialized, industry-specific courses focus on water and wastewater treatment and will result in the apprentices leaving the program with multiple industry certifications.

"We are thrilled to play a small role in advancing the skills of these two incumbent workers," says Ginger Powell, Deputy Director at Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. "The additional Water Operator apprenticeship certification will be beneficial in their professional growth and valuable to the Town of Alamo".

Funding for the apprenticeship program was made possible by the Tennessee Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship Grant and administered locally by the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board.



# •TALENT PIPELINES•

## Virtually Speaking: New Workforce Development Webinar Series Geared Towards Employers

***On March 4, 2021 the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB)'s Business Services staff launched a new webinar series to inform employers about the many resources and services available through the Board and the American Job Centers.***

In the first webinar, Business Services Representatives Lana Wood and Maleia Evans explained best practices for hosting a Virtual Job Fair/Hiring Event using the Premier Virtual platform--a new tool available FREE to employers. "The goal is for employers to increase their applicant pools by making open positions more accessible to job seekers using this new tool," said Evans.

The second event, "Apprenticeships: How, Who, and Why Your Company Should Have One!," took place on June 3, 2021. Featured in the webinar were Tyra Copas, Assistant Administrator for the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, who oversees the state's ApprenticeshipTN office, Dawn Fallert, co-owner of Crown Winery, and Ben and Kaylee Leach, Crown Winery's two apprentices. Fallert spoke to her experience in partnering with the NWTNWB, Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC), Viticulture Enology Science and Technology Alliance (VESTA), and Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance (TFWA) to form the first Registered Winery Apprenticeship Program in the state of Tennessee to help support the growing demands of the state's grape and wine industry. An official signing ceremony was held at the Winery September 29, 2020.

Husband and wife Kaylee and Ben Leach began their apprenticeships in August at Crown Winery. Kaylee is in the one-year Tasting Room Associate Apprenticeship Program and will have 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning to complete with an additional 165 hours of related instruction in the classroom. She is scheduled to complete her classes during the fall 2021 semester. Ben is participating in the two-year Vineyard Foreman Apprenticeship Program and will complete 4,000 hours of on-the-job training with an additional 300 hours of related instruction. His expected classroom completion date is summer 2022.

The Business Services Team is planning future webinars in the next program year, including topics such as Talent Pipelines / Work Experience, and Labor Market Research and Trends. Each event will be recorded and made available on the NWTNWB YouTube page after it takes place.



## REAP: Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation

The Amteck Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP) program is a ten-week pre-apprenticeship program consisting of two weeks of classroom training to learn the fundamentals of basic electricity and construction applications, followed by eight weeks of paid work experience at Amteck's Dyersburg facility. Through participation in the program students have the opportunity to obtain employment at the Amteck Dyersburg facility upon successful completion. If hired, participants are entered into the Registered Apprenticeship program which prepares them to take the exam to become a Journeyman/Licensed Electrician and earn an estimated \$70,000 annually.

The pilot project, offered at Lake County High School in 2018, was refined and expanded in 2019 offering seniors from across Northwest TN high schools an opportunity to participate in the program. Of the 11 students who participated in the class in 2019, 10 graduated, and four are still currently employed with Amteck. The program was expanded again in 2020 to offer young adults up to the age of 24 the opportunity to participate in addition to graduating seniors. Of the 10 students who participated in the 2020 class, five graduated and were offered the opportunity to continue in the program. Four accepted and were hired by Amteck, entered into the apprenticeship program, and are still currently employed. This upcoming year, the fourth annual class is set to begin on July 12, 2021.





# • CONNECTING JOB SEEKERS •

## Premier Virtual Offers Virtual Job Fair Option

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, job fairs took on a new format, virtual, using the Premier Virtual platform. "The goal was for employers to increase their applicant pools by making open positions more accessible to job seekers using this new tool," said Maleia Evans, Business Services Representative. In March of 2021, the first webinar of the new Virtually Speaking Workforce Development Webinar Services offered an overview of the new tool and the benefits to offering a virtual job fair. Over 60 individuals attended the webinar and saw firsthand the many features available with the tool, including event registration, customizable hiring rooms, live reporting during events, video interviews with candidates, and more. The license for Premier Virtual was provided by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development utilizing Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding earmarked for assisting employers and jobseekers reconnect during the COVID-19 pandemic.



In the face of unprecedented worker shortages and large numbers of requests for job fairs and hiring events, the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB)'s Business Services Representatives worked with Chambers of Commerce and other partners to host county-wide job fairs for Carroll, Gibson, Henry, and Weakley Counties. All events were held in-person with the Carroll County event being held at the American Job Center, including a virtual option using Premier Virtual, and Gibson County's off-site event including the Mobile American Job Center. The Weakley County event was held at the Dresden Farmer's Market. "Connecting our employers with qualified job seekers is always our primary focus" stated Jennifer Bane, Executive Director for the NWTNWB. "We are grateful to have Chambers of Commerce partners who are as passionate about helping employers as we are, and who are willing to think outside the box to make events successful during the COVID-19 pandemic" Bane added. Across the four events, 75 employers participated and 243 jobseekers attended.





# • PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT •

## Kemisha Thompson

*"My success! That small sentence makes me so humble! I am a single, young, black mother of three beautiful children! If you take those stats and think about it, it wasn't 'supposed' to be possible for me! I wasn't 'supposed' to 'make it!' But, I did!!! People ask me all the time, 'how do you do it?!' My honest response is ... I do not know! Every day is a struggle from sunup to sundown when I think of ALL the things I am responsible for doing! Nevertheless, these things I know to be true to work AND to keep me grounded: my attitude towards the day from the time I wake up to the time I lie back down (I live my life in gratefulness!), the motivation surrounding me (my babies) and the fact that if I don't do what I'm supposed to do as a parent (THE VERY BEST I CAN) they will suffer, and my FAITH in God – that He will keep me and finish the work He started in me! None of this is easy, but it's not supposed to be (no one said it would be). I am very much proof that WE are the narrators of our own stories, WE have control!! Go get it—go get your blessing!"*

Six years ago, Kemisha entered the Youth Work Experience program after leaving the University of Memphis after three semesters. She came to the Youth program expressing her wish to be a math teacher, and was placed as a teacher's assistant at Dyersburg Middle School (DMS) under the supervision of then Curriculum Coordinator, Seela Newbill. "From the first day I met Kemisha, her work ethic was apparent," Newbill said. Kemisha was placed on the 7th grade team that had a high percentage of students with disabilities that year and they needed the extra support. Newbill added, "I frequently walked through their team only to find Kemisha with a small group of 5-8 students working on various skills in Reading and Math. Her natural ability to teach was obvious."

Carole McCullough, one of the teachers assigned to mentor Kemisha, reported, "I could assign her any task, and she would have it accurately completed in a timely manner. Furthermore, she also was highly organized and artistic. She made various aesthetically pleasing posters for my classroom and helped me to develop a system of organization for missing work that I still use today. As she worked with students she had high expectations and would hold them accountable." When Kemisha shared her dream of becoming a teacher with McCullough, she "could tell from her work ethic, determination, and calm demeanor that whatever she decided to do, she would be able to accomplish it."

Following her work experience at DMS, Kemisha enrolled in Dyersburg State Community College and earned her Associates Degree all while working a full-time job and being a mother. Following DSCC, she enrolled at the University of Tennessee at Martin in the Educator Preparation Program, all the while keeping in touch with her mentors at DMS. During the 2020-2021 school year, Kemisha was placed at DMS for her Student Teaching in the spring semester, and was offered a full-time teaching position at DMS for the 2021-2022 school year.

Executive Director Workforce Services, Connie Stewart, was responsible for placing Kemisha in her first work experience at DMS, and has been privileged to see Kemisha's progress from the beginning. Stewart claims our work experience program is only successful when we have a group of adults, such as at DMS, willing to take the time to mentor and nurture our young people. She stated, "Kemisha worked so hard to accomplish her dreams, all while being a mom and working full-time. She is an inspiration to young adults everywhere."



# NORTHWEST TENNESSEE AMERICAN JOB CENTER LOCATIONS

## Benton County Specialized Center

Benton County Community Resource Center  
145 Hospital Drive  
Camden, TN 38320  
(731) 584-1711

## Carroll County Comprehensive Center

470 Mustang Drive  
Huntingdon, TN 38344  
(731) 352-8898

## Crockett County Specialized Center

335 South Bells Street  
Alamo, TN 38001  
(731) 882-4874

## Dyer County Comprehensive Center

313 West Cedar Street  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 501-1109

## Gibson County Affiliate Center

1751 East Main Street  
Humboldt, TN 38343  
(731) 784-5221

## Henry County Specialized Center

55 Jones Bend Rd, Ext.  
Paris, TN 38242  
(731) 641-1020

## Lake County Specialized Center

Lake County Courthouse  
229 Church Street  
Tiptonville, TN 38079  
(731) 253-8171

## Ridgely Public Library Access Point

134 N. Main Street  
Ridgely, TN 38080

## Obion County Affiliate Center

204 South 2nd Street  
Union City, TN 38261  
(731) 884-3868

## Weakley County Specialized Center

Weakley Co. Courthouse  
116 W. Main Street  
Dresden, TN 38225  
(731) 364-0100

## Mobile American Job Center

On-site recruitment & assessment.  
Self book by emailing:  
CareerCoach.Info@tn.gov

## Northwest TN Workforce Board

208 N. Mill Avenue  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 286-3585

## OUR MISSION

*The mission of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers.*

## OUR VISION


*Northwest Tennessee is 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.*

On-site programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Labor Exchange, Families First, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Basic Education.

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 @nwtjobs

 www.nwtjobs.org

 731.286.3585



Search for jobs, create a resume & more at **JOBS4TN.GOV**

## 2020-2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

5,105

Individual American Job Center  
Jobseeker Visits



7,873

American Job Center Services  
Provided

1,499

Individual Employers  
Served



4,446

Employer Services  
Provided

228

New Hires Placed in On-the-Job  
Training Positions  
with 25 Employers



697

Incumbent Workers Trained  
with 25 Employers

NW

NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD

This project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request. EOE. TDD Dial 7-1-1. Aug 2021