

Southeast Tennessee Workforce Development Board
Opportunities Committee Meeting Minutes DRAFT
August 28, 2024 | 3:00pm | via Zoom

Committee Members in Attendees: Jennifer Thacker (Chair), Stacey Books, Angela Cooper, Elizabeth Cotellese

Other Attendees: Bre LaMountain, Cynthia Brooks, Roxana Horruitiner, Jorge Vera

Staff: Michele Holt, Allison Schiavo, Christi Chapman, Maty Partin, Kevin Treadway, Alicia Zuidema

Call to Order

Jennifer Thacker opened the meeting at 3:04pm.

Approval of Minutes

Due to low attendance, the May 22, 2024 Opportunities Committee minutes were not approved. They will be approved at the next meeting, scheduled for November 20, 2024.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Roxana Horruitiner, Business Employment Consultant with Vocational Rehabilitation, announced an event in Chattanooga to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Voc Rehab, in partnership with other organizations, is hosting the event on October 10, 2024 at the East Lake Recreation Center. The event aims to promote inclusive hiring practices and showcase the skills of individuals with disabilities in the manufacturing sector.

National Recovery Month

Kevin Treadway and Alicia Zuidema from the Southeast TN Development District announced National Recovery Month events in September to support workers and employers and reduce stigma around substance use disorders. Kevin highlighted the benefits of supporting employees in recovery, such as increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and better retention. He introduced the Federal Bonding Program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit as incentives for hiring justice-involved individuals and encouraged the use of the Recovery to Work Employer Toolkit. Alicia emphasized holistic care management, focusing on mental health, housing, and education to help individuals maintain employment and improve well-being. She also stressed the role of peer support in rehabilitation and reentry. Alicia introduced the QUEST team, consisting of herself and two recovery success coaches, Bryan Houston and Deb Gibney, all of whom have personal experience with recovery.

Partner Program Updates

Stacey Books, Persevere, announced a partnership with Made 180 to expand their pathways in Chattanooga, including offering a new course on AutoCAD.

Roxana announced a job fair and forklift graduation event on September 12, 2024, hosted by Goodwill.

Adjournment

Jennifer Thacker adjourned the meeting at 3:48pm.