

West Tennessee Program Year 2018 – 2020 Regional Plan

Northwest, Southwest, and Greater Memphis
Local Workforce Development Areas



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

Submit comments or questions in writing to:

Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board

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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).*

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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

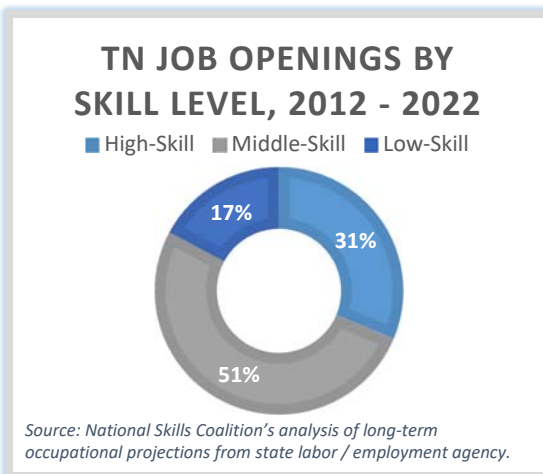
Henry Lewis, Title I
 Ron Wade, Title II
 Darryl Causey, Title III
 LaTroyal Williamson, Title IV
 Beverly Moore, TANF
 Gwyn Fisher, ECD
 Desi Franklin, LWDB Chair
 Roland Rayner, Career and Technical Education
 Kenderek Harris, TN Pathways

*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

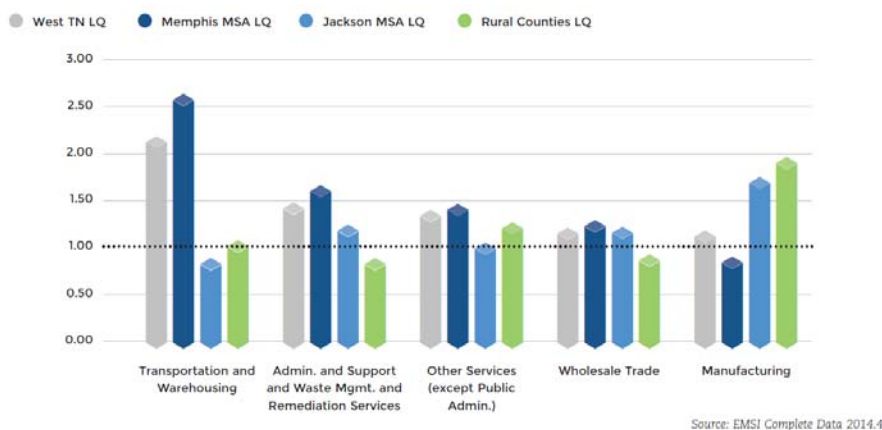
Following the guiding principles of Demand Driven and Workforce Development = Economic Opportunity, West TN uses Labor Market Information and other available data to drive decision making and to invest in initiatives that provide in-

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

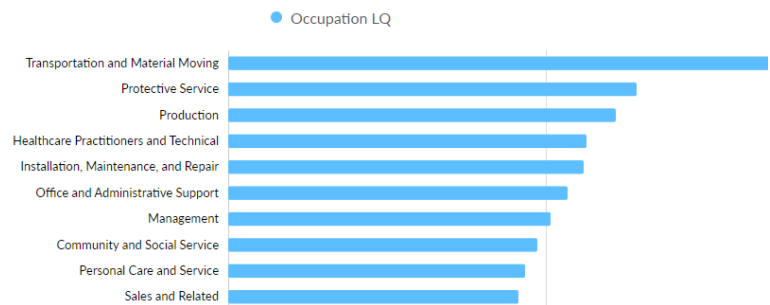
region with more concentration in healthcare and technical occupations and production occupations. The rural regions comprise 18% of all regional jobs with heavy concentration in manufacturing at 25% of all regional employment.

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

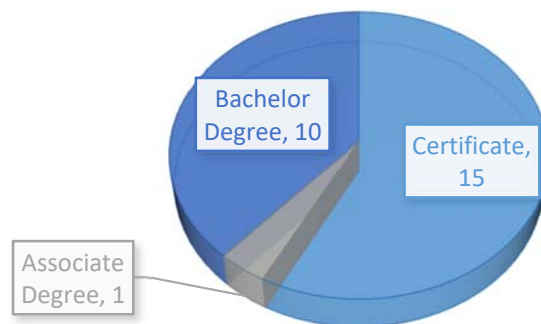
*Occupations include those requiring no work experience and a minimum of a postsecondary non-degree award and a maximum of a Bachelor's degree. Source: EMSI.

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.

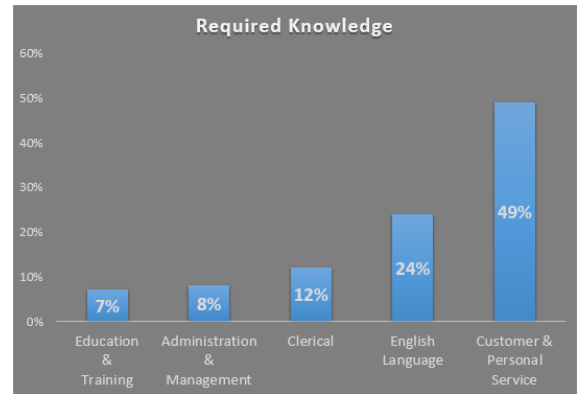
Soft Skills by Employment Opportunities per WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020

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.

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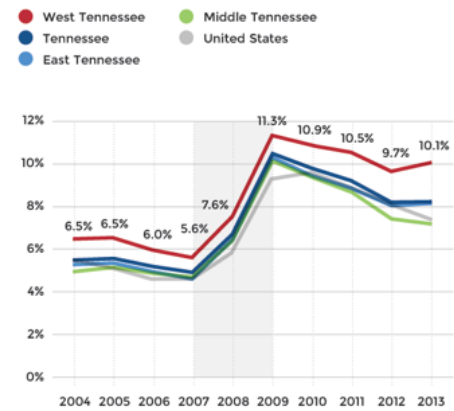
Of the 2018 total West TN population of 1,572,438, 52% are females while 48% are males, 51% are White, 40% are African American, 5% are Hispanic, and the remaining 4% are Other, Non-Hispanic. By 2028, the total West TN population of 1,618,430 is expected to consist of the same percentage of females, 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.

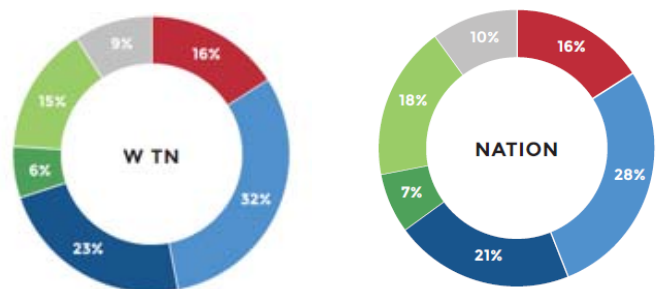
October 2018 County Unemployment Rates



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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 AJCs 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:

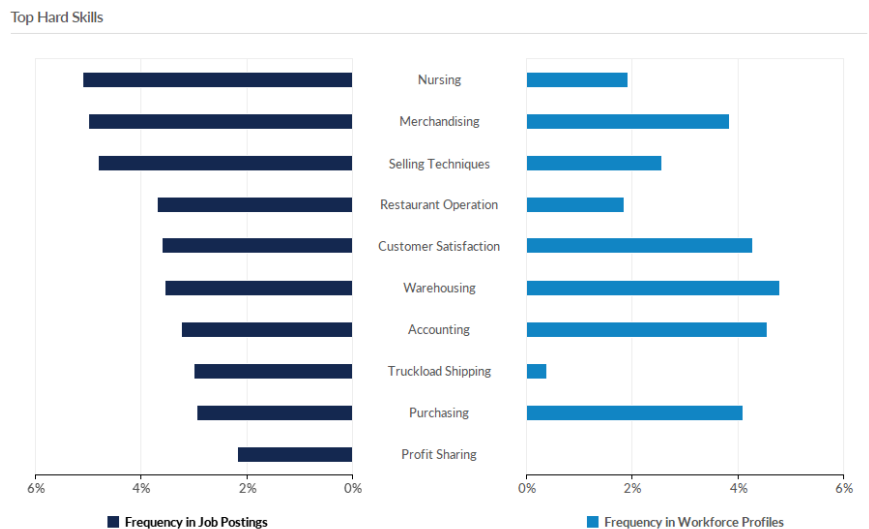
- a. To promote business representation (particularly representatives with optimal policymaking or hiring authority from employers whose employment opportunities reflect existing and emerging employment opportunities in the region) on the Board;
- b. To develop effective linkages with employers in the 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.

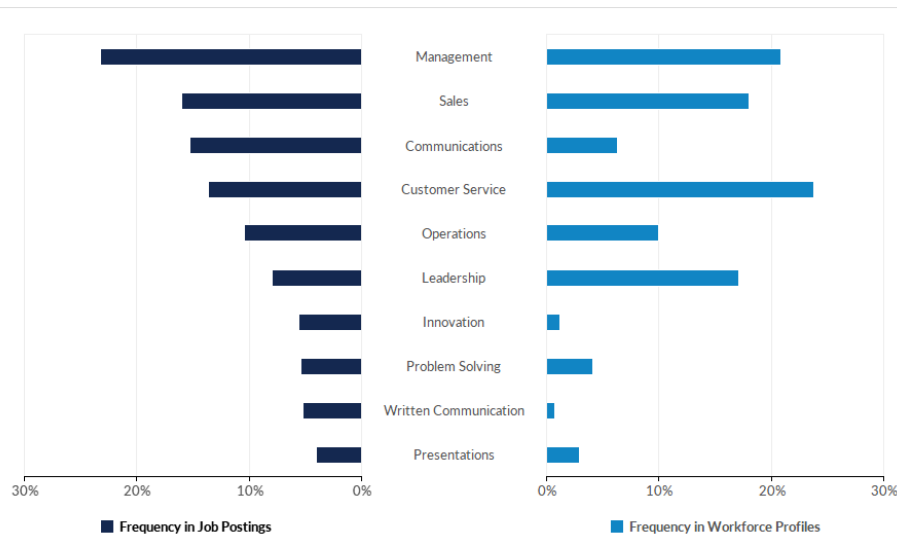
4. Existing Skills of Jobseekers – matching them to demands of local business: To provide insight into the supply and demand of relevant skills, West TN compares the frequency of skills present in job postings against skills present in today's workforce. Along with EMSI's job posting analytics, this 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.

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.

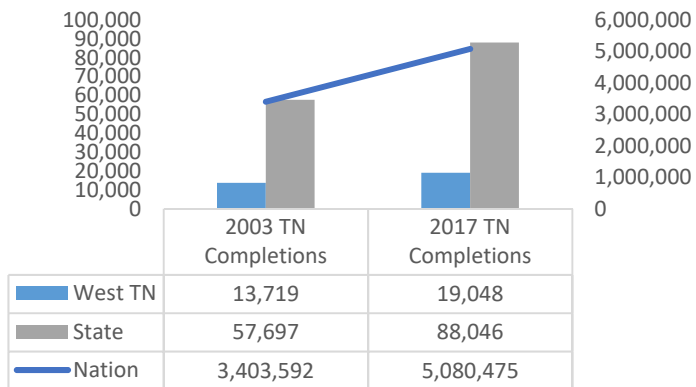
Education and training services offered throughout the region may include:

- 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.

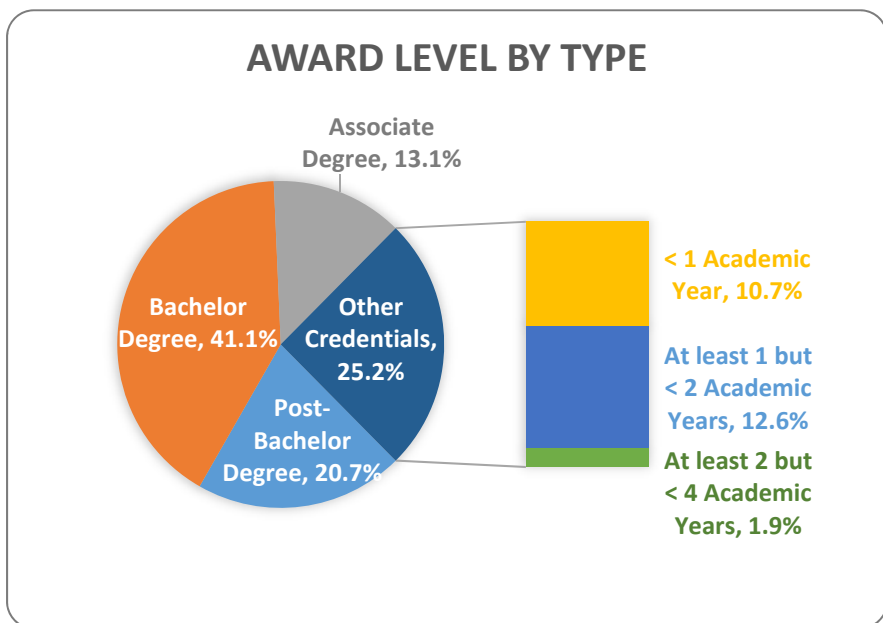
Per EMSI, throughout West TN, 70 institutions are offering a combined total of 1,720 programs. In 2017, there were 19,048 completions in the area, while there were 71,786 annual openings that year. While the number of completions in West TN increased by 38.8% between 2003 and 2017, the State saw an increase 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 2nd and 4th 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"> 1. Abundance of training institutions within the region 2. Strong work ethic of the region 3. Willingness of partners to work together 4. Diversified pool of labor 5. Multiple industrial sites available including the centrally located Memphis Regional Megasite 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of soft skills among job seekers 2. Lack of skills among a portion of the workforce 3. Perceived reputation of workforce development services 4. Education challenges such as inconsistent quality of secondary education across the area 5. Internal/external awareness and knowledge of workforce services
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Postsecondary educational expansions / investments 2. Employer investments in workforce training 3. State education initiatives such as TN Promise, TN ReConnect, and LEAP 4. Projection of future in-demand industries (new opportunities from technology-driven skills) 5. TN Dept. of Economic & Community Development’s Rural Programs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of jobs 2. Relevance – Can the AJC supply what employers need / want? 3. Lack of funding for workforce services 4. Lack of alignment of training to employer needs due to continuous changes in technology and processes 5. Loss of jobs to automation and globalization

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 7th 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 2nd and 4th quarters after exit and credential attainment within four quarters after exit for all programs, as well as median earnings for 2nd 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

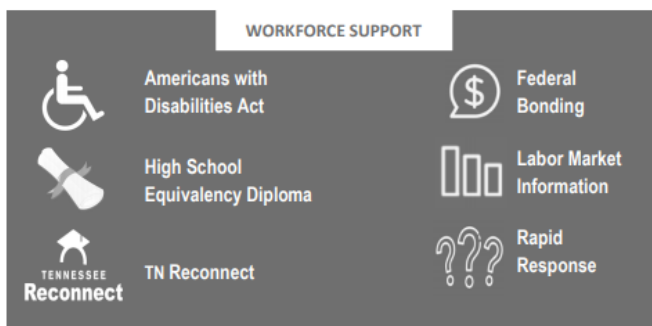
boards, and employers ensures that training is available for in-demand occupations in the local area, current and prospective students are aware of various resources for funding training, including those offered by the partner programs, and that resources are leveraged through co-enrollment and referrals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

New Planning Element – Workforce and Correction Partnership

Based on the promising ROI of business-focused strategies, West TN will adopt the Workforce and Correction partnership with the goal of improving labor market outcomes of the state’s formerly-incarcerated population, 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 career services and supportive services to be successful in work-based or other training opportunities.

A. Local Board Partnerships

Each of the local boards in West TN will 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. West TN 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 Operators (OSO) in each local area, on behalf of all partners of the AJC, will reach out to the various organizations that can assist in this effort. Each of the local boards, in partnership with the AJCs, are actively working with local Sheriff’s and county jails 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 OSOs 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., West TN also recognizes that justice-involved individuals may need mental health and faith-based programs. The OSOs will seek to coordinate with community-based organizations currently working with justice involved individuals to blend and braid services. Additionally, the OSOs 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: Per the TN Jail Summary Report, October 2018, as of October 31, 2018 – One Day Snapshot, the total jail population in West TN is 8,467, with the majority, 5,670, located in the Greater Memphis area, and the remainder nearly equally split between the Northwest and Southwest areas.

Local Area	TDOC Back-up	Local Felons	Other Convicted Felons	Federal & Others	Convicted Misdemeanor	Pre-Trial Felony	Pre-Trial Misdemeanor	Total Jail Population
Northwest	353	85	5	92	222	363	209	1,329
Southwest	229	126	23	22	259	500	321	1,468
Greater Memphis	518	1,384	256	82	354	2,647	429	5,670
West TN	1,100	1,595	284	196	835	3,510	959	8,467

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. Title I partners may also place justice involved individuals in Transitional Work Experience (TWE) and/or On-the-Job Training (OJT). West TN has had great success with OJT for many years, and the program offers employers an incentive to provide an employment opportunity to the justice involved individual. Additional partnerships may be developed as needed.

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 of Formerly Incarcerated Served for PYs 16-17 and 17-18: According to the Targeted Population Summary report from Jobs4TN, during Program Year (PY) 2017, West TN served a combined total of 176 formerly incarcerated individuals. During the prior program year, West TN served a combined total of 204 formerly incarcerated individuals. As of December 18, 2018, West TN has served a combined total of 181 formerly incarcerated individuals since the beginning of PY 2018. In total, West TN has served 561 formerly incarcerated individuals since July 1, 2016.

Ways Partners Will Facilitate Information Sharing: The One-Stop Operators provide mechanisms for communication between all partners. To date, the Sheriff’s Offices have provided documentation for eligibility for current inmates who often do not have a current driver’s license, etc. The AJCs have also contacted Probation and Parole for information.

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

Existing and Prospective Partnerships to Coordinate Re-Entry: 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. West TN has incorporated several programs for currently incarcerated individuals to help prepare them for re-entry into society and the workforce. For instance, a partnership with the Memphis Shelby County Office of Re-Entry (MSCOR) has enabled their clientele to receive training and job placement services. The Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP) has established “specialized” AJCs at the Dyer, Gibson, and Henry County Jails to offer career services, Certified Production Training, and work experience. Similarly, the Inside-Out Dad program provides incarcerated fathers with basic needs to prosper upon re-entry into society. The program includes instruction on being a better father and husband, adult education classes, resume and interviewing guidance, and information on services available through various agencies. After completing a pilot program in McNairy County, the program was expanded to five other counties and a similar program for incarcerated women, How to Be A Responsible Mother, was introduced. LWDBs are working with additional counties to determine feasibility of expansion.

Current Level of Service and Plans to Modify: The West TN region has been working with justice involved programs for several years and has increased services during that time. Due to the small size of some local jails, while an expanded service area, is expected, a significant increase in numbers served is not expected. The West TN region will also explore any opportunities with the State Correctional facilities. It appears with the level of Adult Education, vocational training and college participation, basic career services may be the appropriate service, including use of the Mobile AJC.

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, West TN 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 / or during work experience. 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 participation in various programs in West TN starts with county mayors, sheriffs, Business Service

Teams, AJC Partner staff and training providers. Once all parties agree to the project, informational brochures are provided to the inmates and staff meet individually to determine if they are a right fit for the program. Information on programs has been publicized through flyers/brochures and social media. Business and industry groups have been asked to visit programs, as well as county mayors and sheriffs from neighboring counties. Other justice involved individuals who “walk-in” to the AJC, are identified during the Welcome Function as part of the initial assessment and screening. West TN has also reached out to local Probation and Parole Managers. While there is already some coordination with the office (receiving flyers for job fairs, inquiries from AJC on participants, etc.), we plan to meet to determine how each of our agencies can work together better to support the efforts of serving justice involved individuals.

Intake and Case Management Needs: Case Managers work closely with all applicants to obtain current information about the education and training they have received. West TN acknowledges that those who received education and training during incarceration often have a 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 Operators, 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: All programs interface with sector pathway efforts whenever possible. For instance, 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, Northwest TN piloted the Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP). Formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible for ITAs in 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 different re-entry programs. Leadership provides periodic reviews of programs at 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: LWDBs, which include private sector members, gauge the amount of interest in providing services to justice involved individuals, and approve programs, such as those mentioned above. Employer partners who indicate their companies would give justice involved individuals an opportunity on a case-by-case basis are sought for all projects as needed. All partners are included in the planning process where priority industry sectors and occupations are identified. Further, the One-Stop Operators are aware of the priority and distributes all job order, job fair, etc. information to all partners. Further, the Business Services Team has developed good relationships with employers. During visits, they discuss the possibility of hiring ex-offenders or currently incarcerated (where work release programs are established). They explain the benefits of Work Experience, OJT, WOTC and Federal Bonding. Chambers and employer groups have also been invited to visit the RAMP training.

Shared Case Management – Services/Referrals and Support Services: The One-Stop Operators monitor 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. West TN has reached out to local Probation and Parole Manager and the One-Stop Operators will include appropriate partners who will be able to discuss services, services and support services such as peer support, housing, transportation, food, family reunification and others in future meetings.

Attachments

A. Outreach Efforts and Public Comment Process

To receive and consider input into the development of the Regional Plan for PY 2018-2020 and the corresponding local plans for each of the three areas in the region, in compliance with WIOA Sec. 108(d), all plans are being published for a 15-day comment period between January 3, 2019 and January 17, 2019, prior to submission of the plan on January 18, 2019. Public notice is being submitted for publication to local newspapers in the region and is being published on the organizations' websites and social media pages. Additionally, an electronic communication regarding the posting of the local and regional plans is sent to all American Job Center partners, regional planning council (RPC) members, local board members (representing business, labor organizations, education, and others), standing committee members, Local Elected Officials, and other workforce system stakeholders for review and comments. The plans are being made available to be viewed on the local areas' websites and hard copies are being made available at all AJCs in the region during this time. Additionally, a public listening session hosted outside of normal work hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm) is scheduled in each local area and is being publicized along with the notification of the local and regional plan posting.

All comments are to be submitted in writing to a designated single point of contact, Jennifer Bane – Executive Director for the Northwest TN area, who will compile all comments received during the period of public comment and share them with RPC and board members and senior leaders for consideration and integration into the plan as appropriate. Any comments received, including those that represent disagreement with the proposed local or regional plan, will be included within the local or regional plan's attachments.

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 transitional local and regional plans, and the modifications to those plans. The information gathered during local and regional planning sessions guided the RPC throughout the remainder of the regional planning process. During the transitional regional planning process, and during the plan modification process, stakeholders and the RPC met as listed below to develop the regional plan modification:

Date	Meeting Description
7/26/2016	Northwest Local Strategic Planning Session
7/28/2016	Southwest Local Strategic Planning Session
7/29/2016	Greater Memphis Local Strategic Planning Session
8/9/2016	West TN Regional Strategic Planning Session
10/14/2016	Regional LWDA Directors met to discuss Policy 22 and next steps
11/2/2016	West TN LWDB Regional Planning Preparation Meeting
11/15/2016	Update Northwest Board on Status of Region Plan Process and review progress to date
11/26/2016	Update Southwest Board on Status of Region Plan Process and review progress to date
11/29/2016	Regional Planning Council Meeting
1/10/2017	Regional Planning Council Meeting
1/23/2017	Draft Regional Plan Published for 30 Day Public Comment Period (through 2/21/17)
1/25/2017	Update Greater Memphis Board on Status of Region Plan Process and review progress to date
1/26/2017	Update Southwest Board on Status of Region Plan Process and review progress to date
2/21/2017	Regional Planning Council Meeting; End of 30 Day Public Comment Period
2/28/2017	Update Northwest Board on Status of Region Plan Process and review progress to date
12/6/2018	Planning guidance shared with Regional Planning Council via email
12/18/2018	Comments/Feedback on modifications to current regional plan due
1/3/2019	Local and Regional Plans posted for public comment (publicized and stakeholders notified)
1/14/2019	Local listening sessions for the Northwest and Southwest areas

1/15/2019	Regional Planning Council Meeting
1/17/2019	End of 30 Day Public Comment Period
1/18/2019	Local and Regional Plans submission deadline

B. Documentation of Outreach Efforts

In addition to email communications and meetings as listed above, all required planning partners, as well as the State Workforce Development Board, received the below public notice, customized for each area, regarding planning meetings listening sessions, and other public meetings related to the planning process. The notices were also sent to newspapers, posted on websites and social media pages of the local areas, and printed and posted at the AJCs, along with a hard copy of the appropriate local plan and the regional plan.

Public Notice

The Local Workforce Development Areas of West Tennessee, **Southwest** serving Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McNairy, **Northwest** serving Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, Weakley, and **Greater Memphis** serving Lauderdale, Tipton, Fayette, and Shelby Counties have prepared Local Plans and a Regional Plan for the 2018-2020 program years.

The Northwest Local Plan and West TN Regional Plan are OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT JANUARY 3-17, 2019 and will be available at any American Job Center or online at www.NWTNjobs.org during this time. Submit comments or questions in writing to Jennifer Bane at 708 E. Court Street Dyersburg, TN 38024.

Local Plan Listening Sessions have been scheduled in each area.

The Northwest Listening Session is scheduled for JANUARY 14, 2019 FROM 5:00 – 6:00 PM

NWTDD Office, 124 Weldon Dr., Martin, TN

A Regional Planning Council meeting is scheduled for JANUARY 15, 2019 AT 10:00 AM

American Job Center, 1124 Whitehall, Jackson, TN

All meetings are open to the public. For additional information, contact Jennifer Bane at jbane@nwtworks.org or 731-286-3585.

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