



**PY 19 WIOA**

**Annual Narrative**

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
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**BILL LEE  
GOVERNOR**

**JEFF MCCORD  
COMMISSIONER**

November 30, 2020

The Honorable Bill Lee  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

The Tennessee State Workforce Development Board is pleased to provide you with our Annual Report for program year 2019. Under the leadership of Commissioner Jeff McCord and Board Chair Tim Berry, Vice President of Human Resources at The Dollywood Company, we are proud to share with you many activities and accomplishments that highlight another successful year of connecting people with job opportunities and hiring employers. As our economy in Tennessee continues to demonstrate resilience, the most recent initiatives to strengthen the state's workforce system have proven timely during this moment of economic turbulence. The work of the State Workforce Development Board serves as a major catalyst to align and advocate for policies and new approaches towards addressing worker shortages and creating an effective pipeline to skilled workers in Tennessee.

Through a federal allocation that funds the public workforce system in Tennessee, we operate an effective, collaborative network of American Job Centers and Jobs4TN website that serves to help Tennessee citizens identify jobs and training opportunities that lead to employment. The workforce system provided services to 454,758 Tennesseans with assistance retraining or assistance finding jobs.

The Board would like to recognize the efforts of our public and private sector partners and express our gratitude for their continued cooperation and collaboration from all levels of business, government and education, as well as the citizens of Tennessee. We appreciate and look forward to continuing to serve our communities and state citizens as we work to maximize innovation and efficiency within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Sincerely,

Jeff McCord  
Commissioner, TDL&WD

Tim Berry  
State Workforce Board Chair

## Executive Summary

The priority is for Tennessee to have the nation's premier workforce system. Our Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan embodies the essence of the State's vision. By leveraging our existing assets in each local workforce development area, we have been able to attract new businesses while helping our existing businesses expand and remain competitive. Equally as important, the services we provide across the State have allowed Tennesseans to successfully enter the workforce, despite numerous barriers to employment. By providing services to employers and citizens, we are paving the way for a brighter future for all Tennesseans.

The WIOA plan focuses on four key elements:

1. Improving skills and credential attainment by expanding vocation education and workforce development programs;
2. Support regional and rural economic development strategies;
3. Enhance services and opportunities for justice-involved citizens; and
4. Streamline the delivery of support services in workforce development by collaborating with key agencies and organizations

As a result of the realignment of the Local Workforce Development Areas, our local leaders and partners will work together in the areas of workforce, education, and economic development. The effort has allowed communities to increase access to higher education and training opportunities. The realignment has also enabled Tennessee's state agencies to deliver services and manage public resources in a sound, fiscally conservative manner. As we move into the future, Tennessee recognizes a rapidly changing world in technology, workforce, and business. The State also acknowledges emerging challenges faced by citizens to participate in the workforce, due to changing employer demands for specific skills. These principles will guide Tennessee's long-term success.

The development of this year's WIOA plan serves as the necessary opportunity to evaluate all aspects of our workforce system to chart a promising path toward our goal. Through a focus on intentional collaboration with essential partners, we strive to carry forward our work in a more intentional and meaningful manner, for the benefit of the State and the citizens we serve.

## State Workforce Development Board

Tennessee's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) consists of 24 members representing business, state agencies, local and city government, and the general public. The Governor is represented by four members of his cabinet. Through leadership from the Board, Tennessee has created a seamless system for service delivery to participants seeking employment, unemployment benefits, or training to attain skill upgrades through Tennessee's American Job Centers. Services are developed to address the needs of participants and to meet the needs of local employers. The SWDB crafted the vision for Tennessee to; increase job placement and high school equivalency attainment, reduce unemployment insurance claims, and work toward achieving the Governor's Drive to 55.

The three working committees of the SWDB include the Oversight Committee, Operations Committee and Opportunities Committee. These committees provide the essential guidance needed to carry-out the Governor's vision for the workforce.

### **1. Oversight Committee**

- Advises the Governor on program and policy changes under WIOA
- Leads the development, maintenance and modification of State, regional and local plans
- Serves as an advisor to review statewide program alignment
- Reviews and makes recommendations on program funding allocations
- Leads review of statewide Workforce System

### **2. Operations Committee**

- Oversees the continuous improvement of WIOA programs and activities
- Leads monitoring of State performance/accountability
- Leads coordination of policies and provision of WIOA services
- Reviews and makes recommendations for performance reporting, including Labor Market Information

### **3. Opportunity Committee**

- Identifies and shares Workforce System best practices
- Pursues grant opportunities
- Develops strategies for technology alignment and integration
- Leads the review of service-model strategies in WIOA programs
- Oversees all WIOA Youth program initiatives.

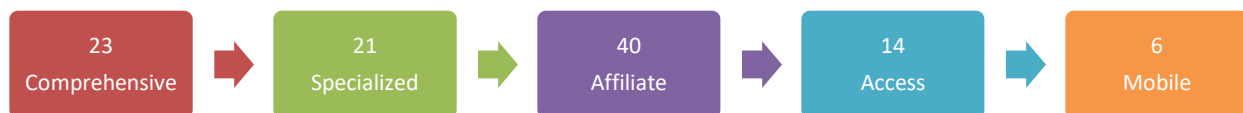
Efforts for the upcoming program year will continue to focus on the success of our realignment of LWDAs with the Governor's Economic Base Camps. Additionally, Tennessee will place continued emphasis on excellence in customer-focused government, and constant evaluation on agility and mobility of our workforce system, while capitalizing on modernization and automation.

## American Job Centers Tennessee

The American Job Centers (AJCs) of Tennessee combine local, state, and federal workforce development services through a customer-centered approach. Businesses can readily find workers and jobseekers have the opportunity to receive training assistance and the latest career information.

Each AJC offers: phone and internet access, job application workspace, automated Labor Market information, technical assistance in navigating Jobs4tn.gov (Tennessee's public jobs database), meaningful Unemployment Insurance assistance, workshops, job placement, recruitment and training referral services. In PY 2019 Tennessee was operating 23 comprehensive centers, 40 affiliate centers, 21 specialized centers, 14 access points and 6 mobile American job centers.

Business services teams (BST) work across programs and schedule employers to recruit on-site. Based on the onboarding needs of the employer, jobseekers with the desired qualifications are invited to the American Job Center. As a result, the employers get to meet with individuals that are determined to be the best candidates. The BST reviews job vacancy reports in Jobs4tn.gov to determine those positions that unfilled after 30 days. This information is vital in determining which companies and or sectors require the services of the team. Using this model, Tennessee produced greater outcomes.



## Mobile American Job Centers

The Mobile American Job Centers offer services similar to those found in a brick and mortar American Job Center (AJC). These Mobile AJCs provide internet connectivity, computer lab, copier and scanner and an adaptable venue for job search assistance on Jobs4tn, various workshops, resume assistance and interviewing skills. Our Mobile AJCs can also serve as recruiting centers for new and expanding businesses. Some are also certified mobile High School Equivalency Test (HSET) testing sites along with their staff certified as examiners and proctors. During PY 2019, the Mobile AJCs continued to administer tests to students in areas that lacked a testing site.

In PY 2019, the six (6) Mobile AJCs served 5373 participants at 738 mobile events across the state. The Mobile American Job Centers conducted events across the state. Many of those counties were rural and below the poverty level. The Mobile AJCs serve as a support system for numerous job fairs, HiSet testing and other events. During PY 2019, the Mobile AJCs administered 272 tests to 80 students in areas that lacked a testing site.

The units also serve as rapid response centers for dislocated workers and employers during mass lay-offs and natural disasters. For example, March of 2020, Mobile American Job Centers were dispatched to Nashville to assist with the tornado recovery efforts. Staff spent many hours assisting the people of Nashville with services such as filing unemployment claims and seeking employment and other resources.

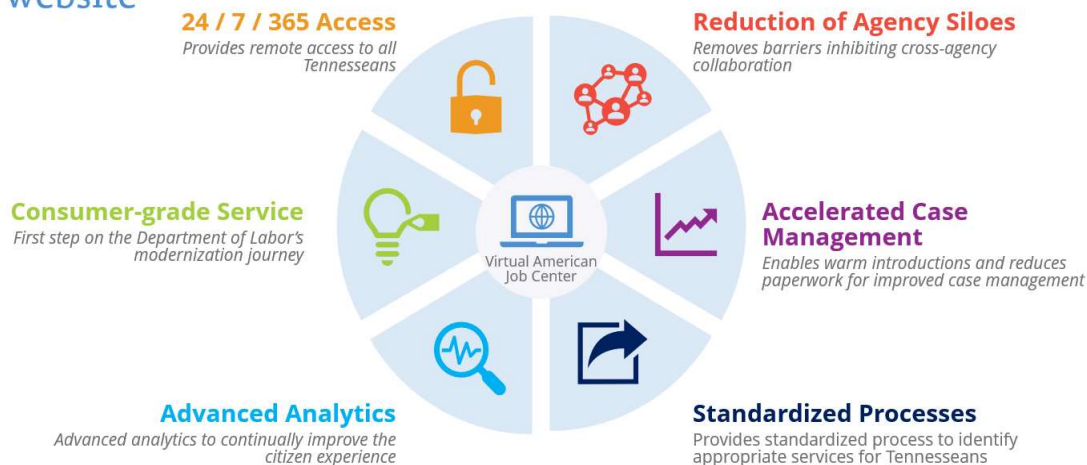
## Virtual American Job Center

The Virtual American Job Center (VAJC) provides a digital experience for Tennesseans to learn about services offered through the Department of Labor and partner agencies. The goal of the VAJC is to enable a self-service model that will improve the service exploration experience.

Through the new VAJC website, Tennesseans will be able to discover services and programs available through their local brick-and-mortar AJC, understand what they may be eligible for based on personal information provided, and get connected with their local AJC by scheduling an appointment online. A key feature included is the eligibility wizard which will help users understand what services they qualify for based on their demographic information. This feature is an example of the self-service model empowering users to explore service availability independently and expediting the enrollment and intake process for case managers.

The vision of the Virtual American Job Center is to develop a dynamic and adaptable system designed to foster cooperation between internal and external partner programs. In so doing, it will live up to the expectations of our clients by providing consistent high-quality customer service. By providing easily digestible and accessible information, the VAJC will positively impact the state as a whole especially in distressed and rural communities, and to individuals who lack physical access to an American Job Center. The planned launch date for the VAJC website is December 2020.

### The Virtual American Job Center (VAJC) delivers more than just a website



## Customer Satisfaction

Tennessee utilizes the Zendesk platform to manage customer service requests. This tool allows the state to track issues and complaints as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of customer engagements. Additionally it allows the department to gain actionable feedback directly from the customer.

## Strategic Vision

### Achieving Tennessee's State Strategic Vision & Goals

In addition to providing employment and training services, adult education, and programs to assist individuals with disabilities (direct impact), WIOA expenditures flow through the local and state economy spurring the production of goods and services, supporting employee income (indirect impact), and helping generate local, state, and federal tax revenue (induced impact). Total Impact is the sum of the direct, indirect, and induced effects. Below is a list of the initiatives that the Tennessee Workforce System has engaged to accomplish these collaborative efforts.

1. **Fast Track initiatives** - a Governor's initiative to support Tennessee's recruitment and retention efforts in order to assist with new expansions, locations or re-locations.
2. **Incumbent Worker Training grants** - a targeted lay-off aversion strategy to Tennessee businesses to address the dynamic workplace with emphasis on skill upgrades and credentials.
3. **Registered Apprenticeship Assistance grants** - a targeted opportunity to increase registered apprentices in Tennessee.
4. **Special Projects** - which currently include *return on investment and economic impact analysis*, *justice-involved individual* projects with county jails, and a small technical assistance grant that support *union affiliated lay-offs* through the AFL-CIO.
5. **Pathways Tennessee** - supports alignment amongst K-12, post-secondary and industry to provide students with relevant education and training to jumpstart their post-secondary degrees and credentials.
6. **Governor's Children Sub-cabinet** - to have a multi-partner approach to assist parents in achieving self-sufficiency and create a better quality of life for themselves and their families.
7. **Governor's Workforce Sub-Cabinet** - a collaborative team dedicated to develop and oversee implementation of a three year strategic plan that aligns state resources to attain the Drive to 55 goals.
8. **P-20-** a collaboration with several agencies around longitudinal data collection systems.
9. **Governor's Rural Task Force** - to bring resources together from a wide range of organizations to advance rural communities and economic development throughout Tennessee.
10. **Employment First Task Force** - the task force is comprised of people with disabilities, their families, state agencies who provide supports for people with disabilities, advocacy groups and other stakeholders who have a common mission of improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioral health diagnoses including mental illness, substance abuse disorders, and co-occurring disorders, and



## Ernst and Young

The department has embarked on a strategic partnership with the professional services network Ernst and Young Global Limited (EY). EY conducted an evaluation of the department's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, which the department is using as a blueprint for improving all aspects of services provided by the TDLWD.

## Drive to 55

Drive to 55 is a Governor's initiative that concentrates Tennessee's efforts to work to promote post-secondary opportunities. The goal is that by 2025, 55 percent of Tennesseans will have a postsecondary degree. This initiative includes three primary programs:

1. *Tennessee Promise* is both a scholarship and a mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students that attend and complete college. It provides a last-dollar scholarship to any high school graduate to attend thirteen (13) Community Colleges and mentors to assist students navigate the college admission process. Tennessee Promise participants must complete and submit eight (8) hours of community service per term enrolled, as well as maintain satisfactory academic progress (2.0 GPA) at their respective institution.
2. *Tennessee ReConnect* which targets adults who did not complete a credential or certificate and want to do so at one of our 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology. TDLWD supports this initiative by training staff to become Tennessee ReConnect Ambassadors.
3. *Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP)* is the third initiative under the Drive to 55 umbrella which is a grant program which recognizes the need of students to graduate with the skills employers demand. Tennessee LEAP ensures that businesses have a direct input into higher education.

Thanks to WIOA and the increased collaboration between the education and workforce system, Tennessee is on a pathway to meet our Drive to 55 goal by 2023, two years ahead of schedule.

## Sector Strategies, Career Pathways and Waivers

### Sector Strategies & Career Pathways

K-12: Tennessee Pathways regional coordinators will operate in the nine economic regions of the state to lead the alignment of local education institutions and employers. Regional coordinators act as the "glue" between school districts, postsecondary institutions, employers, and community leaders facilitating communication and collaboration. A successful model would be a student completing a TN Pathway at their high school with college credits or an industry-recognized credential and then WIOA assists with the transition into post-secondary to obtain their degree or certification. WBL aligns with the TN Pathways and the coordination is the same; TDOE Regional & WBL coordinators will assist in finding students valuable high-quality work experiences to gain employability skills and career exploration opportunities.

SNAP E&T career pathway development through Step into Work initiative that aligns with SNAPs vision and purpose to help SNAP recipients to meet work requirements; to gain skills, training, or experience to increase the SNAP recipient's ability to obtain regular employment and; reduce dependence on SNAP benefits and other public assistance. Example would be: SNAP E&T pays for a participant to receive CNA certification which is currently a non-approved training program under WIOA and then WIOA moves the participant into LPN or another health care occupation.

## Apprenticeship TN

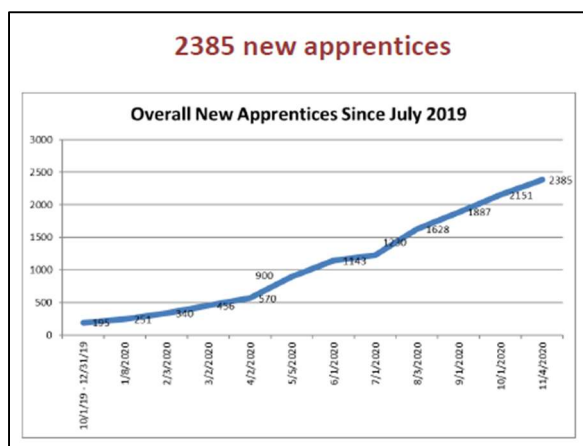


Since creation of ApprenticeshipTN  
**43 New Sponsors**

Apprenticeship TN is actively promoting Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and increasing participation with employers throughout Tennessee. In July 2019, TNLWD was awarded \$1.4M from U.S. DOL for the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant. One year into the grant, 60% of the projected deliverables have been met with 43 new RAPs developed and the percentage of the number of overall apprentices tracking increasing by 24%. At the end of the first year of the grant, TNLWD had achieved record high growth in new programs developed. That growth has continued into the second year of the grant. The chart to the right provides the

growth trajectory of new apprentices added across the state since awarded the ASE grant in July of 2019. Of the 800 registered apprentices targeted in the ASE grant, funds have been awarded or obligated for 452. This represents a 57% performance outcome for this metric of the ASE grant to date. With the ASE grant, Apprenticeship TN sought to register at least 400 new hires in RAPs. As of November 2020, 118 registered apprentices have been newly hired by employers and enrolled in RAPs. This represents a 40% performance outcome for this metric of the ASE grant to date. One hundred thirty-five registered apprentices funded by the ASE grant have been identified as unemployed, LTU, dislocated or incarcerated prior to enrollment who complete a Resisted Apprenticeship program and maintain their employment status with a new employer. This represents a 90% performance outcome for this metric of the ASE grant to date. The average hourly wage of apprentices at enrollment into Registered Apprenticeship program is \$14.66.

Currently, there are three regional Apprenticeship Directors serving West, Middle, and East Tennessee. Each of the Regional Apprenticeship Directors work closely with the Regional Business Services Directors of the nine LWDBs as well as the local staff who operate at the American Job



Centers. Upon establishing or expanding RAPs, the Regional Apprenticeship Directors connect employers with the Business Services staff in the appropriate region. Those staff then connect employers and apprentices with WIOA services and funding options. Funding from this grant will support expansion of activities working with the state's nine regional LWDBs.

## Waivers

In program year 2019 Tennessee had three WIOA waivers that were approved. The following identifies each waiver and the waiver's intentions to affect performance outcomes:

1. **Waiver of the obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect performance data on all students in a training program** - effective July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020.

Tennessee will continue to collect data from ETPs on their WIOA-funded participants and will submit that data via TDLWD's annual report to USDOL.

Connects education and training strategies by reducing the reporting burden on ETPs, thus allowing them to focus more time and resources on producing successful outcomes for WIOA-funded participants, it further protects the privacy rights of ETPs' students who are not WIOA participants along with ETPs will better prepared to submit data on their WIOA-funded students and to remain in the ETP program, subsequently allowing TDLWD to continue with its effective and consistent customer service delivery.

2. **Waiver associated with the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth** - effective October 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020.

The approval of this waiver permits LWDBs the opportunity to determine how best to meet the educational and training needs of youth with other barriers regardless of school status, and specific to the population, geographical location, and economic and employment conditions within each LWDA. Additionally, increasing outreach to ISY while maintaining a focus on serving OSY will help develop a larger pool of young people qualified and prepared to meet the current and future needs of employers in their workforce areas and throughout Tennessee.

This waiver allowed local areas to consider their demographic needs and provide direct resources to in-school youth populations determined to have the highest need; in turn creating a stronger workforce pipeline. For several of the areas, ISY enrollment has increased more than 100%.

3. **Waiver to allow WIOA Individual Training Accounts for in-school-youth** - effective October 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020.

Increases the number of at-risk youth receiving ITAs in work-based programs—especially pre-apprenticeship programs; helps companies develop new skills based on the need of business to develop young talent; provides hands-on experience for youth and encourages work-based services thereby addressing the talent shortage of local businesses and promotes youth accessible pre-apprenticeship programs.

## Performance Accountability System

In addition to the core measures of performance The State of Tennessee is also using two metrics to measure effectiveness of serving employers. The first being repeat business customers, which measures how many businesses choose to repeatedly utilize the state's business services team. The second measure being used by the state is the Employer Penetration Rate which measures the number of employers in the state using business services against the total number of employers in the state. Tennessee's Core measures of performance can be seen below.

### PY19 WIOA Core Measures of Performance

Core Performance Measures	Targets	Tennessee			
		PY2019 Q1	PY2019 Q2	PY2019 Q3	PY2019 Q4
Adult Measures					
Exiters		3634	3419	3882	4346
Participants Served		8168	8453	8736	8105
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	83.5%	86.4%	86.9%	86.60%	86.80%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	83.5%	85.1%	84.8%	85.10%	86.60%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit	\$ 6,650	\$ 7,113	\$ 7,245	\$ 7,278	\$ 7,340
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	59.0%	70.1%	68.3%	66.30%	68.40%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	58.7%	62.1%	63.10%	71.40%
Dislocated Worker					
Exiters		1535	1283	1281	1243
Participants Served		2610	2548	2459	2211
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	82.0%	85.8%	86.6%	85.20%	85.00%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	82.0%	86.3%	85.4%	84.60%	85.30%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit	\$ 7,000	\$ 8,419	\$ 8,655	\$ 8,687	\$ 8,521
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	69.0%	67.9%	63.0%	63.20%	67.60%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	57.5%	59.5%	55.70%	65.50%

Youth					
Exiters		2191	2068	2222	2438
Participants Served		4539	4549	4573	4080
Employment Rate					
2nd Quarter after exit	79.5%	79.2%	79.6%	80.60%	79.80%
Employment Rate					
4th Quarter after exit	76.0%	81.2%	80.9%	79.60%	79.90%
Credential Attainment w/in 4					
Quarters after exit	72.0%	69.9%	69.1%	68.80%	72.70%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	50.4%	49.3%	45.80%	62.70%

Wagner-Peyser					
Exiters		27,792	27,936	27,497	26,913
Participants Served		30,697	30,266	29,056	24,574
Employment Rate					
2nd Quarter after exit	66.0%	72.8%	72.4%	70.70%	71.20%
Employment Rate					
4th Quarter after exit	66.0%	72.4%	72.5%	72.00%	72.10%
Median Earnings					
2nd Quarter after exit	\$ 4,700	\$ 5,517	\$ 5,689	\$ 5,720	\$ 5,731

## Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provide a way of measuring the effectiveness of an organization in achieving its goals. In pursuit of continuous improvement, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development has development annualized state, regional and KPIs. Tennessee has created KPIs tailored to the needs of each program under WIOA. For calendar year 2020, Tennessee is in the process of piloting twelve (12) measures.

- Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker new enrollments
- Title I Youth new enrollments
- Title II Adult Education- Adult Basic Education new enrollments
- Title II Adult Education- Integrated English and Civics Education new enrollments
- Title III Wagner-Peyser new enrollments
- Senior Community Service Employment Program exits
- Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments co-enrollments with Title I
- Trade Adjustment Assistance co-enrollment with Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training new enrollments
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants new enrollments
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker new enrollments
- Justice-Involved Individual new enrollments

By drawing upon regional guidelines as issued by Tennessee, Local Workforce Development Boards work together regionally in order to develop proposed local quarterly goals. This is a collaborative process. KPIs are designed to be fair, reasonable, sustainable, and achievable by using a combination of data and local knowledge.

While Tennessee's KPI measures and scope are expected to evolve over time, their purpose will continue to be the fulfillment of the objectives of WIOA:

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

Increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer need, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Tennessee.

## Common Exit Policy

The state maintains a common exit policy for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Trade and Title III Wagner-Peyser. The policy is reflected in and managed by the virtual one stop website.

## Data Validation

For PY19 Tennessee will conduct data validation in accordance with TEGl 23-19. State staff will determine an appropriate sample size and conduct training and data validation in a virtual environment.

## Eligible Training Provider List

The statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) contains all training providers and certified programs for students using WIOA funds through an Individual Training Account (ITA). An ETPL policy is also established to provide direction for the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) process, initial eligibility, application procedures, appeal process, dissemination of the ETPL, and Performance Reporting.

The Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are responsible for approving and certifying all applications, including out-of-state providers, for initial eligibility to the statewide list. The LWDBs are



also responsible for authorizing any programs that need to be added to the ETPL, including registered apprenticeships programs. The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) then submits all the required information to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) to compile a single list of providers available through the VOS system.

There are 150 providers, including Registered Apprenticeships sponsors on the ETPL, and there are as follow:

- 81 - Private Schools
- 27 - TCATS
- 10 - Four Year Institutions
- 17 - Community Colleges
- 15 - Registered Apprenticeships

All providers except Registered Apprenticeships are required to submit yearly performance participant reports to TDLWD. The report contains individual-level data for all participants in programs offered by ETPs that have serviced at least one (1) student with WIOA funding assistance. The report is then combined to submit the yearly ETPL Federal reporting. To ensure accuracy, the TDLWD has developed an ETPL toolkit to provide direction for the providers on how to present the information via the VOS system securely. However, if an ETP did not have any WIOA students but would like to remain on the ETPL, they must submit an exemption form as explained within the ETPL toolkit.

In 2018, TDLWD was granted a waiver to collect and report performance data only on WIOA funded students for program years 2019 and 2020. As a result, the department has submitted 3,091 programs for the federal annual report with an undue burden. The waiver has also helped the Eligible Training Providers focus more time on producing a successful performance report.

## Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) and H2A-B

During program year 2019, Tennessee continued to operate and oversee the employment services to the MSFW population. TN recorded 602 registered individuals that identified as MSFW in program year 2019.

A continuous challenge faced during this program year is increasing the participation of the MSFW population in staff-assisted and other programming available through the American Job Centers. TN's MSFW population was not identified as having a high estimated year-round MSFW activity in guidance issued by the Secretary. Having a low population requires immense outreach coordination to identify and reach the population. The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) connected with organizations across TN that are known to serve the MSFW population.

- TN connected with Conexion Americas in efforts to deploy a two-gen approach of reaching the youth of MSFW parents. This would allow the dissemination of available

youth and adult services to the target audience. TN continues coordination strategies with Conexion Americas and explores creating a referral process.

- TN also outreached to farm communities as H-2A inspectors performed on-site inspections. Inspectors would outline for farmer how the State defines an MSFW, review services available and inquire if the farmer currently has an employee that fits the criteria. The intention is to inform the farmer so that they can share information with those that may identify with the defined criteria of MSFW and would like to connect to services.
- The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) coordinated efforts with Tennessee Opportunity Programs (TOPS) quarterly to share data, brainstorm ideas of outreach and service and to share best practices.

The oversight of the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program also rests with TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development. TN operates the program with five inspectors state-wide. In program year 2019, the program has yielded the following:

- Number of inspections performed – 3,170
- Number of H-2A job orders - 481
- Number of H-2A workers – 3,824

## Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

The SCSEP with TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development is comprised of six sub-grantees. Four of the state sub-grantees are the administrative entities for local workforce development areas (LWDA), placing them in a direct partnership with WIOA. Sub-grantees are required to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) at the time the participant is enrolled. During enrollment other potential barriers are assessed and if needed, the participant is referred to the appropriate programs for further service.

Tennessee has quarterly conference calls with all the sub-grantees. During program year 2019, conference calls have increased to assist with any challenges of administering services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Administering SCSEP services has been difficult as the population served by the program were/are indicated to be at higher risk of contracting and developing serious complications of COVID-19. During the onset of the virus in Tennessee, directives were given to all sub-grantees to immediately stop recruiting and enrollment efforts while the agency gathered more understanding to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants and staff. Additionally, Host Agencies and American Job Centers began to shut down due to the infection rate raising, leaving participant without their training wage. To alleviate the financial hardship to participants, an Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) policy was drafted and implemented allowing those participants who were displaced from training sites 's to still collect their training wage. Alternative and innovative training ideas are being discussed to ensure the program continues to serve and assist participants. Ideas such as: remote skill training, safe satellite campuses and computer skill trainings are being explored.

During program year 2019, 107 participants have been served with 35 exiting the program with unsubsidized employment.



<b>Sub-Grantee</b>	<b>Counties Covered</b>	<b>No. of assigned slots assigned for 2019-2020</b>
<b>Alliance for Business and Training (Northeast)</b>	<i>Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Washington</i>	23
<b>East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (East)</b>	<i>Campbell, Claiborne, Morgan, Scott, Union</i>	28
<b>The Career Team (Upper Cumberland)</b>	<i>Cumberland, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Putnam, VanBuren</i>	21
<b>Tennessee Community Service Agency (Northwest)</b>	<i>Cheatham, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Stewart, Dyer, Henry, Obion, Weakley</i>	30
<b>Southwest Tennessee HRA (Southwest)</b>	<i>Chester, Hardeman, Hardin, McNairy</i>	18
<b>Meritan Inc. (Greater Memphis)</b>	<i>Shelby</i>	48
<b>TOTAL SLOTS</b>		<b>168</b>

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

The Food and Nutrition Act requires all States provide Employment and/or Training opportunities for Individuals who are determined eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Through an interagency agreement with TN Department of Human Services (TDHS), SNAP E&T is administered through TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). TDHS determines eligibility for the SNAP benefit then refers clients to TDLWD who are interested in the program.

SNAP E&T prepares participants for employment through work-related education and training activities. SNAP E&T services are offered as a voluntary program in all 95 counties. Career specialists assess all individuals and assist participants in completing an individual employment plan to identify action steps to reach the overall goal of employment with a gainful wage that significantly reduces or eliminates the need for governmental assistance. Duration of each participant's engagement varies on background, education, and employment history of the individual.

SNAP E&T offers the following components and activities in order to increase an individual's skills, educational level, or employability:

1. Basic Adult Education
2. Job Search Training
3. Career and Technical Education
4. Work Experience
5. Work Readiness

Governor Bill Lee, through executive order, implemented the Stay at Home Order for Tennesseans and entities at the onset of the pandemic. Local workforce development boards diverted their

efforts in response by focusing on the transition of contractual staff, operations, and clean and safe environments. This meant that SNAP E&T had to modify the service delivery model and adopt practices to align with the new norm. TN transitioned staff to alternative workspaces which required service delivery to adopt an all virtual service delivery model from referral, service and exit. In program year 2020, which overlaps with WIOA program year 2019, SNAP E&T assessed 2,847 unique individuals. Of those that were assessed, 2,213 were placed in at least one program component.

SNAP E&T Partnerships are also established with community-based organizations and colleges/universities. These Third-Party Partners (TPPs), receive a 50 percent reimbursement for the existing services, that mirror program components, provided to eligible E&T participants. Program year 2020 yielded 18 partnerships. Enrollments into the SNAP Employment and Training Program have increased by 15 percent in the past year, many through the partnerships with AJC, community-based organizations, and employers.

Prior to the pandemic, one major area of focus was on improving the delivery of services to people with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Program, including people with disabilities. With the combination of resources and collaboration with multiple partnerships, the chance of successful placement in meaningful work, and the individual's ability to retain the work has also increased.

## Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), or "Veterans Program" consists 53 staff. The JVSG staff is comprised of three distinct categories:

1. Veterans Employment Representative
2. Veterans Outreach Specialist
3. Consolidated Veterans Employment Representative/ Veterans Outreach Specialist Position

Veterans Employment Representatives (VER) are tasked with conducting outreach activities to employers in order to discuss the many benefits of hiring a Veteran. The benefits of hiring a benefit are both programmatic—including WOTCs—and intangible including; being a team player; ability to follow directions; and meticulous attention to detail.

Veterans Outreach Specialists (VOS) works directly with qualified Veterans, and other eligible persons, to provide enhanced career services by removing any significant barriers to employment to ensure they are job ready.

The Consolidated Position performs the services of the VER and VOS. Members of this position are located primarily in rural areas, without a high number of eligible veterans.

These staff members provided services to over 14,000 Veterans, other eligible persons, and transitioning service members. The JVSG achieved a 68% Entered Employment Rate for veterans, an Employment Retention Rate of 86%, with six months average earnings of \$14,136.

## National Dislocated Worker Grants

To assist transitioning military service members from Fort Campbell into successful careers in the Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky region, area partners established the Fort Campbell Strong Workforce Program. Jumpstarted by a \$7.7 million grant from the U.S.

Department of Labor, the successful initiative has now exceeded its enrollment goal of 1,440 enrollments, broadened private partnerships with employers, and bolstered innovation in a post-COVID-19 world. Fort Campbell Strong's participant outcomes regularly exceed those funded through conventional funding- with an impressive 88% placement rate and an annualized salary of more than \$45,000 per year.

## Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is designed to serve individuals who have been determined most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. The goal of the program is to connect these individuals to services in the AJCs that will help with their reemployment. Along with serving those most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits, each state is required to serve transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members.

RESEA serves individuals across all 95 Tennessee counties and is currently operating in 52 American Job Centers (AJCs). During the initial orientation, the participants receive a program description, an eligibility review for unemployment benefits, an assessment of needs and barriers, and an Employment Development Plan (EDP). Each participant is required to attend this orientation and a follow up visit two weeks after the orientation to maintain their unemployment benefits. The orientation is automatically scheduled when selected and the subsequent visit is scheduled by the RESEA coordinator in the AJC.

Participants of RESEA are selected based on a statistical model that determines those most likely to exhaust their benefits. This selection process happens through a batch process that runs every Wednesday night. Once selected, the unemployment claimant receives a letter with an orientation date, time and location that is 10-15 days from the date the selection process is run. The five criteria that determine selection, in order of significance, are:

1. Wage Replacement
2. Duration of Tenure in Months of the Previous Job
3. Number of Base Period Employers
4. The Length of Time Between Employment and Filing a Claim
5. Availability of a Vehicle to Drive to a New Job

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the number of claimants selected to participate in the RESEA program. RESEA selection was suspended in mid-March 2020, due to the Governor's social distancing measures as well as the waiver of the work search requirements for UI claimants. The program restarted in mid-October 2020, in the affiliate centers with virtual meetings. The state will expand the selection to include the comprehensive centers in the near future, bringing the program back to its normal operation. The meetings will continue to be held virtually to minimize the

transmission of the COVID-19 virus. The notice of requirement to report has been changed to indicate that these scheduled meetings will be held by phone.

In PY 2019, in 52 Career Centers across the state, 12,734 unemployment claimants were selected for participation in the RESEA program. Of those selected, 8,622 attended their orientation. Of those who attended their orientation, 7,294 attended their follow-up RESEA sessions. There are 1,196 individuals who found employment while participating in the program or shortly after completion.

## Reentry

While being justice involved can qualify an individual for youth services, serving all that are justice involved though the workforce has been identified as a top priority by TN Governor Bill Lee. Employment is widely seen by practitioners, researchers, and policymakers as crucial to successful reentry by reducing the risk of recidivism. Meaningful employment can help individuals succeed in the community after release from incarceration because it refocuses their time and efforts on pro-social activities. Improving local reentry outcomes requires TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development (TDLWD), TN Dept. of Corrections (TDOC), Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB), and other partners to better align and integrate services across the criminal justice and workforce systems.

TNDLWD received the Justice Assistance Grant from the TN Office of Criminal Justice to support employer engagement and awareness of hiring justice involved individuals. This grant will allow for a consultant to facilitate workgroups and engagement of employers, local boards and local justice organizations to develop a reentry service strategy.

## Youth

Tennessee has been strengthening partnerships with several State agencies to identify Work-based Learning (WBL) opportunities for high-school students to support the State's goal of creating a seamless path from high school, post-secondary education or training, into the workforce. To support career awareness for all youth, TNDLWD released a statewide initiative for to support Career Exploration. The current pandemic has caused many of the planned activities to be postponed or restructured to ensure adherence to CDC guidelines and safety for all.

## Consolidated Business Grant - including IWT, ATG, and OJT

Tennessee implements WIOA in order to establish a framework to assist youths, unemployed adults and dislocated workers attain employment with economically self-sufficient wages. The TDLWD and the SWDB have established policies to assist businesses by providing their workers an opportunity to enroll in training programs such as Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Apprenticeship Training Grants (ATG). These programs provide the skills necessary for workers to compete in tomorrow's economic environment. The Consolidated Business Grant (CBG) provides block monies to LWDA's. By promoting LWDA autonomy, the appropriate training product is used based on a combination of local knowledge and the specific training needs of the business.

The CBG was proposed to the SWDB as an initiative funded through the Governor's set-aside fund in order to provide more work-based training opportunities across the State of Tennessee in order to be aligned with the Governor's vision. Originally, LWDA's could support only a limited number of training grants because of the budget constraints of their formula funds. The SWDB authorized \$3,000,000 to fund the CBG program. These monies were split evenly between the 13 LWDA's across the state, providing a much larger budget to fund training opportunities for local businesses. The CBG has seen great success across the state. Some of the LWDA's had to request additional funding to meet the needs of local employers. For FY 2019, the SWDB approved CBG for \$5,000,000.

During the FY2019, CBG funds were obligated to 206 companies to train 4,158 Incumbent Workers for a total of over \$3,665,235.00. Additionally, there have been 4 contracts approved to fund training for 128 apprentices for a total of over \$84,000. Lastly, 49 contracts were approved for OJTs, training 216 people obligating \$641,000.

The success of the CBG initiative stems from the decentralized use of the grant's funds, which have been disseminated to the LWDA's. LWDB's are responsible for reviewing and approving contracts with local businesses, deciding what is eligible to fund, and how much. For grants up to \$25,000, no additional oversight by the State is required. Requests exceeding \$25,000 will require review from the State to ensure the utilization of funds is appropriate and in accordance with regional and local plans.

## Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program

In December of 2019, Congress re-authorized the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program through 2020. As of now, WOTC has not been reauthorized past December 31, 2020. In early 2016, TDLWD completed the automation of the submission and approval process, replacing paper applications with an online WOTC portal. The portal increases efficiency, facilitating a 24 to 48 hour decision on new tax credit applications. The creation of this portal allowed for the elimination of more than 3 million pieces of paper making enough space for additional conference room. Enhancements continue to be made, increasing the efficiency of the system. During the calendar year 2019, 68,537 certifications were issued for a potential \$191,834,600.00 in tax credits to employers.

## Appendix A

### Promising Practices

#### Greater Memphis

##### Network of Access Points

The Network of Access Points operate outside of the traditional American Job Center structure delivering a broad range of career, training, and related services defined in close coordination with partner agencies established and required by WIOA to participants, as well as additional partners whose services and resources may benefit customers.

Through collaborative partnerships, the development of Access Points for WIOA services will expand the opportunity for greater delivery of services throughout Greater Memphis. The Network of Access Points will offer opportunities to engage and reengage those who would normally have limited access to services offered through WIOA funded programs.

The goal is to provide services to WIOA adult, dislocated workers, and youth; ISY and OSY individuals. This network of alternative sites will run as parallel Title I system and seek to significantly increase the local service footprint within the area and increase access and availability of WIOA services.

Since its inception, March 1, 2020, the Network of Access Points' Provider has executed eighteen (18) MOU's with community partners and agencies, such as, the Shelby County Child Support, Shelby County Office of Reentry, Shelby County Government, Community Libraries, and the Boys and Girls Club, just to name a few. Currently, there are 13 MOU's pending execution –such as TDOC, Tipton County Schools, Southwest Community College, Tipton & Lauderdale Division of Child Support, etc.

Through this network GM has been able to increase the level and quality of service delivery as well as increase the knowledge of available resources offered through WIOA Title I programs. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, GM is unable to provide any supportive data to qualify the effectiveness of the Network of Access Points.

##### Ticket to Work Program

Workforce Midsouth (WMS) is an approved Employment Network in the Ticket to Work (TTW) program. The Ticket to Work Program is a work incentive, developed by the Social Security Administration, to provide SSI/SSDI beneficiaries who are interested in working with the services and supports needed to accomplish their desired work goals.

We understand that disabled individuals who have never been in the workforce or those who have been removed from it for an extended period of time require special assistance. Our Ticket to Work program is staffed by knowledgeable professionals committed to helping you begin your journey into the workforce.

As an Employment Network, WMS's role is to help Ticket Holders reduce, and eventually eliminate, their dependence on their SSI or SSDI benefits by providing assistance with job preparation and job placement, vocational rehabilitation, skills training, support and retention services.

Individuals who enroll in our TTW program must:

- Be 18 to 64 years old
- Be receiving SSI and/or SSDI Based on a Disability
- Have a true desire and ability to return to work
- Be motivated and capable of working on goals with Ticket to Work staff members

## BENEFITS

Ticket Holders who choose to assign their Ticket to an Employment Network are eligible for special incentives that include:

- Waiver of Continuing Disability Reviews as long as the Ticket Holder is meeting the Timely Progress Guidelines.
- The opportunity to continue medical benefits for at least 93 months after cash benefits end
- Expedited reinstatement of benefits if the Ticket Holder is no longer able to work due to their disability

## Northwest Tennessee

Several of the area's promising practices for serving both employers and individuals with barriers to employment continued this year, including the Re-entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP), which was expanded to additional counties this year through the Rural Initiative grant. Through the program local training providers train inmates in the Manufacturing Standard Skills Council – Certified Production Technician (CPT) program. As of the end of the program year, 149 individuals have been served through 15 classes across four local jails with 123 earning at least one credential, Safety, and 80 individuals earning all four credentials to become Certified Production Technicians. Through work-release programs, 41 participants were able to demonstrate their skills to hiring employers while still incarcerated. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has created obstacles in continuing the program due to local jails experiencing COVID cases preventing classes from taking place, or placing restrictions on visitors, including instructors, from entering the jails and on incarcerated individuals being able to leave for work-release programs. Due to these complications and delays, existing students were not able to complete training in one jail and in others have not been able to enter employment. Since American Job Center (AJC) staff cannot visit the jails, other career services have been limited as well. These complications not only hinder services to incarcerated individuals, but also create difficulties in meeting performance measures as individuals are unable to enter employment and cannot be exited as exclusionary due to being incarcerated at the time of enrollment.

## Southwest Tennessee

GIVE Grant: To provide continued support of vocational education, the SWLWDB partnered with TCAT Crump and other stakeholders in the pursuit of three grant opportunities for the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) grant in the fall of 2019. TCAT Crump was successfully awarded two of the three grants resulting in the development of an agriculture pathway for the region, as well as the establishment of a TCAT Crump Extension Campus in Decatur County to focus on various programs of the in-demand sector of transportation. The SWLWDB partnered in the form of an MOU to provide labor market and workforce information, as well as other relevant supports. TCAT Jackson and TCAT Whiteville were also each awarded grants focusing on advanced manufacturing.

Business Services: The Southwest LWDA views its Business Services Team as a best practice due to the composition of partners that serve on this team and the robust relationships and connections that have been formed as a result. Partners include representatives from SWLWDB, TDLWD, TN ECD, TN Pathways, VR, AE, TDOC, local community colleges and TCATs, chambers of commerce, the AJC including the OSO and LVER, and other regional stakeholders.

- McNairy County Business Services Roundtable Meeting was held in February 2020 in partnership with the McNairy County Chamber of Commerce (photo). The meeting was held for local employers and community stakeholders to discuss the wide range of services offered through the AJC network and assist with workforce challenges. In addition, a representative from Stanley Black & Decker presented to the group on their success with Jackson-Madison County School System's unique work-based learning program known as LOOP (Local Options & Opportunities Program).

Monthly meetings allow the partners to collaborate on outreach strategies, organize events, and facilitate discussions around opportunities to streamline services for employers. This team's efforts have led to successful projects including Business Services Roundtable meetings with local industries in rural communities, recruitment events for employer expansions, and in-demand sector career fairs, as well as provided support for ECD projects and career pathways initiatives with TN Pathways.

Career Fairs: Southwest's business services team spearheaded a Regional West TN Career Fair at the Carl Perkins Civic Center on October 31, 2019.

- Over 90 employers
- 370 job seekers
- 98% of job seekers felt closer to securing a job
- 78% of employers filled positions the day of the event
- 100% of employers interested in attending future events



In addition to the regional career fair, 50 career fairs were held across all eight southwest counties.

Reentry: Henderson County Jail Building Construction Trades Program - Southwest LWDA views this program as a best practice because it represents a collaborative partnership amongst community stakeholders that recognized multiple workforce needs in a rural community and found a solution while helping a target population. Henderson County has announced multiple economic development projects in the past two years resulting in significant job growth. In addition to the job growth comes a shortage of affordable housing options for workers relocating to the county. The benefits of this program are twofold. It allows individuals with less than one year left of their sentence to participate in a training program that will lead to stackable credential training and a prevailing wage job, while also providing more skilled workers to build housing options for the growing workforce.

- Partner discussions were held in PY2019 regarding the implementation of this program.
- First cohort of 11 participants began in August 2020.
- Partnership between Southwest LWDB and the AJC, AE, TCAT Jackson, West TN Home Builders Association, Henderson County Jail, and local employers. While in the beginning stages, we look forward to its success and the potential to expand to other parts of the region.

Southwest highlights over the past year include:

- Southwest LWDA served 689 individuals with job training and support services.
- AJC visitor check-ins: 12,120
- Over 20,000 UI calls from April-June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Title I had 363 new enrollments in the Adult, DW, and Youth programs.
- 153 individuals received financial assistance for training through Title I programs.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff across multiple programs and agencies collaborated to ensure customers had access to meaningful unemployment insurance assistance. Employers were provided drive through job fair options, while job seekers were able to utilize computer labs to attend virtual hiring events and interviews.
- Over \$384,000 in Incumbent Worker Training funds were committed to assist 26 employers in upgrading the skills of over 840 employees.
- Over \$129,000 was invested in On-the-Job training to assist 8 employers.

*All totals are for July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020 unless otherwise noted.*

**Dislocated Workers:** The Dislocated Worker Program served 82 workers. With the current economy conditions and unemployment rate being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, these numbers speak to the strong employer economic stability in the Southwest area.

**Youth Program:** The Youth Program assisted 364 youth, including high school students earning college credits through Dual

Enrollment classes. Youth participants are also encouraged to attend workshops offered through the AJC such as “How to Start your Own Business,” “Financial Literacy,” and “What Employers Expect.” LASCO Fittings (Haywood), the City of Lexington’s Public Work Department (Henderson), the City of Brownsville and the Local Press (Haywood), and ComeUnity Café (Madison) are a few examples of employers that have provided valuable work experience opportunities to our youth population.



Our area has also worked to increase partnerships with local high schools to provide workshops and orientation of AJC services to in-school and soon to be out-of-school youth. Since the onset of the pandemic, AJC staff shifted to offering these workshops and orientations virtually. AJC staff participated in community workforce development forums designed to expose high school juniors and seniors to the industries and workforce opportunities in their community, as well as the resources available to help them reach their goals.

Our partnership with Union University’s EDGE program and Vocational Rehabilitation continues to provide ITAs and supportive services to youth with disabilities. The EDGE program provides students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college with the option to complete regular college courses, along with life skills and workforce development training. These students have the opportunity to receive real world work experience while in the program.

## Northern Middle Tennessee

The Northern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (NMWB) has experienced a tumultuous fiscal year in 2019-2020. Even though COVID-19 dominated the last half of the year, not all was lost despite the turbulent times. Highlighted by the addition of a specialized American Job Center in rural Trousdale County, the NMWB focused on expanding services to special populations and at-risk communities in the workforce region.

The Trousdale Specialized AJC offers a full array of services to job-seekers and local employers. This specialized center will be a transitioning point for inmates being released from the nearby CoreCivic Facility.

Northern Middle has a total of 14 American Job Center locations and two mobile coaches that provide services across the 13 county region including Fort Campbell Military Base. A total of over 111,000 individual services were offered over the course of twelve months.

**Adult Education:** Adult Education and literacy activities are thoroughly entwined with the American Job Center System throughout the Northern Middle Workforce Area. Especially rewarding, our adult education provider, partners with business and industry and justice involved individuals to provide educational services. A highlight of this year, our provider began the orientation process for our new ESL classes in partnership with Nissan in Smyrna. These classes are offered at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology which is located right across the street from the Nissan plant. English as a second language (ESL) classes have also expanded at Tyson (chicken) which promotes education to their employees while on the clock!

#### Adult Education Graduation at Stewart Co. Jail

Our adult education provider continued services to justice involved individuals through jail classes. The Stewart County Sheriff's Office partnered with Northern Middle to provide educational opportunities to their inmates. On Friday January 10, 2020, we celebrated two female inmates who obtained their high school equivalency diploma. Mayor Robin Brandon and Northern Middle Executive Director, Marla Rye participated in the graduation exercises.

#### Overcoming Barriers:

The Northern Middle Workforce Board is committed to assisting those most in need. An Expungement Clinic was held on Saturday, October 26, 2019 in conjunction with the Davidson County Courts to assist justice-involved individuals with the expungement process and to connect them to community resources. Angela Lax, Re-Entry Career Specialist and Susan Cowden, One Stop Operator represented the American Job Centers, along with 10 other vendor resources and 12 Pro-bono attorneys. This very successful event assisted over 250 participants.

## **Southern Middle Tennessee**

The goal of the Southern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (SMLWDB) and our partners is to empower employers, individuals, and communities to prosper and grow the region's economy. SMLWDB is accomplishing this job through a workforce development system that is customer focused, seamless, efficient, transparent and financially accountable. The SMLWDB delivers its activities through the American Job Centers which provides high quality customer service to employers and job seekers.

Southern Middle Local Workforce Development Board now has an American Job Center in all thirteen counties with three of the AJC's being comprehensive sites. When the One Stop Operator (OSO) took over several counties did not have a fiscal presence and now all counties in the SMLWDB workforce area are represented. The added convenience of having an American Job Center in each county provides high quality customer service to the employers and participants which is a key component to the success of our program.

The OSO is coordinating the service delivery of required one-stop partners and service providers which is resulting in a seamless customer flow based on customer's needs. With referrals and shared customer data the OSO is utilizing in facilitating co-enrollment of the customer. Another practice of the OSO is keeping an updated list of companies hiring in the area to be prepared to make proper referrals to unemployed clients. The OSO is ensuring that all partners leverage resources, avoid duplication, and prioritize services through communication. All associates participate in quarterly meetings which allow partners to communicate customer needs. In addition, these meetings provide information on upcoming events such as workshops, job fairs and outreach efforts of all interested parties. The OSO is monitoring customer service activities which provides ways to improve these services.

The SMLWDB is working to refer business customers to the resources and partners that will best meet their needs. Our team is working closely with HR and Operations Managers to meet the need for in demand occupations. The SMLWDB served a company by hosting a job fair that netted over two hundred applicants of which many were dislocated workers from a local plant that had recently closed. There were around sixty received job offers and through the wraparound services provided those dislocated employees received On-the-Job Training and the employer will receive fifty percent wage reimbursement for the training hours. The SMLWDB works to connect employers with participants that complete training, such as adults, youth and dislocated workers. The development of community partnerships with other service providers, private businesses, and institutions of higher learning are ensuring that referrals and placements are both consistent and reliable.

## Upper Cumberland

The Upper Cumberland Local Workforce Development Area consists of 2 comprehensive sites and 7 affiliate American Job Centers that serve our 14-county region. Although faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Upper Cumberland Local Workforce Development Board (UCLWDB) has continued to grow and create success through opportunities such as the Consolidated Business Grants (CBG) program, co-locating partnerships, and by developing creative strategies to continue services to our employers and participants.

In PY-19, the UCLWDB allocated \$527,778.00 to our Consolidated Business Grants (CBG) program. These funds were disbursed throughout the Upper Cumberland in ten different counties, twenty-four various businesses, and thirty-six separate training contracts. This represented a substantial investment in Upper Cumberland workers and promoted growth for receiving businesses. In fact, one of our companies receiving CBG funds was able to translate newly upskilled employees into a sizeable expansion of their tool and die business.

## East Tennessee

- HUMV (Housing Unit for Military Veterans) – Knox County Sheriff's Department Knoxville DVOS staff participated in the planning and development of the new housing unit separate from the main jail. DVOS staff begin case management and service delivery prior to release preparing veterans in their transition from incarceration and into society.
- Work with Veterans in rural areas, especially Justice-involved

Veteran staff provide service to all sixteen counties in the region. Outreach activities include county AJCs, Veteran Service Officers, Morgan County Correctional, county jails, treatment courts, Veteran-serving agencies such as Steps House, and the VA.

- Strengthened partnerships with area agencies – increased collaboration due to COVID-19, partners participating in more zoom meetings with other partners.

Examples include: Partners meetings, Quarterly Cross-Training, Regional Partners Meeting hosted by ECD, AJC Outreach/Presentations with the Knoxville Area Urban League, ICAM and the Change Center, monthly East TN Military Affairs Council (ETMAC), Knox County Vet Court Virtual Team meetings, United Way Blount and Roane County virtual meetings, THEC Virtual meetings for distressed and at-risk counties.

- SNAP E&T and DHS

SNAP E&T Coordinators participating in quarterly DHS staff meetings and participating in new hire training session to provide an overview of E&T services and referral process.

- SNAP E&T and TCAT Adult Education

SNAP E&T co-enrollments with Adult Education dual-enrollment students at TCAT.

- Justice Involved Partnerships to Increase and Expand AJC Network

- o Working partnership with TDOC by providing staff assistance to the Day Reporting Center, Probation and Parole, local sheriff's offices to enlist individuals in services available through case management.

- o Employer Symposium co-hosted with TDOC, City of Knoxville, Knox County Sheriff's Office, TDLWD and Knoxville AJC highlighting employers who hire JII, available tax credits, success stories and the benefits of hiring justice involved individuals.

## **Northeast Tennessee**

NETLWDA primary objectives for 2019-20:

- Focus on promoting integrated AJC services to address Governor Lee's focus areas of Re-Entry, Rural Development, Substance Abuse and Career/Technical Education;
- Enhance strategic partnerships and collaborating regionally to foster economic growth;
- Attain performance outcomes and provide excellent customer service to impact individual lives;
- Continue superior service delivery for NETLWDA employers.

Mid-March shift of resources to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff were quickly trained and re-deployed to provide virtual, meaningful unemployment assistance and service hours, at all American Job Centers, were extended to ensure that the UI claimants were served. The NETLWDA AJCs answered more than 27,000 unemployment inquiries. Of course, this increased volume strained the unemployment system, but all staff were committed to providing the best level of service possible. Concurrently, the AJC operational model has been adapting to the new world of virtual service, including the implementation of new systems for intake, assessment and enrollment. Our participants are adapting to the new world of online classes and virtual educational opportunities made available through instructional models such as Coursera and Premier Virtual.

Sub-Recipients. NETLWDA extended the One-Stop Operator and Career Services Provider sub-recipient contracts with East TN State University.

## **Southeast Tennessee**

### WELCOME FUNCTION

Pilot Program for Intake Program:

The Southeast Local Workforce Development Area participated in a pilot project to test Common Intake, a process by which customers could experience an integrated approach of pre-screening and referral to appropriate programs that best meet their service needs. The American Job Center is a “no wrong door” option for individuals seeking services. The pilot project allowed for assigned staff to perform as Intake Specialist who reviewed the intake submission and worked with the client to ensure they were registered on Jobs4TN and appropriate documentation was uploaded. Staff would then pre-screen for eligibility of program services and make appropriate referrals process for Southeast Tennessee LWDA.

Welcome Function staff coordinating the Common Intake must be highly cross trained in AJC services and able to pre-screen for eligibility before making a referral to a program. The process should also provide a mechanism for ensuring that customers received the services needed. The area continues to identify challenges and solutions to ensure the best customer experience.

### SKILLS TRAINING TEAM

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs:

In Program Year 2019, a total of 1,070 individuals were served in the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This includes 574 participants carried in and 496 newly enrolled participants. During the PY, 603 participants were exited. Of these, 300 obtained unsubsidized employment with 164 obtaining training related employment. A combined 226 Adults and Dislocated workers attained a certificate, diploma, or degree between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

WIOA Youth Program:

A total of 491 Youth participants were served, with 64 in-school youth and 427 out-of-school youth. A total of 339 participants were carried in and 152 participants were enrolled. In PY2019, 270 youth

participants were exited from the program, with 91 obtaining unsubsidized employment and 28 obtaining training related employment. A total of 79 youth attained a recognized certificate, diploma, or degree. Four individuals attained a high school diploma or equivalent and 9 entered postsecondary.

The local area has expanded services to in-school youth by adopting the state waiver to lower the required Out-of-School expenditure rate to a minimum of 50% in 2018. As a result, In-School Youth enrollments have increased in PY2018, the first year of the waiver, but came short in PY2019. Southeast also has not experienced the anticipated increase of enrollments of total Youth. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools which limited access to students, especially during the final quarter when we typically have the highest number of enrollments.

#### Veteran's Services:

The Southeast area is proud to have served 99 veterans in PY2019, including 28 campaign veterans, 17 recently separated, 2 transitioning service members, 14 disabled and 11 special disabled veterans.

#### SNAP Employment and Training:

The SNAP E&T program experienced an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers adopted quickly to virtual services, which is beneficial for those who lack transportation and childcare.

The SNAP Employment and Training Program served 216 participants, 42 of which were carried in, 174 participants were enrolled and 143 were exited. A total of 33 individuals attained a certificate, diploma or degree and one individual attained a high school diploma or equivalent.

#### BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM

#### On-the-Job Training:

Business Services staff assisted 29 employers with OJT enrollments. Southeast AJC staff served 86 OJT participants providing grant funds of \$205,711.90 for training reimbursements to employers.

#### Incumbent Worker Training:

The Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board provided training grants to ten (10) employers, serving over 153 employees and 89 apprentices. The grant obligations amounted to \$314,714 in local funds and \$52,778 in state apprenticeship funds.

#### Rapid Response Activity:

The Rapid Response Team assisted 63 employers with services to reemploy a total of 18,940 affected employees, many as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Appendix B

### Strategic Initiatives and Challenges during the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Greater Memphis

### Career Services Best Practices:

- Live and Self-Directed Workshops & Introduction to Services
- Drive up meeting options
- Virtual Enrollment options with Delivery Slip
- Reevaluation of preparation for engaging customers
- Providing multiple signature options for customers virtually
- Social Distancing for Face-to-face appointments (Health & Safety Team Monitors)

### 2019-2020 Business Services Recap

- 230 Hiring Events hosted by the American Job Centers
- 2, 162 Internal Job Postings
- Provided 16,016 total services to 2,500 employers
- 16 Business Grants Awarded in the amount of: \$524,593.02
  - 9 Incumbent Worker Training Grants with the potential of upskilling 136 employees with an average salary of \$23.66
  - 7 On the Job Training Grants with the intent to hire up to 85 new employees earning an average wage of \$14.18/hour.

## Northwest Tennessee

The NW area also enhanced our efforts to increasing registered apprenticeships through our EARN\$TN – Expanding Apprenticeships in Rural Northwest Tennessee initiative, which is supported through a \$150,000 Delta Regional Authority grant in addition the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant and Title I funding. During the first nine months of the initiative, two new registered apprenticeships were developed, including one new pre-apprenticeship, and 17 new apprentices were trained. Furthermore, through the July 2019 Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP) class, a pre-apprenticeship program offered to recent high school graduates in partnership with a local employer, Amteck, 10 of 11 students who began the class completed and were offered employment with Amteck. Of those, eight accepted and entered into Amteck's registered apprenticeship program. As of the end of the program year, six were still employed with Amteck. Recruitment for

the July 2020 class also took place during PY 2019 with 14 potential students attending an information session and eight deciding to participate in the class.

Throughout the year, especially as COVID-19 forced us to re-visit how we offer services, we increased our use of social media, particularly Facebook, and other technology to reach both our jobseeker and employer customers. For example, we enhanced our efforts to conduct outreach to youth participants by posting available work experience positions on our Facebook page. This has resulted in an increase in youth applicants requesting and receiving services due to increased awareness of services as well as provided a means of communicating with applicants who may not respond to traditional communication methods.

## Southwest Tennessee

TN Reconnect: AJC staff and partner cross-trainings are held quarterly to discuss available services and updates, address any concerns, and collaborate on new ideas and initiatives. Many of these trainings incorporated a speaker to educate staff on additional community programs and skills. On March 6, 2020 all Southwest AJC staff and partners participated in training, delivered by THEC representatives, to become TN Reconnect Ambassadors. This further equipped staff to provide more meaningful assistance and connections to other partnering programs to ensure successful outcomes for AJC clients

TDOC Probation & Parole Career Readiness Partnership: The Southwest LWDA views this as a best practice due to the strong partnership and engagement with TDOC's Probation and Parole team that allows for effective service delivery to this key population. The AJC staff provides career readiness workshops for TDOC clients on a regular basis to help prepare them to re-enter the workforce, participate in job fairs at Probation and Parole offices and the Jackson Day Reporting Center, and visit the sites regularly to connect clients to AJC services. In addition, job order lists are provided to TDOC staff on a weekly basis so they can share available jobs in the area with their clients.

- In January 2020, the AJC partnered with TDOC to host a series of three job readiness workshops for justice involved jobseekers in Southwest TN. A total of 30 participants from our region were able to do team building exercises (pictured), learn interview skills, practice how to address their background, how to follow-up with an employer, and how to develop interpersonal and soft skills to advance in the workplace.
- Over the past year, local leadership and designated AJC staff attended TN Dept. of Correction's monthly TN Reentry Collaborative (TREC) meetings held for community partners and stakeholders. Workshops and hiring events were held at Probation & Parole offices and the Jackson Day Reporting Center. AJC and TDOC continue to work closely throughout the pandemic by providing weekly job order information, special workshops for justice involved

individuals (in-person at AJC offices and virtually through Zoom). As COVID restrictions are lifted, AJC staff plans to resume offering these services on-site.

This year, SWLDB began a partnership with the STAR Center (a non-profit that provides a wide variety of services to individuals with disabilities) to provide their staff the ability to meet with clients at the AJC offices. This enables customers with barriers, often in rural areas, to receive important services while also connecting them to other services available through various AJC programs.

AJC offices serve as an application pick-up and drop-off location for low-income individuals participating in the Toys for Tots program. This partnership allows individuals with barriers to familiarize themselves with the AJC office locations and exposes them to the opportunities and services available through AJC partner programs.

Apprenticeships: Southwest LWDA hosted a Regional Apprenticeship Forum at the Madison County AJC in February 2020 in partnership with Northwest and Greater Memphis. The State Apprenticeship Director presented to over 50 employers and community stakeholders regarding the benefits of apprenticeships and the launch of Apprenticeship TN. Delta Electric, Jackson TN, has 18 apprentices and received \$10,674 under the apprenticeship grant.

Challenges for Southwest LWDA: As all areas have dealt with the impact of COVID-19, one challenge that we have faced is the ability to facilitate our Rural Initiative Grant. The grant was written to implement the Thinking for a Change (T4C) curriculum into our criminal justice complexes in six counties. We purchased the training curriculum and trained the trainers pre-pandemic. However, COVID-19 restrictions limit our ability to have access to the participants in order to implement the program.

## **Northern Middle Tennessee**

Tornado and COVID-19 Impact:

The Northern Middle Workforce region was especially hard hit by COVID-19. Over 36% of the unemployment insurance claimants were in the workforce area. Contingency plans were established that allowed the American Job Centers to remain operational while promoting the safety of our employees and job seekers. Staff to the local Board were proactive and participated in numerous outreach activities to notify individuals, businesses and industries of assistance that the American Job Centers could provide.

The entertainment and hospitality industry in Davidson County, including a multitude of singers and songwriters that were impacted during the pandemic. The Northern Middle Board staff worked with these groups to provide opportunities through the Tennessee Talent Exchange and meaningful unemployment insurance assistance.

Adding insult to injury, on March 2, 2020 a tornado ripped through Davidson and Wilson counties, leaving death and destruction in its wake. Aside from the devastating human toll, small businesses and the jobs they provided were suddenly lost. Mobile AJCs from across the state were dispatched to Nashville and Lebanon to provide disaster relief for those workers that had been displaced by the tornados. Employees worked long shifts on these Mobile AJCs, including weekends to assist those impacted by the devastating natural disaster. They tirelessly assisted those displaced with filing for Unemployment Insurance (UI), as well as providing other job-seeking assistance such as resume writing, job leads and informing them of the services provided in our traditional AJCs.

#### Career Pathways and Rural Development:

Nowhere in Tennessee is the economic prosperity more evident, than in Northern Middle. None of the counties in Northern Middle are qualify as "distressed". Houston is the only county that has been recognized as being "as-risk" and has qualified for \$52,193 in rural development funding from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDL&WD). At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10% and 25% of the nation's counties. Houston County's score is 2672, nearing the distressed status which starts at 2806.

The Northern Middle Board has created a plan to utilize the funding to train young adults, unemployed and underemployed adults and offenders for entry-level jobs in manufacturing by offering Certified Production Technician training in the county. A partnership with the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Dickon has been formed to provide the training.

Leveraging funding to assist in rural development and career pathways, Northern Middle partnered with multiple education providers to apply for funding under the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE). Specifically to grow opportunities in entry level manufacturing, The Bridge to Work program focuses its efforts on Advanced Manufacturing and includes the three county CTE programs of Houston, Stewart and Montgomery County. Especially important is the focus on Houston County since it is a distressed county within the Northern Middle LWDA.

#### TANF Partnership:

The Northern Middle Workforce Board fully incorporates TANF as a partner in the American Job Center System. On Tuesday, December 12, 2019, our TANF Partner, Workforce Essentials hosted a Parent Café in Nashville at the Metro Parks Community Center to focus on the two-gen model. Family Resource Specialist, Deidra Ware invited trained facilitator Adrienne Hackney of New Vision, Inc., to the Metro Parks Nashville Recreation Community Center on Rosa Parks Blvd. to share information with Families First Clients *Nurturing and Strengthening Families through Education New Vision, Inc. nurturing parenting program* is a primary, early prevention program administered by New Vision, Inc. for parents/caregivers of children ages 0-8. The program aims to help families build caring, empathetic parent-child relationships through education in bonding and attachment.

#### Services to Business and Industry: Apprenticeships

The Northern Middle Board has aggressively supported business and industry through the development of apprenticeship programs. Highlights include 27 new apprentices signing with Empower Electric at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Nashville and a virtual apprenticeship signing with six new information technology apprentices with Asurion. The Northern Middle Board allocated over \$500,000 to businesses during the 2019-2020 program year.

#### Challenges:

Prior to COVID-19, the Northern Middle Workforce Board aggressively trained dislocated workers in the information technology and management sectors. With a booming economy in and around Nashville, many dislocated workers obtained employment prior to completing training or obtaining a credential. While this was positive and was reflected by achieving the highest median dislocated worker earnings in the state, the Northern Middle Board was not successful in achieving the dislocated worker credentialing standard.

## Southern Middle Tennessee

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for our American Job Centers while continuing to grow and succeed during these uncertain times. The SMLWDB is working to fulfill all the needs of employers and participants while continuing to follow the guidelines for safe entry to the American Job Centers for staff and participants.

## Upper Cumberland

Developing and nurturing partner relationships continues to be a focus of the UCLWDB. During PY-19, we enhanced collaboration with educational partners by co-locating two of our affiliate sites within training institutions. Our Warren County site moved into the Motlow State Community College Robotics Center in McMinnville, TN while our Overton County site moved into the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Livingston, TN. Beyond educational partners, the UCLWDB also enhanced our relationship with Volunteer Behavioral Health. Joint efforts on multiple projects led to their part-time co-location within our Putnam County Comprehensive site. All three have seen success in these relationships while creating a better wrap-around experience for our participants. The UCLWDB has worked tirelessly to increase virtual capabilities during the Coronavirus pandemic- both internally and for our participants. Enrollment processes were examined and adapted to limit in-person exposure. This removed some virtual barriers but exposed another- virtual capabilities throughout our rural areas were insufficient. The UCLWDB addressed this insufficiency by working with Twin Lakes Telephone Corporation, the largest internet provider within the Upper Cumberland, to continue expanding internet services to individuals in all our counties while also brokering a deal to waive installation fees and create special pricing packages to make access more affordable. Additionally, the UCLWDB granted limited COVID-19 exceptions to our Supportive Services policy to provide reimbursement for internet and other supportive services on a case-by-case basis. We were also proud to supply over 40 laptops to students enrolled in TCAT courses that were forced online. These students were enrolled in on-ground courses and suddenly found themselves needing an expensive laptop as a tool required to continue the course. The UCLWDB worked with our provider and institutional financial aid officers to remove this barrier where need was sufficiently shown. Our Title III partner staff became Unemployment Insurance heroes and took the lead in communicating with employers and employees affected. Even while working with unemployed individuals they continued to post job opportunities in social media platforms and the Jobs4TN website. They also collaborated with our Business Services Team to host "Drive-Thru" job fairs. These events gave 45 employers the opportunity to reach several individuals looking for employment in a safer environment.

As the UCLWDB works to continue our PY-19 growth and produce PY-20 successes, we will be evaluating our pre and post pandemic approaches to adjust as necessary. Our PY-19 experiences have shown the need to constantly survey the changing needs of local businesses and remain able to adapt for shifting participant barriers.

## **East Tennessee**

### **Outreach**

The outreach and onsite service delivery conducted by staff in every partner program was impacted by COVID-19. Limitations to hosting onsite job fairs without a viable option as the onset of the pandemic as well as access limitations to jailed populations hampered our outreach opportunities. However, we quickly mobilized.

### **Resilience**

ETLWDA staff and partners are resilient and dedicated to serving their customers. The Global COVID-19 Pandemic gave ETLWDA an opportunity to stretch and grow to serve our area. Staff and partners went above and beyond in answering UI calls at the onset of the Pandemic, effectively turning each AJC into a de facto call center, providing meaningful assistance and resource information to callers.

Staff and partners mobilized quickly to serve customers virtually (via phone, email, web-based video platforms). Customers were served by all programs, enrolled, case managed, engaged in training (virtually and live), provided supportive services, and connected with additional resources/agencies to meet needs and remove barriers.

## **Northeast Tennessee**

Pandemic Rapid Response - Data from the TDLWD Labor Market Report revealed a significant increase in the Northeast TN unemployment rate, from 4.9% in June of 2019 to 9.4% in June of 2020. The month of April in Northeast TN saw the highest UI rate in this area to date, with an average of 13.8%. The hardest hit was Greene County, with a staggeringly high unemployment rate of 17.1%, as reported in the Labor Market Report from the state of TN for the month of April 2020. For Northeast TN, the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) rate was extremely high. During this time of social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NETLWDB Rapid Response team transitioned to virtual American Job Center Re-employment Services and Unemployment Benefits meetings in order to continue to provide this vital service to businesses and employees impacted by layoffs. Further, to ensure a comprehensive systemic approach for Rapid Response, representatives from Wagner Peyser, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing (RCAM) were added as permanent members to the Team.

Northeast TN Rapid Response team worked in coordination with Domtar Human Resources to enable employees on layoff status to attend a virtual Rapid Response Orientation. Employees were on temporary layoff and were being transitioned to permanent layoff. Due to COVID-19, there was not an opportunity to call them back onsite for group orientations. The Northeast TN Rapid Response team had already developed a virtual orientation that was being delivered via Zoom. While the content was the same, the delivery method for this group was different. The Northeast TN Rapid Response Team developed a meeting invitation flyer that was distributed by Domtar HR to all employees via their personal email addresses. About 1/3 of the laid off employees attended the orientations. Due to the unique nature of the orientation, with each individual person signing in from their own device, breakout rooms were used at the end of the meeting. Each breakout room featured a leading expert. For example, one room featured a local employer that was hiring, and one room was led by one of the local Team Leads to answer UI questions. This was unique and successful method for orienting already laid off employees and was successful due to the partnership with Domtar's Human Resource Department.

Individuals Served - The NETLWDA American Job Center system served 13,669 individuals.

NETLWDA Re-entry initiatives included active participation in the Tennessee Re-Entry Collaborative (TREC) and onsite service delivery at the Washington County Day Reporting Center.

NETLWDA Substance Abuse/Opioid Addiction. NETLWDA continued outreach to organizations to address substance abuse/opioid addiction such as East TN State University's Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment and the Insight Alliance.



CareerQuest TN 2020 "It's All About Business".

CareerQuest TN... It's All About Business was held in March of 2020 and attended by more than 350 area high school juniors and seniors who learned about careers in accounting, banking/financial planning, human resources and marketing. The third annual shark tank competition was very successful. The winner on this competition had a business plan that included going onsite to homes and teaching the home owners how to build grow boxes and create raised garden beds. The event included interviews

with HR professionals for each student and a fashion show to demonstrate appropriate business dress. NETLWDA Youth Service Providers volunteered at this event to assist area youth in this unique and interactive career exploration event. The CareerQuest TN event scheduled for April 2020 at the East TN State University Mini-Dome was cancelled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education to Employment—E2E. The First TN Development District's Education to Employment (E2E)



Summit was held on Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at Grace Meadows Farm in Jonesborough. The event brought together k-12 and post-secondary educators, workforce and economic development professionals, and business, industry, community and government leaders to discuss each stakeholder's current/future role in developing a strong regional workforce. A subject matter expert panel relating to legal and insurance issues concerned with the implementation of Work-Based Learning opportunities discussed mechanisms, challenges and myths associated with bringing young people into the workplace safely. The panel included Kenneth Nealy, Director of Labor Standards, TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Tom Montgomery, VP-NGU Risk Management; and Steve Darden, Attorney at Law and Partner, Hunter Smith and Davis. A special feature of this event was the gallery walk of current technical programs and business support programs available around the region. The NETLWDB/AB&T were a proud supporter of this event.

## **Southeast Tennessee**

### **Valmont Industries Develops High School Pre-Apprenticeship:**

Valmont Industries in Marion County committed to developing its own talent pipeline by designing a pre-apprenticeship program in coordination with Marion County Schools and Chattanooga State Community College. Valmont credits the work-based learning contracts with the local board with providing money to reinvest in workforce development programs.

The electric utility manufacturer created an onsite lab for a cohort of eight students from three high schools in Marion County. The students received OSHA-10 training from Chattanooga State over the summer. In August, the students were scheduled to attend half of the day on their school campus completing academic work and half of the day in a paid work-based learning component at Valmont. The students participated in a signing day with Chattanooga State's Registered Apprenticeship Programs in November of 2019 with Governor Bill Lee in attendance. All eight students completed with 100% placement. Two were hired directly by Valmont, and seven of the eight enrolled in various programs at Chattanooga State Community College.

### **ETPL Partner/AJC Outreach Collaboration – Promising Practice:**

During Spring 2020 semester, Southeast AJC staff collaborated with TBR (Chattanooga State and Cleveland State) and TCAT (Athens and Chattanooga) on a series of virtual outreach events to inform area residents about various courses and fields of study with the TBR and TCAT institutions. The series included: (1) Business Management and Hospitality, (2) Engineering and Computer Technology, (3) Social and Behavioral Science, and (4) Healthcare. This outreach series was available to anyone with the purpose of providing insight into each course of study as well as answer questions. TBR and TCAT staff provided information about respective courses, and AJC staff providing information on the ETPL, Labor Market Information, and connecting with the American Job Center to pursue enrollment with Title I.



#### Returning Talent Initiatives:

The Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Board presented special speakers in the December joint Southeast Tennessee Development District and Workforce Development Board meeting to educate members on returning talent initiatives. Carri Smith, HR Manager of Valmont Industries and Joe Jenkins, Valmont employee and author of the BRAVE Effect, presented the group with valuable information on success strategies for employers and returning individuals. The presentation included information on how the culture of organization has resulted in 100% success rate in hiring returning talent.

Carri Smith has cultivated a culture of success by vetting individuals with justice-involved history the same way she would other applicants, maintaining their confidentiality, and supporting them with the transition to employment.

Joe Jenkins shared his story of becoming employed in a welcoming culture at Valmont, crediting Ms. Smith's techniques for maintaining the confidentiality of his past and assisting him with transition to self-sufficient employment. Mr. Jenkins shared that justice-involved individuals must take responsibility and accountability for their past and develop the right mindset for returning to employment and life post-release. He shared that it can be challenging for many returning citizens to do simple tasks, such as grocery shopping when they are used to purchasing things from the jail commissary.

This employer/employee presentation received a standing ovation from the crowd. Ms. Smith and Mr. Jenkins are great advocates for returning talent initiatives and continue to share best practices with employer groups.

#### Unique Partnership Results in Successful Training for Work-Release Candidates:

A unique partnership between the Southeast Local Workforce Development Board, American Job Centers, Grundy County Sheriff's Office, Grundy County Schools and Chattanooga State Community college resulted in a successful training cohort of seven (7) individuals currently housed in the Grundy County Jail. Grundy County Schools allows the use of the high school welding lab for adult learners, with the high school instructor, Robin Dykes, serving as an adjunct instructor for Chattanooga State. The Grundy County Sheriff arranged for the special training cohort while the campus was closed for students and provided transportation. The 80-hour welding class was intended to increase employability post-release and provide work release opportunities that paid fines and child support. All seven (7) individuals successfully completed the course and passed the

American Welding Society certification in June 2020. The instructor reports that this is one of the best welding cohorts he has ever taught. As a result, six (6) of these individuals have been hired in work-release programs and now have the opportunity to maintain self-sufficient employment that minimizes the chance of recidivism.

#### New Life Job Fair:

New Life is a partnership between the American Job Center and the City of Chattanooga to address the needs of the Justice Involved Individuals. The American Job Center hosted a two-day, New Life Job Fair in Chattanooga March 5-6, 2020. A total of Forty-seven (47) people attended the first day, where participants attend a Career Prep day with resume and interview workshops, as well as time to meet with local barbers for a fresh haircut, the Young Lawyers Association for information and help with getting their record expunged. Participants also receive a clothing voucher to assist with appropriate interview or work attire. Forty-eight (48) people attended the second day, the hiring event, where 11 local employers were in attendance. Twelve (12) participants received job offers on-site, while several more began the company's hiring process. A total of 73 unique Justice Involved Individuals were provided services during this two-day event.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

##### Virtual Capacity, Staff Capacity, and Mobilization During COVID-19:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment claims spiked as a result of the economic shutdown. Over 60,00 UI claims were filed in our Southeast 10 county area before the end of the program year. The public workforce system made unemployment claims a priority, reassigning state merit staff who were trained to manage tickets submitted to the Zendesk and 800 number. Staff were available to provide meaningful assistance for those filing claims virtually when appropriate.

All workforce partner programs quickly mobilized to provide services to individuals at the onset of the Pandemic. Several partners moved to virtual enrollment and were able to assist customers virtually (via phone, email, virtual platforms). Partners continued to meet by Zoom, and the Quarterly Cross Training events were held via Zoom. Staff maintained compliance with our extended hours period of operations by working varied schedules to better serve our customers and the current demand.



## Appendix C

### Success Stories

#### Greater Memphis

##### Jackie



Jackie entered the American Job Center (AJC) in Covington, TN, with a heavy heart. She had recently been laid off from her accounting job and felt humiliated filing for unemployment for the first time. Career Advisor Aretha Gooden quickly assured Jackie that there was no shame in filing a claim and notified her about a free job search program offered under the Greater Memphis WIOA program. Aretha was extremely helpful in assisting her with her claim while offering her words of encouragement.

After enrolling in the job search program, Jackie struggled to afford the many trips to job interviews. After some consulting with Aretha, she was signed up for supportive services, which included a free gas card for transportation costs. Overcoming this barrier was a huge step and she was soon referred to Account Manager

Savannah Bishop whose positive attitude helped Jackie start to believe in herself again. Savannah sent Jackie's resume to several local employers. Although the process began slowly, Jackie soon landed an interview at one of the area's top agencies. Jackie was successfully hired for a job making \$18 per hour! After just a few days at the job, Jackie was already making a positive impression on her employer. Candy Curtis, Jackie's hiring manager, says that she fit into the role very well right from the start.

Jackie was ecstatic about her experience with the AJC. "The AJC is not just an unemployment office, it is the American Job Center! I was feeling so down on myself, but now I have a purpose again. I received a second chance because of the AJC. People should know that the AJC genuinely cares about the customers they serve. The classes and job fairs offered through the center allow people to better themselves tremendously."

Thanks to the support of the American Job Center, Jackie is now enjoying employment while her self-esteem has improved as well. We are happy to have had a positive role in Jackie's story, and we look forward to her future success!

##### Marwin

Marwin arrived at the American Job Center in need of guidance amidst a series of major life

changes. He had been shot, suffered debilitating injuries, and had to learn how to walk all over again. He also had a family to support and aspired to remain a role model for his children. The odds were stacked against Marwin, but he never gave up.

He fought through the pain of physical therapy, and soon was able to operate a food truck to make enough money to get by. But Marwin still desired to do something more with his career, and that inner motivation soon led him to the American Job Center in Ripley, TN.

At the AJC, Marwin met Career Advisor Sherry Johnson. Sherry helped Marwin update his resume and brush up on his interview skills. Speaking about Sherry, Marwin described her as "compassionate, but firm," as she taught him how to present the best version of himself.

Once Marwin was job ready, he was referred to Account Manager Savannah Bishop. Savannah pre-screened Marwin to determine which local employers might be a good fit. Although Savannah referred him to several employers, it was often difficult to explain his lengthy gap in employment. Savannah's dedication to supporting Marwin and his career goals ultimately paid off when she met the Area Manager from Vanguard Utility Services who was interested in hiring Marwin.

In the time between his last conversation with Savannah and when he got called to interview with Vanguard, more heartbreak had come to Marwin when his home burned down and a close friend of his died. A testament to his inner strength, Marwin put aside this emotional pain to show up well-dressed and prepared for the interview. He was immediately hired by Vanguard Utility Services! The hiring manager made a point to meet Marwin in-person during his first week of work to personally let him know that hiring him was one of the best decisions he had made for the company.

In his new role, Marwin learned quickly and always showed up with a positive attitude. He knows that this opportunity would not have been possible without the AJC staff, for whom he is so grateful. He is especially thankful that the AJC staff never judged or looked down on him, but instead instilled him with hope and constructive advice.

When Marwin was asked which parts of his story he was comfortable with sharing, he responded with yet another statement of inspiration.

"I want [Savannah] to share all of [my story]. If my story helps even one person to have hope, all my struggles were worth it."

## Northwest Tennessee

The Northwest (NW) area's nine AJCs served nearly 30,000 jobseekers through over 21,000 services. Title I served a total of 1,955 enrolled participants, over 400 more than the prior year, and exceeded the 40% Minimum Participant Cost Rate with a 44.65% rate, spending nearly \$530,000 on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and nearly \$130,000 on transportation supportive services. Employers were reimbursed over \$332,000 for On-the-Job (OJT) of 244 new hires and nearly \$293,000 for Incumbent

Worker Training (IWT) for 642 incumbent workers. Over 500 employers received over 3,500 services through the NW AJCs during the program year, including over 120 job fairs attended by over 1,000 customers. Investments continued to be focused in the area's target sectors of Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation & Logistics, and Business Services. Additionally, career opportunities in advanced manufacturing pathway were also promoted to area high schools again this year in conjunction with Manufacturing Day. Nearly 1,400 students across 19 high schools toured and / or heard presentations from 27 employers to learn about careers available within the advanced manufacturing industry. We also continued our focus on work experience paying wages of over \$167,000 to 32 youth participants.

## Southwest Tennessee

Success Story from our Career Service Provider: John was referred to the Hardin County AJC in his pursuit of training at TCAT Crump. He had student loan debt preventing him from receiving tuition assistance. AJC staff assisted him in pursuing a student loan rehab program so he could be in good standing on his previous loans. SNAP E&T and Title I partnered to provide John tuition assistance for TCAT Crump's LPN program. He excelled in the program and graduated in August 2020 as the valedictorian of his class. After completing LPN training, the Title I program assisted in paying for his licensure exam. John is now employed as an LPN and is doing very well! He says he would not be where he is today without the support he received from the AJC.

\*Name changed at participant's request.

## Northern Middle Tennessee

### Veterans:

The Campbell Strong Workforce Partnership gained national attention. In February 2020, The Campbell Strong Workforce Partnership briefed the Vice President's wife, Mrs. Pence along with the Secretary of Defense's wife, Mrs. Esper on our program which helps military spouses. The Campbell Strong Workforce Partnership celebrated serving their 1,000 soldier and spouse that are transitioning to civilian life through the National Dislocated Worker Grant.

### Transitioning Soldiers:

Desmond Harris is a transitioning soldier who came through Campbell Strong for assistance with tuition for the Hopkinsville Community College CDL Program. He completed the program, received his CDL and is now working for Werner Trucking, making \$15.75 per hour.

Morgan Neuman is a transitioning soldier who came to Campbell Strong for supportive services assistance while attending the Ryder Program. He has completed the program and received employment with Ryder in Fairborn, Ohio, making \$23.80 per hour.

Colvirak Kem enrolled as a transitioning military officer who was interested in entering into the project management field. We assisted him with funding towards his Lean Six Sigma green belt certification. Upon completion of training, he was able to successfully transition into the civilian workforce as an application Engineer at US Water Services making \$31 per hour.

#### Southern Middle Tennessee

SMLWDB's workforce is promoting business driven talent solutions. These solutions are integrating education, workforce and economic development resources across systems providing businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper. Working with the Pathways Director promoting the In-School Work Experience Program has enabled the Career Advisors to make connections with students in need. The SMLWDB has served a student that participated in the WIOA Youth Work Experience Program. Based on low income the student was eligible to enroll in the WIOA youth grant while working in the food service department at a local hospital earning \$9.00 an hour. After graduating with three certificates and three diplomas from TCAT Shelbyville the student is now working at NASA in a position that earns up to \$103,000 per year. With every success story SMLWDB strives to better serve the participants by building better communication and organizational skills to tackle unique situations that are encountered daily while also facing the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic. Working to be proactive to address the needs of each participant and employer has proven successful.

#### SUCCESS STORY 1

The following story was featured in Department of Human Service's 2020 Expect Employment Report under Expanding the Role of American Job Center (p 13).

#### Cody's Story

"At 23 years old, Cody Ranta was supporting two children with a very low income. He was working as an equipment operator averaging only 25 hours per week and many times would be out of work due to bad weather. Cody wanted a more secure career with full-time employment and benefits for his family. So, he began to pursue a career as a truck driver.

Cody met with Campbell County Title I (WIOA) staff for assistance with CDL Truck Driving Training. He was enrolled with Title I in the Out-of- School Youth Program for training at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Knoxville but needed some assistance for tuition and textbook

costs. He was referred to SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) and was enrolled by phone for the convenience of the client and to expedite the process to secure funding.

Through SNAP E&T, Cody's tuition and textbook costs were covered and he received transportation assistance and monthly case management through Title I. Cody completed his training at TCAT and earned his CDL A and obtained employment with McElroy Trucking Company based in Cuba, Alabama. He began earning \$15 per hour for 40 to 50 hours per week and still received Job Retention Assistance from SNAP E&T.

Cody can now provide for his young family with a stable, full-time job with benefits. There will be no shortage of future work in this field. The close communication between Title I, SNAP E&T, and DHS and their prompt responses made it possible for this Cody to go from struggling to secure employment in just a few months."

#### SUCCESS STORY 2

A customer who has previously failed in a medical program still desired to serve in the medical field. SNAP E&T Enrolled the customer in the CCMA program at Walters State Community College. COVID 19 put the class on hold temporarily, but the customer was able to resume classes in June 2020. She obtained her CCMA and was hired by an Urgent Care facility.

#### SUCCESS STORY 3

A single parent of three children was working part time as a Patient Care Assistant, earning \$9/hr averaging 28 hrs weekly. She started her first trimester of the LPN Program at TCAT-Harriman and reached out to Anderson County Title I (WIOA) and requested assistance with training costs and other supportive services not covered by her financial aid award. Title I covered her unmet training costs, uniforms, tools, travel assistance, childcare assistance and rent assistance. Shortly afterwards, the customer provided Title I with recent eligibility for SNAP benefits. She was immediately referred to SNAP E&T. The Customer was able to utilize support services from SNAP E&T for childcare assistance and support services from Title I for travel assistance, rent assistance, and referrals to local internet service providers for free internet service to participate in distance learning at the onset of COVID-19.

The client successfully completed the LPN program, received supplemental training through Title I to increase employability, and worked with Title I on resume assistance and job search. She obtained full time employment as an LPN in her county earning \$18.75/hour. She received additional



supportive services (4 sets of scrubs and a lab coat) through Title I and two \$25 gas cards as Job Retention Assistance through SNAP E&T to help her with needs in her new job.

She was able to double her hourly wage and obtain stable full-time employment as a result of her hard work and the close coordination of Title I, DHS and SNAP E&T.

#### SUCCESS STORY 4

A recently hired customer in Sevier County informed Title III staff she credits them with obtaining her job. She had AJC Staff review her resume, and staff made some recommendations, especially with dates, to prevent any possible age discrimination as she was an older worker. She feels that our advice was key to her finding a job she enjoys.

#### SUCCESS STORY 5

Upon registering in Jobs4TN.gov, a transitioning military service member was contacted by Knoxville based Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialist (DVOS) Brad Bledsoe. Due to limited civilian work experience, Mr. Bledsoe offered assistance with job readiness and job search activities. Through case management, the DVOS staff assisted with job readiness activities including updating the resume to apply for civilian positions. After working with the Business Service Team for possible job leads, the DVOS successfully assisted the veteran in applying for a local apprenticeship program for which an updated resume was a necessity. The veteran interviewed and was accepted into an apprenticeship with Fire and Life Safety America and was approved to use his GI Bill benefits to receive a stipend for housing.

#### SUCCESS STORY 6

A Justice Involved Veteran with significant barriers to employment was entered into case management after serving a 15 year prison sentence. The veteran was a referral from the STEPS House, a weekly outreach of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant DVOS staff. Through the case management process the veteran was assisted with gaining housing, clothing for employment and a job with a construction company starting at \$19.00 per hour.

#### SUCCESS STORY 7

A Justice Involved Female Veteran connected with AJC Staff through outreach at the Knox County Detention Center. She received assistance through the case management process to establish housing through the local YWCA and enroll in SNAP benefits. The Disabled Outreach Veteran's Specialist also provide help with job leads and interviewing skills. As a result of the assistance received from the DVOS, the veteran successfully gained employment with a Knoxville Staffing Agency in an administrative position making \$17.00 per hour.

#### SUCCESS STORY 8

A Justice Involved Veteran connected with JVSG staff through outreach work with the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court and was provided assistance through case management from DVOS Brad Bledsoe. Mr. Bledsoe serves as a team member on the treatment team that meets weekly. Through the case management process, the individual was assisted with housing through VOA/SSVF and referred to and enrolled in SNAP for food assistance benefits. The DVOS also assisted the Veteran to create a current resume. The DVOS then met with LVER Laura Chagnon, a member of the Business Services team, who provided assistance with final revisions to the resume and with identifying possible job leads. LVER Chagnon provided a job lead with Luttrell Staffing to which the Veteran applied, interviewed and was hired into a full-time position at a local bottling company working as a Warehouse Associate/Forklift Driver at \$15.00 per hour.

#### SUCCESS STORY 9

Morgan County Title I (WIOA) staff met with an 18 year old, single mom, in a household of 6, receiving SNAP benefits. Title I enrolled customer for Out of School Youth Work Experience at a local medical facility as the customer had a career goal of attending Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) training at Roane State Community College the following month. She needed assistance with training costs, transportation and childcare.

Title I referred the customer to SNAP E&T for co-enrollment. SNAP E&T covered tuition and books while Title I covered childcare assistance and travel assistance for training and work experience. The customer completed CCMA training, received job search assistance through Title I, and obtained employment with a health care facility as a Health Screener starting out at \$10.00 for 37.5 hours/week. The customer's hard work and partner collaboration of Title I, DHS and SNAP E&T made her success possible.

#### SUCCESS STORY 10

Roane County DHS referred a recently released Justice Involved customer to SNAP E&T. The client's career goal was to become a CDL truck driver. The customer worked with his probation officer, was co-enrolled with Title I, and started the Truck Driver Training at TCAT Crossville.

SNAP E&T and Title I partnered together to cover tuition, books, travel assistance, a drug screen, DOT physical, work boots, and travel assistance for Job Retention Assistance for the client who completed Truck Driving School, passed his CDL exam 3 days later, and was hired 2 days later by a local trucking company for full time over the road truck driving employment.

The client was very motivated to turn his life around and get back on his feet. Roane County DHS identified this client as a great candidate for SNAP E&T. SNAP E&T and Title I worked seamlessly together to quickly get this client enrolled in school and on his way to an in-demand career where his background issues would not be a hinderance. His hard work and determination paid off.

#### SUCCESS STORY 11

A SNAP E&T referred customer was unemployed and interested in the Power Line Construction and Maintenance Program at TCAT Oneida, a high demand occupation with great earning potential. The customer was a client of a local youth serving agency, was co-enrolled with Title I as an Out of School youth in Jacksboro. SNAP E&T staff collaborated with his case worker at the youth serving agency who was helpful and encouraging.

SNAP E&T and Title I paid for his remaining unmet need for tools, supplies, and travel assistance throughout his full-time attendance at training. COVID 19 necessitated class movement to online learning in the spring, returning to the classroom for hands-on learning in late spring, early summer. AJC Staff collaborated with the TCAT Oneida staff on referrals for a cell phone for the customer.

The customer completed training, earned his Electrical Line Worker diploma as well as certifications for pole top/bucket rescue, flagger, forklift, CPR and OSHA 10. He accepted a job with a local cable construction company for an entry level position as a flag/groundsman earning \$15.25/hour for 40+ hours per week. Collaboration of funds, connection, referrals and resources between SNAP E&T, DHS, the youth serving agency, Title I, and TCAT Oneida working with the customer helped him on the pathway to self-sufficiency.

#### SUCCESS STORY 12

A young unemployed single mother was referred to WIOA Title I by SNAP E&T for assistance with travel while attending the CCMA Program at Roane State Community College. The customer, who had been receiving public assistance, coordinated with SNAP E&T and Title I assisting with tuition, books, supplies, scrubs, test fees and travel. This committed customer traveled over 20 miles each way every day she attended class! She successfully completed the EKG and Phlebotomy courses of her program, and after a three-month delay caused by COVID-19, was able to pass the NHA

Certifications for both. Due to Title I and SNAP E&T assistance, the customer was able to utilize savings to purchase a laptop to complete her CCMA courses which moved online due to COVID-19. She successfully completed training and passed CCMA NHA Certification. After completing job search activities, she gained employment as a CCMA at a local health care facility.

#### SUCCESS STORY 13

A single mother in her 20's enrolled in Title I and was referred to by TCAT Jacksboro for assistance to complete her Practical Nursing Training. She was traveling over 40 miles each way to her training site. The customer received Title I assistance with supportive services such as travel, uniforms, drug screens, background checks, and exam fees. Samantha completed training, earned her LPN License and obtain employment as a Full Time LPN at a local nursing and rehabilitation facility making \$19 an hour.

#### SUCCESS STORY 14

A young mother in Claiborne County was working part time and receiving public assistance. Her career goal was to become a Licensed Practical Nurse and work in the health care field. WIOA training and supportive services Adult funding aided her in the pursuit of her goal. She successfully completed the LPN program obtained her state nursing license and is now employed as an LPN.

#### SUCCESS STORY 15

Scott County AJC staff enrolled an unemployed single mother into the LPN program at TCAT Oneida/Huntsville as an out of school youth. She received assistance with training costs, testing fees, transportation and uniforms for employment. She completed training, passed her NCLEX and is now a Licensed Practical Nurse at a local facility where she completed her clinicals. Overcoming many obstacles in her path to success, she now hopes to start an RN program to further her career in Nursing.

#### SUCCESS STORY 16

A young man came to the Knoxville AJC seeking services and supports to attend a Class A CDL training program in order to obtain his Commercial Driver License with the stated goal of needing to better provide for his growing family as he was the family's sole income earner. At the time of his Application, the customer was employed as a construction worker, earning \$14 per hour averaging 32 hours of work per week for an estimated annual income of \$23,296 for his entire family, well below the Poverty Guidelines. He attended a Class A CDL training program, completely funded via WIOA, did very well in the training program, earned his Certificate of Completion, and passed the CDL exam with no issues.

An initial job driving a local route fell through at the last minute. Due to his family's situation, he could not pursue over the road driving jobs. He worked with AJC staff to job search and within a few weeks, was able to procure a local route truck driving through a local wholesale distributor. He

secured employment at \$19 per hour working an average of 48-55 hours per week, earning overtime. His new annual income is approximately double his starting income not including fringe benefits provided through his employers. The customer noted he is very thankful for the assistance he received through Title I. His Career Specialist noted his drive and persistence to complete are inspiring.

#### SUCCESS STORY 17

A Title III Career Specialist in Blount County worked with local probation and parole officers to assist a woman who had just been released after more than 20 years in prison. The Career Specialist worked with the customer, assessed her needs, and networked with her local employers to secure an interview for the customer with a local restaurant. The customer was hired as a dishwasher with pay-rate of \$9.50 per hour. The customer's long term goal is to attend a culinary arts school to become a chef.

#### SUCCESS STORY 18

Empower Cocke County and TCAT Knoxville Adult Education partner to provide services to customers in Cocke County. A Cocke County Adult Education Student recently passed her HiSET after being home-schooled. She plans to attend Walters State Community College to pursue a degree in Human Resources (see attached article).

#### SUCCESS STORY 19

Through outreach with the Blount County Probation and Parole office, a Justice Involved individual connected with Alcoa AJC Title III Career Specialists. The customer was looking for work. The Career Specialist contacted a local staffing agency who contacted the customer for an interview. The customer was hired immediately making \$10 per hour as an initial job in manufacturing.

#### SUCCESS STORY 20

A young man enrolled in Title I at the Knox County AJC seeking services and supports to attend a Class A CDL training program stating he was trying to better himself and his financial situation in order to more capably provide for himself and his young daughter. The customer overcame many barriers while pursuing his goals including homelessness and being under-employed. At time of application, he reported he was "couch surfing" with friends and working as a local day laborer,

sporadically, as jobs were available. As a previous SNAP benefit recipient, he applied for SNAP again, and was co-enrolled with WIOA Title I and SNAP E&T.

Multiple barriers cropped up during the training process including an out-of-state hold on his license preventing him from pursuing the CDL's. The Title I Career Specialist worked with the customer diligently, and the customer was able to resolve this license issue to free him up for training. SNAP E&T partnered together to provide funding for tuition, fees, travel assistance, background check, DOT physical exam, and CDL permit. The customer completed the training program, earned his Certificate of Completion, and passed the CDL exam. He secured employment with a local trucking company, and was provided clothing and footwear for his employment needs through SNAP E&T. The customer reported to his Career Specialist that his life had been changed and he had learned a lot about himself throughout the process gaining coping skills and enhancing patience and tolerance levels.

## Northeast Tennessee

Participant Success Story. Kayla Cabe Tells Her Story of Success: I took on nursing school as a single mom with two children. I went in strong minded and had high expectations for myself. Needless to say the nursing program I attended was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I knew that there would be plenty of sacrifices I would have to make in order to be successful. One of the biggest sacrifices I made was my source of income. The nursing program was Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. - 3 p.m., so there was little time for me to work full time, and still have time to be a mom. I decided to reduce my hours at work which caused me to move into a family member's basement for the time being. Another huge obstacle I faced was our clinical days because they started early in the morning before my kids school opened. So I was forced to make the decision to hire a babysitter for the days I went to clinicals. However, I managed to make it all the way to graduation day, and not only did I graduate, I graduated with honors. If it had not been for the American Job Center helping me financially in my last moments of nursing school, and paying for my boards, I'm not sure I would have been able to come this far. I'm am beyond grateful for their willingness to help me achieve my goal and make a better life for me and my two boys! Thank you!

Participant Success Story – Out-of-School Youth. Vincent Hinkle earned his HiSET January 23, 2020. Vincent also received assistance on January 6, 2020 to get his driver's license. Vincent completed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Paid Work Experience program and was hired full-time at Adam's Auto Repair in Bristol, TN as a mechanic. Vincent will be attending Tennessee College of Applied Technology Elizabethton's Automotive P.M. program in the spring of 2021.

Adult Education. Title III Adult Education served a total of 644 individuals with 222 total diplomas earned.

Employer Services. Working in conjunction with the AJC's Business Services Team, NETLWDA served 147 individuals through Incumbent Worker Training grants for a total investment of \$172,187.66. Other business investments including Consolidated Business Grants, Apprenticeship State

Expansion, and On-the-Job Formula Funds were used to serve 796 individuals and with \$596,842.40 invested. A total of 439 employers were assisted through business services.