

WIOA Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Local Plan Template

PYs 2024-2027



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Local Area Information

TN Local Area: Northern Middle Workforce Area

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Board Chair Name	Board Chair Email Address
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Date of Submission: 4/8/24

LOCAL AREA: Northern Middle Workforce Area							
Priority Initiative	What State initiative or regional priority does this support?	Goal Description- what is success?	Targeted Success Date	Milestone		Targeted Success Date	
				Action Items	Targeted Success Date		Action Items
Increase LPR in Northern Middle	Increase LPR	Improve LPR in four counties that are below the state average.	6/30/2025 Ongoing	Survey residents (not in labor force) in 4 counties in partnership with county mayors	7/31/2024	Engage local county/jail/employers to develop more WD's with Title II AE to increase pipeline of workers	6/30/2025
Improve Tracking of Job Placement across the System	Expand Data Research and Analytics	Implement data tracking system to capture job placements across partners.	6/30/2025	Partner meeting to assess current data and system capacity	9/30/2024	Measure monthly dashboard to track job placements	1/1/2025
Identify ownership and data tracking of services to employers	Implement Business Engagement Plan	Identify and empower Regional Business and Workforce Director to implement system to track employer services	9/30/2024	Identify Assets and funding resources in local area.	12/31/2024	Train and implement new Zen Desk system with monthly dashboard to track services.	TBD
Increase participation in the TIEP	Increase LPR	Increase enrollment in TIEP in Northern Middle Goal 692	6/30/2025	Work with county mayors to identify government positions for TIEP	7/1/2024	Increase enrollments of individuals with disabilities in TIEP by working with CBOs and VR Goal of 100 enrollments	6/30/2025
Increase Staff Training	Superior Service Delivery/Implement Business Engagement Plan	Improve staff training in Northern Middle to provide a more comprehensive approach with both job seekers and employers.	6/30/2026	On-going staff training on new BEP and for CSP selected for Northern Middle on 10/1/24	12/31/2024	Implement job seeker and employer customer satisfaction measure to improve quality of service deliver. Benchmark other areas.	6/30/2025

Regional and Local Analysis:

- a. Provide an analysis of regional economic conditions, including:
 - i. Existing and emerging in-demand sectors and occupations,
 - ii. The employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations; and
 - iii. How the LWDA compares to the region and any unique contributors to the regional economic conditions and business needs.

i.

A skilled and educated workforce is the most important factor influencing a community's economic competitiveness. The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board (NMWB) focuses its efforts on the strength and opportunities within the economic landscape of the 13 counties encompassing the Northern Middle Workforce Area. Approximately one third of the states workforce is employed within these 13 counties, so it is imperative that efforts focus on in-demand career pathways and up-skilling to ensure that Tennessee as a whole remains competitive in the global marketplace. After recovering from the COVID pandemic the Northern Middle Workforce Area (NMWA) has experienced a 4.5% employment growth which is a significant recovery. The two MSA's within our NMWA have seen an increase in employment and forecasts show predictable growth via the commuting district that also crosses the TN KY state line.

According to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's WIRED Data Economic Analysis, the largest employment industries in Northern Middle are healthcare services, manufacturing, accommodations and food service, and retail trade. However, projected growth through 2030 indicates that manufacturing, healthcare, and accommodations and food services are the top three growth industries.

ii.

WIRED data projects that employment needs through 2031 will create 36,143 jobs in the manufacturing sector and 35,831 jobs in healthcare. Due to Nashville being an entertainment destination, accommodations and food services will create 35,135 new jobs. Transportation and logistics falls just out of the top five employment needs with an expansion of 21,171 new jobs. Many of the growth occupations require only a high school diploma such tractor trailer drivers and transportation and distribution positions with projected earnings from \$37,627 to \$59,054 respectively. See WIRED Economic Analysis Data Table 2 on the following page for a full list of Occupations in Demand, featuring education levels and entry level wages. The most requested certifications in the Middle Region are CPR, commercial driver license, CPA, and nursing leadership certifications. For June 2023, the most requested tools and technologies include familiarity with Microsoft Office and Power Point, SQL, Python, operation of cash registers and forklifts, and use of personal protective equipment.

iii.

Unique to Northern Middle, logistics and material moving occupations are high growth opportunities due to the the location of Northern Middle and the interstates that criss cross the region especially along the 840 corridor. The transportation cluster contains several 

- b. Describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to meet the employment needs of businesses, including those in in-demand sectors and employing individuals in demand occupations.

The top knowledge skills, abilities and technical skills required within demand sectors in Northern Middle as defined by analytics from over 342,000 unique job posting are nursing, merchandising, marketing, project management, warehousing, auditing, restaurant operations, accounting, sales and finance.

In demand common skills are communication, customer services, management, sales, operations, leadership, detail oriented, problem solving, planning and writing.

In today's fast paced workplace, success requires more than technical expertise and knowledge. As work continues to evolve it is important for individuals to possess attributes that will allow them to collaborate with fellow employees no matter the industry sector. These are normally referred to as soft skills and are the foundation of organizational success. These 'people skills' allow all to interact in a professional setting whether it be in manufacturing or health care. It is imperative that the Board guide educational providers at the secondary and post-secondary level to include soft skill training throughout the journey of life-long learning. The Board supports CTE directors, TCATS and two year career institutions to incorporate these soft skills into the curriculum so that new employees will have the successful soft skills demanded by employers no matter the industry.

Occupations with unmet needs in the Northern Middle Region include:

- A. Manufacturing including Electromechanical Engineering Technicians.
- B. Transportation including Heavy Tractor/Trailer Truck Drivers, Industrial Truck Operators, Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics.
- C. Business, Finance, Government Management, support including Medical Records Administrators, Accounting Technicians, Business Statisticians, Project Management Specialists, Public Policy Specialists.
- D. Health Sciences including Respiratory Therapists, Physical Therapists, Mental Health Nurses.
- E. Human Services including Social and Behavioral Health Workers.
- F. Information technology including Computer and IT Security.
- G. Education including Early Childhood Educators, Secondary Educators, Reading, Math, English, and Art Teachers.

Skill Gaps:

Demand: Tennessee is a leading state in transportation, distribution, and logistics. The transportation cluster contains several occupations that are in-demand statewide and in every region of the state, including automotive service technicians and mechanics; bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists; production, planning, and expediting clerks; heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers; industrial truck and tractor operators; and mobile heavy equipment mechanics.



Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group	Job Opening Match Count
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills	19,463
2	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	1,624
3	Cash handling	Cashier Skills	1,531
4	Developing new business	Business Development Skills	1,442
5	Preventative maintenance	Maintenance Technician Skills	1,361
6	Inventory control	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	1,250
7	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills	1,170
8	Risk management	Risk Analyst Skills	1,115
9	Typing	Office Clerk Skills	1,099
10	Word processing	Office Clerk Skills	869

Also see Appendix A for the WIRED DATA for Middle Tennessee and Northern Middle.

- c. Provide an analysis of the regional and local workforce, including:
 - i. Current labor force employment and unemployment numbers;
 - ii. Information on any trends in the labor market; and
 - iii. Educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

i.

The current labor force in Northern Middle Tennessee is 1,159,242 individuals. Northern Middle represents over 34% of Tennessee's labor force. The January, 2024 unemployment rate for the region is 2.9%, the lowest of the state's nine workforce areas. While the number indicated that the economic conditions are thriving in Middle Tennessee, over 33,000 remain on the unemployment roles in the 13 county region. Youth unemployment has declined since 2020 but still remains high. According to Kid's Count Data Center, Davidson County's youth unemployment rate is at 10.4% while Cheatham County has a rate of 17%. The average unemployment rate for youth in Northern Middle is 8.63%. The chart below lists the current unemployment and employment data across the 13 Northern Middle counties.

ii.

For the past three years the Middle Tennessee region and especially the Northern Middle Workforce Area have been challenged by enormous business growth and relocation into the area. Growth and relocation coupled with an aging workforce in some counties is producing additional stress equating to a low Labor Force Participation Rate. Current workforce studies as well as census data predict that the workforce squeeze or employment pressures will continue through 2030. The Board and its partners are focused on increasing labor force participation as well as skill development in high demand occupational clusters.

Employment trends since 2018 reflect that transportation and warehousing, professional, scientific, and technical and construction industries continue to add the most workers. Only one industry, manufacturing, lost jobs from 2018 to 2022 in middle Tennessee. However, a resurgent is expected due to the strong establishment of Tennessee as the "Battery Belt" of the electric vehicle (EV) market.

Wage trends have been on the increase since the economy has rebounded from COVID as evidenced by Nashville workers' median household increasing by 10.1% from 2021 to 2022, according to the U.S. Census. Wages overall have increased adding intense pressure on lower paying jobs such as childcare workers. This phenomenon has placed an added barrier on female workers as childcare costs have skyrocketed, preventing women from re-entering the workforce.

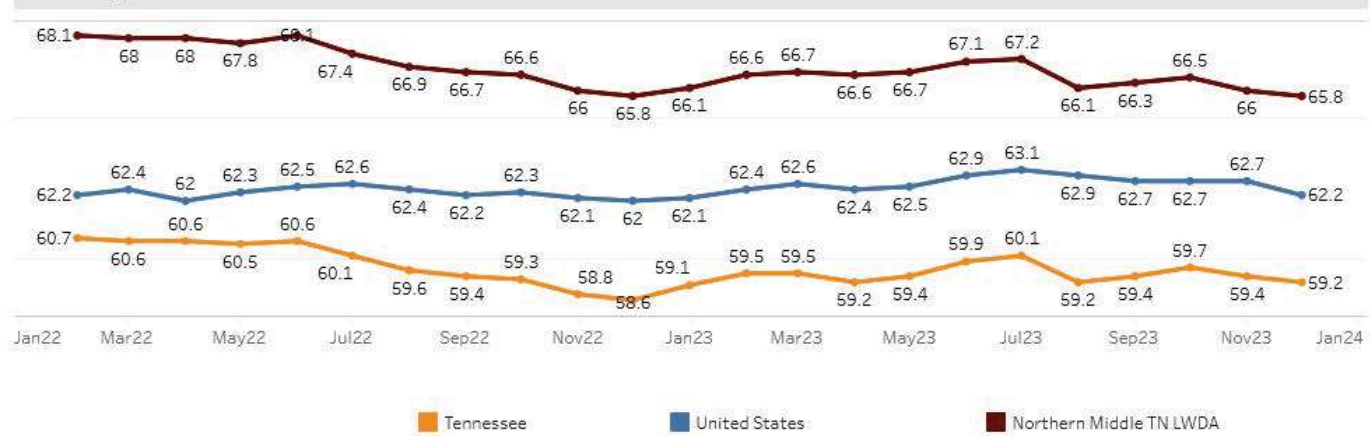
iii.

The Northern Middle region shines with with 68.8% having some college or additional education. This number is well above the state's average and the Upper Cumberland's average of 43.2%. The Middle Tennessee region shows significant disparities concerning the post high school educational attainment of individuals based on their race or ethnic heritage. The attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher by individuals who are over the age of 25 and identify their race as White is 33.39% which shows a significant disparity when compared to

Labor Force Estimates - LWDA

	January 2024 Pre.				December 2023 Rev.	
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Rate	Change
Northern Middle TN	1,159,242	1,126,153	33,089	2.9	2.5	0.4
Cheatham	23,028	22,395	633	2.7	2.4	0.3
Davidson	420,009	408,276	11,733	2.8	2.5	0.3
Dickson	28,413	27,621	792	2.8	2.5	0.3
Houston	3,281	3,104	177	5.4	4.3	1.1
Humphreys	8,932	8,601	331	3.7	3.0	0.7
Montgomery	89,313	85,834	3,479	3.9	3.4	0.5
Robertson	40,096	39,009	1,087	2.7	2.5	0.2
Rutherford	199,269	193,815	5,454	2.7	2.4	0.3
Stewart	5,807	5,585	222	3.8	3.2	0.6
Sumner	110,735	107,669	3,066	2.8	2.4	0.4
Trousdale	5,883	5,676	207	3.5	3.0	0.5
Williamson	140,778	137,203	3,575	2.5	2.3	0.2
Wilson	83,698	81,365	2,333	2.8	2.5	0.3

LFPR - TN/US



- d. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region.
- i. Identify strengths and weaknesses of these workforce development activities, and;
 - ii. Discuss the LWDB's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the local workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of businesses.

i.

The Northern Middle Workforce Area is often referenced as the Athens of the South. Home to three public universities, six private colleges, four community colleges, four Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology and a plethora of private schools, individuals have a wide variety of training providers to meet their needs. In addition, Northern Middle is home to three historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Examples of partner workforce development activities include:

1. Chamber of Commerces supporting YouScience Assessments and youth career fairs
2. K-12 Career and Technical Education offering work based learning and career pathways.
3. Adult Education Workforce Development Initiatives with employers
4. Local Jails utilizing Orijin Tablets to facilitate workforce instruction for justice involved
5. Monroe Harding offers a Works Wonders program to assist foster children
6. Martha O'Bryan Center programming to support low-income individuals
7. AJC workshops and support services
8. Vocational Rehabilitation initiatives to support individuals with disabilities
9. Tennessee Valley Authority Workforce grants to local communities
10. Catholic Charities partnership with AJC to provide support services, including food bank.

Identified strengths of the local system as defined by the partners of the Northern Middle Workforce partners include: Experienced board of directors, strong partnerships, committed staff and subject matter experts in workforce development. Weaknesses include; lack of marketing and awareness of the AJC, limited staffing and reduced funding and coordinated services.

ii.

In response to employer needs, the NMWB has taken a progressive stance related to training funded by WIOA in the region through prioritizing sector strategies that align with high demand jobs in the region. Current low employment rates drive the need to narrow the scope of trainings offered, and to balance that action with allowing multiple training providers to promote participant provider choice. While trainings outside of this scope may be funded, the Board manages the Eligible Training Provider List to align diplomas and credentials to skill sets required in the NM targeted industry sectors. The Board has put into place policies and procedures that only courses resulting in a stackable credential, industry recognized certification, or a state recognized diploma will be funded through an Individual Training Account. The Board receives monthly data and is focused on Federal performance.

Support of State Initiatives:

a. Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

- i. Describe how the LWDB will provide focused advocacy and engagement to special populations in effort to increase in the local LFPR.
- ii. What regional or local initiatives will the LWDB support or implement to positively impact LFRP efforts?

i.

Based upon the analysis of the Labor Force Participation Rate of Tennessee, Northern Middle Workforce Area has the highest LFPR of the nine local workforce areas and is also higher than the national average. However, four counties within the workforce area are below the State average. The Board has identified residents of rural counties, military spouses, veterans, youth, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved individuals as special populations to address the labor force participation rate problem.

The Board will provide focused advocacy and engage special populations by:

1. Meeting job seekers where they are. While bricks and mortar are needed, individuals within the designated target groups often have barriers and are reluctant to step outside their comfort zone. Northern Middle is committed to meeting customers where they are through a variety of mechanisms including increasing access points, creating pop-up employment events and utilization of the mobile American Job Center.
2. Prioritize a work-first component to the workforce system. The American Job Centers, especially Title I, is more than employment and training. Outreach to job seekers to create employment pipelines will be priority.
3. Enhance support services for job seekers who have been out of the labor force for more than four weeks. This may include increasing childcare allowances, providing additional transportation allowances or adding mental health counseling.
4. Focus on educating employers to provide additional supports and leniency for job seekers, especially justice-involved individuals that still have judicial commitments to adhere too. In addition educate employers on job accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
5. Expand partnerships to support and educate limited English speaking individuals which is a growing sector of Northern Middle's labor supply.
6. Assist dislocated workers through Rapid Response and TAA activities to proactively find employment and prevent an uptick in the LFPR upon a plant layoff or closure.

ii.

Because of these special populations, the Northern Middle Local Workforce Development Board received approval from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development to implement a "work-first" model; the Labor Force Participation Rate Pilot Project. This project will aid in achieving TDLWD's goal of increasing the LFPR by 2%. Four of Northern Middle's 13 counties will be of primary focus; Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery and Stewart. Each of these counties have a significantly lower LFPR than the state and national averages. Houston County is identified as an at-risk county. Under the Pilot Project. ❏

b. Business Engagement Plan

- i. How will the local area implement the TDLWD-WFS Business Engagement Plan to redefine “business engagement” pursuant to the state-wide framework and provide streamlined solutions to employer customers?
- ii. How will the local area apply the seven pillars of the TDLWD-WFS Business Engagement Plan to the work of the Business Services Team?

i.

The Public Workforce System has faced many challenges over the past 25 years. It has shifted focus from a multi-government delivery approach to a seamless American Job Center approach that currently delivers workforce services to job seekers and employers across our 13 county workforce region. The primary component of customer service has traditionally focused on the job seeker but over the last few years the delivery model has been shifting to the employer and economic development activities. The future trend is to align services seamlessly of all workforce partners to prioritize employers as the system's primary customer. This will be accomplished through transforming the current Business Service Teams via the American Job Centers to Business Engagement Teams. Specifically, the system will build business consulting relationships with local and regional employers and industries.

To better serve the business customer, the NMWB and its partners participated in a concept briefing conducted in the second quarter by the TOSS unit. All partners received an initial briefing of the Business Engagement Plan and due to the sharing of the OSO between Upper Cumberland and Northern Middle, staff from both areas attended, giving this Engagement Plan a local, as well as a regional approach.

Overarching, the Board will:

1. Designate and empower the TDLWD Business & Workforce Director as lead for the Business Engagement Plan with support from the Northern Middle Board staff.
2. Establish goals and expectations for business consultants
3. Provide on-going training to business consultants
4. Develop a dashboard for employer service delivery
5. Implement employer customer service survey system

ii.

The Business Engagement Plan establishes a comprehensive strategy of redefining ‘Business Engagement’. They have organized its high level solutions around seven foundational themes called plan “pillars”. These seven pillars create a plan structure broken down through the themes below.

Pillar 1.

Adopting a Sector Based Delivery Approach-

The NMWB has and will continue to focus on the primary sector strategies that are growing within the 13 county region. The Business and Workforce Director for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development will lead the new Business Engagement +

c. Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

- i. Describe how the LWDB will implement SYEP in the local area.
- ii. How will the LWDB leverage partnerships and current connections with both in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as employers, to increase SYEP participation and job placement?
- iii. Describe how the LWDB will conduct outreach to employers, as well as youth participants, to ensure Youth work experience is utilized year-round.


i.

Northern Middle will establish a Summer Youth Employment Program for youth ages 14-24. Building on success from the summer of 2023 where NM was able to serve 250 youth, we will continue to grow our program by serving an additional 320 youth to reach our youth participant goal of 570 in 2024. We intend to serve another 120 individuals in 2025. Based upon updated projections, Northern Middle will strive to serve almost 700 young adults through June 2025. Priority will be given to foster youth, justice involved youth, and those who are economically disadvantaged. This effort will be coordinated through the American Job Centers, the Northern Middle Board will be responsible for working with the mayors in the Northern Middle area and other community based organizations to administer the program. A work-centered approach will be followed for each participant. Work sites will be developed with public and private employers to allow for a diverse and sector strategy approach to match youth with their career interests. Construction, Information Technology, Healthcare, Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing, Education, and Hospitality will be priorities. However, where feasible, every attempt will be made to create worksites that align with career goals. Youth will have the ability to work a maximum of 200 hours at a rate not to exceed \$16 per hour. The total per youth will not exceed \$3,200.

ii.

Career Service Providers in Northern Middle will work with secondary school counselors and CTE Directors to identify ISY and to coordinate with any existing youth career pathway or internship programs. NM will also work closely with entities such as Vol State Community College, Forward Sumner, Rutherford Works, TCAT/CMCSS, employer work-based learning programs, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. For example, Vol State hosts a Career Exploration Fair for upcoming freshman to inform them and their parents of expanded opportunities in high schools as it relates to career and technical education and allows youth to learn about professionalism and evaluate their personality, strengths, interests, and potential career options. Rutherford County Schools and Rutherford Works partner to host a College and Career Event. This event is open to employers interested in hiring high school students and future graduates for part-time and full-time jobs, summer internships, or work-based learning opportunities. These are examples of excellent opportunities to leverage resources while at the same time recruiting youth and working with employers on job placement opportunities.

iii.

Flyers targeting youth recruitment will be distributed in places such as, but not limited to, secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, housing authorities, and juvenile courts and detention centers. Employer recruitment flyers will be distributed among small businesses. 

d. AJC Operations Improvement: AJC Assessment

- i. Provide an analysis of the KPMG assessment study results specific to the local area.
- ii. How does the LWDB plan to incorporate the recommendations and adjust the local service strategy if necessary?

i.

The Northern Middle Region supports the premise of continuous improvement and welcomes the Program Evaluation facilitated by KPMG. Through research and data analysis provided, program services and offerings will be refined to improve delivery of workforce services. Specifically related to the six global strategies identified, Northern Middle proposes to facilitate the following actions:

Strengthen service integration and increase co-enrollments by convening partners and meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers.

Increase service awareness and utilization among all communities by conducting outreach and enhancing relationship building with employers by implementation of the Business Engagement Plan.

Design and provide intensive, individualized services to enhance employment outcomes by identifying local strategies to serve target populations.

Identify causes and promising practices to enhance efficiency by identifying redundant and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Deepen and track community partnerships and increase access points to customers to ensure they cater to a diverse range of demographic needs.

Improve Staff recruitment, development and retention and virtual service delivery to guide service providers on strategic hiring to effectively serve populations with barriers.

Specific to Northern Middle, the area has a high potential to serve of individuals in targeted demographics including veterans, disabled, homeless and justice involved. Title II, Northern Middle is home to more non-English speaking individuals than any other area. Additionally, Nashville-Davidson County has close to 2,000 homeless individuals indicating a high potential to serve. The Board will provide outreach opportunities to improve services including transportation assistance, childcare needs, English as a second language, and serving justice involved individuals.

While the KPMG report highlights transportation as an issue for job seekers to obtain services, Northern Middle has maintained a physical AJC in each of the 13 counties. It has been able to do this by reaching out to community partners and service providers to help offset the infrastructure costs of the centers while bringing in more opportunities and supports for job seekers. An example of this is in the Montgomery County AJC, where Catholic Charities pays rent and offers a food bank to under-served populations.



e. Infrastructure

- i. Describe how the LWDB plans to implement an innovative and effective funding structure to incorporate the blending and braiding of resources.
- ii. What additional funding sources, beyond WIOA formula dollars, does the LWDB plan to seek?
- iii. How does the LWDB plan to staff and administer any programs funded through non-WIOA sources?

i.

The Northern Middle Board continually seeks alternative resources to further sustain the American Job Center system throughout the workforce region. The Board pursues new partners and partner opportunities to develop additional tenants in the AJC system as well as funding streams that will reduce partner overhead and bring new opportunities to braid resources. Braiding resources through the MOU and IFA process as well as new grant opportunities helps to minimize direct funding from mandatory partners in AJC operations especially those in core Title operations. (see MOU and IFA attachments)

Some examples of positive funding restructuring and leveraging resources can be seen below:

Title I, SNAP E&T, RESEA, AE, TANF and TAA sharing customers and combining resources to fund training and support for eligible individuals.

ii.

The Napier Envision Center as well as the McGruder Center provides office space at no cost for AE, Title I, Title III, DHS, and VR for staff to provide on site assistance to eligible customers.

Co-location of the AJC with TCAT in Dickson, Rutherford, and Wilson Counties.

Staff office space for Title I and Title III staff on the Fort Campbell Transition Assistance Center and Spouse Employment Center military base at no cost.

The Board partnered with numerous Economic development agencies in TVA Economic Development grants such as those successfully applied for in Wilson, Montgomery, and Sumner Counties. These grants saved thousands of dollars in Title I training dollars and support dollars.

Partnering with the Greater Nashville Regional Council for Good Jobs Challenge grants at the Federal Level. Even though this was not awarded the Board takes pride in developing partnerships that open opportunities such as the Good Jobs Challenge. This did result in a partnership with NHC that is ongoing to train eligible DW's and employ them in the Health Care field. This will be an ongoing opportunity saving untold funding in Title I.

	A	B	C
1	Northern Middle Workforce Board Support & Partnerships		
2	Initiative	Description	County
3	Premier Radiology	Outpatient Diagnostic Imaging Services	Montgomery
4	Austin Peay State Univeristy	Grow Your Own Teacher Apprenticeship	Montgomery
5	Economic Development Administration	Electrical Joint Apprentieceship and Training	Davidson
6	Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains	Wildcat's domestic cathode active material manufacturing plant	Dickson
7	Wilson County TVA Grant	Apprenticeship Training for EV, Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Industries	Wilson
8	Families First Community Grant Program	Catholic Charities, Diocese of Nashville	Davidson
9	USDA Rural Development	2023 Middle Tennessee Workforce Compensation Study (MTIDA)	Rural
10	Office of Refugee Resettlement Employer Engagement Program	New American and Refugee Pathway Program	Davidson
11	TN Department of Labor and Workforce Services	Summer Youth Employment Program	All
12	TVA Workforce Invest Grant Program	Forward Sumner Certified Career Readiness Pathways and Training	Sumner
13	Innovative Schools Models Grant	Career readiness training, mentoring and advising	Montgomery, Dickson, Davidson
14	TCAT Nashville Community Reinvestment Grant	Wrap-around Supportive Services for justice involved individuals seeking employment in Information Technology and Construction sectors	Davidson
15	Department of Energy - American Geothermal Proposal	Heat Pump Defense Production Act Program	All
16	Connected Community Facilities Grant	Rennovations to the historic Ward School to transform it to a much needed community gathering location for digital accessibility	Trousdale

Strategic Planning Elements:

- a. Describe the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.
 - i. How do the local area's workforce development programs, including programs provided by partner agencies, support this strategic vision?
 - ii. How will the local area, working with the entities that carry out the core programs, align available resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals?

i.

The Northern Middle Workforce Board (NMWB) establishes a strategic vision and goals aimed at preparing an educated and skilled workforce, with a focus on inclusivity for youth and individuals facing barriers to employment.

Strategic Vision and Goals: The NMWB's strategic vision revolves around creating a dynamic and inclusive workforce ecosystem that meets the evolving needs of the local economy. Key goals include:

1. Skill Development: Prioritizing initiatives that enhance the skills of the local workforce, ensuring alignment with industry demands and technological advancements.
2. Inclusivity: Fostering programs and services that address the needs of youth and individuals facing barriers to employment, such as those with disabilities, veterans, or individuals with limited educational backgrounds.
3. Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and employers to create a seamless pathway from education to employment.
4. Workforce Diversity: Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workforce by implementing strategies to eliminate barriers and biases in hiring and advancement.
5. Youth Engagement: Developing targeted programs and resources to engage and prepare youth for the workforce, including internships, apprenticeships, and career exploration opportunities.

ii.

Supporting Workforce Development Programs: The local area's workforce development programs, including those provided by partner agencies, play a crucial role in supporting the NMWB's strategic vision:

1. Education and Training Programs: Collaborating with educational institutions to design and implement relevant training programs that equip individuals with the skills needed in the local job market.
2. Youth Employment Initiatives: Applying youth-focused programs that provide career guidance, mentorship, and hands-on experience to facilitate a smooth transition from education to employment.
3. Barriers to Employment Services: Partnering with agencies specializing in supporting

- b. Describe the LWDB's goals relating to performance accountability measures. How do these measures support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency?

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development has developed a plan that seamlessly integrates the service delivery of all programs, to improve the success outcomes for the Tennesseans that utilize our programs. This primary goal centers on 1) maximizing the co-enrollment opportunity, 2) developing new intake and referral processes across programs and 3) designing a reporting system to better analyze performance and outcomes. Northern Middle staff support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency by engaging with regional local economic development agencies and organizations such as Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Agency to promote jobs and self-sufficiency.

The Northern Middle Workforce Board and the One-Stop-Operator (OSO) closely monitor federal performance measures as well as our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) goals defined by the TDLWD. WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's core programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, AE & AEFLA, Employment Service program, and VR). KPIs quantify WIOA objectives and allows for tracking of Tennessee's progress on becoming "the best public workforce system in the nation". KPIs consist of, but are not limited to: new enrollments, total enrollments, co-enrollments, and exits. Programs included in the KPI measures include: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Apprenticeship, RESEA, Re-Entry, Senior Employment, SNAP E&T, TAA, Wagner-Peyser, and Incumbent Worker. Monitoring for these measures is provided on a continuous basis. For example, the OSO sends weekly co-enrollment reports to all program staff.

In addition to ongoing monitoring in Northern Middle Workforce Board and the OSO meet with the partners of the American Job Centers on a quarterly basis for training and updates. These quarterly meetings promote alignment and collaboration between partners, ultimately preventing duplication of services. Northern Middle board staff also meet with Title I career service providers on a bi-weekly basis. Topics include, but are not limited to technical assistance and progress toward federal performance and KPIs.

- c. Provide a description of how the LWDB will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including those authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to support service alignment.

The WIOA core partners of the Title I, II, III and IV programs as well as other partners of the Northern Middle AJC network are aligned to deliver mutually supporting services that support the state's strategic initiatives. The focus is to improve customer service for employers, businesses, and individuals by leveraging resources, simplifying processes and procedures and preventing duplication of services.

The Northern Middle Workforce Area, has configured to:

- o Have a seamless intake system between partners, which allows for efficient co-enrollment and service delivery.
- o Implemented an electronic referral system to streamline the referral process and increase co-enrollment opportunities.
- o Streamlined the enrollment process to provide quick and effective engagement for candidates and avoid intake duplication between partner applications.
- o Work with education providers to create industry recognized training programs that will offer credentials, and provide immediate entry into employment.
- o Ensure cross-training is provided to partners so that the AJC Welcome Function, Career Development, and Business Services teams know the specifics of each partner program in order to enhance services, leverage resources and prevent duplication of services.

Examples of streamlined service delivery and co-enrollment include:

- o Splitting training costs between Title I and SNAP E&T.
- o Reverse SNAP E&T referrals.
- o Developing and implementing a TAA and Title I co-enrollment policy to prevent customers from duplicating enrollment documentation.
- o Co-enroll AE Youth to provide Paid Work Experience opportunities and to provide incentives for HiSET completion.
- o Quarterly AJC staff training provided by the One-Stop-Operator (OSO).
- o Wagner-Peyser providing direct placements and referrals to Title I programs for wrap-around Supportive Services to enhance retention.
- o Vocational Rehabilitation providing soft skills to disabled youth and referring to Title I for Paid Work Experiences opportunities.
- o Title I, Title III and Adult Education provide services to incarcerated individuals in local county jails and other correctional institutions .
- o Title I, TAA, UI and RESEA assist with facilitating Rapid Response events.

Local One-Stop System:

- a. Describe the LWDA's progressive service strategy, incorporating updates resulting from the AJC Assessment, and how the annual Partner's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will support the implementation of this strategy.

The NMWB has committed to maintaining American Job Centers in each county, and has developed additional access points to ensure the underserved have a local entry point to the One-Stop System without worsening the recognized transportation barrier many of our participants face. This progressive strategy is contrary to the trend to consolidate service entry points. The NMTWB has also recognized the costs associated with this strategy and has recruited additional partners to have a physical presence in some AJCs to offset expenses. This balancing act has not only allowed AJCs to remain open, but it has brought an increased level of services to the AJCs which benefits customers who qualify for community services beyond core programs.

The Partners' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities for the implementation of WIOA services and programs. The purpose of the MOU is to:

- o describe partner services provided in and through the AJC network;
- o describe how services are delivered;
- o describe how services are coordinated and identify cross training efforts;
- o describe the method of services for individuals with barriers;
- o describe the agreement of funding costs and services, as well as the cost of operating the system;
- o describe duration, appeals process, and identify signatory authority of partners;
- o establish compliance with WIOA an all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, policies, and plans applicable to parties in their respective programs.

Services offered by core partners are detailed in the local plan. (see MOU in attachments)

As stated in the KPMG study, a roadmap to enhancing workforce services in the State of Tennessee, "one of the promising initiatives to test using a Rapid-Cycle Evaluation (RCE) approach is the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) improvement efforts being spearheaded by the Northern Middle workforce region. This initiative aims at 1) shifting prevailing beliefs about the types of services and supports offered at AJCs, 2) enhancing the "independence" and "proactivity" of AJC staff when referring customers to services, and 3) increasing emphasis on quick and efficient connection of well-matched job seekers and employers."

The three strategies identified in the study are:

- 1) Comprehensive orientations
- 2) Objective assessments and employment-focused service plans
- 3) Intensified job development and matching

*see pages 11-14 of the KPMG executive summary for additional details



- b. Identify programs that are part of the local area’s one-stop system, and describe the role and resource contribution of each, including:
 - i. Core programs;
 - ii. Additional partner programs, including those that support alignment under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006; and
 - iii. Other workforce development programs, if applicable.

i.

Each partner of the American Job Centers in Northern Middle is committed to aligning workforce programs and activities seeking the best employment and education solutions for the job seekers in the area and to building the relationships with employers by providing the needed services. Services are integrated and delivered according to customer need without emphasis on program. Assessments are conducted on each customer to determine their needs and services. Service delivery is divided into three functions: Welcome Function (Basic Career Services), Skills/Career Development Function (Individualized Career Services), and Business Services Function. Participants visiting the AJCs will be greeted by the shared staff at the welcome desk, where they will be triaged to an appropriate service. Services may include the following: registration, orientation to services, re-employment program questions, provision of labor market information, access to resource room, initial assessment, identification of basic skill deficiencies, self-directed job referral and placement, referral to workshops, and referral to other community services. Services may also include skills analysis, facilitated assessments and testing, (COPS, COPEs, CAPS, TABE) identifying support needs, provide career guidance and coaching, arrangement for soft skills training, and referring job seekers to program specific occupational training. Cross training is provided to staff in order to serve participants efficiently with AJC basic services. Through knowledge of partner programs, staff can make the referrals appropriately to better serve job seeker needs. The relationship between the partners is open and available to job seekers in conversations and meetings for resolution to any difficulties that may arise.

ii.

Rapid Response activities are provided by the Business Services Team, a lead staff person receives WARN notification, contacts the employer to collect information and with partner collaboration puts together a team of appropriate staff and resources for a Rapid Response meeting.

Through a network of subcontractors the NMWB will provide the mandatory fourteen youth elements while enhancing best practices led by youth providers within the 13 county region. These will be delivered in traditional and non-traditional formats via the American Job Center Network and targeted zones within some counties where additional at risk youth live. This approach to tailored program availability as compared to a single framework for all youth will enable intake, assessment, skill upgrades and employment plans to be tailored to each youth’s needs while maximizing the resources of the contractors and other community based organizations.



- c. Describe how the LWDB will support state plan strategies and work with the entities carrying out programs in the one-stop system to coordinate and support service alignment.

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board is comprised of thirteen counties, two metropolitan statistical areas and approximately one third of Tennessee's workforce. It is truly the economic engine of the state. Aligning with the Governor, the Board's overall focus is to convene partners and resources to make Tennessee the number one state in the southeast for good paying jobs. The Board delivers its mission and strategies through an interconnected American Job Center network by aligning its strategic initiatives to fully support the state's plan strategies. The Board has delegated the responsibility of coordinating and supporting service alignment to the One Stop Operator (OSO). The OSO has implemented several initiatives to coordinate, track, and monitor service delivery and outcomes. These include such things as:

- o Quarterly IFA Partner Meetings where both the board and AJC issue reports and updates.
- o Quarterly AJC Trainings with all AJC staff.
- o Quarterly AJC Board Report where OSO creates an AJC Dashboard containing information such as partner program updates, traffic counts, NM unemployment rates, KPIs, challenges and successes.
- o OSO weekly updates distributed to all AJC staff on new UI claimants and RESEA co-enrollments.

The twenty-three member business-led Board, in partnership with the Local Elected Officials and multiple partners, bonded together by a formal MOU and infrastructure funding agreement, plans and oversees the workforce system and delivers innovative workforce solutions through the AJC network. In middle Tennessee's growing economy, the Board focuses their efforts and resources within the eight business sector strategies of Healthcare and Social Assistance, Information Technology, Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism, Professional and Scientific Services and Educational Services. These key industry sectors align with the emerging growth and needs of business outlined in both the Regional and State Combined Plans. The WIOA core partners of the Title I, II, III and IV are aligned to deliver mutually supporting services to increase the competitive position of Tennessee businesses by developing a highly skilled workforce. These primary core partners are the backbone of the Middle TN workforce delivery system, however partners such as TANF, National Council on Aging, and Job Corps all deliver seamless services to eliminate barriers to employment for job seekers while up skilling the workforce to meet business expectations.

Specifically to address the goals of Tennessee's Combined State Plan, the NMWB is:

- o Working with partners to create a seamless intake system, which will allow for efficient co-enrollment and service delivery.
- o Focusing recruitment and enrollment of participants on the hardest to serve with significant barriers to unemployment to promote diversity and equity in the Northern Middle's workforce.
- o Working with education partners to create industry recognized training programs that will offer credentials and provide immediate entry into employment.

Workforce Development and Career Pathways

- a. Describe how the LWDB will work with providers to facilitate the development of career pathways, including co-enrollment in core programs and academic training programs when appropriate.

Through analysis of our emerging industries via the WIRED unit data, and partner input to include survey data from business and industry, the Northern Middle LWDB can focus on a sector-based service delivery approach. The eight sector industries identified in Northern Middle include Healthcare and Social Assistance, Information Technology, Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism, Professional and Scientific Services and Educational Services. The one-stop-systems efforts are aligned to provide relevant skills training for attainment of self-sustaining wages and viable career pathways. Particular emphasis is made among AJC partners to conduct outreach and recruitment of equity challenged individuals who face barriers to social mobility.

The NMWB maintains the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to align diplomas and credentials to skill sets required in the eight targeted industry sectors. The Board has put into place policies and procedures that only courses that will result in stackable credentials, industry recognized certification, or a state recognized diploma will be funded through WIOA Title I. Additionally, the NMWB performs frequent monitoring of the ETPL to ensure satisfactory performance benchmarks and successful training outcomes.

The Board has worked closely with its business partners in developing a pipeline of qualified candidates through apprenticeships, work-based learning and Incumbent Worker Training that all lead to successful career pathways providing a self-sustaining wage. Title I works closely with local CTE Directors and school systems to meet and enroll students before they graduate. Upon enrollment, Career Service Providers work with youth to assist them with continuing education in their career interest, help them enter into an apprenticeship, or work with employers to place them directly in their field of interest. Title II staff play a significant role in preparing individuals from all partner programs for training or employment. For example, if an individual is interested in training but has been out of school for a while Title II staff provides refresher courses to ensure successful completion of training program. If employer requires an individual to perform at a certain level related to math, reading, comprehension, etc. Title II works with individual to gain the required competency to enable to secure employment.

Co-enrollment in partner programs begins with the common intake form at AJC entry. As Title I and III teams begin the career pathway development and Individual Employment Plan, the partners have agreed to a referral process. Both electronic referrals and 'warm handoffs' occur in the AJC among partners. The OSO monitors co-enrollments, along with site leads to ensure customers are receiving all the benefits the AJC has to offer.

- b. Describe how the LWDB will work with providers to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials.
 - i. Explain how the LWDB will ensure these credentials are transferable to other occupations or industries (“portable”).
 - ii. Explain how the LWDB will ensure these credentials are part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time (“stackable”)? If yes, please explain.

i.

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board develops and nurtures relationships with postsecondary institutions to ensure that the link between education and employment is well-established and communicated within the communities. The Board has worked diligently on streamlining the Eligible Training Provider Listings (see page 8) and work with education partners is ongoing to create or expand industry recognized training programs that will offer credentials and provide immediate entry into employment. Specifically the Board focuses on the following:

- o Creation of industrial readiness training programs in local jails.
- o Supporting apprenticeships through incumbent worker training.
- o Offering ITAs in targeted industries.
- o Financial support to employers for upskilling and OJT.
- o Expanding flexibility and support to Adult Education to provide employer-driven training under the umbrella of Workforce Development Initiatives (WDI).

The Northern Middle Workforce Board has a full array of programs and services to speed the connection between job seekers and employers. The Board places an emphasis on the following industry sectors: Healthcare and Social Assistance, Information Technology, Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism, Professional and Scientific Services and Educational Services.

Staff to the Board manage the Workforce Funding Grants, including Incumbent Worker Training grants and Apprenticeship grants, with a goal to position area employers to remain competitive in a global economy. The Career Service Provider manages On the Job Training contracts. Adult Education manages the Workforce Development Initiatives. Priority is supporting employers within the eight sector strategies determined by the Board.

The NMWB staff works with members of the Business Service Teams to educate employers about the availability of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and On the Job Training (OJT) funds to assist in upgrading skills of new and existing employees. Information about these programs is on both the NMWB and fiscal agent, Workforce Essentials, Inc. websites. All partners assist in building employer relationships, marketing, and facilitating the use of AJC services.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grants Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants provide funding to help eligible Tennessee businesses effectively train and retain employees by providing skills upgrades and process improvement training for existing, full-time employees. The grant reimburses employers for pre-approved training up to \$25,000.



Access to Employment and Services:

- a. Describe how the LWDB and its partners will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

The Northern Middle Board, through a workforce study conducted by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, strategized to increase its outreach to underserved job seekers facing barriers to employment by opening specialized AJCs at the Napier Envision Center and the McGruder Center in Nashville. Specifically, the McGruder Center is located in an area with incredibly low per capita income and according to a Brookings report, the McGruder zip code, 37208, has the highest incarceration rate in the nation.

An inclusive racial equity agenda for the region's workforce is the cornerstone of an equitable economic recovery and a prosperous economy in which all can participate and reach their full potential. The Advancing Workforce Equity in Nashville: A Blueprint for Action recommends to strategies for funders, employers, and community-based organizations working to advance workforce equity in Middle Tennessee. When the full report is released, the NMWB will embrace the challenge of addressing workforce equity in the region.

AJC staff also conduct outreach activities throughout the month at community centers in other public housing areas such as Lincoln Homes in Montgomery or the Shalom Zone in Sumner County. The Board also conducts aggressive outreach and advertisement of events and services through the Boards website, its Facebook page, Instagram, Twitter account and Linked In.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides access to employment and training to individuals with disabilities. VR provides Job Readiness Training, Job Placement and Job Coaching. The Department has really improved it's services pertaining to vocational training via TRC Smyrna. Most areas of study at TRC Smyrna now result in a certification, supporting career pathways that can lead to employment. VR also supports completion of Post-Secondary education leading to a credential for individuals with disabilities. The Board recently authorized funding to target transitioning soldiers at Fort Campbell. The program will focus on assisting first term army veterans to find good paying jobs in Tennessee and neighboring Kentucky.

WIOA core partners, during intake and development of the individual employment plan, conduct barrier identification which might hinder program completion. All partners work together to eliminate these barriers to ensure successful employment. A single mom may initially see a TANF case manager but receive services from Adult Education, Title I and Title IV to ensure she meets and exceeds employer expectations upon landing her job in one of the eight in-demand sectors. A disabled soldier seen initially by a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist may receive assistance from Title I and IV to alleviate barriers so that the veteran can smoothly transition to his second career in the civilian workforce. The Board ensures that these services are delivered seamlessly through the American Job Center partners either in person or virtually under the supervision of the One Stop Operator. The Boards Individual Training Account policy as well as its Support Service policy align equal access to the job seeker to ensure barriers are eliminated when pursuing career plans

- b. Provide a description of how the LWDB will provide services to priority populations as outlined in the State Plan, including:
- i. Directions given to the One-Stop System Operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
 - ii. How the LWDB will determine priority populations and how to best serve them, along with any other state requirements.

i.

Establishing priority of service begins at entry into any of the Northern Middle American Job Centers, including the Virtual American Job Center. One –Stop System Operator staff are trained to identify and assist those eligible for priority of service at the point of entry. There are also banners and signage up at the entrance of all American Job Centers notifying veterans and eligible persons of priority of service. The Northern Middle LWDA has a local Priority of Service policy in place as well as monitoring processes to ensure priority of service is delivered appropriately.

Priority of service falls into two main areas: priority of service to veterans and priority of service for the WIOA Title I Adult program. WIOA implements priority of service to low-income individuals and those with barriers to employment however, veterans within these groups receive priority over non-veterans. Contractual measures are in place to ensure high quality customer service to those who take precedence.

Another unique priority strategy of the board is its process to assist transitioning soldiers and spouses as they leave Fort Campbell. Tennessee has a high population of veterans across the state and ranks seventh overall in numbers of residents who have served in the armed forces. On average, Fort Campbell discharges approximately 400 soldiers per month in a variety of ranks, years of service and specialty skill sets. This is a ready-made pipeline of workers. The demand for soldiers of all skill sets with the experience in teamwork and soft skills is highly desirable to employers. The Board has partnered with the Transition Assistance Program and the Spouse Employment Center on base at Fort Campbell to secure office space for our career service provider and establish an outreach program to recruit transitioning soldiers and spouses. Targeted specifically are first term soldiers that are ‘most at risk’ to not having the support and workforce plan to successfully transition to civilian life. (see Priority of Service Policy)

ii.

Northern Middle has several existing partnerships and collaborations in place and is constantly working to build and establish new partnerships that benefit workforce development in the area. An example of this is the United Way Family Collective Program. This program covers Cheatham, Davidson, Robertson, Rutherford, and Williamson counties in the Northern Middle area. The Family Collective is an initiative of the United Way of Greater Nashville, dedicated to preventing and solving family homelessness in our community. In order to assist families in obtaining stable housing this program offers numerous services such as coaching, financial counseling, employment and education navigation, mental health,

- c. Describe how the local area will facilitate access to services through the One-Stop delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology.

The American Job Center system across the 13 counties and 16 different AJC's by all partners through the MOU section 6 have committed to aligning workforce programs and activities and are electronically linked across all counties. Services can be electronically delivered and integrated according to the need of the customer. Any party to this MOU may refer customers electronically for services or through other procedures using a mutually agreed upon format. All partners have also agreed upon delivery through electronic means via Section 10 of the MOU for those needing specialized accessibility and is in keeping with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended.

All of the resource centers are connected to high speed internet and JOBS4TN, UI connections and Zendesk Chat have short cuts available to the job seeker to directly link them to Department of Labor data and information concerning all workforce questions. Printers and thumb drives are available to assist those needing resumes copied and upgraded for job applications. The Board ensures that information technology is upgraded through policy, and that software is properly licensed across the areas AJC's. Assistive technology is available for those that require equipment such as a track ball mouse.

Partners such as Adult Education bring laptops into county jails for instruction for attaining their HISET while incarcerated. Title I staff along with their Community College partners use technology in county jails to train incarcerated individuals in such fields as advanced manufacturing mechatronics. This allows inmates to leave the facility with a marketable credential and speed up re-employment opportunities thus reducing recidivism. Adult Education also uses information technology for those receiving English as a Second Language instruction. Some of these classes are housed in employer facilities due to the high number of non-English speakers such as Tyson Foods. These employees receive civics and English instruction via laptops while at the workplace. This is a benefit for the individual and the employer.

The mobile Career Coach is used across many sectors of the region bringing computer access directly to the doors of those facing barriers to employment. The Board has used the coach (and will continue to do so) at Rapid Response activities to speed up assistance through the Department of Labor to those being laid off. The Coach has pulled up to jails and Title III staff assist soon to be released inmates to enroll in JOBS4TN and begin their job search prior to release. The Coach is also used at urban and rural job fairs so that applicants can apply to solid job leads immediately. The Coach is also used to bring internet connectivity to youth career exploration fairs so that high school students can connect better to industry sectors especially those hiring in the near future.

The Board has put into place blockers and malware to ensure that internet connectivity is focused on education, recruitment and job search only throughout the AJC system.

d. Describe how AJCs are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology enabled intake care management information system.

Partners of the American Job Center have implemented fillable forms, electronic signature functions and DocuSign to provide case management without creating additional barriers for customers. Most of the AJC staff are equipped with cell phones and laptops in order to provide services whether in office, at home or out in the community.

Title III staff use the Virtual AJC for staff acuity scheduling, eligibility determinations, and referrals. Vocational Rehabilitation added Jabber software to their office desk phones so that counselors can text, email, chat and communicate with customers as if they were physically at their office. Adult Education and ESL students, across the region, can register, attend and participate in all aspects of the program via Zoom. AE also offers multiple on-line resources to include, but not limited to:

Win – Online soft skills and academic help;

Burlington English – ESL online;

180 Skills – Online courses to teach both job specific and academic skills.

Tablets have been provided to county jails and prisons by the American Prison Data System (APDS). The Galaxy TabA devices are equipped with military-grade cases, 24/7 live-agent monitoring and are Wi-Fi enabled on a secure network independent of the facilities' networks. Programs include education, rehabilitation, re-entry, workforce development, professional development, a learning management system and live video classroom. Title I staff have the ability to determine eligibility for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs without requiring to travel to the AJC by using electronic forms and virtual meetings.

Northern Middle and its partners continue on the path of continuous improvement through innovation and technology to ensure quality case management.

- e. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of programs and services provided to adults and dislocated workers in the local area.

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services are available full-time, on-site at all American Job Centers in the Northern Middle area. Service delivery is broken down into career services and training services.

There are three types of career services: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services.

Basic career services are made available and, at a minimum, include the following services as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles.

- WIOA eligibility determination to determine if the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs.
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system
- Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs.
- Labor exchange services to include job search, placement assistance, and information on in-demand industry occupations and non-traditional employment
- Providing referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and to other workforce development programs as needed.
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas.
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible training providers
- Provision of information relating to available supportive services such as transportation, childcare, and auto repair. Information on other services that may be provided by another agency through the referral process such as housing, SNAP, and TANF.

Individualized career services are made available if determined to be appropriate in order for individual to obtain or retain employment. These include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills, levels and service needs of individuals to include assessment tools such as TABE and interest inventories and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, objectives and plan on how to achieve them
- Career planning
- Internships or paid work experience opportunities that are linked to career interests or career pathways. These opportunities may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or public sector.
- Workforce preparation activities such as resume assistance, interviewing skills, and career readiness workshops



- f. Describe how workforce activities will be coordinated with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and appropriate supportive services in the local area.

WIOA core partners, during intake and eligibility determination, conduct barrier identification which might hinder program completion. Once barriers are pin-pointed, supportive services, including transportation assistance, may be provided to customers participating in career or training services. Programs such as Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth, SNAP E&T and Vocational Rehabilitation can provide transportation assistance as well as other supportive services. Other examples of Supportive Services include, but are not limited to, assistance with childcare, assistance with educational testing, assistance with housing, linkages to community services, reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools. Cross training is provided to AJC staff in order to prevent duplication of services. There must be a demonstrated financial need and the cost must be reasonable and necessary, as well as competitive in price. Before authorized, when multiple options are available for receiving supportive services, documentation must show a reasonable effort was made to determine and choose the lowest, competitively priced service available. (See Support Service Policy in attachments)

Three counties within the Northern Middle region have public transportation; Montgomery, Davidson and Rutherford counties. AJC programs such as Title I work with the transit vendors in order to provide bus passes to enrolled Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth individuals. Mid Cumberland Human Resource Agency (MCHRA) provides public transportation in twelve of the Northern Middle counties. This curb-to-curb rural transit option is open to the general public, with priority given for medical trips.

- g. Provide a description of services available to veterans and eligible spouses, to include priority of service and the use of available Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) staff.

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff and other AJC staff work together as a close-knit team to provide services to all veteran/eligible persons. After the comprehensive assessment is conducted to identify barriers and services needed, a DVOP will refer the veteran/eligible person to partner AJC staff such as Title I (Adult) for training and other support services, Adult Education (AE), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Re-employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The use of this multi-agency strategy, combined with a value for streamlined program integration will ensure the veteran/eligible person is provided maximum employment and training assistance that will aid in addressing the basic skills needed to promote more qualified, effective, and efficient opportunities for veterans. DVOP's will coordinate case management with the partners to ensure there is not a duplication in services, the Individual Employment Plan is being followed/updated as appropriate, and case notes are properly maintained.

Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER)'s are an integral part of our Business Service Team (BST). The BST provides valuable information about promoting veterans within a variety of venues including job fair participation, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) meetings, employer visits, public radio and television service spots, and departmental brochures. The advantage of hiring veteran/eligible persons is a topic that needs to be presented to an employer consistently. Tennessee's American Job Centers (AJC's), through the Business Services Team (BST), provides an effective conduit to promote veteran/eligible persons to businesses as a sound and wise investment. Federal contractors and subcontractors are also targeted as they not only benefit from the hiring of veterans but are reminded about their responsibilities under the Office of Federal Contract and Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) guidelines as well.

Priority of Service (POS) begins at the point of entry of all Middle Tennessee American Job Centers (AJC). The same priority of service is also provided via any virtual web portals for those applying for services. It is the responsibility of the One-Stop Operator to ensure that all staff of the AJC are trained to assist those eligible for POS. There are two types of Priority of Service in the AJC: priority of service to veterans and priority of service for the WIOA Title I Adult program. The NMWB has aligned their veteran programs under the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) where employment and training programs are funded in whole or part by the Department of Labor. Additionally, the NMWB has banners and signage up at the entrance of all comprehensive and affiliate centers notifying Veterans and eligible persons of priority of service. All provider staff and partners have received priority training. Providers have contractual measures in place to demand high quality customer service to those who take precedence. Our success with these measures is monitored through customer feedback surveys and follow-up monitoring. (See POS Policy in attachments)

DVOP, LVER, and consolidated DVOP/LVER positions are integrated into the employment 

h. What initiatives will the LWDB implement to best serve individuals who have been justice involved?

The Northern Middle Workforce Board will provide training and job placement opportunities to individuals that have barriers to employment because of being justice involved. The Board will assist an offender's transition from multiple entry points whether it be from incarceration inside a prison, jail, or juvenile or probation and parole into life as a productive citizen in Northern Middle Tennessee communities. The NMWB will also provide financial support and incentives to employers who provide placement and on-the-job training opportunities to those justice involved individuals.

American Job Center partners in Northern Middle have existing relationships with many facilities and programs that serve justice-involved individuals. In the past, the NMWB has partnered with post-secondary institutions such as Nashville State Community College and Volunteer State Community College to provide free Industrial Readiness Training for justice involved individuals, leading to entry-level positions as operators and maintenance technicians in the manufacturing industry. The Board partnered with county jails in order to provide in-person classes to those currently incarcerated. Adult Education can provide basic remediation services and/or high school equivalency programs. Job Fairs and expungement clinics are hosted across the Northern Middle region for justice-involved individuals.

Additionally, the Northern Middle and Upper Cumberland LWDAs are collaborating on two grant opportunities: 1) Pathway Home; will give us the opportunity to provide re-entry services to incarcerated individuals before release from state correctional facilities or county jails. 2) Improving Job Opportunities for Youth Affected by Violence, Poverty will allow the Board to provide programs that provide skills training through work-based learning, employment services, educational support and mentorship to youth and young adults in communities affected by violence, crime and poverty.

Other initiatives for justice involved individuals for the period 2024-2027 include:

- * Enhancing the current partnerships with Project Return in Nashville on the Pathways Home grant and working with them in existing prisons in middle TN including the Debra K. Johnson Center.
- *Support Men of Valor initiatives in Nashville by leveraging funding and providing support services to participants.
- *Partner with Persevere in the American Job Center to support their Tech Alliance Program.
- *Work with current AE providers in Northern Middle to include Workforce Essentials, NICE, Volunteer State Community College, South Central Workforce Alliance and Davidson County Sheriff's Office to promote the tablet program and co-enroll inmates upon release to transition them to employment.
- *Lead efforts in jails located in rural communities in partnership with Adult Education to

- i. Describe any MOU agreements in place to enhance the quality and availability of services to people with disabilities, such as cross training to staff, technical assistance, or methods of sharing information.

The 16 partners who are signatory of the Northern Middle MOU have agreed to ensure their policies, procedures, programs and services are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments in order to be inclusive and provide equal access to all customers with disabilities. Additionally in section 9 of the MOU, the partners agree to fully comply with the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and 29CFR part 37 to ensure that services are delivered by partners that are inclusive and non-discriminatory. (See MOU in attachments)

The partners are committed to promoting capacity building and professional development of staff to increase awareness and understanding of serving people with disabilities. Training and targeted workshops are conducted quarterly with the OSO at select AJC's with special topics to ensure that all staff know the expertise and support that other partner case managers can bring to assist those searching for work who have a disability. All AJC locations within the NM area are certified every two years to include a separate VR evaluation of accessibility, equipment and staff to ensure job seekers with disabilities have access to all of the resources to successfully complete their career plan.

All centers are fully accessible. Descriptions of services offered at the center are also available in braille. Handicapped parking is located closest to the main entrance. All resource Center computers have the ability to utilize voice frequencies to assist those with hearing or visual impairments. Track ball mice, joy sticks and specialized key boards are available on request. Those with mobility impairments such as a wheel chair, have the option of using resource center electrically adjustable furniture to make them more efficient and comfortable.

Staff work with VR or DVOP's, located at the AJC for their expertise in assisting disabled customers. However, other agencies such as the Veterans Administration, Mid Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Catholic Charities are just a few of the additional partners, even though not directly through an MOU, that staff work with and leverage resources to ensure success.

In addition to the required MOU, the Workforce Board has agreements with the Tennessee Alliance for Economic Mobility, United Way Family Collective, and the National Council on Aging.

Specifically, to serve individuals with disabilities, the Board has agreements with Liberty Station in Murfreesboro. Liberty's Station is a progressive workforce program where 90% of the employees have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), physical disabilities, or other employment barriers. Employees are assessed, trained, and gain work experience to then confidently acquire unsubsidized employment in the food service industry.

In addition, the Board provides services to transitioning soldiers through a partnership with the Fort Campbell's Career Transition Program. Many soldiers are medically discharged and

- j. Describe how One-Stop System Operators and One-Stop partners will comply with the nondiscrimination requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (section 188), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding:
- i. The physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, and services;
 - ii. Technology and materials for individuals with disabilities; and
 - iii. Providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
 - iv. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the One-Stop partners related to the nondiscrimination requirements of WIOA (section 188), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

i.

The partners of this MOU agree to ensure their policies, procedures, programs and services are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments in order to be inclusive and provide equal access to all customers with disabilities. Additionally, partners agree to fully comply with the provisions of WIOA, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and 29 CFR part 37 and all other regulations implementing the aforementioned laws to ensure all partners are Inclusive and non-discriminatory.

The American Job Center facilities, including the Mobile American Job Center, are ADA compliant. Partners in the AJCs will: * Evaluate assistive technology and resources available to accommodate participants. * Evaluate accessibility needs annually and upgraded when necessary. * Continue on-going staff training for sensitivity. * Review facilities to ensure they meet the ADA checklist requirements from Vocational Rehabilitation.

ii.

The partners of the MOU commit to promoting capacity building and professional development of all staff to increase awareness and understanding of serving people with barriers to employment and individuals with disabilities. Services will be available in convenient, high traffic and accessible locations. Vocational Rehabilitation conducts AFC site inspections and accessibility reviews of the physical office to ensure ADA compliance throughout NMTLWDA.

Current facilities are:

- o Located along the public transportation system (Davidson, Rutherford and Montgomery).
- o Public buildings with the required number of dedicated parking lot spaces for disabled parking, including the location nearest the entryways.
- o Vocational Rehabilitation is an active partner and available on-site or through electronic referral to address any additional accessibility questions that may arise.



Business Engagement:

- a. Describe how the LWDB will utilize the Business Engagement Plan to provide consistent messaging and services to local area business and industry.

Since the state's launch of the Business Engagement plan in the Fall of 2023 the Northern Middle Board as well as its AJC partners have participated in its soft roll out as this new and exciting concept begins to transform workforce delivery throughout the public workforce system. The Business Engagement Plan will be a key component to ensuring that TN is the number one place to work in the Southeast and for businesses to be competitive in the global market place. The Business Engagement Plan's cornerstone is to prioritize TN employers as the primary workforce customer through a series of relationship building, projecting value propositions, customizing programs and for the AJC and its partners to provide a consistent approach to streamlined solutions. Two information briefings have already been delivered to partners and the OSO of the area to include staff to the Board and the Executive Director.

Facing the dual challenge of low unemployment rates as well as low labor force participation rates the state has developed the Business Engagement Plan with innovative restructuring strategies to address the needs of employers. The Northern Middle Workforce Board and its 16 AJC partners stand ready to begin this journey to fundamentally shift resources and deliverables to achieve state priorities. Themes for deliverables include alignment and coordination between areas, improved communication with employers and partners and building of Customer Relationship Management of which the Board has begun initial discussion between the state and partners for the launch of this plan.

The state under the direction of the Business Engagement Strategy Team has identified nine plan solutions from a high level for business and industry. The Northern Middle Workforce Board is currently beginning its journey, and local assessment of the local conditions and challenges to finalize its plan solutions to align with the states Business Engagement Plan.

Those solutions are:

- o Enhancing Employer Outreach
- o Tailoring Workforce Solutions
- o Managing the Customer Relationship
- o Rapid Employment and Skill Development Programs
- o Talent Acquisition Support
- o Labor Market Insights
- o Workforce Training Partnerships
- o Responsive Services
- o Continuous Improvement

The nine plan solutions have been organized into seven plan strategies. These solutions' have been organized into 'pillars' of which the Northern Middle Board will collectively with its partners, both local and regional, layout comprehensive approach for the resources needed to achieve the shift in business engagement through the current, yet transformed AJC system. The pillars are: Adopting a Sector base Delivery Approach. Utilize a Business Cycle. +

- b. What local area initiatives (such as registered apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, and customized training solutions) will be used to facilitate engagement of businesses, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand sectors and occupations?

The Northern Middle Workforce Board has a full array of programs and services to speed the connection between job seekers and employers. The Board places an emphasis on the following industry sectors: Healthcare and Social Assistance, Information Technology, Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, Hospitality and Tourism, Professional and Scientific Services and Educational Services.

Staff to the Board manage the Workforce Funding Grants, including Incumbent Worker Training grants and Apprenticeship grants, with a goal to position area employers to remain competitive in a global economy. The Career Service Provider manages On the Job Training contracts. Priority is supporting employers within the eight sector strategies determined by the Board. The NMWB staff works with members of the Business Service Teams to educate employers about the availability of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and On the Job Training (OJT) funds to assist in upgrading skills of new and existing employees. Information about these programs is on both the NMWB and fiscal agent, Workforce Essentials, Inc. websites. All partners assist in building employer relationships, marketing, and facilitating the use of AJC services.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants provide funding to help eligible Tennessee businesses effectively train and retain employees by providing skills upgrades and process improvement training for existing, full-time employees. The grant reimburses employers for pre-approved training up to \$25,000. In the past two program years, Northern Middle has worked with 25 employers to support 530 employees with IWT resulting in approximately \$428,149 in direct support to area businesses. The types of training projects varied from leadership development to very specific process training such as electrical industrial control.

- o NMWB staff develops and updates internal processes annually to streamline the process for participating employers, aligning with the Governor's priorities to create an effective and simple engagement process.
- o NMWB staff prioritizes funding in the sector strategies identified by the NM Board to create a trained workforce to meet employer's needs.
- o NMWB staff strive to fund employer IWT contracts in rural, suburban, and urban environments to reflect the diversity of the counties we serve.
- o Northern Middle Business Service Teams will continue to recruit, promote, and educate employers on AJC services available to them.

Apprenticeship Training Grants

The NMWB has been a leader in both apprenticeship development and apprenticeship support. The Board will continue to provide local funding as needed to supplement state apprenticeship funds to support employers, particularly those launching new apprenticeship programs. The Board is pleased to provide financial support to the Clarksville Montgomery



- c. Describe how the LWDB drives the partnerships necessary for effective business engagement, including the use of business intermediaries and economic development groups.

The twenty three member business led Northern Middle Workforce Board in partnership with Local Elected Officials and other partners, bonded through a formal MOU plans and oversees the public workforce system in 13 counties in Middle TN. Approximately one third of the states workforce (1,161,019) works within the 13 counties of Northern Middle. The Board has kept pace with business growth by participating and sponsoring the Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association salary and benefit survey. They also have sponsored the Montgomery County Workforce Study with Montgomery County Economic Development as well as the Nashville Chamber of Commerce Workforce Study within the past three years. These studies as well as Department of Labor statistics through the states WIRED unit has given the Board directional growth and challenges faced for workforce development now and into the future. As previously discussed in this plan, Northern Middle is focusing its efforts on identified challenges in 8 industry sectors such as Healthcare, Logistics and Information Technology. All of the data conducted in the studies and through the WIRED unit identify these sectors as industries that are growing and projected to have continued growth over the next 5-10 years. The Northern Middle Board with its proactive involvement of workforce studies has postured itself to have a positive jump on the soon to be launched state Business Engagement Plan.

The Boards three subcommittees are also business led which are Finance, Special Populations and Innovations. These committees provide specialized input for decision making of the overall Board that is data driven. The committees, and staff to the Board are actively involved in the talent pipeline management in the growth in business and industry across the region. Business and industry growth and workforce challenges are tied together and deliver mutually supportive services to Tennessee Business. Hospitality is a featured sector since Nashville is the entertainment hub of the south.

The Board has participated successfully with Wilson County Economic development in landing a major warehousing and distribution center as well as a manufacturing corporation relocating from Portland.

The Board is working with Forward Sumner to increase heavy equipment operators with its partner Volunteer State Community College. In partnership with Wilson County Economic Development agency the board is supporting recruitment to increase skill sets in advance manufacturing with a TVA grant. The Executive Director of the Board has been invited to discuss career pathways with the Urban League of Nashville to increase opportunities for people of color to move out of poverty. Currently board staff is partnering with Bethel University and The Branch to assist the immigrant population to transition into the workplace. The Northern Board has procured targeted funding for FORD technicians to gain the skill sets to achieve a level two in an accelerated time frame.

- d. Describe how the local area's workforce development programs and strategies will be coordinated with economic development activities.
 - i. Describe how these programs will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

i.

The NTWB aligns its resources and partners to help business be competitive in the global and local economy. The employer focus for the workforce system under the new Business Engagement Plan, small businesses or micro-enterprises are key in establishing a thriving community. This is why the NTWB partners with the local economic development agencies as well as chambers of commerce to bring resources and partners to ensure small business succeeds. A key player in our region is the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBOC). This agency provides a wide array of services such as consulting, and educational opportunities to help small business owners from start up to expansion at no cost. Their focus is to help small business and micro-enterprises to think strategically and grow their business and achieve success. There are numerous TSBOC offices throughout the Northern Middle area to include Nashville and in Clarksville, which is collocated with Austin Peay State University.

Past and present Board Chairs and Co-chairs for Northern Middle have been owners or managers of small businesses and thus have the professional expertise and direct history in operating a microenterprise and are fully aware of their impact to communities across the thirteen counties of Northern Middle. This has allowed additional players such as the UT Center for Industrial Services to brief Board members and other partners as to options and resources available to assist in the development of business startups. The current Career Service Provider, EDSI, aligning its services to the in demand industry sector of transportation and warehousing, has assisted new business owners in attaining CDL. An example a WIOA customer who obtained thier CDL through Armoured Trucking Academy has now started his own business in the transportation and trucking sector.

Additionally, the Nashville Chamber facilitates the Talent Pipeline Management Model which includes small business and microenterprises. As seen in the Workforce Study funded in partnership of the Workforce Board, small business is a critical piece of economic growth within our region. The Talent Pipeline is comprised of Talent Councils of which one Council, is focused on construction with aligns with the Boards in-demand industry sector. The Board and its Career Service Provider, Metro Action Commission (MAC), are working with job seekers and small employers and assisting them in attaining the construction skill sets required for them to enter into a self-sustaining career in Nashville and the surrounding area. MAC has established a construction academy to provide the skill sets and certifications needed to enter into the construction field. Though in its early stages micro-enterprise construction businesses will be guided to establish other workforce partnerships to increase successful outcomes.

- e. Describe how the LWDB will coordinate its workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response activities.

The primary goal of rapid response activities is to assist affected individuals in transitioning to new employment as quickly and seamlessly as possible, minimizing the negative impact on both workers and the local economy.

Rapid response activities are especially crucial during economic downturns, industry shifts, or other situations where large-scale job losses are imminent. By providing timely and targeted support, rapid response efforts contribute to a more resilient and adaptive workforce, facilitating a smoother transition for workers and promoting economic stability at the local and regional levels. The coordination between the Northern Middle Workforce Board (NMWB) and statewide rapid response activities is crucial for ensuring a cohesive and effective approach to workforce development for any plant closing, including those that are TAA certified.

1. Communication and Collaboration:

- o The NMWB establishes clear channels of communication with the statewide rapid response team, including TAA, Unemployment Insurance, WIOA, Adult Education and local AJC's, educational institutions, and industry associations.
- o Regular meetings, both formal and informal, are scheduled via email to discuss ongoing and upcoming workforce investment activities and rapid response activities.

2. Information Sharing:

- o The NMWB and state rapid response team share information on current labor market trends, emerging skill demands, and potential workforce challenges.
- o Timely sharing of data ensures that both entities have up-to-date information to make informed decisions about training programs, skill development, and job placement strategies.

3. Joint Planning and Strategy Development:

- o The NMWB coordinator and rapid response team collaborate on developing joint strategies and plans to address immediate workforce needs during periods of economic transition, such as industry downturns or closures.
- o The coordinated efforts help in aligning workforce development programs with the specific requirements of affected industries and regions.

4. Training Program Alignment:

- o The NMWB ensures that its training programs are aligned with the immediate needs identified by the rapid response team. This may involve tailoring existing programs or developing new ones to address specific skill gaps identified during rapid response efforts.
- o Close collaboration ensures that training programs are responsive to the evolving demands of the labor market.
- o Alignment with enhanced TAA training options are leveraged for customer benefit.



Training Services

- a. Describe how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities. This may include incumbent worker, on-the-job, and customized training programs.

Title I will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities on an individual basis. This begins by assessing an individual's needs and skills at the time of eligibility determination. Those determined as work ready will receive job matching and job placement services. Individuals who require a certification to launch their career pathway could receive Occupational Skills Training for in-demand industry sectors funded by an Individual Training Account (ITA). Occupational Skills Training could result in a stackable credential, an industry recognized certification, a state recognized diploma and ultimately, self-sufficient employment. Other training opportunities include On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeships. OJT grants provide employers with up to 50% reimbursement of employee pay during a designated timeframe. Apprenticeships assist individuals in gaining a license to practice in a regulated profession.

The NMWB will work closely with eligible Tennessee businesses to provide customized training programs or incumbent worker training. Customized training will meet special requirements of an employer and incumbent worker training will help employers train and retrain employees by providing skills upgrades and process improvement training for existing, full-time employees.

b. Describe how contracts will be coordinated with the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

Individual Training Accounts will be issued to participants who are not work ready on a priority of service basis. ITA funding will allow an individual to obtain self-sufficient employment by earning a stackable credential, an industry recognized certification, an occupational skills license or a state recognized diploma. Training funded by ITAs must appear on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and must be an in-demand occupation or fall within the eight target industry sectors identified by the NMLWB. ITAs will be awarded per training provider term so long as the customer is in good academic standing. The Board set a maximum ITA amount of \$6,000 per enrollment however, all other available financial resources such as Pell grants, TN Reconnect, TN Promise, Wilder/Naifeh, Lottery, TSAC, other scholarships, etc., must be used first toward payment of tuition, fees and books prior to WIOA dollars being expended.

- c. Describe how the LWDB will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how training services are provided.

The NMWB Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) contains a significant number of competent Eligible Training Providers (ETPs), offering a wide variety of training programs and occupational choices. The large selection is made available, within Jobs4TN, in order to maximize customer choice and ensure that all population groups are served. Any individual can access the ETPL, whether entering an AJC in person and utilizing the resource room or by accessing the site on their personal computers. Title I staff can provide customers with instructions on how to access the ETPL. The Eligible Training Provider List includes a description of providers and their corresponding programs along with their performance outcomes and cost information. Customers can easily search by provider or specific program on Jobs4TN.

The Northern Middle LWDB conducts frequent monitoring of ETPL providers and programs to support increased performance accountability.

- d. Describe how the LWDB will ensure continuous improvement of eligible training providers of services and that the providers will meet the needs of local employers and jobseekers.

The Northern Middle Workforce Board reviews all providers and programs before they are approved on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). In-state and out-of-state post-secondary institutions must be authorized by a state governing body – such as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) or the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). There must be a waiver in place for those not approved. Providers must describe each training program offered to include, but not limited to, performance data, cost information, credential outcomes and accessibility for individuals who are employed, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities. Training providers must also provide their alignment with in-demand industry sectors. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development describe the state's top growing industries:

- o Leisure & hospitality
- o Healthcare & social assistance
- o Manufacturing
- o Transportation, warehousing & utilities
- o Professional, scientific & technical services
- o Construction
- o Information Technology

In addition to initial eligibility reviews, the NMWB monitors performance outcomes on each program at subsequent reviews in order to maintain satisfactory federal performance measures. Programs not meeting the necessary requirements or performance benchmarks will be removed from the ETPL. Continuous monitoring of program outcomes and placement data not only provides business with the in-demand employer skill sets, but also results in empowering the economic sufficiency of both individuals and communities.

Demanding excellence, the Board also increased the success factors for training providers to ensure that customers (students) receive the best possible training experience to enhance their career growth.

Program Coordination:

- a. Describe how education and workforce investment activities will be coordinated in the local area. This must include:
 - ii. Coordination of relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs;
 - iii. Activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies and enhance services; and
 - iv. A description of how the LWDB will avoid duplication of services.

ii.

The NMWB researches labor market information and interacts with employers in the region often through many intersecting points of engagement to obtain ongoing input regarding employer current and future hiring needs, as well as to ascertain workforce skills gaps that can be addressed through education, training, and/or upskilling. This information drives the development of strategies and partnerships with education providers and programs, including TN Colleges of Applied Technology, Community Colleges, and Universities, and supports the Board's focus on prioritized sector strategies.

iii.

The Board believes a strong relationship with K-12 partners is an important part of establishing a skilled workforce and supports programs within local schools systems, such as enrolling youth in paid work experiences through the CTE programs at the high school level. This same strategy is prevalent with young adults served by the Adult Education providers in the region. Board staff and AJC partner staff work with K-12 and local Chambers on Job Shadowing and Career Exploration events throughout the 13-county service area. This same group of workforce professionals encourage young people to take advantage of Coursera and other available online resources to expand skills and explore careers.

Post-secondary efforts are also coordinated through On-the-Job Training and/or pre-apprenticeship efforts and registered apprenticeship programs and co-enrollment for training and support services among partner programs such as Title I, Title II, Vocational Rehabilitation, TAA, and/or SNAP E&T is encouraged and supported.

One example of a coordinated postsecondary education and workforce investment project is the NMWB and the Tennessee Builders Alliance to support the construction of the Tennessee Titans Stadium. Specifically, the plan includes:

1. Industry specific training for unemployed, underemployed, justice-involved, WIOA eligible youth adults interested in growing a career in construction (future state registered pre-apprenticeship).
2. Incumbent worker training to include short term training and registered apprenticeships for constructions trade partners.
3. Community engagement and long-range pipeline development thought career exploration and other K-12 activities.



- b. Describe plans, strategies, and assurances concerning the coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Each partner of the American Job Center in the Northern Middle Area is committed to aligning workforce programs and activities seeking the best employment and education solutions for the individuals in the area and to building relationships with employers by providing the needed services. Services are integrated and delivered according to customer needs without emphasis on programs. Assessments are conducted on customers to determine their needs and services. Service delivery is divided into three functions: Welcome Function (Basic Career Services), Skills/Career Development Function (Individualized Career Services), and Business Services Function. Direct linkage by phone or other technology, including virtual AJC or Jobs4TN is made available to customers through comprehensive and affiliate AJCS and other identified access points.

Cross-training of AJC staff provides staff with knowledge of all partner programs allowing them to refer customers to the appropriate provider to meet their needs. This training enhances overall customer service, leverage resources, and avoids duplication of services.

It is currently the plan of the NMWB to utilize Title III staff in the Business Engagement Plan as business engagement consultants. Their efforts will focus on a unified approach to managing business customers through Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Staff will have close collaboration with different partners in the AJC system to ensure seamless delivery and prompt resolution. It will be key for them to foster trust with employers as valuable business customers. The NMWB's intent is for all partners, including Title III, to actively participate and focus on direct placement efforts of individuals into employment. These efforts will include not only obtaining employer job orders but also recruitment of individuals, pre-screening and vetting of individuals against job postings, and making referrals of qualified individuals to employers to fill their job vacancies. While the goal will be to prioritize prompt entry into the workforce, job seekers will be provided the necessary training and support services to ensure their long-term success and career advancement. Most importantly, the Board's strategy is to work with all partners to ensure there is a streamlined process in place to track placement outcomes of all individuals across all programs. Tracking and accounting for all job placements is the only way to improve and enhance the Labor Force Participation Rate in the Northern Middle Area.

- c. How will the LWDB coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II?
- i. Include information on expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services provided through the local one-stop system for Title II participants with barriers to employment.
 - ii. Include how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232.

i.

The NMWB will be intentional by directing the Adult Education provider to make all students feel welcome and safe in an accessible learning environment that will enhance student success and combats barriers to employment through training and education. Primary emphasis will be on the following:

- o Each student will meet with faculty and staff to design their own learning plan.
- o Flexible learning opportunities with computer or paper based materials are available.
- o Classes will be offered in the morning, evening, or weekends each week.
- o Distance learning is available as needed.
- o Neutral classroom locations such as AJCs, TCATs, community colleges, and libraries with appropriate accommodations will be offered.
- o To reduce language barriers, printed materials will be available in both English, Spanish and other languages as needed.

In addition, Adult Education will seek and recruit staff who are representative of the community served. For example, we secured an Afghan instructor to teach immigrants from Afghanistan via our non-profit partners. Also, ESL teachers will be specifically trained in knowledge of cultural differences and unique challenges faced by students without English language skills. Co-enrollment in AJC partner programs such as Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation or Snap E&T can provide additional supportive services for Adult Education participants.

AE also offers digital literacy and soft skills training through NorthStar and WIN, and offers a variety of Workforce Development Initiatives (WDI) that align adult education efforts with employer needs. We offer many work-based learning programs, including a long-standing ESL class at Tyson Foods in Goodlettsville, and have recently started a career readiness program (soft skills training) in the Wilson County Jail with participants guaranteed an interview with an employer partner upon release. Adult Education utilizes career coaches to track both educational and workforce progress, and assist with job placement or enrollment in post-secondary education.

ii

The NMWB does review all local applications submitted as part of the Title II Request for 

- d. Describe any executed cooperative agreements that define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system.

The primary cooperative agreement for the Northern Middle Workforce Board is the Memorandum of Understanding between sixteen partners of the American Job Center. The MOU establishes mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The parties agree to convene and leverage resources. Each partner of the American Job Center in the NMWA is committed to aligning workforce programs and activities seeking the best employment and education solutions for the participants in the area and to building the relationships with employers by providing the needed services. Services are integrated and delivered according to customer need without emphasis on programs. Assessments are conducted on each customer to determine their needs and services. Service delivery is divided into three functions: Welcome Function (Basic Career Services), Skills/Career Development Function (Individualized Career Services), and Business Services Function. Cross training is provided to staff in order to serve participants efficiently with AJC basic services. Through knowledge of partner programs, staff can make the referrals appropriately to better serve participant needs. The relationship between the partners is open and available to participate in conversations and meeting for resolution to any difficulties that may arise. The MOU is updated quarterly. (See MOU in attachments)

Additional MOUs and agreements with partners have been developed to ensure equitable distribution of services, especially with those facing barriers to employment. The Workforce Board has executed an agreement with the Department of Defense Ft. Campbell Ky. A Title I and Title III American Job Center representative are housed at the Transition Assistance Center on the military base. These individuals have direct contact with discharging soldiers and spouses. The Metro Development and Housing Authority has an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Labor in coordination with the One Stop Operator for the Local Workforce Area to provide:

- o AJC representative with technology resources
- o Supportive services for AJC clients and students
- o Participation in relevant meetings and event in collaboration with MDHA
- o Help to prospective AJC clients by connecting them to training opportunities and relevant financial resources
- o Participation in relevant recruitment and retention activities
- o On-site Adult Education classes

- e. How do the LWDA's programs and strategies strengthen the linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of Tennessee put an emphasis on improving the unemployment insurance (UI) program. Staff throughout the one-stop system have been trained to provide UI assistance to any customer entering an AJC. Resource Rooms are equipped with computers that allows customers to complete weekly certifications and job searches. Resource Room staff, also known as the Welcome Function, can assess and refer UI customers to other partners such as Title I. Title I can then provide additional job search assistance to include resume workshops, mock interviews, training and supportive services. Customers unable to visit an AJC can complete weekly certifications online or via their mobile device.

UI assistance is also provided via the RESEA program and at Rapid Response events. RESEA provides claimants with job matching and job placement services, and makes referrals for those needing additional services such as post-secondary training. The Rapid Response program responds to mass-layoffs, providing employees with an overview of workforce services and the available resources within the one-stop system.

In February 2024, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development introduced the new Unemployment Claimant e-Services system. The new system is a one-stop destination for all unemployment benefit related services. Additionally, the TDLWD developed an Unemployment Insurance Benefit Toolkit. This Toolkit was provided to staff of the one-stop system as well as placed at the entrance of the AJCs for customers to access. It includes instructions and how-to's on registering for the new UI system and how to complete weekly certifications.

Youth Activities

- a. Provide an assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area.

Youth and or employment for the youth in the local area are designed to support the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent, entry into and completion of post secondary education, career readiness activities. The local area ensures that all of the required 14 youth elements are made available. These elements are delivered through the Career Service Providers (CSPs) or by a referral to another agency. These are some of the youth activities available in the NM area:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| o High School Diploma/HiSet | o Drop out Recovery Services |
| o Work Experience Opportunities | o Occupational Skills Training |
| o Guidance & Counseling | o Leadership Development |
| o Support Services | o Adult Mentoring |
| o Follow Up Services | o Financial Literacy |
| o Entrepreneurial Skills Training | o Labor Market Information |
| o Education & Training Preparation | o Career Readiness Activities |

There are a large number of excellent service providers in the area for youth. The local Tennessee Technology Centers and Community Colleges and registered apprenticeship programs are an excellent resource for training services for youth. In addition, local adult education activities are equipped to provide Hi-Set classes and testing along with basic skills instruction. For youth with disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides assessment, training, job placement, job coaching, and vocational counseling services.

Title I career service providers partner with K-12 school systems, local training providers, employers, community-based organizations, and other AJC partners to provide youth with resources, knowledge, career awareness, and workplace readiness skills needed to enter in-demand career pathways.

Youth can receive work experience, training, and employment opportunities through some of the programs/resources listed below:

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)/TN Youth Employment Program (TYEP) is held in partnership with employers across the Northern Middle area to provide local youth the opportunity to participate in meaningful work experiences year-round.

Project Search is a program whose primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities. One of Northern Middle's CSPs is partnering with the Montgomery County Project Search to provide paid work experience opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities by enabling them to obtain entry-level employment with Tennova Hospital. This is a successful model in which we will try and expand upon in the future.

In-school youth Dual enrollment opportunities are provided through a partnership with CSP/TCAT/Clarksville Montgomery County School System. While attending high school



- b. Explain how providers and LWDB staff ensure the WIOA elements:
- i. Connect back to the WIOA Youth Program Design Framework, particularly the Objective Assessments and ISS; and
 - ii. Are made available to youth with disabilities by describing specific program practices, tools, and services that are tailored to serve youth with disabilities.

i.

Assessment is part of the overall intake process and includes the initial determination of each individual's employability, aptitudes, abilities, and interests through interview, testing, and counseling. All WIOA-eligible youth have an objective assessment completed to evaluate basic skills, experience, and the appropriateness for service and ability to benefit from WIOA. Information obtained from the objective assessment is then used to complete the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS is developed in partnership with the participant and the career coach. It is a "living document" tool that is used as a roadmap of short and long-term goals that include career pathways, education, training, employment goals, and support services. The key to success is having a well-developed ISS that can be used in the ongoing process of monitoring and re-evaluating the participant's progress toward educational and occupational goals. When used correctly, the ISS is one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment and to coordinate the various services, including training services or other partner/agency services to overcome these barriers. At the time of enrollment, youth are made aware of the 14 youth program elements. This is done through an interview and assessment process with the career coach and each youth is given an IEP Service Element Acknowledgement to sign that identifies all 14 youth elements available.

Here are a couple of examples of using the information on the ISS to place youth at worksites related to their career interest. The ISS of an ISY revealed they were interested in pursuing a career in the healthcare industry. The Career Coach worked with their local nursing home to set up a paid work experience site for the youth. Through this process the youth was able to work in several departments while at the nursing home providing her with experience in multiple areas of the industry. Another example is an OSY with a disability. This youth needed a job but had no work experience and her autism made her very uncomfortable around loud noises, lots of people, and fast-paced environments. The career coach worked with the local library to set up a work experience in a quiet and structured environment. This was the perfect fit. This youth's first work experience was developed around her comfort zone allowing her to slowly adjust. The youth was able to grow during this process and completed the activity successfully. At completion of the work experience, the career coach then worked with a local grocery store to hire youth as a stocker. This way the youth would have a structured job task and would not have to interact with a lot of people. Not only did youth excel at this task but she also took on bagging duties along with stocking shelves, which required her to interact with the general public. The gradual addition of tasks has proven to be successful as the youth has now been hired in a full-time capacity with this employer and continues to do both tasks along with other duties as needed.



- c. Describe successful models for youth services from your local area, including but not limited to virtual work experiences, OSY recruitment, and engagement strategies.

Northern Middle Board recognizes that the successful implementation of WIOA's purposes rests on programs that connect youth to education and jobs. Successful youth models are ones which include frequent contact with youth to keep them engaged. These programs should focus on preparing youth for employment and connecting them to work experiences and employers that are linked to careers. The year-round TN Youth Work Experience Program (TYEP) is a successful model offering short-term work opportunities for eligible youth with little or no work experience. Employer partners work with the youth on developing proper work habits and learning specific tasks and functions of the job. Goals of the program include short-term, supervised work sites, developing life-long work habits and employment-related skills that can be carried to any worksite, and increasing the opportunities for long-term employment leading to self-sufficiency. Youth receive hands-on experience while learning basic work ethics such as teamwork, communication, time management, conflict resolution, and acceptable work habits.

Outreach efforts are focused around secondary school counselors and CTE Directors within the local high schools and other agencies or community entities that serve potential WIOA-eligible youth such as Monroe Harding, adult education programs, juvenile court systems, and local housing authorities. For instance, Monroe Harding serves a large majority of older youth transitioning out of foster care. They help youth to navigate the process of leaving foster care and becoming independent. Through co-enrollment into Title I's work experience program youth can earn a wage while also learning basic employment skills to prepare them for lifelong employment opportunities. Another example of an outreach partner is the Gallatin Shalom Zone. Shalom Zone is dedicated to providing life-enriching programs to children, youth, families, and individuals that educate and encourage families to work toward self-sufficiency while strengthening the family unit. Shalom Zone partnered with Title I and became a vital partner by providing work experience opportunities for WIOA-eligible youth that lead to permanent employment for some youth after the work experience ended. Another engagement strategy is the ability to incentivize youth for achieving milestones or outcomes directly related to their work experience, education, or training activities. For example, per NMWB policy eligible youth who obtain their HiSet diploma while enrolled in WIOA are eligible to receive a \$250 incentive or youth who obtain unsubsidized employment while enrolled are eligible to receive a one-time placement incentive award of \$100. 20.CFR 681.640 states these are allowable incentive payments permitted for recognition and achievement and tied directly to training or work activities.

Northern Middle created youth and employer flyers and equipped them with QR codes so individuals could scan codes and register to receive more information through the form stack process. The flyers are distributed in places not limited to secondary and post-secondary institutions, housing authorities, juvenile courts, detention centers, and other youth oriented entities. In addition, the local area utilizes other virtual options such as the board's website, Facebook, and Twitter to recruit potential youth and referral sources.

- d. Explain how the LWDB has defined the criterion of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” for OSY and ISY, including:
- i. Evidence supporting the established criteria, to include current labor market information, statistical evidence and other data deemed supportive;
 - ii. A description of how the LWDB ensures regional alignment in this criteria; and
 - iii. List any documentation required from the participant to support established criteria and any additional case management parameters the LWDB has deemed necessary.

i.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), 39.1% of 18-24 year olds in Tennessee have some college but no degree.

The Tennessee Higher Education Fact Book 2019-2020, states that almost 60% of all first-time freshmen require learning support at Tennessee community colleges and only 56.8% of freshmen are retained.

According to Educationdata.org students between the age of 20-29 are the most likely to drop out of a 4 or 2-year institution. The top reasons for dropping out of college are financial pressure and academic disqualification. In addition, the Tennessee Department of Education considers reducing chronic absence essential to its goal of improving educational outcomes across the state. An analysis of the state’s attendance data shows that absenteeism correlates with lower test scores and higher dropout rates. The analysis also shows that chronic absence rates are highest in the early grades and again in high school and that absenteeism disproportionately affects some student populations.

ii.

Based upon the data and statistical information provided above along with other data obtained by working with youth in this population, the NMWB has adopted the criteria below, which aligns with the Northern Middle area, for determining additional assistance for ISY and OSY to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment along with reducing the likelihood of youth entering or remaining in poverty.

OSY Requiring Additional Assistance:

- Has not enrolled in postsecondary school or entered a career path within one year of completion of secondary school to include lack of full-time employment or history of employment with earnings below self-sufficiency guidelines
- Is required to enroll in remedial or developmental coursework in postsecondary
- Has dropped out of a postsecondary educational program as documented by school records



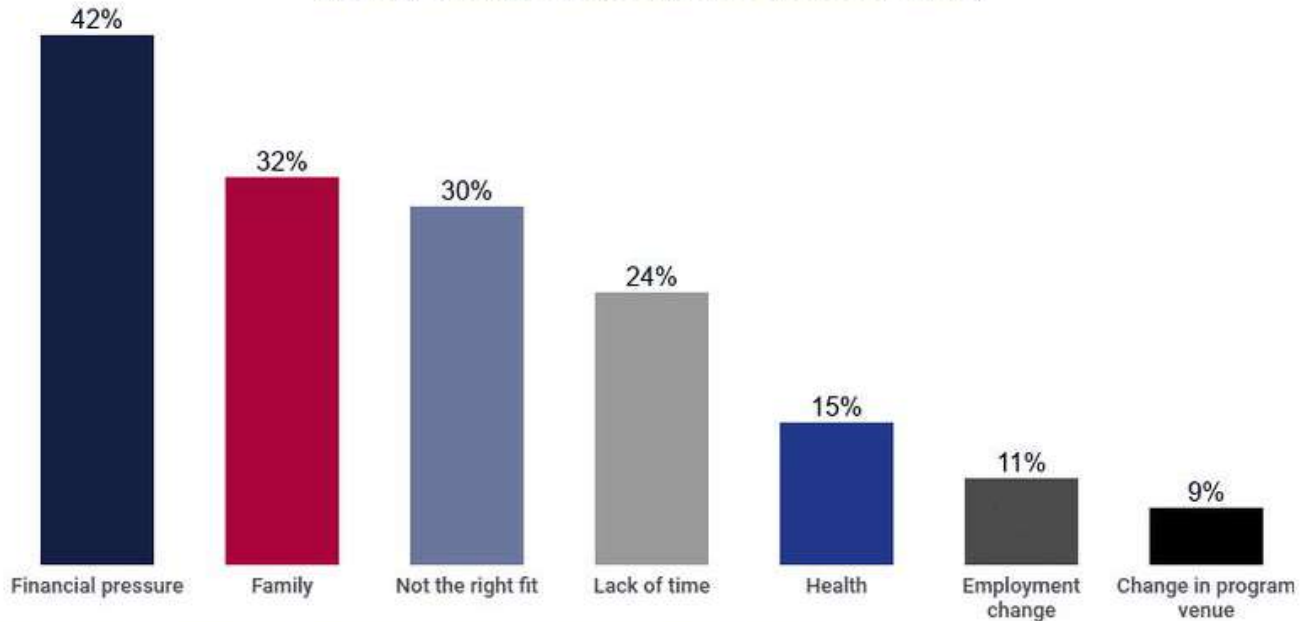
Table 1.12

First-time Freshmen Requiring Learning Support at Community Colleges Fall 2014 - Fall 2021								
Learning Support Subject	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021
No Learning Support	5,984	7,822	7,686	7,376	7,201	8,058	7,639	7,469
Writing Only	361	487	526	529	499	520	278	338
Math Only	4,303	4,745	4,585	4,195	4,197	3,682	2,883	2,811
Reading Only	332	484	465	494	535	511	448	316
1 Subject	4,996	5,716	5,576	5,218	5,231	4,713	3,609	3,465
Writing and Math	1,404	1,527	1,440	1,634	1,640	1,390	1,062	1,061
Writing and Reading	395	746	770	805	629	660	416	378
Math and Reading	911	1,123	955	975	1,123	889	700	600
2 Subjects	2,710	3,396	3,165	3,414	3,392	2,939	2,178	2,039
3 Subjects	3,607	4,400	3,995	4,854	5,005	4,351	3,530	3,302
Any Learning Support	11,313	13,512	12,736	13,486	13,628	12,003	9,317	8,806
Total Freshmen Cohort	17,297	21,334	20,422	20,862	20,829	20,061	16,956	16,275
% Learning Support	65.4%	63.3%	62.4%	64.6%	65.4%	59.8%	54.9%	54.1%

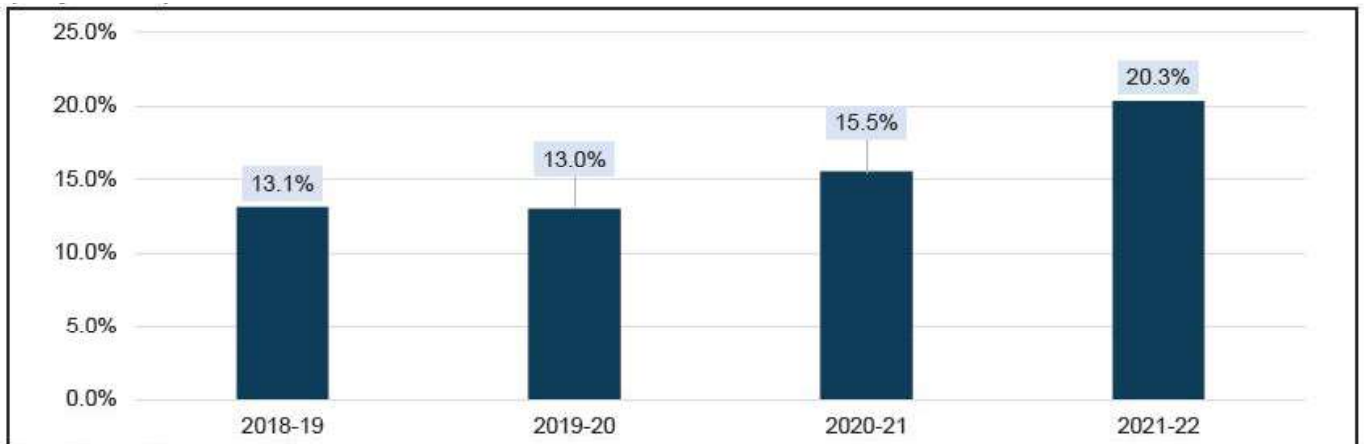
Table 2.1

First Fall to Second Fall Retention Rates for Public Institutions Fall 2020 - Fall 2021					
Institution	Fall 2020 FTTF	Fall 2021			Retention Rate
		Enrolled at Admitting Institution	Enrolled in Other Public Institution	Total Enrolled	
TBR Community Colleges					
Chattanooga State Community College	1,297	625	41	666	51.3%
Cleveland State Community College	692	319	25	344	49.7%
Columbia State Community College	1,438	778	87	865	60.2%
Dyersburg State Community College	483	243	20	263	54.5%
Jackson State Community College	818	360	40	400	48.9%
Motlow State Community College	1,457	720	61	781	53.6%
Nashville State Community College	1,122	500	35	535	47.7%
Northeast State Community College	1,090	621	21	642	58.9%
Pellissippi State Community College	1,984	959	141	1,100	55.4%
Roane State Community College	1,004	530	46	576	57.4%
Southwest Tennessee Community College	1,190	657	26	683	57.4%
Volunteer State Community College	1,774	782	57	839	47.3%
Walters State Community College	1,236	656	38	694	56.1%
TBR Community College Total	15,585	7,750	638	8,388	53.8%

Top Reasons College Dropouts Give for Leaving School (by the percentage of dropouts who cited each reason)



Education Data Initiative source: StraighterLine with the University Professional and Continuing Education Association



Source: Tennessee Department of Education.

Administration

- a. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) or the Governor under WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

The Northern Middle Workforce Board has developed an agreement between the Chief Elected Official of the Northern Middle Workforce Area, and Workforce Essentials (Fiscal Agent & Staff to the Board). The Board staff and Fiscal Agent will carry out its responsibilities in full compliance with:

1. The WIOA law and corresponding regulations.
2. Relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.
3. The uniform Guidance given in the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200 - including 2CFR200.318.

[Click here to view CLEO NM Agreement](#)

- b. Describe the competitive process to be used to award subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities in the local area.

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board follows the appropriate and required procurement guidelines outlined in local, state, and federal policies when procuring Title I Career Service Provider (CSP) and One-Stop Operator Services.

Traditional practice is for the Board to hire a third-party administrator to competitively procure the Career Services Providers in Northern Middle. The third-party vendor is a separate and independent entity that developments, announces, issues, reviews submitted proposals and evaluates them on a scale coordinated with the Board. The Request for Proposal includes federal, state, and local regulations and descriptions of positions, plans, and proposed service delivery. Respondents will be vetted by the third-party vendor and the Board to ensure that all proposals align with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles and federal requirements. The Board has procurement policies in place to ensure contractors perform in accordance with terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts. Proposals will also be reviewed with board sub-committees and the CLEO. Evaluators of proposals must disclose any conflicts of interest with potential bidders. The process allows for multiple vendors to be selected if justified through the proposal evaluation process. Currently, the Board sets a goal of 50% minimum participant cost rate (MPCR) for CSPs providing services to adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Additional information can be found in the Board's procurement policy located on the Northern Middle Board website.

The Board believes that utilizing a third party to procure service providers reduces risk associated with the selection process and increases awareness and competition among providers.

- c. Provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and CLEO to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the LWDB for measuring the performance of the fiscal agent, eligible providers, and the One-Stop delivery system, in the local area.

Performance negotiations took place just before Program Year '22 for PY 2022 and PY 2023. Included below are the Northern Middle Federal WIOA Performance Metrics for the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs (see charts below). In addition, the Key Performance Indicators for the American Job Center partners are on the following page.

WIOA Performance Metrics	Local Model Expected	PY22 State Goals	PY23 State Goals	Labor Proposed LWDA Accepted PY22 Goal	Labor Proposed LWDA Accepted PY23 Goal
Adult Measures					
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	79.1%	81.5%	81.5%	81.5%	81.5%
<i>Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit</i>	77.2%	80.2%	81.0%	80.2%	81.0%
<i>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	\$ 6,784.86	\$ 6,900.00	\$ 7,025.00	\$ 6,900.00	\$ 7,025.00
<i>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after exit</i>	70.2%	69.0%	69.5%	69.0%	69.5%
<i>MSG</i>	74.5%	62.0%	63.5%	62.0%	63.5%
Dislocated Worker					
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	85.6%	81.0%	81.5%	83.0%	83.5%
<i>Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit</i>	80.4%	81.0%	81.0%	81.0%	81.0%
<i>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	\$ 9,657.33	\$ 7,900.00	\$ 7,944.00	\$ 7,900.00	\$ 7,944.00
<i>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after exit</i>	87.7%	70.6%	70.6%	65.0%	65.5%
<i>MSG</i>	73.7%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%	61.2%
Youth					
<i>Employment or Placement Rate 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	70.7%	77.2%	77.5%	77.5%	78.0%
<i>Employment or Placement Rate 4th Quarter after exit</i>	66.9%	76.5%	77.5%	76.5%	77.0%
<i>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit</i>	\$ 4,042.35	\$ 3,720.00	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 3,720.00	\$ 3,800.00
<i>Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after exit</i>	64.5%	59.8%	61.5%	65.0%	65.5%
<i>MSG</i>	67.0%	54.2%	55.0%	54.2%	55.0%

Northern Middle's Key Performance Indicator Targets:
July, 2023 through June, 2024

Program	Performance Measure	PY23
Justice-Involved Individuals	New Enrollment	1,069
Wagner-Peyser	New Enrollment	5,702
Reemployment Services	Co-enrollment	49
Senior Employment	New Enrollment	56
Jobs for Veterans	New Enrollment	147
Youth	New Enrollment	460
Youth- In-School Youth	New Enrollment	138
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Co-enrollment with Dislocated Worker	90%
Apprenticeship	Peak Enrollment (Tennessee)	6,774
Adult and Dislocated Worker	New Enrollment	1,000
SNAP Employment & Training	New Enrollment	1,178
Youth- Work Experience	New Enrollment	500
Apprenticeship	State certified Pre-Apprenticeship Programs	55
Program	Performance Measure	Target
Living Wages (Pilot)	WIOA participants that earn a MIT living wage w/in 12 months of	190
Program	Performance Measure	Target
Incumbent Worker and On-the-Job Training	New Enrollment	150
National Dislocated Worker	New Enrollment	Conditional

- d. Describe the actions taken toward becoming or remaining a high-performing LWDB, consistent with factors developed by the State Workforce Board (SWB).

According to the National Governor's Association, a high-performing workforce board is one that provides leadership to the entire education and workforce system to create sustainable change. Three key roles stand out as being critical for achieving success as well as represent the system leadership high-performing boards use to move their states forward.

High-performing boards:

- o Set and communicate the Vision for the workforce system;
- o Model and manage strategic partnerships that achieve the vision; and
- o Use data and accountability systems to keep the system accountable to the vision.

Being a high performing board begins with the education and training of its Board members. The Northern Middle Executive Director and TDLWD Regional Director work in tandem to provide a thorough orientation and training to new members. The 23 member Northern Middle TN Workforce Board, led by the private sector, aligns its vision and mission to support regional and state economic and workforce development goals to ensure that Tennessee is the number one state for job seekers and employers in the southeast. The Northern Middle Board is certified by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and aligns its by-laws and policies to ensure that it builds strategic partnerships with employers and educational institutions across its 13 county area.

Mission-To help job seekers access employment, education, training and resources to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy.

Vision-To provide customers with innovative workforce solutions which promote economic growth and increases the competitive region.

Values-To provide visionary leadership, have valued employees, provide quality work and services, focus on customer satisfaction and rely on continuous improvement.

Strategic Priorities of the Board include:

- o Managing Board funds to support Career Pathways;
- o Connecting People with Career Opportunities;
- o Developing a Train Workforce to Fill Employer Needs.

The Northern Middle Board focuses on more than statutory requirements. Priority is placed on economic development of the region. With the number of partners in Northern Middle, the Board must create a central system at the local level that will allow it to put a strategy in place that meets the needs of employers while developing career ladders for job seekers. Workforce success for the Board is to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of business and the needs of the workforce by aligning resources and policy compliance. The Northern Middle Board is the backbone and leader of workforce development activities and it does so through its staff as well as its subcommittees that cross and envelop a wide array of

Public Comment:

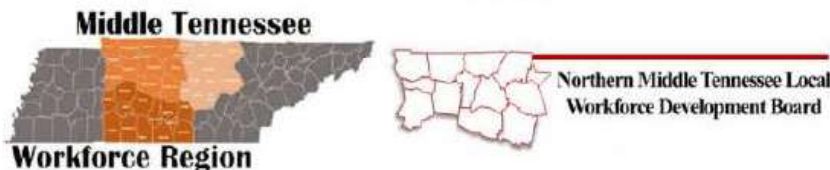
- a. Describe the process used by the LWDB to provide a period of no more than 30 days for public comment.

The Northern Middle Local Plan, along with the Middle Tennessee Regional Plan was published on the Northern Middle website (<https://nm-wb.com/board/public-notice>) on March 15, 2024 for public comment. In addition, an email notification was sent to the Northern Middle Consortium of County Mayors, Northern Middle Board members, WIOA Partners and other stakeholders that participated in the planning process.

Plan notifications were distributed to each American Job Center with comments directed to wioaplan@workforceessentials.com. Any disagreements to the Plan are included in 55.b. of this plan. Disagreements will be considered by the Board for consideration.

Middle Tennessee Regional and Northern Middle Workforce Area Plans Program Years 2024-2027

The Local Workforce Development Areas of Middle TN, Northern Middle serving Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphrey, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson, Southern Middle serving Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne, and Upper Cumberland serving Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, and White Counties have completed the Regional Workforce Plan for the 2024-2027 program years.



The Middle TN Regional Plan and the Northern Middle Workforce Board's Local Plan will be open for Public Comment March 15th -31st, 2024 and will be available at any American Job Center in Middle TN or online at:

www.ucwork.org
www.sctdd.org/notices/
<https://nm-wb.com/board/public-notice> or



Please submit comments or questions to: wioaplan@workforceessentials.com

A Virtual Public Listening Session will be held on
March 19, 2024, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM, CST

To attend virtual meeting, click on link or scan QR Code below:

<https://bit.ly/3UY9Kht>



- b. Include any comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan.

No comments were received during the public comment period that were in disagreement with the plan.

Stakeholder Involvement:

- a) Describe how stakeholder involvement requirements were met for the local plan, pursuant to the TDLWD Regional and Local Plan policy.

Stakeholder involvement is paramount to the development of a comprehensive strategic plan from a regional and local perspective.

Beginning with State planning guidance that was issued on January 8, 2024, the staff of the Northern Middle Board engaged partners and stakeholders in the planning process.

On January 19, 2024, over 75 invitations were sent out to local stakeholders including all mandated WIOA Partners, local K-12 CTE Directors, representatives from Community Colleges and TCATS, Tennessee Department of Human Services, Economic and Community Development representatives, community based organizations that target special populations such as justice involved, foster children and low income individuals. In addition, representatives from local Chambers of Commerce were invited and attended to represent business and industry.

A series of questions were emailed to the stakeholders to encourage feedback and participation in advance of the meeting. Questions focused on workforce activities and coordination of services among providers to improve the workforce system.

Additional meetings and events where the regional and local plans were discussed include:

February 2, 2024: Regional Planning Council Meeting with approximately 95 attendees.

February 8, 2024: Northern Middle Workforce Board Committee Meetings.

February 14, 2024: Northern Middle Workforce Board Full Meeting.

February 26, 2024: Northern Middle Local Planning Meeting with approximately 40 attendees.

March 15, 2024: Posted Plan for public comment via website, AJC Comprehensive Centers and sent to partners for review.

March 19, 2024: After-hours listening session for public feedback. Approximately 10-15 people attending the listening session, including a local educational entity, economic development agency and non-profits.

April 1, 2024: Public comment period ended.

In addition, stakeholders were engaged on an individual basis as subject matter experts to draft specific details of the plan to include Wagner Peyser, JVSG, and Adult Education.

Attachments

Attachment A- Required Policies

In the space below, please provide a link to the LWDB policy page, which must include the following required local policies:

- [Property Management Policy](#)
- [Supportive Services Policy](#)
- [Youth Program Design Policy](#)
- [Priority of Service Policy](#)
- [Local Governance Policy](#)
- [Co-Enrollment Policy](#)
- [Electronic Case Files Policy](#)
- [Grievance and Complaint Resolution Policy](#)
- [Minimum Participant Cost Rate Policy](#)
- [Monitoring Policy](#)
- [Youth Eligibility Policy](#)

Attachment B- CLEO Signature page

Attachment B can be submitted one of two ways. If the LWDA has capacity for electronic signatures, it can be linked in the space below. In the alternative, the LWDA can provide via email. Please designate which option is selected.

Attachment B is linked in the space below:

[Click here](#) to view CLEO Signature Page

Attachment B has been sent via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov

Attachment C- Partners MOU & IFA

Please affirm the LWDA has previously submitted a Partner's MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement pursuant to TDLWD-WFS Guidance-WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/One-Stop Service Delivery and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA). In the space below, provide the date on which these documents were most recently submitted:

Please click [here](#) for the most recent MOU/IFA update which was submitted on January 26, 2024.

Attachment D- Additional Cooperative Agreements

Please provide any executed cooperative agreements, other than the Partner’s MOU, to which the LWDA is a party. Any additional cooperative agreements can be provided as “Attachment D to Local Plan” via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov. In the space below, please list the name of any additional cooperative agreement that will be included. If none exist, please state “none.”

Attachment D was emailed to Workforce.Board@tn.gov on April 8, 2024. It includes agreements for Ticket to Work, Catholic Charities and NICE.

Attachment E- Budget Information and Supporting Materials

Please provide the following fiscal materials via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov using the subject line “Local Plan Attachment E.”

- Detailed budget listing the sources and uses of TDLWD pass-through funds and all non-Federal matching funds
- Supporting budget narrative explaining expenditures by line items listed on Standard Form 424A
(Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists and describe expenses in the ‘other’ line item, if applicable. If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses, cash or in-kind, estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate, or portion of FTE and salary, for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. If the budget includes land or buildings, provide an MAI appraisal or comparable appraisal. Include a description of all leveraged funds, including any fee based and/or revenue generated. Include description of any in-kind resources, including the methods used to determine their value).
- Letters of Commitment from each non-TDLWD funding source (federal state, local, or private) that specifies the amount and type of funds committed (grant, loan, cash, or in-kind)
- Any additional pertinent supporting materials, as applicable.

In the text box below, provide the date Attachment E was submitted and name of individual submitting:

Marla W. Rye emailed Attachment E to Workforce.Board@tn.gov on April 8, 2024.



Northern Middle Plan Signatures

This Northern Middle Plan represents our area's collective efforts to maximize and coordinate efforts and resources available under Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. (WIOA)

By signing below, the Chief Local Elected Official requests approval of the Northern Middle Workforce Development Board's 2024-2027 Local Plan.

Chief Local Elected Official Name Mayor Bob Rial

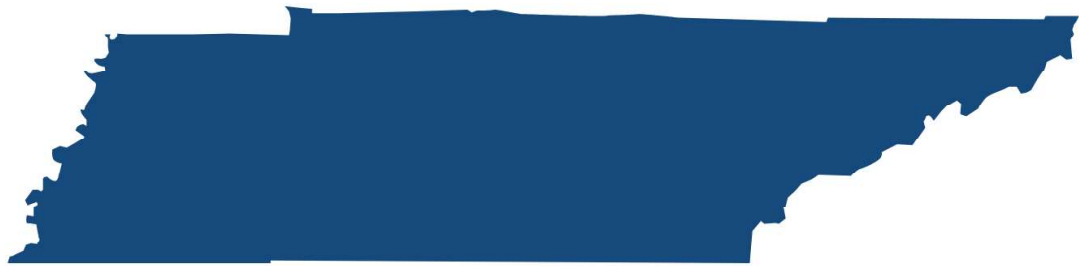
Chief Local Elected Official Signature  B1D42316DE2F418...

Date 3/14/2024

[Return to Attachments page](#)

WIRED DATA

Workforce Analysis



Middle TN -Northern Middle

Middle Region

(i) Employment and Unemployment

Total employment in the Middle Region, excluding agriculture and the self-employed, increased to 1,461,565. Labor force also increased in the Middle region.

The Middle Region consists of three Local Workforce Development Areas: Northern Middle, Southern Middle, and Upper Cumberland, encompassing a total of 40 counties. Of these, 29 counties increased employment as compared to 40 the year prior. This is an expected pattern as the year prior was a year of recovery for the Tennessee economy. The average number of establishments increased to 97,982 over the year and payroll increased by 11.4 percent to \$85.9 billion. The increase in payroll was at a faster rate than the state.

The average unemployment rate decreased from 2021 to 2022 to 3.0 percent, which is less than the state annual average. Youth unemployment in 2021(the latest data available) is lower compared to the state rate of 11.4 percent. The percent of those in poverty was stable at 13.4 percent, below the state rate, yet higher for the Middle Region than last year.

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) in the Middle Region in 2022 was 58.73 percent, somewhat lower than the previous year. However, despite this, the state's labor force participation rate increased to 58.6 percent in 2022. The Middle Region's participation rate mirrors the states. The largest decrease for the Middle Region was in the Southern Middle LWDA, which was expected given the negative population growth. A significant decrease in labor force participation rate was also seen in the Northern Middle area.

Poverty rates declined from 13.9 percent in 2020 to 13.4 percent for the Middle Region in 2021, as federal aid was targeted to individuals with the greatest needs. The highest poverty rate in the region was in the Upper Cumberland LWDA at 16.7 percent. Upper Cumberland LWDA was the only LWDA in the Middle Region that had poverty rates higher than the state's average. The 2022 rates should have been lower, given the improving economy; reducing poverty and increasing educational attainment should be key targets of workforce policy in this region. Like the state, about a third of those not in the labor force have a disability, with Upper Cumberland LWDA having the highest rate.

Youth unemployment in the Middle Region increased slightly from 9.63 in 2020 to 9.89 in 2021.

Significant Barriers to Employment

The table below identifies numbers of individuals with significant barriers to employment in the Middle Region, using the latest data available. The Middle Region has the following populations greater than its share of the population in the state:

- 43 percent of individuals on probation or parole.
- 58 percent of those with limited English- speaking ability

	Northern Middle TN LWDA	Southern Middle TN LWDA	Upper Cumberland LWDA	Middle Region	State Total
Number of American Indians or Alaskan Natives alone	5,580	1280	929	7,789	15,219
Population Ages 15-19	134,346	31,323	22,134	187,803	438,290
Population Ages 20-24	139,907	26,953	22,911	189,771	443,703
Population Ages 55+	509,632	158,632	126,627	794,891	2,022,778
Number of Veterans 2022	119,735	30,289	22,849	172,873	423,042
Number Below Poverty	213,708	58,774	58,453	330,935	955,929
Number With Disability	238,769	74,512	65,836	379,117	1,025,259
Number of Single Parent Families	341,445	73,965	58,825	474,235	1,234,824
Probationers and Parolees 2023	22,572	4,305	3,629	30,506	71,142
Community Correction 2023	1,648	5	106	1,759	3,401
Mental Health Court Statistics (FY 2023)	47	0	0	47	96
Limited English Speaking	22,856	821	64	24,331	42,056
Foster Care Services - Youth Aged 2022	192	68	52	312	801
Clients In Recovery Courts (2023)	400	45	108	553	1,399
Disadvantaged Youth and Adults	157,655	45,750	40,300	243,705	693,590
TANF 24 Months from 2022	348	112	60	520	1,816
Prison Population 2023	4,263	2,437	0	6,700	19,063
Jail Population 2023	5,646	1,901	1,515	9,065	25,696

(ii) Labor Market Trends

The five largest industry sectors in the Middle Region for 2022 were:

- Healthcare and social assistance (178,447)
- Retail Trade (135,359)
- Manufacturing (139,351)
- Accommodation and Food Services (131,314)
- Educational Services (96,674)

Compared to 2018, the industries adding the most new workers included the transportation and warehousing (20,657 new jobs), professional, scientific, and technical (13,049) and construction (13,705) industries. Only one industry, manufacturing, lost jobs from 2018 to 2022 (1,009). With this increase, accommodation and food services reported a growth of 3% since 2018, thus increasing its employment numbers post-pandemic. The most rapid growth was in the information, construction and transportation and warehousing sectors. The industries with the highest earnings per worker were the management of companies and enterprises, finance, and insurance, professional, scientific, and technical, and information industries. The lowest earnings per employee were in the accommodation and food services industries.

The office and administrative support occupational group remained the largest in the Middle Region, according to the Occupational Employment and Wages Survey for 2022, which provides data on all industries except agriculture and the self-employed. Employment in this group in May 2022 was 184,660; however, it decreased employment by 3% since 2015. The next three largest industries were transportation and material moving, sales and related, and food preparation and serving. Sales and related jobs declined during the pandemic as e-commerce expanded. This group in 2022 has recovered and has employment at about the same level as in 2015.

Occupational groups that added the most jobs from 2015 to 2022 included transportation and material moving, computer and mathematical, business and finance, management, healthcare practitioners and technical, and construction. Office and administrative support and personal care and service lost the most jobs over the seven-year period. Other than management, the occupational groups with the highest median earnings included computer and mathematical, architecture and engineering, legal, healthcare practitioners and technical, and business and finance. These earnings results show the importance of STEM education and training in achieving higher earning.

(iii) Education and Skill Level of the Workforce

The Upper Cumberland LWDA reported the lowest rate of educational attainment in 2021, with 43.2 percent of the population aged 25 years or more having some college or additional education. In contrast, the rate in the Northern Middle LWDA was 66.8 percent, well above the state’s average. The Middle Region of the state of Tennessee shows significant disparities concerning the post high school educational attainment of individuals based on their race or ethnic heritage. These disparities are not unique to the Middle Region, as they reflect a pattern throughout the whole state. In the Middle Region, the attainment of a bachelor’s degree or higher by individuals who are over the age of 25 and identify their race as White is 33.39 percent, which shows a significant disparity when compared to those who identify their race as Black (28.50), and those who identify their heritage as Hispanic or Latino (18.59)

Educational Attainment	Middle Region White Only	Middle Region Black Only	Middle Region Hispanic or Latino Only	Statewide White Only	Statewide Black Only	Statewide Hispanic or Latino Only
Population 25 years and over	1,534,019	230,544	100,658	3,701,360	725,820	194,222
High school graduate only	474,318	68,564	19,937	1,171,517	247,651	54,356
Percent high school graduate only	30.92%	29.74%	19.81%	31.65%	34.12%	27.99%
High school graduate or higher	1,388,732	206,950	68,012	3,317,421	636,892	125,079
Percent high school graduate or higher	90.53%	89.77%	67.57%	89.63%	87.75%	64.40%
Bachelor degree or higher	512,239	65,703	18,717	1,114,827	159,001	33,770
Percent bachelor degree or higher	33.39%	28.50%	18.59%	30.12%	21.91%	17.39%

The most requested certifications in the Middle Region are CPR, commercial driver license, CPA, and nursing leadership certifications. For June 2023, the most requested tools and technologies include facility with Microsoft Office and Power Point, SQL, Python, operation of cash registers and forklifts, and use of personal protective equipment.

Of the top 10 employers posting jobs in the Middle Region on August 1, 2023, 4 included hospitals and other healthcare employers, as well as Kroger, Metro Nashville public schools, and fast-food companies. Reflecting the top occupational groups and those adding the most new jobs, top job postings in the region included healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, management,

sales, and food related occupations.

(iv) Skill Gaps

Demand: Tennessee is a leading state in transportation, distribution, and logistics. The transportation cluster contains several occupations that are in-demand statewide and in every region of the state, including automotive service technicians and mechanics; bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists; production, planning, and expediting clerks; heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers; industrial truck and tractor operators; and mobile heavy equipment mechanics.

Supply: Several TCAT programs train Tennesseans in this cluster who remain in Tennessee to work. The highest employment rates for certificate programs were logistics and supply chain management at 62 percent and diesel mechanics technology at 54 percent. First-year wages for the bachelor's degree program in logistics was \$53,062, and for the master's degree, \$90,607. High school CTE concentrators in autobody collision repair and diesel mechanics were employed in Tennessee at rates of more than 60 percent. This cluster had 121 apprenticeship completers.

Occupations with unmet needs by industry for Middle Region:

- A. Manufacturing
 - Electromechanical Engineering Technicians
- B. Transportation
 - Heavy Tractor – Trailer Truck Drivers
 - Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
 - Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics
- C. Business, Finance, Government Management, Support
 - Medical Records Administrators
 - Accounting Technicians
 - Business Statisticians
 - Project Management Specialists
 - Public Policy Specialists
- D. Health Sciences
 - Respiratory Therapists
 - Physical Therapists, Mental Health Nurses

- E. Human Services
 - Social and Behavioral Health Workers
- F. Information technology
 - Computer and IT Security
- G. Education
 - Early Childhood Educators
 - Secondary Educators
 - Reading, Math, English, and Art Teachers

Advertised Job Skills Table for Middle Region

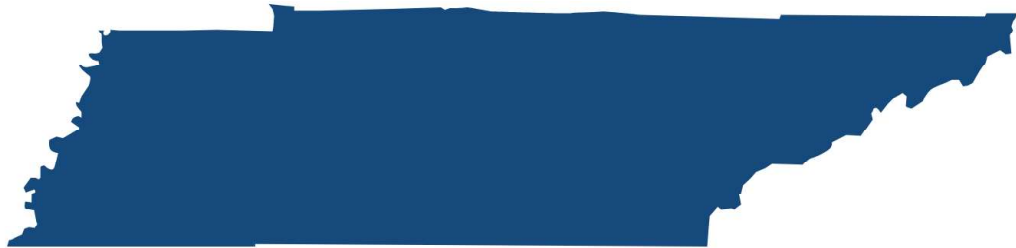
Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group	Job Opening Match Count
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills	19,463
2	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	1,624
3	Cash handling	Cashier Skills	1,531
4	Developing new business	Business Development Skills	1,442
5	Preventative maintenance	Maintenance Technician Skills	1,361
6	Inventory control	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	1,250
7	Food preparation	Food Preparation Worker Skills	1,170
8	Risk management	Risk Analyst Skills	1,115
9	Typing	Office Clerk Skills	1,099
10	Word processing	Office Clerk Skills	869



Department of
**Labor & Workforce
Development**

WIRED DATA

Economic Analysis



Northern Middle LWDA

The Northern Middle LWDA is projected to have positive job growth in 2030 of 29%. The industry that is projected to be the largest in 2030 in the Northern Middle LWDA is Healthcare and Social Assistance (168,145 jobs). This is a continuing trend, since in 2022.

Northern Middle experienced an increase of 55,446 in employment from 2021 to 2022, ending with 1,064,835 average employment in 2022. Average weekly wages increased from \$1252 to \$1327. Looking forward to 2030, Northern Middle is expecting to have 29 percent growth in employment from 2020 to 2030. Its three largest industries are projected to be **health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services** (Fig. 10).

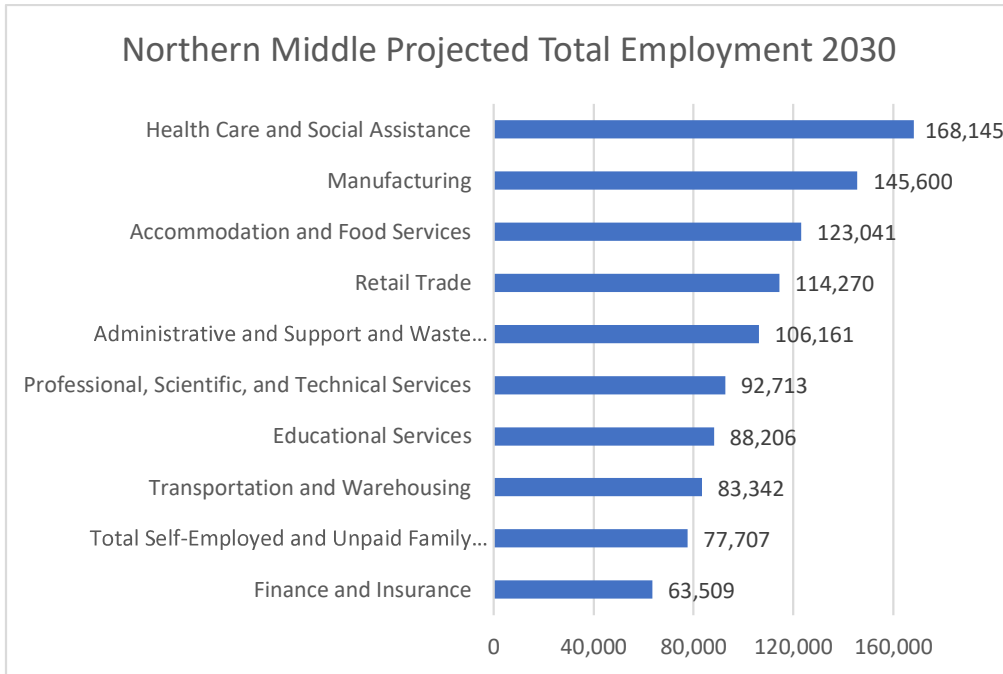


Fig. 10

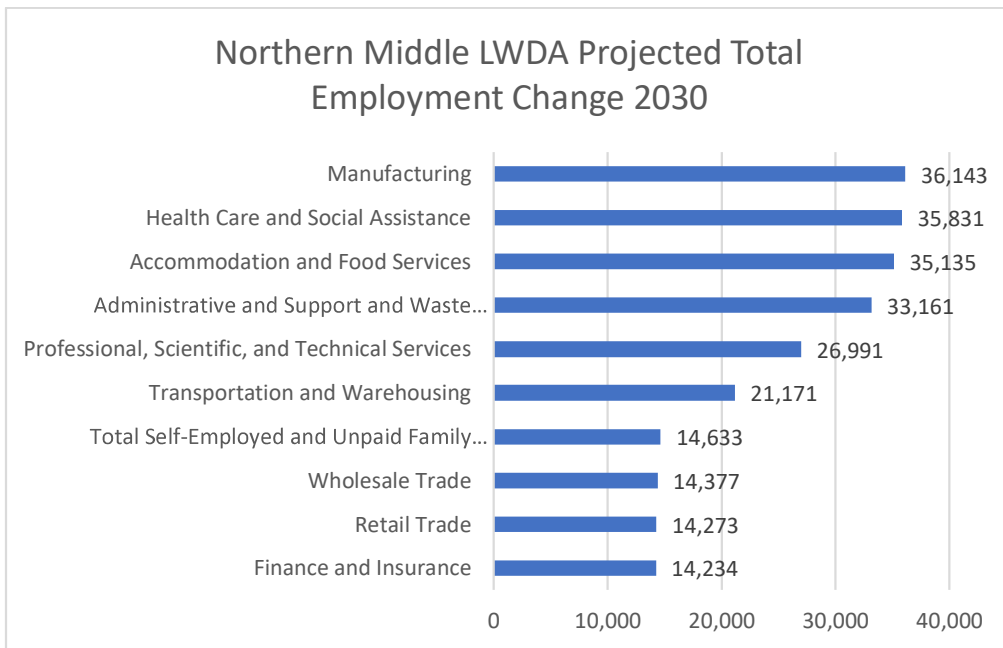


Fig. 11

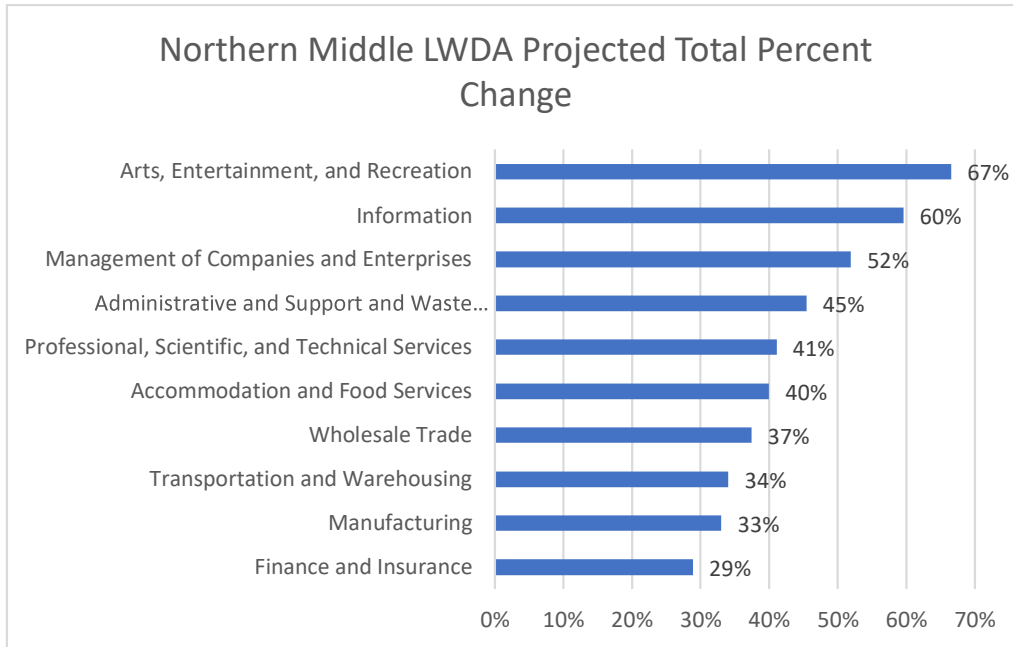


Fig. 12

These same three industries (**health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services**) are expected to create the most new jobs through 2030, each creating about 35,000- 36,000 jobs. The most rapidly growing industries in the Northern Middle LWDA are the result of significant industry investments and the strong economic market forces in the region. These include the rapid growth in the **information** and management of companies and enterprises industries. The Middle Region will continue its historical growth in **the arts, entertainment, and recreation industries**.

Table 2. Occupations in Demand-Middle Region LWDAs

Code	Occupations	NM	SM	UC	Typical Education	No. of LWDAs	Annual Entry Level Wage
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists		1	1	AS	2	\$42,299
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	1	1	1	AS	3	\$42,313
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education		1	1	AS	2	\$22,499
29-1141	Registered Nurses		1	1	AS	2	\$54,486
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers		1	1	AS	2	\$54,196
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants		1	1	AS	2	\$47,282
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1	1	1	AS	3	\$46,871
43-4161	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	1	1	1	AS	3	\$28,534
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	1	1	1	SC	3	\$36,615
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1	1	1	SC	3	\$30,253
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$36,873
31-9091	Dental Assistants	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$32,692
31-9092	Medical Assistants	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$28,974
31-9097	Phlebotomists	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$29,229
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1	1		PSN	2	\$20,559
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	1	1		PSN	2	\$33,235
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1		1	PSN	2	\$36,840
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$35,517
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1	1	1	PSN	3	\$37,627
11-3071	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$59,054
11-9051	Food Service Managers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$34,011
11-9081	Lodging Managers	1		1	HS	2	\$27,107
11-9141	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	1		1	HS	2	\$39,179
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	1	1		HS	2	\$26,193
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians		1	1	HS	2	\$28,760
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1		1	HS	2	\$32,193

Code	Occupations	NM	SM	UC	Typical Education	No. of LWDAs	Annual Entry Level Wage
33-9032	Security Guards		1	1	HS	2	\$23,955
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	1	1	1	HS	3	\$38,123
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$26,522
37-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$29,997
37-2021	Pest Control Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$28,807
39-9031	Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	1	1	1	HS	3	\$24,048
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$29,629
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	1	1	1	HS	3	\$33,265
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1		1	HS	2	\$35,066
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products		1	1	HS	2	\$34,217
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	1		1	HS	2	\$23,636
43-3011	Bill and Account Collectors	1	1		HS	2	\$28,169
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	1	1		HS	2	\$31,557
43-3051	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	1	1	1	HS	3	\$32,642
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1	1	1	HS	3	\$30,909
43-5032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	1	1	1	HS	3	\$46,508
43-5051	Postal Service Clerks		1	1	HS	2	\$34,837
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks		1	1	HS	2	\$30,541
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	1	1	1	HS	3	\$41,469
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	1	1	1	HS	3	\$27,859
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1	1	1	HS	3	\$23,733
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1		1	HS	2	\$22,727
43-9199	Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	1	1		HS	2	\$41,222
47-2021	Brickmasons and Blockmasons	1	1		HS	2	\$34,417
47-2031	Carpenters	1	1	1	HS	3	\$29,001

Code	Occupations	NM	SM	UC	Typical Education	No. of LWDAs	Annual Entry Level Wage
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	1	1		HS	2	\$38,893
47-2111	Electricians	1	1	1	HS	3	\$31,049
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1	1	1	HS	3	\$33,669
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	1	1		HS	2	\$39,021
47-4011	Construction and Building Inspectors	1		1	HS	2	\$29,362
47-4090	Miscellaneous Construction and Related Workers	1		1	HS	2	\$44,257
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers		1	1	HS	2	\$42,036
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$31,045
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	1		1	HS	2	\$35,389
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	1	1		HS	2	\$39,800
49-9098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$27,063
49-9099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	1	1	1	HS	3	\$31,048
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$42,576
51-2090	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	1	1	1	HS	3	\$29,981
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	1	1		HS	2	\$28,478
51-4033	Grinding, Lapping, Polishing, and Buffing Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic		1	1	HS	2	\$30,208
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	1		1	HS	2	\$32,150
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers		1	1	HS	2	\$35,801
51-4199	Metal Workers and Plastic Workers, All Other	1	1		HS	2	\$30,910
51-5112	Printing Press Operators	1		1	HS	2	\$28,846
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1	1	1	HS	3	\$29,647
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	1	1	1	HS	3	\$28,334

Code	Occupations	NM	SM	UC	Typical Education	No. of LWDAs	Annual Entry Level Wage
51-9124	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	1	1		HS	2	\$32,008
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators		1	1	HS	2	\$34,838
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other		1	1	HS	2	\$26,715
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	1	1		HS	2	\$27,967
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1	1	1	NC	3	\$35,999
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	1	1	1	NC	3	\$40,166
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters		1	1	NC	2	\$27,032
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	1	1		NC	2	\$25,258
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	1	1	1	NC	3	\$31,285
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1	1	1	NC	3	\$27,637

Education Key: AS Associate's degree; SC Some College; PSN Post secondary non degree credential; 4 High school diploma or equivalent; NC No credential required.

The description for determining the occupations in demand for the Middle Region LWDAs can be found with Table 1, East Tennessee Demand Occupations. The 83 occupations in demand listed above are found primarily in the most prominent industries in the Middle Region LWDAs, including health care and social assistance, manufacturing, administration and support, leisure and hospitality, information, installers and repairers, and construction. Many of the occupations in professional, scientific, and technical services require degrees at the bachelor's level and above.