

REGIONAL PLAN 2019

The Middle Tennessee Region is comprised of 40 counties covering Tennessee from the North to the South borders of Tennessee and from the Tennessee River to the Cumberland Plateau. It consists of metropolitan, micropolitan (Cookeville), suburban, urban, and rural areas, which comprise diverse economic conditions across Local Workforce Development Areas in the Northern Middle, Southern Middle and Upper Cumberland. The counties of each Local Workforce Development Area are listed below:

Northern Middle	Southern Middle	Upper Cumberland
Cheatham	Bedford	Cannon
Dickson	Coffee	Clay
Davidson	Franklin	Cumberland
Houston	Giles	DeKalb
Humphreys	Hickman	Fentress
Montgomery	Lawrence	Jackson
Robertson	Lewis	Macon
Rutherford	Lincoln	Overton
Stewart	Marshall	Pickett
Sumner	Maury	Putnam
Trousdale	Moore	Smith
Williamson	Perry	Van Buren
Wilson	Wayne	Warren
		White

The Middle Tennessee Council members represent each of the core partners:

- Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
- Title II – Adult Education and Literacy Act
- Title III – Wagner-Peyser Act
- Title IV – Rehabilitation Act

Additional partners at the meeting were representatives of:

- Economic and Community Development
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Veterans
- Local Board Member
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology

For List of Participants, please see Attachment 1

Analysis of:

- ***Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;***
- ***Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;***
- ***Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and***
- ***An analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment***

Questions, must answer all:

- ***How were all partners involved in providing, analyzing and agreeing on supply and demand data and the targeted sectors/industries/occupations/skills? How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?***

Information from JobsEQ data was shared among all partners for analysis. The following chart reveals the information for the Region. Each member of the Middle Tennessee Regional Council had an opportunity to collectively discuss the contents and agreed that this data was reflected in their areas. The in-demand sectors have remained relatively constant in the Middle Tennessee Region over the last two years. Most sectors have experienced growth with the following occupations representing the strongest Average Annual Growth: Computer and Mathematical Occupations, Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations, and Construction and Extraction Occupations. Figure 1 reflects slight changes in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for the greatest number of job openings, ranking Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, or Logistics, as having the greatest number of openings in the past year. This reflects the change in labor supply and occupational demand.

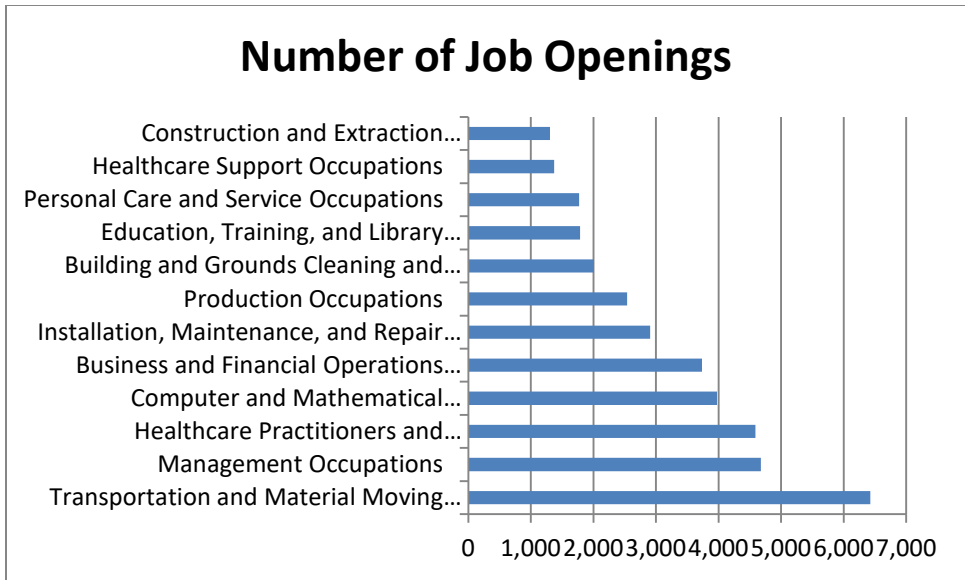


Figure 1

Figure 2

SOC	Title	2018-Jobs	Avg Ann Wages	Avg Ann Growth	5-year History Change	5-year History Avg Ann
11-0000	Management Occupations	92,843	\$96,900	1.7%	11,779	2.8%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	8,357	\$91,400	1.8%	481	1.2%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	29,819	\$76,200	2.1%	5,582	4.2%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	79,377	\$73,200	2.0%	8,360	2.3%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	18,883	\$72,300	1.7%	2,076	2.4%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	61,240	\$66,500	1.9%	9,765	3.5%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	7,373	\$60,800	1.7%	759	2.2%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	28,942	\$49,600	1.4%	3,709	2.8%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	65,359	\$46,100	1.6%	3,899	1.2%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	55,609	\$45,100	1.4%	7,453	2.9%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	17,813	\$42,000	2.0%	246	0.3%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	56,390	\$41,400	1.7%	9,142	3.6%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	131,691	\$37,500	1.2%	13,071	2.1%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	204,639	\$36,500	0.9%	28,110	3.0%
51-0000	Production Occupations	116,144	\$36,400	0.3%	16,712	3.2%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	26,150	\$35,800	1.1%	3,339	2.8%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	107,831	\$33,900	1.4%	21,474	4.5%

The review of data in Figure 2:

- SOC codes included in the in-demand list with high projections of growth include Computer Programmers, Database Administrators, Advanced Manufacturing Production Workers, Welders and Heavy Machinery, and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- The next largest annual openings are projected in Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations. These SOC codes represent numerous occupations in the healthcare sector, such as Physicians

Assistants, Radiologic Technologists, EMT, Paramedics, Dental and Medical Assistants.

- Another occupation with immediate and growing needs that can be targeted from workforce development assets is the construction and extraction occupations. This occupation classification includes Construction Trades Workers, Helpers and Construction Trades and Other Construction and Related Workers.

- ***What are the policy and service implications of the current and projected Labor Market Information?***

With this broad area of coverage, the growth industry sectors and occupations consist of employment opportunities projected to have the fastest growing number of new jobs added to the economy. In addition, these growth sectors are existing or emerging businesses which are being transformed by technology and innovation and may require new skill sets for workers, such as logistics which is within the currently identified IT field. With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the region has focused on providing training in the various levels of skill sets required to efficiently serve the Adult and Youth priority population and those with employment barriers. Many individuals in the priority population have not had the opportunity to advance in high demand occupations due to their specific barriers. With WIOA, the region can support job seekers and workers with access to employment through education and training programs. This will set participants on a career pathway to increase their prosperity and fill job vacancies for the employers.

- ***What special populations exist in the region, What is their magnitude, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?***

Each local area in the Region has a policy detailing the Priority of Service for participants. Employment statistics for individuals with barriers still reflect a need for improvement. Although the unemployment rate overall in Tennessee is very good, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities lags significantly behind the general labor force. Nationally, 51% of people with disabilities are of working age 16-64. Of the working age group, 36% of people with disabilities are employed nationwide. For Tennessee, 30% of people with disabilities are employed and have a median income of between \$21,965 and \$23,873. For the 40 county Middle Tennessee Region, there are 200,875 individuals with disabilities in the age group 18-64. Based on the percent of people with disabilities employed in Tennessee, there are 60,262 people with disabilities employed in the region, leaving 140,612 not employed.

Other groups with barriers to employment include veterans, long-term unemployed, participants with English as a second language, disadvantaged youth, older workers, and ex-offenders. Veterans will continue to receive preference in service throughout the Middle Tennessee Region. Specifically, services will include assessing skills obtained while serving in the military and translating those abilities into marketable skills in the civilian labor force. Each LWDA will be encouraged to participate in the use of Prior

Learning Assessments (PLA) provided by the Universities located in the region. Each University offers varying levels of PLA for their students with some Universities offering as much as 60 credits for PLA while others may offer as few as 6. The disparity is currently being addressed by establishing a PLA database which can be used by Veterans and Career Specialist in establishing a career pathway for participants.

Within the 40 county Middle Tennessee Region, 336,853 individuals are participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as of November 2016. Programs for ex-offenders are in the process of being developed across the region and best practices are being reviewed in order to assess an effective approach for future employment. Many of the long-term unemployed and those with barriers fall into the 15.6% of Middle Tennesseans who are below the poverty rate which equates to 402,782 individuals.

- **What sector/industries/occupations/skills are in demand and targets of opportunity?**
 - **What sectors/industries/occupations have favorable location quotients?**

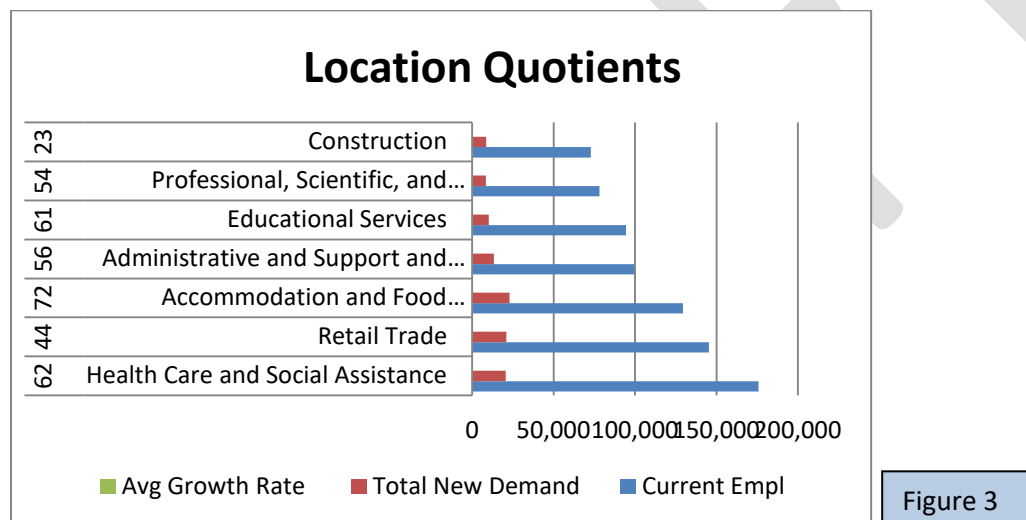


Figure 3

Based on data from JobsEQ, Figure 3, the location quotients in the Middle Tennessee Region, based on the number of jobs, concentration and 1-year growth projections reflect the following: Careers in Health Care are the most favorable, followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Management of Companies and Enterprises, and Construction. These companies are among the largest number of jobs with a high growth projection.

- **What sectors/industries/occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?**

The sectors with the highest growth and projected demand are Careers in Health Care, followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Management of Companies and Enterprises, and Construction. When providing services to participants in the

priority populations, these sectors contain occupations that have entry level opportunities to assist with establishing a career pathway.

- **What sectors/industries/occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?**

Industry Snapshot in Middle Tennessee Region, 2018q3

		Current			5-Year History		1-Year Forecast				
Figure 4		Four Quarters Ending with 2018q3			Total Change	Avg Ann % Chg in Empl	Separations (Approximate)			Growth	
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ			Total New Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl	Avg Ann Rate
NAICS	Industry	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl	Region	Total New Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl	Avg Ann Rate
23	Construction	72,778	\$56,493	0.95	13,469	4.2%	8,515	2,586	4,608	1,321	1.8%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	66,683	\$47,861	1.12	19,266	7.1%	8,161	3,033	4,068	1,060	1.6%
52	Finance and Insurance	52,703	\$88,158	0.99	6,890	2.8%	5,935	1,919	3,089	927	1.8%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	78,071	\$88,719	0.87	19,338	5.9%	8,336	2,531	4,214	1,590	2.0%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	22,995	\$103,957	1.15	8,140	9.1%	2,524	782	1,317	426	1.9%
	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	99,501	\$36,486	1.14	19,855	4.6%	13,374	4,903	6,637	1,834	1.8%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	175,786	\$55,152	0.91	17,468	2.1%	20,574	8,178	8,468	3,928	2.2%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	23,393	\$70,728	0.87	5,379	5.4%	3,653	1,480	1,814	360	1.5%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	129,440	\$20,555	1.06	24,224	4.2%	22,951	9,316	11,728	1,907	1.5%

Source: JobsEQ®

- **What sector/industries/occupations are considered mature but still important to the economy?**

Occupations within the sectors of Healthcare, IT, Service Industry and Construction are mature and will continue to be important to the economy. Positions in these sectors will require additional training as technology and demand grows and changes. Employees' skill sets will require updates as technology changes in the IT and Healthcare fields. Also, as construction continues to be in demand the need for basic to advanced training in safety and building skills will grow.

- **What sector/industries/occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?**

As indicated in Figure 4, the industry with the highest emerging/growth rate is in Health Care and Social Assistance which also has the highest number of employment. Second in the highest percentage rate for Average Annual Rate is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services with 1,590 in employment. The third and fourth in growth rate and employment includes Administrative and support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, and Accommodation and Food Services.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region.

- ***What sectors/industries/occupations/skills are the regional priorities and how was this determined? Explain how the status of growing, maturing and emerging was factored into the ranking.***

Regional priority is with those sectors/industries/occupations/skills that are demonstrated as necessary through the Workforce data from JobsEQ. Maturing and emerging are indicated as the next ranking within the growth indicators.

- ***Describe the partners that are participating in the sector strategy development. Include a description for the meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.***

The Middle Tennessee Regional Council included all partners in meetings. There have been two meetings via conference calls and in person (this information will be finalized prior full submission) since the realignment and new membership on the Council. The first line of business engagement is through our Local Workforce Development Board Members, as 50% are business leaders. The Board members represent the various counties in the areas including urban and rural, providing a direct connection to the employer needs. In addition, members in each of the local areas engage employers in their areas through their Business Service Team comprised of AJC staff members who represent various partner programs. Business engagement is led by the business services team and, continued relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, industrial boards, and other economic development organizations. Collaboration also exists with the Economic and Community Development jobs base camps to utilize the resources established with the more rural communities. Utilizing tools and a professional well-trained contract staff, every employer interaction defines and contributes to how human capacity is developed. Employer engagement and relationship is a core competency of our success. Using the following strategies as services further helps in how we connect people and jobs. Similar to how soft skills are often built into curriculum, so employer needs are defined through active engagement and relationships. Each local Board within our region prides itself on the number and volume of repeat companies that continue utilizing our services year after year, this in spite of significant placement agencies and specialized employment agencies. Data drives actions. More information is gleaned by evaluating data that is further confirmed through direct employer interaction.

- ***What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?***

Other forms of engagement include Job Fairs, the provision of the Consolidated Business Grants, and community outreach. The Upper Cumberland LWDB actively partners with the Highlands Economic Partnership (HEP), which was launched in 2006 by the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce as the Highlands Initiative.

The HEP is a collaborative, public/private sector program designed to boost economic and community development in several of the counties in Upper Cumberland. More than 85 investor companies made up of federal, state, city and county governments and agencies, chambers of commerce, key officials and business leaders throughout the region, play key roles in the program's development.

- ***How well do the existing skills of job seekers match the demands of local businesses?***

Regionally, 30.6% of the individuals have attained a High School Diploma, with the next highest level of education attained being a Bachelor's Degree at 19.8%. This is consistent with the levels attained statewide with the region attaining a slightly lower percentage in High School Diploma and slightly higher in the Bachelor's Degree category which is an improvement in Bachelor degrees over the past two years. To increase the success of the participants and employers, the Middle Tennessee Council reviewed the data available in the previous plan to the current information to assess the changes in the region. The data reflects a significant number of individuals receiving Certification in intermediary skills attainment in Mechanical, Electrical, Assemblers, and other Production types of training. This continues the in-demand focus in the construction industries and strengthens the concentration of policy and services in this field. The region also actively partners with TN Reconnect which coaches participants with some college credit but have no degree as they complete their credential attainment.

- ***Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.***

Strategies to continue to produce a healthy pool of employees in the top sectors while allowing for a deeper dive into the occupations within the sectors would be next to be targeted. An example would be where the health industry has focused more on the higher wage degrees and diplomas. These are good, self-sufficient jobs for training however, many participants are hesitant to take that first step. Career pathways have been established for the region in key areas of study such as Healthcare, IT, and Advanced Manufacturing to encourage participants to take that first step toward a higher paying job by establishing stackable credentials which seem more reachable. Career Pathways offer the option of getting on or off the path at any point. For example, a participant may choose to pursue the Healthcare pathway. This particular pathway offers the option of building their skills/ attainment as follows: Certified Nurse Assistant licensure (TCAT) → Registered Nurse (Community College) → Bachelors of Science Nursing (University). Healthcare articulation agreements between TCATs, Community Colleges, and four-year Universities exist throughout the region. These agreements decrease the time between certifications/degrees for participants and standardizes plans of study across the region so that all participants have the same opportunity for skill/degree attainment. Similar articulation agreements exist for IT and Advanced Manufacturing. Recent employers to move into the Middle Tennessee Region include Amazon, Academy Sports and Outdoors distribution plant, SAIC and multiple retail

stores and restaurants in the Shoppes at Eagle Point, to name a few. The occupations encompass various skills, degrees and certificates from beginning level to more advanced. Job growth targets will be in manufacturing, logistics, transportation, healthcare, corporate services, construction, academic/education, and hospitality/tourism,

Strategies for Service Integration

Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers. Must answer all:

- ***How well do existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses?***

Performance outcomes provide the necessary statistical analysis necessary to determine the effectiveness of the area training programs. Performance outcomes are the best indicator for success in in-demand sector training. Feedback is provided when a participant receives services in a specific program and becomes employed in that regional business: the participant was assessed and trained in an appropriate occupation and, there was a need to be filled by an employer. Positive outcomes from employment, wages, and retention demonstrate the success of a job seeker.

- ***What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment (ROI)***

The Middle Tennessee Regional Council will meet on a quarterly basis to ensure communication among all partners across the region and to assess the region's economic conditions. Utilizing the latest labor market and economic analysis information, the Region will continue to define the employer needs and skill gaps to establish the most effective service strategies. The Regional Council will expand on its successful On-the-Job (OJT) projects with selected business and industry. Youth who qualify for WIOA funding will also have expanded opportunities for Work Based Learning throughout the region. Along with the core partners and ECD, the educational institutes will play a large role in leveraging the existing assets and programs established by Governor Haslam. Where employer needs cross multiple areas, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be established to streamline services for the participant and enable the employer to receive consistent services. Closer review of CBGs, and their expansion where possible, will provide employer specific training based on training that employer has specifically requested to improve their businesses. The CBGs focus on short and long-term and short-term salary increase, saving jobs, expanding jobs, and preventing layoffs.

The Return on Investment is based on an individual going to work, making a self-sufficient wage, being removed from any public assistance programs and, contributing to the tax base. As positive results in performance are gained, the focus of the services and/or training and close contact with business and industry to prepare the participants will be replicated.

The Council has identified the following as possible service strategies to be given further consideration:

- A common application in order streamline services for both job seeker and employer customers.
 - Align support service policies to ensure all customers receive similar services, as appropriate
 - Develop a process to jointly offer OJT contracts/grants to employers in the region.
 - Seek and utilize grant funding as a region to enhance and expand service offerings. Enhance methods of addressing soft-skill gaps.
 - Coordinate with employers to utilize resources and / or funding saved through OJT and IWT grants for other training needs.
 - Maximize services through coordination with, and referral to, core and other partners including K – 12, postsecondary, SNAP E&T, RESEA, TANF, and others, as described in the TN WIOA Combined State Plan for 2016 – 2020 as well as the Service Integration Policy.
 - Work to develop an ROI methodology that can be used to better evaluate outcomes.
- ***What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising ROI?***
 - ***What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal ROI?***

Services and/or programs that do not show a promising practice for employment skills or lack of self-sufficient wages will be evaluated for the option of discontinuing. However, some entry training is needed for those with little to no skills in order to prepare them for a better position. At this time, the trainings provided are limited to those that have the best ROI based on the initial assessment of the participant's skills.

- ***What steps will be taken to support the state strategies and goals to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development?***

The Region sets the strategic direction through aligning workforce resources and monitors performance to ensure job seekers meet and exceed employer demands to include performance requirements under WIOA. The Region aligns its focus and vision with the Governor's goals to: Prioritizing the strategic recruitment of target industries; Assist existing Tennessee businesses in expansion and to remain competitive; Supporting regional and rural economic development strategies; and Investing in innovation and reducing business regulation

- ***Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region.***

Transportation for participants in rural areas, and for those with barriers, will continue to be a challenge. The Council intends to use available modes of transportation while researching potential new options. Efforts and studies conducted by the Department of Transportation through Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Rural Planning Organizations establish long-term and short-term funding priorities for transportation needs. In addition, the Regional Transportation Authority in Middle Tennessee operates in several of the region's counties. These options leave many areas with limited transportation choices. The Middle Tennessee Region has a variety of state and federal highway systems crossing the area as well as rail and inland waterways suitable for heavy barge traffic. This has allowed Middle Tennessee to prosper by providing flexible delivery options for business and industry as they transport goods across North America and worldwide. *Business Magazine* has named Tennessee as a top state for business growth, and the existing transportation system is an essential component of this.

- ***What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services:***

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs are authorized by their governing policies to expend funding for supportive services as needed. In addition to core partner support services, staff at AJCs are cognizant of area specific organizations that may provide supportive services such as Human Resource Agencies, Community Based Organizations (CBO), and Outreach Programs. AJC staff are cross-trained to ensure funding is leveraged and not duplicated while assuring individuals receive authorized and effective services to eliminate employment and/or skill upgrade barriers.

- ***What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?***

Co-Enrollment and Supportive Service Policies are utilized in each local area of the Region. Customers are co-enrolled in a variety of programs to leverage resources. For instance, a participant could receive WIOA funding for travel, TANF assistance for child care, and VR supplied workplace equipment due to a disability. After the initial intake and assessment process, AJC staff have a referral network which allows eligible customers who have a remaining need(s) to receive support in eliminating barriers.

Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers

Answer all questions:

- ***What economic development organizations or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?***

Tennessee Economic Community Development (TECD) and regional workforce programs are critical components of local economic growth. Departmental relationships are strengthened through coordination of strategic planning; use of economic data in workforce development decision making; and recognition that workforce development programs contribute greatly to the pipeline of skilled workers. Staff serve on TECD boards and councils, and TECD is well represented on local boards and committees.

- ***What economic development organizations or businesses were invited to participate but declined?***

The Region has strong partnerships with economic development organizations which continue to be involved in meetings and the area strategic planning. Due to the short turn-around time frame for the plan and the holidays, only organizations who could participate did so.

- ***What input was provided by regional economic development organizations and businesses?***

Business engagement is led by the business services team, and continued relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, industrial boards, and other economic development organizations. Collaboration exists with the Economic and Community Development (ECD) jobs base camps. The Middle Tennessee Regional Council will continue to work with the jobs base camps to utilize the resources established with the more rural communities to ensure all job seekers across the region are positioned to meet employer needs. Economic and Community Development partners and Business partners provide necessary engagement to assist with immediate needs as well as anticipated needs. As partners, the economic development organizations and businesses reviewed the same local analysis charts for agreement.

- ***What input provided by economic development and businesses was incorporated into the regional plan?***

Data from JobsEQ was used for specific analysis and charts in the plan. This information was shared with the Regional Planning partners for analysis and comment on accuracy and potential additional input.

- ***Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate.***

Administrative costs will be managed through a MOU between each Local Workforce Development Area within the Middle Tennessee Region. Depending on the specific event which would dictate the need for a shared cost agreement, the arrangement will reflect a proportionate distribution between partners to ensure appropriate leveraging of funds.

The Middle Tennessee Regional Council will assemble a Fiscal Committee from its members to further define and establish a consistent cost sharing process. Directors of the three Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), along with their individual Workforce Boards and Fiscal Committees, will budget WIOA funding based upon a formula agreed on by the Council members. Funding will be based upon demographics of the local area as well as percentages of WIOA formula funds administered within their respective Area. Since most Local Workforce Boards will have a fiscal sub-committee, the Council will also form a financial advisor sub-group to monitor expenditures of funds.

Vision, Goals and Implementation Strategies

- ***Describe the strategic vision to support state, regional and local economic growth.***

The Governor's strategic vision is to:

1. Prioritizing the strategic recruitment of target industries
2. Assist existing Tennessee businesses in expansion and to remain competitive
3. Supporting regional and rural economic development strategies
4. Investing in innovation and reducing business regulations

These goals are the same for the Region. The Region and each of the local areas within the Region strive to achieve these goals through communication with business partners and workforce partners. With the analysis of economic data the Region can ensure training is provided in in-demand occupations. A participant assessment provides the proper information for eligibility and suitability for a participant to be a success.

- ***Describe the goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to performance accountability measures based on performance indicators.***

Strategic guidance and coordinated activities between education and training providers will be of premium importance to meeting the workforce needs of employers and to help individuals gain knowledge and skills to land that first, new or better job. Efforts will focus on regional interests to help all customers secure their "best fit" service option. A service delivery process provided to all job seekers will include: 1) administration of a skills assessment for the construction of a service plan; 2) calculated selection of demand driven skill enhancement activities that may include training opportunities within and beyond the classroom; 3) and finally, referral to family sustaining, career based employment.

Provide a description of the regional strategies that will achieve the vision and goals. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the regional planning areas.

- ***To facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.***
- ***To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area***
- ***To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development;***
- ***To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs;***

Partner staff working on-site at all AJCs are cross-trained to provide meaningful assistance for UI. This includes assisting customers in using Jobs4TN.gov to complete claims, weekly certifications, and utilizing the live chat feature, or using lwdsupport.tn.gov/hc/en-us to submit and track help desk tickets. Fax machines are also available at the AJCs to allow customers to submit needed information to the TDLWD State office if necessary. Title I staff provide assistance to employers through Rapid Response services. Additionally, Title I and Title III staff are responsible for recording these services in Jobs4TN by entering activities into the individual's or employer's account.

- ***To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services; and***

Outreach to small business and entrepreneurial training and microenterprise services will be facilitated by the Middle Tennessee Regional Council, in partnership with the small business administration. Through these engagements, the region can reach out to employers and offer services to provide training in in-demand occupations to address employment needs.

- ***To implement initiative such as incumbent worker training programs, one-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers.***

Services to employers include, but are not limited to: On-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurial training, customized training, and shared space with employers in the American Jobs Center (AJC). Business needs will further be met by providing Career and Technical Education (CTE) worksites for students enrolled in a rigorous academic/career pathway as framed by Pathways TN and WIOA ISY and OSY work experience which provides youth with mastery of soft and hard skills desired by employers. Partner programs also offer business engagement through Vocational Rehabilitation business consultants and employment facilitators to assist with the job needs of participants with barriers. Other employer services are offered through SCSEP and TANF to facilitate the transition of participants into employment and to meet employer needs.

Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state key objectives to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:

- ***Increase access to education, training, and employment; particularly for people with significant barriers to employment***

Employment statistics for individuals with barriers still reflect a need for improvement. Although the unemployment rate overall in Tennessee is very good, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities lags significantly behind the general labor force. Nationally, 51% of people with disabilities are of working age 16-64. Of the working age group, 36% of people with disabilities are employed nationwide. For Tennessee, 30% of people with disabilities are employed and have a median income between \$21,965 and \$23,873. For the 40 county Middle Tennessee Region, there are 200,875 individuals with disabilities in the age group 18-64. Based on the percentage of people with disabilities employed in Tennessee, there are 60,262 people with disabilities employed in the region, leaving 140,612 not employed.

Other groups with barriers to employment include veterans, long-term unemployed, participants with English as a second language, disadvantaged youth, Older Workers, and ex-offenders. Veterans will continue to receive preference in service throughout the Middle Tennessee Region. Specifically, services will include assessing skills obtained while serving in the military and translating those abilities into marketable skills in the civilian labor force. Within the 40 county Middle Tennessee Region, 336,853 individuals are participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as of November 2016. Programs for ex-offenders are in the process of being developed across the region and best practices are being reviewed in order to assess an effective approach for future employment. Many of the long-term unemployed and those with barriers fall into the 15.6% of Middle Tennesseans who are below the poverty rate which equates to 402,782 individuals.

- ***Create a comprehensive, high-quality workforce system by aligning workforce investment, education, and economic development.***

Regional partners will continue to foster relationships between workforce development, post-secondary, secondary educational systems, and economic development to ensure system alignment and layered credentialing of programs to satisfy employer needs and provide job seekers portable demand-driven skills. Resource leveraging will offer the best support structure for success. Councils and board members will serve on educational advisory committees and boards to enhance services and avoid duplication. Real time data and historical business performance will be referenced to identify workplace soft and hard skills and competencies necessary to attain a sustainable wage. Coordination between state departments and regional areas will work in support of an integrated service delivery model. Functional teams across co-located partner staff will provide conveniently located in-demand occupational training for participants.

- ***Improve quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts.***

Through the American Job Centers, the Middle Tennessee Regional partners seek 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. Relevant and up-to-date labor market information and communication with business partners is key to bringing together the proper skilled individuals and matching them with the employers in our specific locations. The participants are assessed at entry for their current skills and talents. Coupling this information with the available labor market and employer information assists with potential positive outcomes.

- ***Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services.***

The One-Stop Operator is responsible to develop and initiate a Board approved evaluation process to determine customer experiences in the comprehensive center(s). Evaluation methods may include on-site, as well as, on-line, must maintain confidentiality, and be timely to the customer experience. The One-Stop Operator will share results with the AJC partners to celebrate successes and address opportunities for improvement. Evaluate services provided at comprehensive and affiliate centers to ensure that all required services are being provided throughout the AJC.

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

The Region benefits from a diverse economy which has contributed to its economic growth over the past 10 years and makes it highly competitive at the national level. This competitive edge is evident through the vast increase in relocation of healthcare and automotive headquarters to the area. Higher education, ranging from one to a four year college and technical education, is spread throughout the region, providing a young workforce with the skills and abilities to meet the needs of industry and business.

Social Program Recipient – Self Sufficiency Partnership

Assessment of Need and Population Size

{Insert chart of social program recipients in region by TANF, SNAP E&T}

Barriers

Participants receiving services from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) typically face multiple barriers to employment. The recipients are parents who will need additional supports in order to prepare for, find, and keep employment. The following is a chart of the types of barriers they may face as well as the level of urgency for the service.

Barrier	1 – In Crisis	2 – Vulnerable	3 – Safe	4 – Building Capacity	5 – Empowered
1. Shelter/Housing	Homeless or threatened with eviction.	In transitional, temporary or substandard housing; and/or current rent/mortgage payment is unaffordable (over 30% of income).	In stable housing that is safe but only marginally adequate.	Household is in safe, adequate subsidized housing.	Household is safe, adequate, unsubsidized housing.
2. Employment	No job.	Temporary, part-time or seasonal, inadequate pay, no benefits.	Employed full-time; inadequate pay; few or no benefits.	Employed full time with adequate pay and benefits.	Maintains permanent employment with adequate income and benefits.
3. Income	No income.	Inadequate income and/or spontaneous or inappropriate spending.	Can meet basic needs with subsidy; appropriate spending.	Can meet basic needs and manage debt without assistance.	Income is sufficient, well-managed; has discretionary income and is able to save.
4. Food and Nutrition	No food or means to prepare it. Relies to a significant degree on other sources of free or low-cost food.	Household receives SNAP benefits.	Can meet basic food needs, but requires occasional assistance.	Can meet basic food needs without assistance.	Can choose to purchase any food household desires. Makes healthy choices.
5. Childcare	Needs childcare, but none is available/accessible and/or child is not eligible.	Childcare is unreliable or unaffordable, inadequate supervision is a problem for childcare that is available.	Affordable subsidized childcare is available, but limited.	Reliable, affordable childcare if available, no need for subsidies.	Able to select quality childcare of choice.
6. Children's Education	One or more school-aged children not enrolled in school.	One or more school-aged children enrolled in school, but not attending classes.	Enrolled in school but one or more children only occasionally attending classes.	Enrolled in school and attending classes most of the time.	All school-aged children enrolled and attending on a regular basis.
7. Adult Education	Literacy problems and/or no high school diploma/GED are serious barriers to employment.	Enrolled in literacy and/or GED program and/or has sufficient command of English to where language is not a barrier to employment.	Has high school diploma/GED.	Needs additional education to improve employment and/or to resolve literacy problems to where they are able to function effectively in society.	Has completed education/training needed to become employable. No literacy problems.
8. Health Care	No medical coverage with immediate need	No medical coverage and/or great difficulty accessing medical card when needed. Client may be in poor health.	Client on publicly provided health plan.	Client can get medical care when needed, but may strain budget.	Client is covered by affordable, adequate health insurance.
9. Life Skills	Unable to meet basic needs such as	Can meet a few but not all needs of daily living	Can meet most but not all daily living needs	Able to meet all basic needs of	Able to provide beyond basic

	hygiene, food, activities of daily living.	without assistance.	without assistance.	daily living without assistance.	needs of daily living for self and family.
10. Family Relations/Support Network	Lack of necessary support from family or friends; abuse (DV, Child) is present or there is child neglect.	Family/friends may be supportive, but lack ability or resources to help; family members do not relate well with one another; potential for abuse or neglect.	Some support from family/friends; family members acknowledge and seek to change negative behaviors; are learning to communicate and support.	Strong support from family or friends. Household members support each other's efforts.	Has healthy/expanding support network; household is stable, and communication is consistently open.
11. Transportation and Mobility	No access to transportation, public or private; may have car that is inoperable.	Transportation is available, but unreliable, unpredictable, unaffordable, may have car but no insurance, license, etc.	Transportation is available and reliable, but limited and/or inconvenient; drivers are licensed and minimally insured.	Transportation is generally accessible to meet basic travel needs.	Transportation is readily available and affordable; car is adequately insured.
12. Community Involvement	Not application due to crisis situation; in "survival" mode.	Socially isolated and/or no social skills and/or lacks motivation to become involved.	Lacks knowledge of ways to become involved.	Some involvement (advisory group, support group), but has barriers e.g. childcare, transportation.	Actively involved in the community.
13. Parenting Skills	There are safety concerns regarding parenting skills.	Parenting skills are minimal.	Parenting skills are apparent but not adequate.	Parenting skills are adequate.	Parenting skills are well developed.
14. Legal	Current outstanding tickets or warrants.	Current charges/trial pending, noncompliance with probation/parole.	Fully compliant with probation/parole terms.	Successfully completed probation/parole within past 12 months, no new charges filed.	No active criminal justice involvement in more than 12 months and/or no felony criminal history.
15. Mental Health	Danger to self or others; recurring suicidal ideation; experiencing severe difficulty in day-to-day life due to psychological problems.	Recurrent symptoms that may affect behavior, but not a danger to self/others; persistent problems with functioning due to mental health symptoms.	Mild symptoms may be present but are transient; only moderate difficulty in functioning due to mental health problems.	Minimal symptoms that are expectable responses to life stressors; only slight impairment in functioning.	Symptoms are absent or rare; good or superior functioning in wide range of activities; no more than everyday problems or concerns.
16. Substance Abuse	Meets criteria for severe abuse/dependence; resulting problems so severe that institutional living or hospitalization may be necessary.	Meets criteria for dependence; preoccupation with use and/or obtaining drugs/alcohol; withdrawal or withdrawal avoidance behaviors evident; use results in avoidance or neglect of essential life activities.	Used within last 6 months; evidence of persistent recurrent social, occupational, emotional, or physical problems related to use (disruptive behavior or housing problems); problems have persisted for at least one month.	Client has used during last 6 months, but no evidence of persistent or recurrent social, occupational, emotional, or physical problems related to use; no evidence of recurrent dangerous use.	No drug use/alcohol abuse in last six months.
17. Safety	Home or residence is not safe; immediate level of lethality is extremely high; possible CPS involvement.	Safety is threatened/temporary protection is available, level or lethality is high.	Current level of safety is minimally adequate; ongoing safety planning is essential.	Environment is safe, however, future of such is uncertain; safety planning is important.	Environment is apparently safe and stable.
18. Disabilities	In crisis – acute or chronic symptoms affecting housing, employment, social interactions, etc.	Vulnerable – sometimes or periodically has acute or chronic symptoms affecting housing, employment, social interactions, etc.	Safe – rarely has acute or chronic symptoms affecting housing, employment, social interactions, etc.	Building capacity – asymptomatic – condition controlled by services or medication.	Thriving – no identified disability.
19. Financial Management	Bankruptcies, foreclosures, evictions.	Outstanding judgements, garnishments.	Aware of credit score, needs a credit repair plan.	Moderate budgeting skills, has bank account but no savings plan.	Manageable budget and ability to save, bank account.

Other (e.g. Spirituality)					
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Services – Who, What, When, and How of Alignment

How partners will identify - Individuals receiving TANF or SNAP are referred to the American Job Center in order for the participant to comply with the federally mandated work activities component of 30 hours weekly. American Job Center partners, community service providers, educational providers and employers can meet with the participants to ensure the best use of resources. Each local area has a Co-Enrollment policy and Supportive Services policy used to leverage funding and share responsibility for the success of the participant.

Types of Services - Currently there are 1,020 TANF participants being served in the Region. Services are available to recipients through Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV and, other entities through the workforce development network in the Region. The Region will continue to assess and analyze the successes of participants in order to achieve the highest level of success. It is important to the Local Boards of the region to assist those with barriers and to help participants become self-sufficient.

Identify potential barriers – As a TANF or SNAP recipient the participant faces potentially multiple barriers, as shown in the chart above. The top five barriers are: Shelter/Housing, Employment, Income, Food and Nutrition and, Childcare. Any one of these factor could be a barrier when seeking self-sufficiency but, multiplying these barriers make it employment even more difficult. Through community services temporary housing, food, transportation and childcare may be provided. The Local Area Supportive Services policies may also provide for many of the wrap-around services. In addition, one of the top 5 barriers, transportation continues to be a significant issue especially in the rural areas. Some progress has been made through inter-agency meetings designed to specifically address the transportation issue. One option being discussed is bus stations with defined routes and schedules that are designed to transport individuals from very rural areas to educational, medical, and supportive services agencies.

Identify existing and potential opportunities – Through community meetings such as the Chamber of Commerce, industrial boards, and other economic development organizations, outreach agencies may be identified. Connecting with existing and new partners to assist with leveraging resources and engaging services for participants is important to the success of each participant. A key service provided in the workforce development system is the initial assessment of a participant's knowledge, skills, and abilities to support that participant's employment goal. The initial assessment determines needs and strategies to achieve sustainable employment; furthermore, training and supportive services are based on an analysis of information gathered from the participant during the intake process. The assessment should indicate what services the participant needs and should include, if necessary, referrals to appropriate partner staff and other agencies that can best provide these services. Assessments

must be conducted with each participant to determine their needs, goals, and services to be delivered. Working with partners in education, certificates/diplomas, degrees and other education documents may be obtained.

Regional Alignment, Coordination, and Integration

Describe how local/regional partners will braid resources and coordinate service delivery to people receiving public assistance, including by leveraging resources from SNAP E&T third partner partners for workforce services, sector pathway programs, supportive services and retention efforts. – Funding from any one partner funding stream would not be efficient or effective when providing services to a participant. Braiding of funds is a more efficient method for serving a participant. The participant may receive a wider array of services from multiple funders that would be impossible for a single provider. Each workforce partner can offer some service for the participant to experience a seamless and no-wrong door experience. Utilizing community partners also provides a connection for growth and exposure for the participant to build a network.

Explain how local/regional partners will identify and partner with local/regional organizations that serve specific types of public assistance populations (i.e. formerly incarcerated individuals, non-custodial parents, etc.) and strategies for leveraging existing resources in the community. – Regional partners will reach out to workforce partners and community partners to identify other services available to assist with service for special populations. Additionally, Regional quarterly meetings are a time to share best practices and potential issues in order to seek assistance across the 40 counties.

Describe the role of local/regional partners in helping provide services to and integrating people who are social program recipients into sector pathway programs, including participant in program development, outreach, and the provision of specialized supportive services.

Describe the ways in which local/regional partners will work together to provide supportive services to this population and facilitate program completion.

Partners will work together to determine the best plan for each customer who falls in this category. They will determine customer's needs and based on what each program offers will discuss which partner has available supportive services that customer needs.



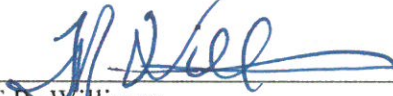
Southern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Board

SUBJECT: Southern Middle Tennessee Region, Regional Plan

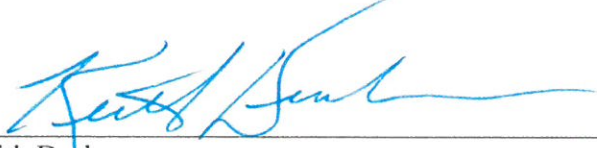
FROM: T.R. Williams
Chief Local Elected Official
LSMWB

Keith Durham,
Chairman,
LSMWB

I certify that as the Southern Middle Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board will operate within the guidelines of the Regional Plan in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws and regulations.



T.R. Williams,
Chief Local Elected Official,
LSMWB



Keith Durham,
Chairman,
LSMWB