

East Tennessee Workforce Region

Regional Plan 2018 – 2020

Prepared by

East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council

Northeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Area

East Tennessee Local Workforce Development Area

Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Area



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Public Comments Regarding the East Tennessee Regional Plan

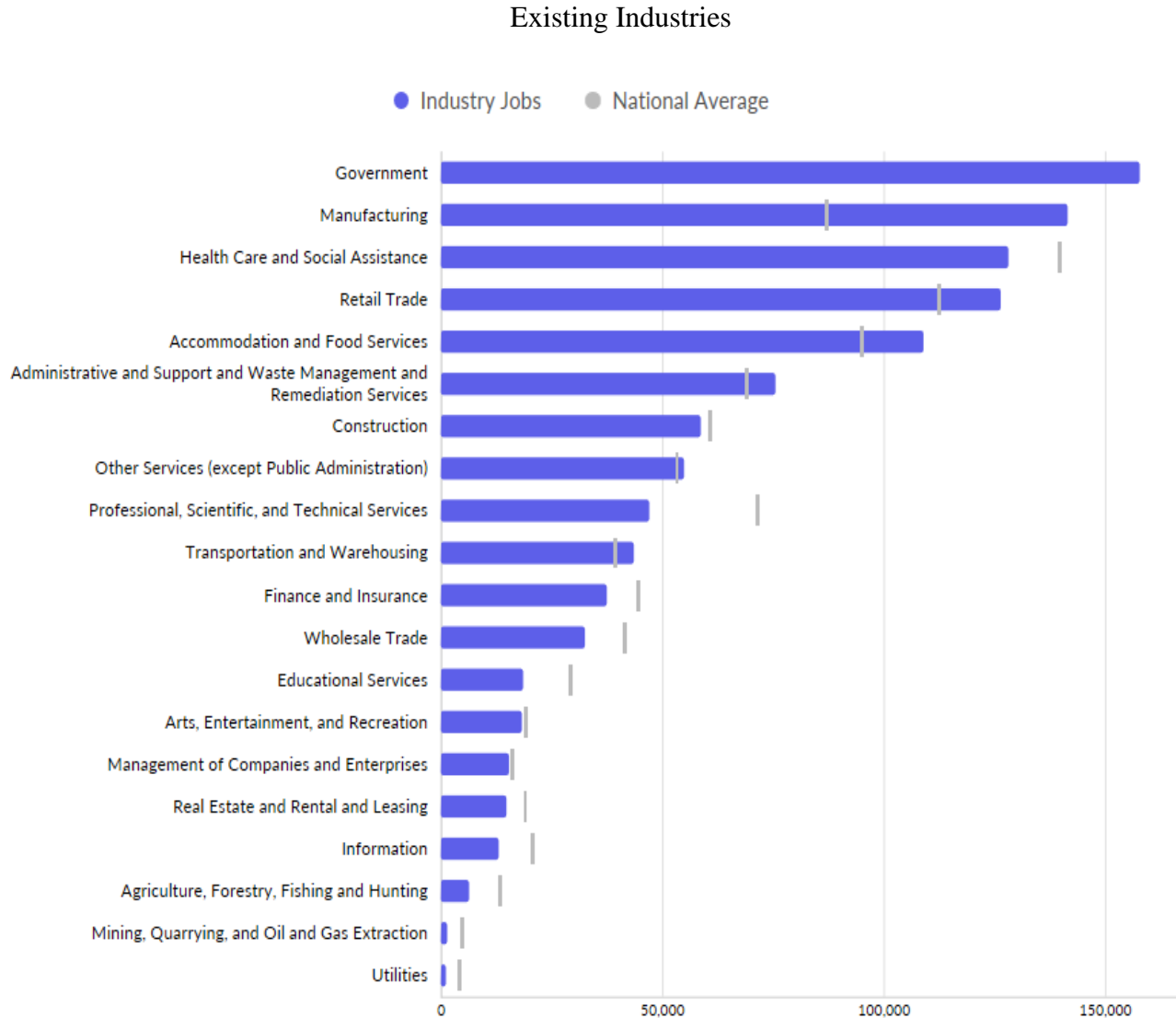
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ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

i. Analysis of the economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The following chart indicates existing industries in the region.



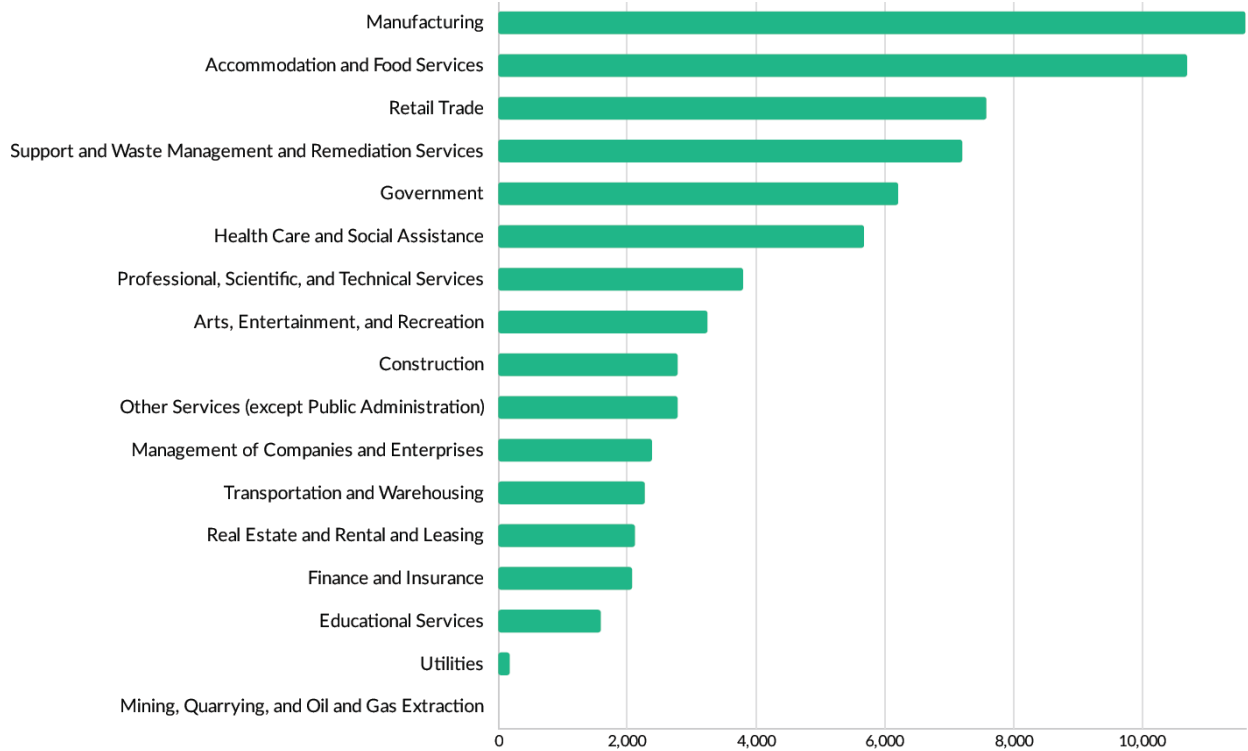
Charts, graphs and industries, sectors, occupations, and demographics data contained in this document were obtained from: Emsi Q4 Data Set | www.economicalmodeling.com

Additional existing industry data and characteristics are noted below. The industries demonstrating the most growth, seven percent or higher, include 1) Manufacturing—9%; 2) accommodation and food services—11%; 3) Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services—10%; 4) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services—9%; 5) Transportation and Warehouse—7%; 6) Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation—22%; 7) Educational Services—9%; 8) Real Estate and Rental and Leasing—17%; 9) Management of Companies and Enterprises—18%; and 10) Utilities—17%.

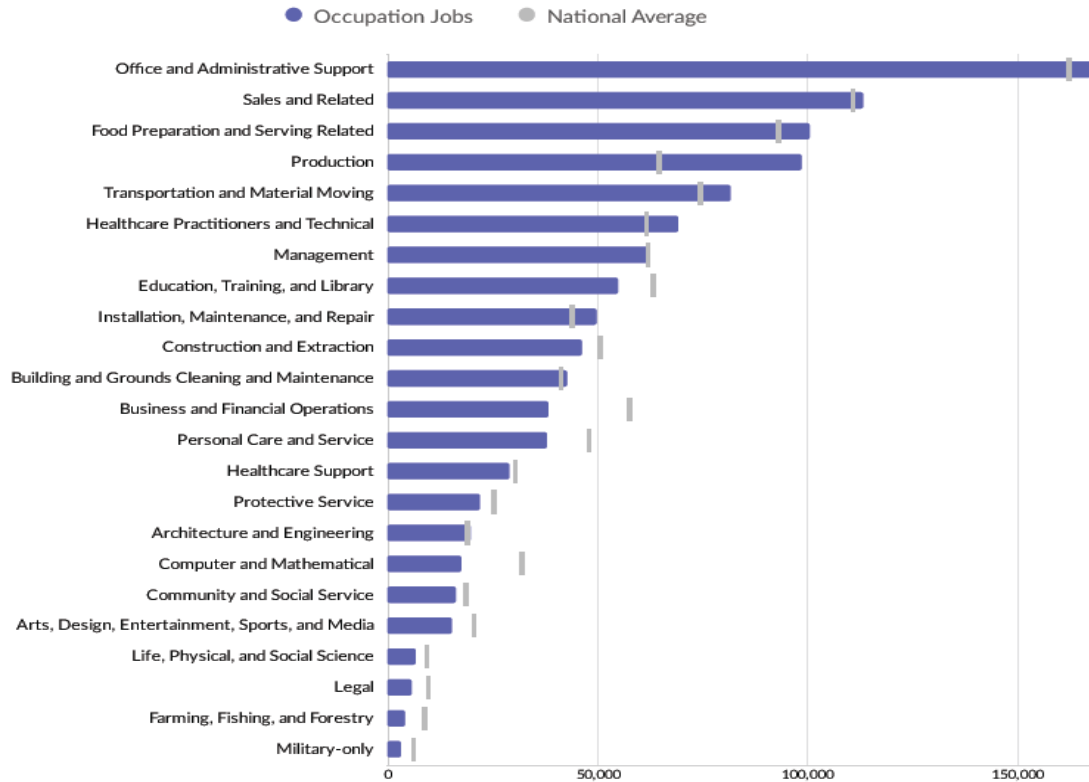
Additional Industry Characteristics

Industry	2013 Jobs	2018 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2018 LQ	2018 Earnings Per Worker	2017 GRP
Government	151,774	157,998	6,224	+4%	0.95	\$65,390	\$11.99B
Manufacturing	130,160	141,778	11,618	+9%	1.64	\$73,470	\$20.83B
Health Care and Social Assistance	122,673	128,361	5,688	+5%	0.92	\$58,387	\$8.95B
Retail Trade	118,918	126,510	7,592	+6%	1.13	\$33,287	\$8.15B
Accommodation and Food Services	98,271	108,975	10,704	+11%	1.15	\$20,434	\$3.75B
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	68,398	75,615	7,217	+11%	1.10	\$37,649	\$4.11B
Construction	55,989	58,782	2,793	+5%	0.97	\$51,691	\$4.96B
Other Services (except Public Administration)	52,082	54,874	2,792	+5%	1.04	\$26,617	\$2.18B
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	43,225	47,023	3,798	+9%	0.66	\$79,255	\$5.29B
Transportation and Warehousing	41,242	43,526	2,284	+6%	1.12	\$59,116	\$3.87B
Finance and Insurance	35,541	37,614	2,073	+6%	0.85	\$75,188	\$6.82B
Wholesale Trade	33,209	32,660	-549	-2%	0.79	\$73,164	\$6.02B
Educational Services	16,936	18,522	1,586	+9%	0.65	\$36,451	\$767.84M
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	14,977	18,238	3,261	+22%	0.96	\$24,262	\$826.82M
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13,081	15,464	2,383	+18%	0.99	\$102,127	\$2.07B
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12,614	14,733	2,119	+17%	0.79	\$46,522	\$3.45B
Information	13,106	12,989	-117	-1%	0.64	\$79,764	\$3.73B
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,740	6,308	-432	-6%	0.48	\$28,683	\$978.44M
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,555	1,556	1	+0%	0.35	\$74,203	\$586.18M
Utilities	1,086	1,270	184	+17%	0.33	\$97,097	\$434.40M

Regional Industry Jobs Growth



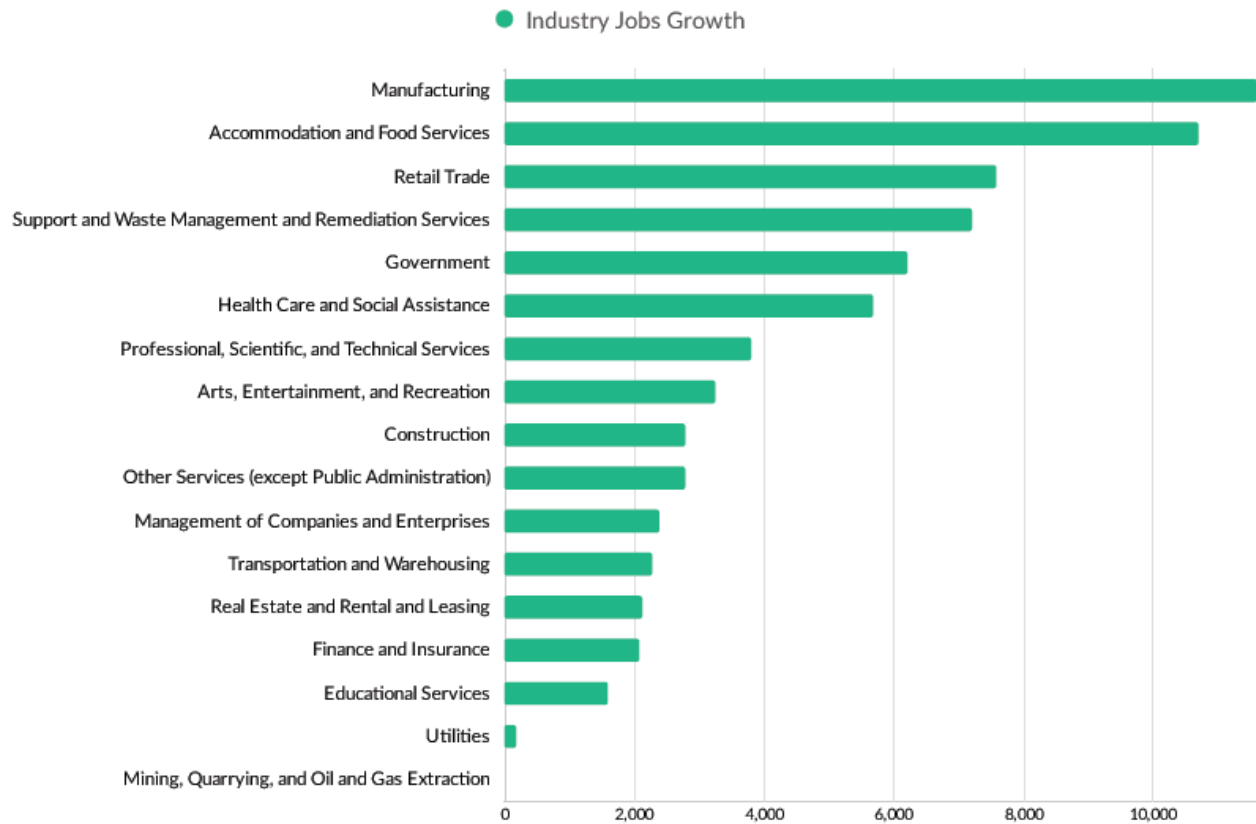
Largest Number of Occupations



Emerging industries include robotics and other technologies. In the Southeast area, fiber optic speeds up to 10,000 bytes are drawing new businesses to the area that need this internet platform for development and implementation of new software or applications or development of other innovative technologies.

ii. Analysis of the employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The Industry Jobs Growth chart shown below clearly shows the sectors with in-demand jobs needed by regional employers. The top ten include: 1) Manufacturing; 2) Accommodation and Food Service; 3) Retail Trade; 4) Administrative Support and Waste Management and Redemption Services; 5) Government; 6) Health Care and Social Assistance; 7) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; 8) Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; 9) Construction; and 10) Other Services (except Public Administration).



iii. Provide an analysis of the 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.

Over 75 employers in the region’s target industries, plus several other industry groups provided responses to two regional surveys. In those surveys, employers indicated that, although they were generally able to hire applicants, many applicants lacked a wide variety of skills. Those mentioned most often include: soft skills, math and science knowledge; customer service skills; CNC skills; and computer skills, including basic skills.

Employers also responded to questions about skills that existing employees need. A total of 45 skills were listed by the respondents, ranging from critical thinking to specific technical skills. Communication and computer skills were mentioned the most often, but only by four employers. The range of skills listed indicates that workforce development agencies need to be as flexible as possible in tailoring solutions for employers. The great variety also makes it a challenge to develop training programs which need a constant demand to be provided by organizations, such as the community colleges and TCATs that train applicants and employees.

The two employer surveys conducted in 2016 indicated that employers need certain knowledge and specific technical skills and soft skills. The top 10 are listed and the exhaustive list is available upon request: 1) one year of work history; 2) basic computer skills/improved computer skills; 3) training in specific skills: industrial sewing, automation mechanics; 4) experience in general and in specific skills in: IIT, Mechanical/Machinist, Programming CNC machines, Allen-Brady programmable controllers, machine design familiar with Solid Works CAD program; 5) workplace math and science; 6) communication skills; 7) critical thinking skills; 8) automation skills; 9) customer service skills; and 10) problem solving.

According to a study published in the *Harvard Business Review*, “nearly half of the new job openings from 2015 through 2020 will be in middle-skill occupations in areas such as computer technology, nursing and advanced manufacturing.” Workforce development agencies and training providers need to be prepared for this trend.

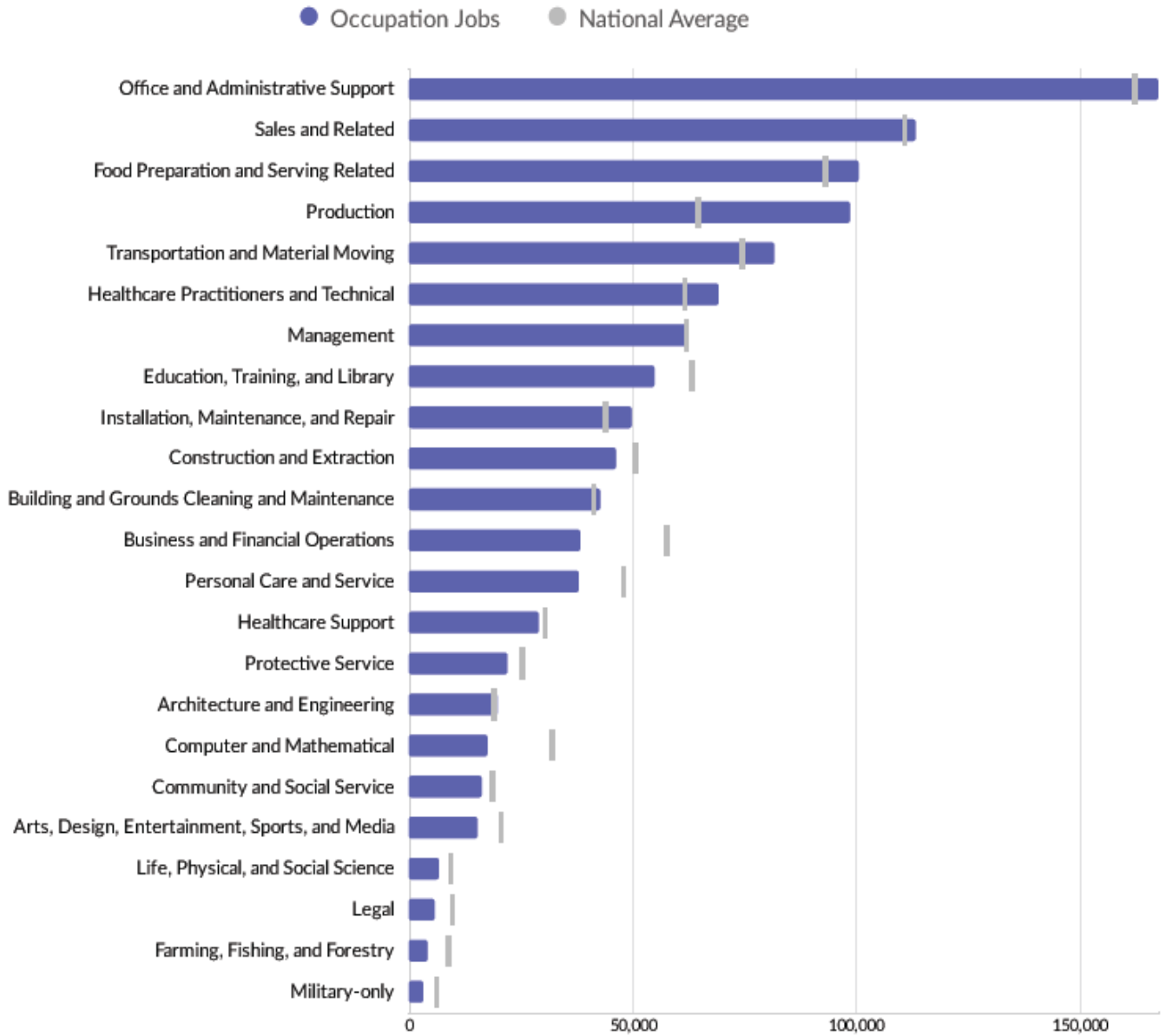
A key concern with middle-skill workforce in East Tennessee remains sustaining needed supply of workers. Currently, one in five middle-skill workers in the area is age 55 or over. A large number of middle skill occupations are in short supply of workers. Jobs that are chronically difficult to fill include many in manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare. Technical roles in manufacturing, such as computer-controlled machinery operation, commercial machinery repair, and advanced assembling and setting will be vital to the region’s manufacturing backbone. Implications of shortages in middle skill occupations include pressure on wages, loss or delay of business activity or delivery, or impacts on work quality or productivity within existing staffing.

iv. Provide 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.

In general, the participants in a region’s labor force and employment pool are the same workers from year to year. The current workforce of East Tennessee will basically be the same workforce of 2020. Relatively small incremental change occurs year by year through entry and exit of new participants as workers in a region. Economic growth may cause more persons to become part of a regional workforce because of a real or perceived new level of opportunity. This would include more students remaining in an area for work, more discouraged workers reentering the labor force, and potentially more individuals relocating to a region for a job. Altogether, these annual additions to an overall labor force account for around 5 percent or less of total change annually in the workforce. In that regard, it can take decades to see a complete turnover of the individuals present in a regional labor force.¹

¹ Strengthening the East Tennessee Region 2020: Building a Vital Workforce to Sustain Economic Growth and Expand Opportunity; Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; The Research Center

The following chart details the labor force concentration by occupations in the region and compares the region with the national data for jobs.

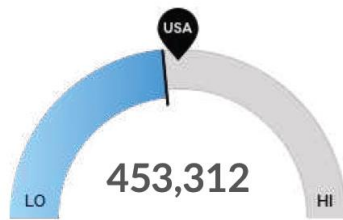


The Labor Force Participation Rate indicates workforce participation at 56.30% as of July 2018.

Timeframe	Labor Force Participation Rate
2013	56.15%
2014	54.68%
2015	54.83%
2016	55.43%
2017	55.68%
January - April 2018	55.65%
May 2018	56.01%
June 2018	56.84%
July 2018	56.94%

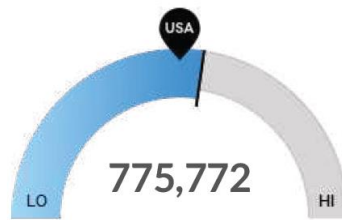
The Unemployment Rate Trends are indicated in the chart below. As of July 2018, the unemployment rate is 4.17%

Timeframe	Unemployment Rate
2013	7.93%
2014	6.71%
2015	5.72%
2016	4.89%
2017	3.87%
January - April 2018	3.60%
May 2018	3.00%
June 2018	4.22%
July 2018	4.13%



Millennials

Your area has 453,312 millennials (ages 20-34). The national average for an area this size is 494,962.



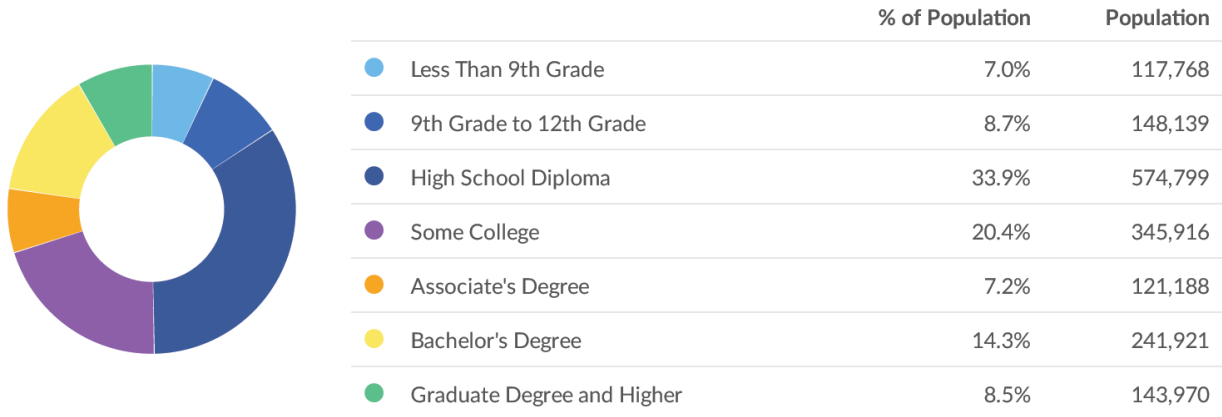
Retiring Soon

Retirement risk is high in your area. The national average for an area this size is 681,269 people 55 or older, while there are 775,772 here.

The chart below describes the educational attainment of the residents in the region.

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 14.3% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (4.3% below the national average), and 7.2% hold an Associate's Degree (0.9% below the national average).



v. Describe the involvement of all partners in providing, analyzing and agreeing on supply and demand data and the targeted sectors/industries/occupations/skills.

The East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council (ETRWC) members took an active role in gathering information from employers, labor market information databases, as well as participating in meetings. The initial meeting of the entire ETRWC was held at the American Job Center (AJC) in Knoxville on November 29, 2016. The agenda included an overview of regional planning and TDLWD Workforce Services Policy 22, the proposed regional planning process, a discussion of the ETRWC's role, and breakout discussions. The workforce economic analysis by the Research Center and the planning workshop with Thomas P. Miller and Associates in June 2016 were also reviewed.

vi. Address how the region is changing in terms of demographics, labor supply and occupational demand.

As of 2018 the region's population increased by 2.9% since 2013, growing by 67,700. Population is expected to increase by 2.3% between 2018 and 2023, adding 56,020. From 2013 to 2018, jobs increased by 6.9% in the East Region from 1,031,644 to 1,102,839. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 7.4% by 0.5%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 55.9% to 56.9% between 2013 and 2018. Concerning educational attainment, 14.3% of the regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (4.3% below the national average), and 7.2% hold an Associate's Degree (0.9% below the national average).

The region has 453,312 millennials (ages 20-34). The national average for an area this size is 494,962. Retirement risk is high in the region. The national average for people 55 or older in a region this size is 681,269. The region has 775,772 people 55 or older.

Racial diversity is low in the region. The national average for an area this size is 938,516 racially diverse people, while there are 323,777 here. The region also has 175,831 Veterans. The national average for a region this size is 143,166.

vii. Indicate the policy and service implications of the current and projected Labor Market Information.

WIOA services and local area policies within the region align well with the intention of the Act and are proactively responsive to Labor Market Information (LMI). By aligning services and policies with LMI, the region will be better prepared to address changes in employers’ workforce needs now and in the future.

viii. Identify special populations that exist in the region, including their magnitude, and the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals.

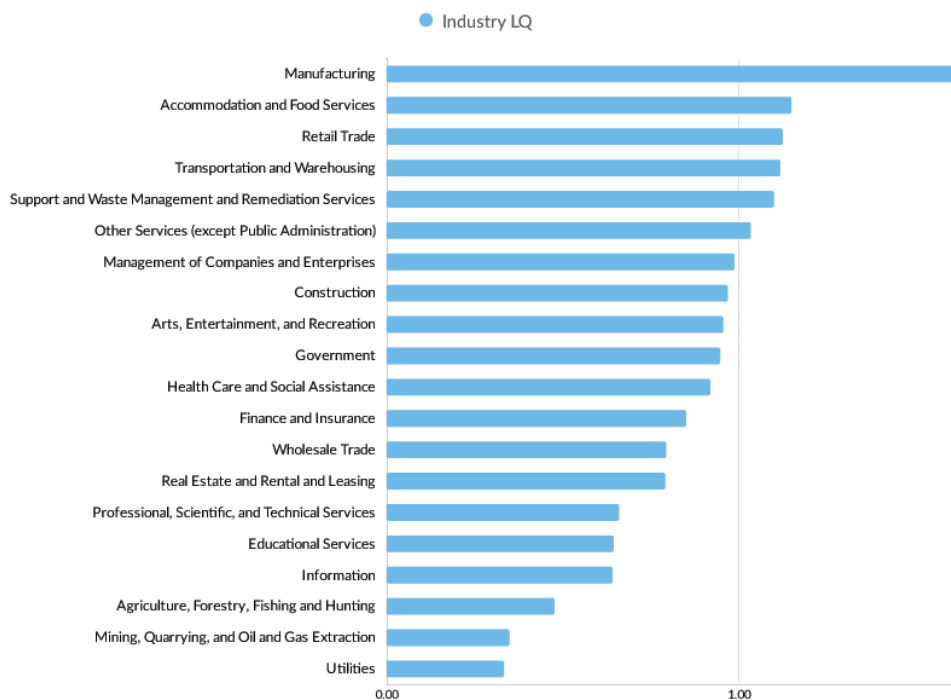
The grand East Region currently serves 324,273 SNAP recipients, 79 current, open, active, and enrolled TANF recipients, 185 current, open, active, and enrolled Vocational Rehabilitation participants, 138 current, open, active and enrolled justice-involved individuals in VOS, and a total of 4,819 felon inmate convictions in both the Tennessee Department of Correction and the local jails. The regional council will develop a policy that details service implications to meet the needs of these individuals.

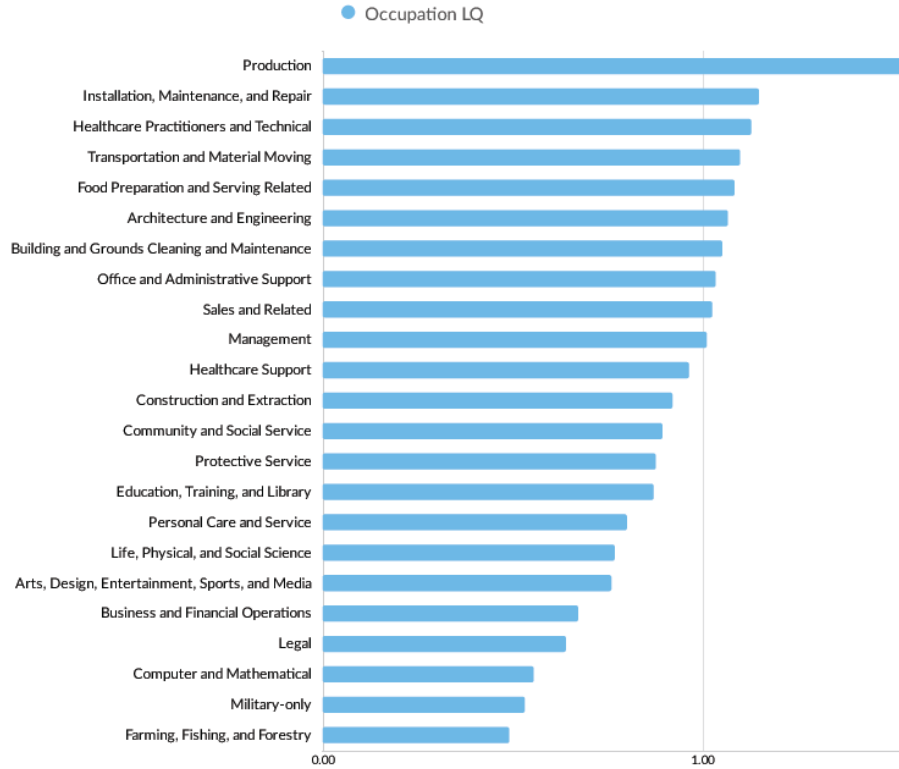
ix. Identify sectors, industries, occupations, and skills that are in demand.

The following sectors have been identified as in-demand for the region: 1) Advanced Manufacturing; 2) Healthcare and Social Assistance; 3) Logistics and Distribution; 4) Aerospace and Aviation; 5) Information Technology; 6) Retail and Wholesale; 7) Professional and Business Services; 8) Office and Administrative Support; and 9) Accommodation and Food Service. Skills that are in demand in the region include STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

x. Identify sectors, industries, and occupations that have favorable location quotients.

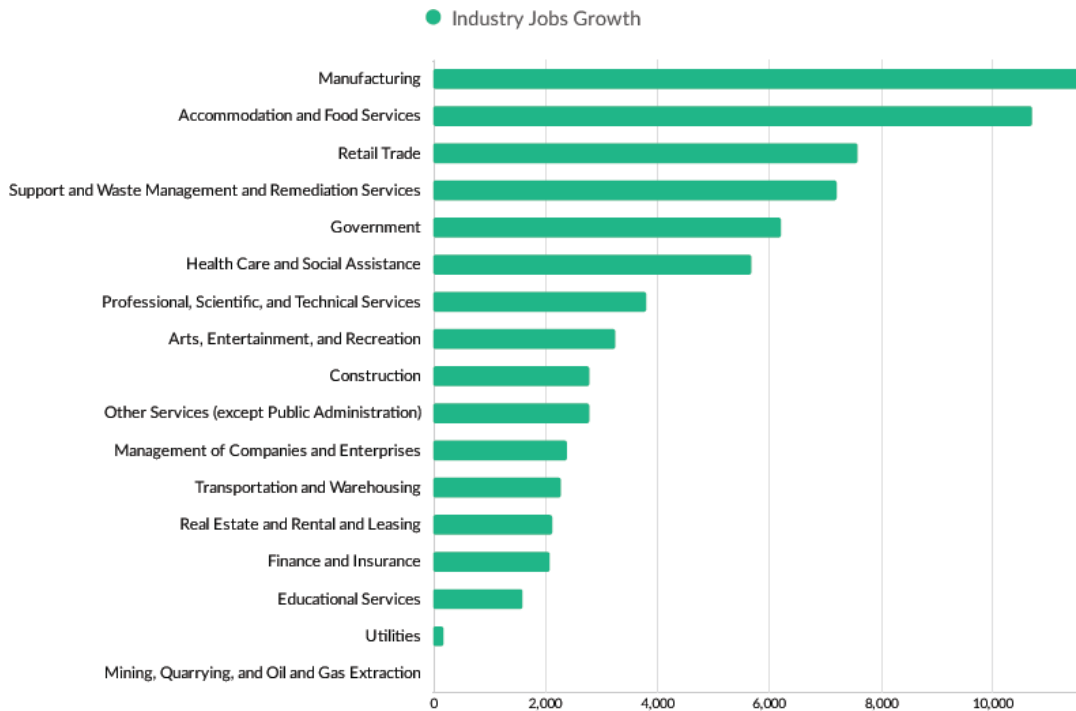
The following graphs depict location quotients (LQ) for industries and occupations in the region.



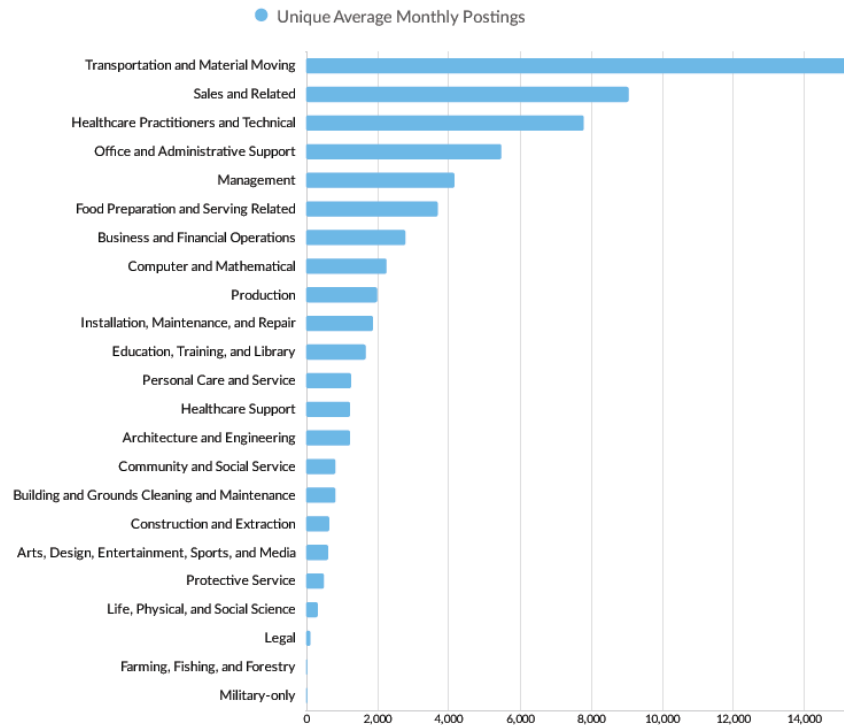


xi. Identify sectors, industries, and occupations that have favorable demand projections based on growth.

The chart below identifies industry job growth that will likely demonstrate favorable demand projections:

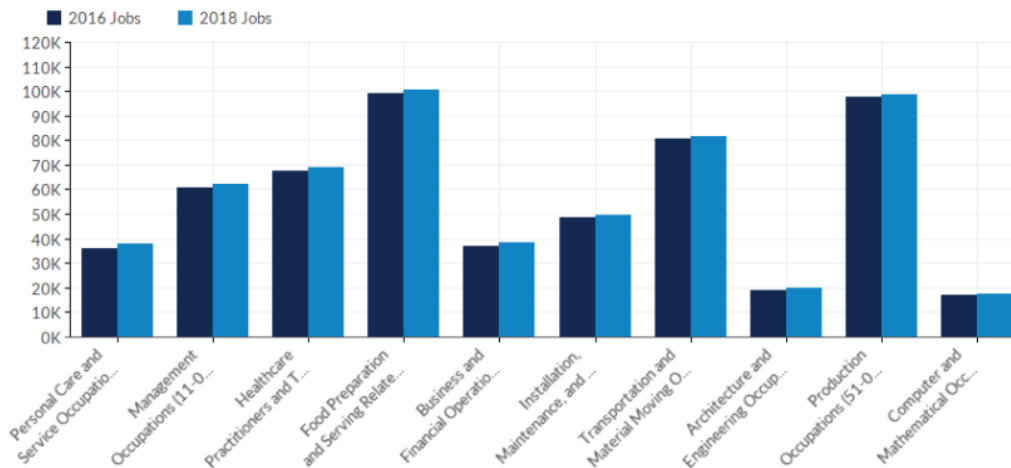


One source of data for identifying favorable demand projections is the Unique Average Monthly Postings for jobs online.



Below is the regional occupational jobs growth chart that lists the occupations which will likely demonstrate favorable demand projections:





Research suggests that nearly half of new job openings from 2010 through 2020 will be in middle-skill occupations in areas such as computer technology, nursing and advanced manufacturing. Significantly, studies note that supply of workers for those roles will come largely from the existing workforce, suggesting that nearly two-thirds of the people who will be in the workforce in 2025 were already working adults in 2010, far past the traditional high school-to-college pipeline.

Middle-skill jobs are those which require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree, and a median wage of \$13.16 an hour in all of East Tennessee, so this wage varies within each Local Workforce Development Area.

Currently, East Tennessee is home to more than 267,000 middle-skills jobs, with a density 12% over the national average.

Forecast data indicate that middle-skill jobs are increasing as a share of total employment in all parts of the state and nation, including in East Tennessee through 2020. Rising from slightly more than a quarter of all jobs in 2010 to nearly a third of the total by 2020, this occupational set demonstrates the largest single class of jobs by skill type with a growth trend and cohort that is this large and consistent.

Many middle-skill occupations are highly oriented to STEM fields³⁸³⁹. The priority emphasis on incorporating STEM components across the curriculum in K-12 education and in bolstering STEM programs in postsecondary settings is critical to ensuring current and future demands for workforce are met. STEM opportunities also provide an important mechanism for engaging specific subpopulations, such as veterans with transferable skills, women and others that historically have not been well represented in STEM-related fields, and retraining individuals in “encore” careers where strong soft skills benefit a STEM role.

Middle-skill occupations in East Tennessee represent a wide diversity across industries, mirroring the regional economy's diversity. Three leading sectors, health care, advanced

manufacturing, and logistics account for a large share of the middle-skills occupations in the area. These sectors are prevalent in each of the LWDAs, comprised of a large and unique assortment of firms, which together account for a quarter of the total workforce.

xii. Identify sectors, industries, and occupations that have favorable demand projections based on replacements.

Job openings are either due to growth or replacement. The higher the replacements openings, the higher the turnover is for that occupation. The net replacement rates used in developing job openings estimates do not count workers who change jobs but remain in the same occupation. In addition, because the number of openings due to net replacements is limited to those created by older workers leaving the job permanently, it may underestimate the openings for new entrants especially in jobs where many people permanently leave at younger ages.

The current population of East Tennessee finds over 1 million persons in the primary working age, 20-54. Meanwhile, nearly 300,000 people ages 55-64 will move into retirement age over the coming decade, indicating that the area will require significant number of replacement supply for those who are currently employed. Even more importantly, among those age 20 to 54, a disproportionate share are themselves going to move into “pre-retiree” age groups soon. In short, the demographic composition of the area does not have the balance needed whereby younger workers and future workers are as numerous in a supply pipeline as those exiting the workforce. This phenomenon is not unique to this area.

For advanced manufacturing, replacement jobs will likely focus on quality, skill-oriented workers rather than production lines with a high number of workers.

Sectors, industries and occupations with favorable demand projections have been previously identified and include healthcare, transportation and logistics, advanced manufacturing, and hospitality.

xiii. Identify sectors, industries, and occupations that are considered mature yet important to the economy.

Textile industries, financial services, and electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing.

xiv. Identify sectors, industries, and occupations that are considered emerging in the regional economy.

Advanced manufacturing (automotive), healthcare, transportation and logistics, business services, waste collection, social advocacy services, other transit and ground passenger transportation, additive manufacturing, advanced fiber production and installation, advanced materials manufacturing (carbon fiber), advanced medical and biomedical technology, artisan entrepreneurs, craft breweries, and advanced molding technology.

xv. Define what sectors, industries, occupations, and skills that are regional priorities including how this determination was made and how growing maturing, and emerging factor in.

Targeted businesses in the East Tennessee workforce region include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, distribution/logistic and smaller but growing businesses in specialty foods and drink.

xvi. Identify which partners are participating in the sector strategy development.

Local board members, board staff, DHS (TANF) VR, Adult Ed, ETDD, ETHRA, Title I, TCAT, WSCC, PSTCC, ECD, TDLWD, and Chambers of Commerce.

xvii. Provide a description of the meetings that have place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.

The meeting dates and descriptions are as follows:

- November 29, 2016—Initial East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council (ETRWC) meeting at Knoxville AJC
- December 21, 2016—ETRWC videoconference for facilitated planning session
- January 17, 2017—ETRWC videoconference to review of draft plan prior to posting for public comments
- February 21, 2017—ETRWC videoconference to review and resolution of public comments
- November 9, 2017—ETRWC videoconference to determine highest rated Strategic Priorities and Action Steps
- January 11, 2018—ETRWC videoconference to establish work groups on priorities
- April 12, 2018—ETRWC videoconference for work groups to report out on progress
- July 26, 2018—ETRWC videoconference to discuss realignment status and regional goals/objectives
- January 7, 2019—ETRWC videoconference to discuss Regional Plan due January 18, 2019

With the local area's realignment completed, the ETRWC will meet every quarter going forward either in person or via videoconference.

xviii. Identify other public-private partnerships that exist in the region that could support sector strategies and their role in planning.

The workforce and economic and community development agencies began pursuing a regional partnership in 2014 which was further strengthened by Workforce 360. Partnering with mental health agencies, addiction recovery agencies, Tennessee Department of Correction, and probation and parole representatives may help in the support of sector strategies especially in strategies planning to serve these target populations.

xix. Describe how well the existing skills of the job seekers match the demands of the local businesses.

Nearly two-thirds of the nation's jobs require some postsecondary education. Currently, 51.3% of the East Tennessee residents have no college background; 35% of that total have only a high school diploma. Feedback from employers indicate that job seekers generally do not have the advanced skills necessary to do the job particularly in technically-related manufacturing jobs, for example.

xx. Describe how new MOUs will be established with other service providers to meet the requirements of the board's directive including but not limited to addressing any challenges associated with local ordinances or policies relevant to executing new MOUs.

Once a potential service provider has been identified, executing a new MOU to fulfill board expectations will not be encumbered by ordinances or policies.

xxi. Detail plans for future strategy development for future sectors.

Interagency communication, partnerships with Chambers of Commerce and other economic development agencies will prepare the region for future sectors especially as technology continues to change the nature of work and future jobs.

STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

xxii. Describe the regional service strategies including use of cooperative service delivery strategies.

In June 2016, the workforce organizations in East Tennessee participated in a workforce planning session led by Thomas P. Miller and Associates in preparation for the regional plan. In October TDLWD and local area directors began forming a regional council. The first meeting was held on November 29, 2016, at the Knoxville AJC. On December 21, 2016, the ETRWC held its second meeting, an all-day planning session via videoconference. The hosted sites included the AJCs in Chattanooga, Crossville, Johnson City and Knoxville. Attendance was excellent, with over 90% of the members of the ETRWC participating. The council members addressed all of the questions focusing on service delivery strategies. Following the meeting, the responses from all of the sites were combined and common themes were identified. The council then agreed on priorities and action steps for the region (see Attachments).

xxiii. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities including education and training in the region.

The region benefits from a wide variety of workforce development and education and training resources: 21 AJCs, a Mobile Career Coach, six community colleges, eight TCATs, three ECD Job Base Camps, three local workforce development boards, three administrative fiscal agencies, 12 VR offices and DHS offices in 33 counties. These agencies and institutions provide adequate capacity to serve residents including those individuals with barriers.

xxiv. Indicate strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers.

One of the major strengths of workforce development in the East Tennessee region is the strong relationships between agencies and individual staff. For example, the core partners in the comprehensive centers are co-located, some even before June 2000. The area directors of the different agencies meet together on a regular basis, share training and network with other workforce development agencies.

Some of the major weaknesses include funding uncertainties; geographic challenges in serving populations in rural counties with very limited transportation or high-speed internet access; lack of flexibility and equipment to launch new credit or noncredit programs tailored to the needs of

employers; lack of instructors in some high demand fields, including nursing and welding; and lack of public support and funds to improve educational attainment.

For capacity and services to individuals with barriers, refer to the previous item.

xxv. Describe how well existing training programs in the region/local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses.

The region is market-responsive to employer workforce skills needs and provides solutions as soon as needed. The region also boasts of strong Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs such as the Regional Center for Manufacturing (RCAM), local manufacturers, and a RA program in on of Hamilton County School District's high schools.

xxvi. Identify existing service delivery strategies that will be expanded due ROI.

Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job and Incumbent Worker Trainings are programs that positively impact ROI in the form of increased wages and, thus, economic stimulation. These programs can be expanded to further increase the ROI impact.

xxvii. Define what new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising ROI.

The ETRWC members focused on the following new strategies to improve regional education and training: 1) develop a better understanding of employers' needs by a coordinated regional outreach, including hosting feedback sessions, holding one-on-one conversations, using local board task forces, and communicate these needs to training providers; 2) bring together employers and training providers to develop an understanding of the opportunities and challenges that each one faces in educating employees and having applicants job ready; 3) support new approaches to training, such as a regional work-based learning summit for workforce agencies and organizations and employers, determine the gaps in training across the region and develop a regional strategy to fill the gaps, develop career pathways on a regional basis, as well as apprenticeships, work-based learning and other new methods, including delivery of training via technology; and 4) use resources effectively by agreeing on regional priorities for using the mobile Career Coach and by developing a regional plan to market the coach.

xxviii. Identify existing service delivery strategies that will be curtailed/eliminated based on low ROI.

At this time, there are no plans to curtail or eliminate existing service delivery strategies based on minimal ROI.

xxix. Steps to be taken to support the state strategies and goals to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development.

The region has benefited from the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) which provided grants to local areas to support local alignment groups to develop skills gap forecasts, identify the highest priorities, and develop programs or purchase equipment needed to fill those gaps. If future LEAP or other similar opportunities arise, the region will compete for the grant awards.

Partnering with ECD's Workforce360°, a systematic partnership among state agencies and the higher education system, helps to facilitate the delivery of a highly skilled workforce for regional

employers. And by increasing the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RAP) or Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP), education, workforce, business and industry as well as economic development are aligned.

xxx. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated in the region.

- Use regional and local websites to link to transportation services and other supportive services in the local area
- Explore the development of an Approved Transportation Provider list for the region
- Consider the range of supportive services across the region and identify a basic menu of services to be provided as funding allows
- Develop a regional resource guide
- Utilize council meetings to maintain contacts in each agency that can facilitate coordination of supportive services with all of the partners across the region
- Develop a regional asset map
- Implement a regional Support Services Policy that outlines a process

xxxi. Identify regional organizations that currently provided or could provide supportive services.

Support services are provided by WIOA (Title I), Labor-TAA; Vocational Rehabilitation, TN Department of Human Services programs, including TANF and SNAP; non-profit organizations such as local homeless shelters, food banks, and others; and housing authorities. One strategy to increase support services is to include them in grant applications, when possible.

xxxii. Describe policies and procedures that will be established to promote coordination of supportive services.

The council will develop and implement a regional Supportive Services Policy in order to provide the process for coordination of services.

xxxiii. Identify the economic development organizations or businesses that are actively engaged in planning.

Appalachian Regional Commission, area chambers/economic development organizations, development districts: East, First, Southeast East Tennessee Economic Development Association, Innovation Valley, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Valley Authority, utility companies and Tennessee Valley Corridor.

Other organizations that are involved in regional planning as part of their mission or on a more limited basis: human resource agencies, trade unions, Community Action agencies, and the UT Institute for Public Service.

xxxiv. Identify the economic development organizations or businesses that declined to be engaged in regional planning.

All of the previously mentioned organizations or businesses are engaged in some form of planning for the region.

xxxv. Detail input provided by regional economic development organizations and businesses.

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development representatives for the region are council members and provided input to the plan. Since the input was generated by focus groups with other council members of different organizations, the specific input from the ECD representatives was not specifically recorded.

xxxvi. The plan describes the coordination of administrative cost arrangements including pooling of funds as appropriate.

The regional council will follow the guidance in WIOA TEGL No. 17-16 released on January 18, 2017, and instructions from TDLWD to establish administrative cost arrangements.

VISION, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

xxxvii. Describe the strategic vision to support state, regional and local economic goals.

The council agreed on nine key strategies for engaging employers.

- Determine employer needs, including the needs of emerging businesses and businesses facing closures or layoffs; disseminate the results to workforce agencies, training providers, secondary and postsecondary schools and community leaders to refine/develop programs to meet employer needs
- Develop regional approaches for defining and implementing/funding work-based learning and career pathways, including youth-focused programs, as well as pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for adults and youth.
- Develop a regional strategy to work with employers and training providers to develop/update needed training and equipment, especially targeted short-term training, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.
- Foster communication and cooperative efforts between partners and agencies
- Extend the reach of the AJCs by utilizing technology and the Career Coaches to connect with individuals throughout the region via public libraries, schools, partner agencies, and by offering workshops in locations without AJCs.
- Market workforce development services and resources, including the Career Coaches and Labor Market Information (LMI), which are available to employers through the AJCs.
- Work with transportation planning agencies such as TDOT and MPO's to identify and develop expanded transportation options.
- Work with school systems and training providers to provide resources.
- Develop regional staff training to better serve employers and jobseeker

xxxviii. Describe the goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.

- Promote transition from adult education to postsecondary education and employment through career pathways by providing adult education instructional services that are contextually related to workforce training and the needs of employers.
- Maintain market responsiveness to future workforce needs
- Promote an increase in training-related job placements
- Promote work learning and work-based learning experiences for middle and high schools respectively
- Promote middle skill training and training-related job placement

- Develop and support strategies that respond to changing economic conditions so that services are customized for employers
- Expand the use of Jobs4TN.gov to secondary schools
- Ensure educational goals for persons with barriers are appropriate and provide the necessary supports for success
- Actively engage students with disabilities while in secondary school to ensure smooth transition to postsecondary school and/or the workforce
- Promote educational attainment and credentials that meet employer hiring needs

xxxix. Describe goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators.

- Improved and expanded regional sector partnerships, which increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors
- Expanded career pathway opportunities, including work-based training models and integrated programs of study, that lead to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings
- Expanded workforce opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to career advancement through improved career services, career pathway programs and expansion of bridge programs.

Refer to the section above for additional goals relating to the performance accountability measures.

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

- Determine employer needs, including the needs of emerging businesses and businesses facing closures or layoffs. Disseminate the results to workforce agencies, training providers, secondary and postsecondary schools and community leaders to refine/develop programs to meet employer needs
- Develop regional approaches for defining and implementing/funding work-based learning and career pathways, including youth-focused programs, as well as pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships for adults and youth.
- Develop a regional strategy to work with employers and training providers to develop/update needed training and equipment, especially targeted short-term training, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.
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- Work with transportation planning agencies such as TDOT and MPO's to identify and develop expanded transportation options.
- Work with school systems and training providers to provide resources.
- Develop regional staff training to better serve employers and jobseekers.

The council will meet on a quarterly basis to revisit existing service delivery activities that implement the strategies and to track progress on expanding, streamlining or eliminating services. Activities include:

- Hosting job fairs/hiring events
- Providing employer services and coordinated Business Services Teams that meet employer needs
- Improving communication through website links and coordination teams
- Improving services to targeted populations
- Offering effective staff training
- Participating in economic development activities, including recruiting
- Marketing, including a coordinated marketing strategy, marketing materials, and regional website/links
- Meeting with workforce development partners, employers and training providers to understand employer needs
- Working with secondary education systems to develop career pathways and work-based learning
- Supporting regional efforts to promote economic and workforce development, including Workforce 360
- Integrating partner services and pursuing efforts to eliminate duplication

xli. Describe the facilitation of engagement of employers in workforce development programs including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

- Develop a better understanding of employers' needs by a coordinated regional outreach, including hosting feedback sessions, holding one-on-one conversations, using local board task forces, and communicate these needs to training providers;
- Bring together employers and training providers to develop an understanding of the opportunities and challenges that each one faces in educating employees and having job seekers job-ready;
- Support new approaches to training, such as a regional work-based learning summit for workforce agencies, organizations and employers, determine the gaps in training across the region and develop a regional strategy to fill the gaps, develop career pathways on a regional basis, as well as apprenticeships, work-based learning and other new methods, including delivery of training via technology;
- Use resources effectively by agreeing on regional priorities for using the two mobile Career Coaches and by developing a regional plan to market the coaches.

Additionally, engagement of employers will be accomplished through WIOA programs such as OJT, IWT, and ATG. These programs are provided to small and in-demand employers in the region.

xlii. Indicate how the local workforce development system meets the needs of the businesses in the local area.

Under WIOA, the local workforce system improves services to employers and promotes work-based training. The local workforce programs contributes to economic growth and business expansion by ensuring the workforce system is job-driven, matching employers with skilled

individuals. There is a plethora of services available to employers in the local area including: 1) multiple job fairs hosted by partners and stakeholders; 2) 24/7 access for employers who are hiring and job postings via Jobs4TN.gov; 3) access to AJC space for recruitment, assessments, screening, and hiring; 4) training grants for new hires and existing employees; 5) tax credits where appropriate; 6) Rapid Response.

xl.iii. Describe the strategies to better coordinate workforce development and economic development.

Workforce professionals and ECD representatives are at the table together with the employer when discussing training needs due to expansion or relocation to the region. The team provides a customized approach to meet the employers' needs.

xliv. Describe the strategies to strengthen the linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance.

If a customer visiting the One-Stop Centers or Affiliate AJCs makes an inquiry about unemployment insurance programs, staff will refer the customer directly to the Resource Room to access the UI Re-employment Assistance claims process. From the Unemployment Benefits tab, the individual has access to filing a claim, make a weekly certification, or check the status of his/her claim. The individual must be registered with Jobs4TN.gov in order to access these services. Resource Room staff are available to assist individuals who have limited computer usage skills. The individual may also be provided a toll-free number to make phone inquiries regarding the claim.

xlv. Identify strategies to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise.

The region is home to several Small Business Development Centers as part of the Tennessee and America's Small Business Development Centers Network (SBDC). Contact information can be accessed here: <https://americassbdc.org/small-business-consulting-and-training/find-your-sbdc/> The region encourages local business growth and entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas, with festivals and local tourism attractions. It is worth repeating the statistic that small businesses, with less than 10 employees, comprise nearly 64% of the businesses in the region totaling over 63,000 businesses. These small businesses likely represent the investments made in entrepreneurial training and supports from the business development centers. The local areas strongly support entrepreneurs and new business development. By assisting entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the region by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs, and encouraging new investment. The region's economic interests are enhanced by providing One-Stop assistance to future entrepreneurs by means of counseling, training, research, and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses or via referrals to local business development centers.

xlvi. Identify implementation of initiatives such as IWT, CT, OJT programs as well as 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.

Each local board has developed policies and procedures in order to expand or enhance local workforce development through OJT, IWT, CT, career pathways and sector strategies that are focused on strengthening the regional workforce skill sets and that ultimately lead to increased

economic development. Employer outreach for these initiatives include local and regional partners and stakeholders including, in part, ECD partners and Chambers of Commerce.

xlvi. Steps to be taken to support the state strategies and goals to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development.

The region has benefited from the Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) which provided grants to local areas to support local alignment groups to develop skills gap forecasts, identify the highest priorities, and develop programs or purchase equipment needed to fill those gaps. If future LEAP or other similar opportunities arise, the region will compete for the grant awards.

Partnering with ECD's Workforce360°, a systematic partnership among state agencies and the higher education system, helps to facilitate the delivery of a highly skilled workforce for regional employers. And by increasing the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RAP) or Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP), education, workforce, business and industry as well as economic development are aligned.

xlvi. Identify the strategy for increasing access to education, training, and employment particularly for people with significant barriers to employment

The Division of Rehabilitation Services is responsible for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program, which includes determination of eligibility, determination of the nature and scope of VR services and the provision of employment-focused rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities consistent with their strengths, priorities, and resources. As a One-Stop core partner, VR also provides necessary accommodations for individuals with disabilities if warranted/needed. VR services to individuals include: counseling and guidance, maintenance and transportation, transition services from school to work, job placement, and post-employment services.

The region will develop stronger pipelines to juvenile and adult probation, both state and federal, for enhanced career and employment services. This may be accomplished via a weekly Job Club. Greater outreach efforts to young probationers will be initiated for job readiness training and paid work experience. For those who are recovering from opioid or other substance abuse addictions, partnerships with mental health and recovery agencies will create opportunities for training and/or job placements which is widely known to facilitate or accelerate recovery.

xlix. Describe the strategy for a comprehensive, high-quality workforce system by aligning workforce investment, education, and economic development.

The workforce system, education, and economic development professionals must work in concert and be market-responsive to the needs of the employers relative to ever-evolving and in-demand skills of the regional workforce. One approach may be through participating in strategic efforts such as sector partnerships in which leaders from business, government, education coordinate workforce strategies to support the growth of a particular industry. The agencies may also coordinate on labor market research, job-matching strategies, attracting talent, and reemployment strategies. Coordination between the economic development, which markets the workforce to businesses, the workforce system and education, which either facilitates training and workforce development or provides the training of the workforce, is the best way to ensure the region is getting the training and access required for future jobs. This coordination will also

improve and refine the regional economic development strategy and make the region and state more competitive in attracting new business.

i. Define the approach for improving quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts.

Accurate, objective, relevant, timely, and accessible workforce and labor market information is critical for 1) building a skilled workforce that spurs business competitiveness and economic growth; 2) strengthening career pathways and guiding skill attainment for good jobs, economic opportunity, and career growth; 3) understanding the rapidly changing nature of work and how it impacts the workforce and U.S. economy; and 4) spending workforce training and education funds effectively. The regional labor market cannot function efficiently and effectively without quality information to support the investment decisions of the workforce development system and the investment decisions of business managers, workers, students, jobseekers and educators.

ii. Identify the method used to promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services.

Quarterly MOU (and IFA) meetings with all required partners will keep the region laser-focused on improvement in structure and services. Service and facility assessment surveys are or will be provided to employers, AJC individual customers and board members. The feedback will be used to identify opportunities for improvement.

NEW PLAN ELEMENT

iii. Identify a new plan element and provide a written response.

- i. The local boards and the RPC will engage the CBOs, local TDOC offices, parole and probation representatives as well as mental health and recovery programs through Cooperative Agreements relative to the reentry and workforce development efforts for justice-involved individuals. The Cooperative Agreements will ensure that the public workforce system in the region provides career services, job services, training services and supportive services where appropriate. The fusion of the public workforce system with the correctional, parole and probation programs will facilitate seamless, integrated, and effective services to this targeted population.
- ii. The region currently has several counties participating in programs that assist incarcerated individuals with recovery and reentry programs that may lead to full-time employment or quicker release from incarceration. Where appropriate, the “Correctional Career Pathways: A Journey to Hope,” which is an evidence-based practice was initially launched in Greene County. The program is now being replicated by the Grundy County Sheriff’s Department may be implemented throughout the region as one reentry platform. One significant challenge regarding formerly incarcerated job search and placement is that many will be paid wages that will not induce long-term attachment to the labor market. Therefore, sector-strategy training may increase the odds of long-term attachment to the workforce due to earning self-sufficiency wages.
- iii. The TDOC reports that the October incarceration population is 30,361, monthly felon inmate releases are 4,419, annual probations are 65,670, and monthly parole populations average 11,007. By extrapolation, the regional data may reflect approximately 30% of these numbers. Total TDOC and local jail population grand East Region is 4,819 inmates.
- iv. Services needed include mental health and substance abuse counseling, soft skills, life skills, resume’ writing and mock interviews as examples. Where possible, the goal is to

- replicate the “Correctional Careers Pathway: A Journey to Hope” program in place at the Grundy County Sheriff’s Department and offers specific program components leading to gainful employment.
- v. Data for formerly incarcerated served by the area’s public workforce system will be provided annually. According to VOS, the grand East Region has a total of 138 current, open, active and enrolled justice-involved (offenders) participants.
 - vi. Partners will share information either through Dropbox, email, and/or partner case management meetings.
 - vii. Partnerships for coordination of reentry services are in progress. Plans are underway to identify all services provided in the region for modification. The Southeast local area’s workforce system partner, f2f Chattanooga (Father to the Fatherless), is the Second Chance grantee and provides services to justice-involved individuals particularly those who have been formerly incarcerated. They promote and hold quarterly job fairs in the Chattanooga AJC which include an orientation day prior to the job fair. Employers hire participants on site during the event. As previously noted, the “Correctional Career Pathways: A Journey to Hope,” which is an evidence-based practice is now being replicated by the Grundy County Sheriff’s Department and may be implemented throughout the local area or region as another recovery and reentry platform. Staff to the East Board is heavily involved in the Justice Involved Program. A staff member makes routine weekly or monthly visits to area jails, especially in Anderson and Morgan Counties. In the East local Area, plans are in place to launch the following initiatives: TCAT Behind Bars, Morgan County Correction Facility (MCCX) One-Stop Center, MCCX Work Release Center, a TRICOR Referral Initiative for reentry, Local Jail Reporting/Community Resource Center Outreach, ETHRA Probation and Community Corrections Officers Training, Collaboration with Progressive Sentencing Incorporated (PSI), Transportation Services for reentry candidates, Outreach to County Probation Officers, and Training and Enhanced Supportive Services for eligible justice-involved individuals. The Northeast local area has a weekly interaction at the Washington County Day Reporting Center which serves court-diverted offenders and recently released. AJC staff conduct workshops and provide other “remote” AJC services at the facility to help reconnect these individuals to the labor market. And, of course, we are also connecting to the program, “Correctional Careers Pathway: A Journey to Hope,” in Greene County in order to replicate the program in another county/counties.
 - viii. Ex-offenders face many barriers to employment. While some barriers are psychological, attitudinal, and social in nature, others involve key economic/financial barriers, educational, skill-related, lack of community support, lack of family support, knowledge, and legal issues such as legal fees and restitution requirements. Taken together, these barriers prevent people with criminal records from developing an effective job search and finding rewarding jobs. Therefore, all needed supports will be identified to ensure successful and sustained employment.
 - ix. Per WIOA requirements, services will be provided to those with the greatest need (i.e. a family to support, no transportation, child care needs, recovering user, etc.) and can be identified via intake and partner referral. Of utmost concern is the national opioid crisis. The reentry programs must also focus on opioid use/abuse to align with the state’s initiative and to help mitigate and eradicate this crisis.
 - x. Plans are underway to partner with parole and probation reps to ensure the proper timing of services during pre-release and to ensure that the individuals receive the services that

ensure their success. Prior to release, the career services staff can obtain information about the individual such as educational attainment, previous work history, existing and transferrable skills, career goals, etc. The more information gathered prior to release, the more effective the program services will be.

- xi. The intake and case management will remain the same, and staff will learn of corrections education from the releasing institution or the parole officer's detailed case records.
- xii. The Business Services Team, including board staff, communicate to employers regarding such benefits as WOTC, Federal Bonding, and other job placement agencies that work with the targeted population.
- xiii. The region successfully adheres to sector strategies for job placement and will use the same for this population. Advanced manufacturing, a board-approved sector, is in dire need of workers in the region and is having difficulty finding the workers. If VW expands to produce the electric SUV, then there will be a nearly immediate need of 1,500 production workers at the facility.
- xiv. Training will be identified as needed for the local area and region to help serve this population.
- xv. As partnerships are developed via meetings and planning, sector-supported occupations will be communicated to partners. Identification and engagement of employers, industry sector partnerships, and labor-management partnerships that are willing to hire justice-involved individuals including formerly incarcerated and under state supervision will be accomplished through several methods. Initial announcements for employer opportunities to hire justice-involved individuals will occur at the local workforce development board meeting. Additional announcements will be made by board staff via emails to former and existing employers who received training grants. The volume of job placements will be based on the employers' hiring needs and will occur under the assumption of a growing local and regional economy.
- xvi. The Cooperative Agreement which establishes the workforce-corrections partnership will detail shared case management policies and conditions in order to maximize the partner synergies for successful outcomes. Communication between workforce and correction staff will be critical to program success.
- xvii. Case Managers will include the parole and probation representatives in all correspondence relating to workforce services, employment plans, assessments, and any other services.
- xviii. The public workforce system partners may all participate at some level to provide services to this targeted population (e.g. HUD partner and housing). Outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding, workforce professionals will work with CBOs to provide peer support, housing, transportation, food, family reunification, and other supportive and direct services. Referrals will be made to CBOs that provide one or more of the services mentioned above. Front-line staff are trained to know where to refer participants for needs fulfillment if the services are not provided by the AJC partner and include local CBOs who will partner in the reentry program.