

Southeast Tennessee Workforce Development Board
Draft Operations Committee Minutes
February 26, 2026, | 2:00 PM ET | Via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance: John Proffitt (Chair), Jennifer Thacker, Corey Raburn, Wesley Skinner and Leslie Travis

Staff: Michele Holt, Allison Schiavo, Christi Chapman, Maty Partin and Reece Stevens

Call to Order

John Proffitt opened the meeting at 2:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The committee adopted the minutes of the November 21, 2025, meeting as drafted. Motion to approve was made by Corey Raburn, seconded by Jennifer Thacker, and passed unanimously.

Administrative Update

Michele Holt provided an administrative update regarding the transition to an outreach service delivery model. She reported that the shift has begun to stabilize, with Title I staff now providing services across multiple locations several times per week.

In the interest of full transparency, Michele also reviewed the Quarter 2 performance scorecard issued by the state. While the Southeast LWDA did not meet benchmarks in several performance areas, she emphasized that staff have made performance improvement their top priority and are actively implementing strategies to strengthen outcomes ahead of the next reporting period.

Review and Approve ETPL Applications

Christi Chapman presented eighteen (18) applications for eligibility.

Academy of Allied Health:

- Practical Nursing- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Professional Coder Plus- subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Leslie Travis, seconded by Corey Raburn, and passed unanimously.

Chattanooga State Community College:

- Emergency Medical Services- Paramedic Technical Certificate– subsequent two-year eligibility

- Respiratory Care– subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Leslie Travis, seconded by Wesley Skinner, and passed unanimously.

Cleveland State Community College:

- Accounting Technical Certificate- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician Technical Certificate- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Cloud Computing Concentration: Computer Information Technology, AAS- subsequent two-year eligibility

- HVAC Bootcamp- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Medical Assisting Certificate- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Paramedic Technical Certificate- subsequent two-year eligibility

- Paramedic, AAS- subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Wesley Skinner, seconded by Leslie Travis, and passed unanimously.

Competitive Edge Dental Assisting Academy, LLC

Dental Assistant with Radiology- subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Leslie Travis, seconded by Jennifer Thacker, and passed unanimously.

Miller-Motte College Chattanooga:

Electrical Technician Basics– subsequent two-year eligibility

Healthcare Billing & Coding– subsequent two-year eligibility

Information Technology– subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Wesley Skinner, seconded by Corey Raburn, and Leslie Travis abstained.

Southeastern Institute of Medical Technology:

Phlebotomy Technician- subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Leslie Travis, seconded by Corey Raburn, and passed unanimously.

Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Chattanooga

Diesel Equipment Technology– subsequent two-year eligibility

Motion to approve was made by Jennifer Thacker, seconded by Corey Raburn, and passed unanimously.

Switch Certification- TN Professional Training Institute

Medical Assisting

Motion to approve was made by Leslie Travis, seconded by Corey Raburn, and passed unanimously.

Monitoring Update

Christi Chapman reported that all WIOA services and financial functions are administered internally. She noted that all invoices and payroll items undergo a multi-level review process to ensure accuracy and compliance. Additionally, enrollments are being reviewed and monitored at 100%, allowing corrections to be made at the outset.

With no questions from the board, Ms. Chapman concluded her report and returned the meeting to Chair John Proffitt.

Adjournment

John Proffitt adjourned the meeting at 2:48 pm with a motion from Wesley Skinner with no objection.

Southeast Tennessee Workforce Development Board
Draft Opportunities Committee Minutes
February 25, 2026 | 3:00 PM EST | Via TEAMS

Committee Members in Attendance: Corey Raburn (Chair), Angela Cooper, Jennifer Thacker, Roxana Horruitiner, Brandon Gaines

Staff: Michele Holt, Allison Schaivo, Maty Partin, Quinita Robinson, Alicia Zuidema

Call to Order

Corey Raburn opened the meeting at 3:03pm.

Approval of Minutes

Jennifer Thacker moved to approve the 11/19/2025 meeting minutes as drafted. Angela Cooper seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous consent.

Building Futures and Empowering Connections Workshop Update

Alicia Zuidema provided an update on the Job Readiness Workshop hosted by the Opportunities Committee on December 5, 2025, at Chattanooga State Community College Kimball Campus. The workshop featured sessions on Assistive Technology presented by Signal Centers, as well as Job Readiness & Job Search Strategies, and Resume & Interview preparation. Attendees also participated in an extremely informative HR Panel Discussion with Jeremy Basham (Komatsu), Carrie Smith (Valmont), and Ashley McKnight (EPB), who shared valuable employer insights and hiring perspectives. Following the update, committee members discussed ideas for future events, including opportunities to collaborate and partner with upcoming events hosted by community partners to further strengthen outreach and impact.

Voc. Rehab TYEP

Maty Partin shared on funding allotted by the Tennessee Department of Labor in conjunction with Voc. Rehab to target individuals with disabilities to provide paid work experience opportunities. Each individual is allowed to earn up to \$3500 in wages for their work. This grant runs on an employer reimbursement model, where the employer hires participant for a short period of time and submits invoices with backup documentation. After the application is completed, the participant must provide I-9 documents and proof of disability. There is currently \$40,000 available from now until June 30, 2026.

Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant & Transfr VR Headsets

Alicia shared an update on the Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant (CRRG), awarded through the Tennessee Office of Reentry. This grant is designed to support justice-involved individuals and those significantly impacted by the justice system. CRRG funding is being utilized to provide training and skill development opportunities, assist participants in obtaining essential I-9 documentation, and purchasing 15 Transfr VR headsets to expand workforce training capacity. The purchase of the VR Headsets were first discussed during the November 2025 Opportunities Meeting. Since that time, the headsets have been acquired and staff training has been completed.

Maty Partin shared how these headsets will enhance services offered across both adult and youth programs. The Transfr VR platform offers immersive training experiences through two primary pathways: Career Exploration and Career Training. Career Exploration allows participants to explore more than 150 careers, personalized career matching, interactive financial literacy, and experience "Day in the Life" simulations across 50+ occupations. Career Training provides hands-on, competency-based virtual instructions, including fundamental skills

training, Over 330 industry-specific modules, and Pre-employment programs career preparation tracks. The addition of these VR headsets strengthen engagement efforts at resource and job fairs, as well as creates new opportunities to deliver training services within local detention centers, further supporting successful reentry outcomes.

Upcoming Events and Partnership Opportunities

Committee members and staff shared upcoming events. Next scheduled Opportunity Committee Meeting will be February 25, 2026 at 3:00 PM EST.

Adjournment

With no further business, Angela Cooper motioned to close the meeting. Jennifer Thacker seconded. Corey Raburn adjourned the meeting at 3:39 PM.

SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Draft Minutes Youth Committee Minutes

February 19, 2026 | 1:00 PM ET | Via Teams Meeting

Committee Members in Attendance: Committee members: Chrisi Eggert, Jeff Rector, Hannah Young, Brittany Cannon, Jennifer Thacker, Gary Behler, Grant Roddy and Sandy Pricer

Guest: Derron Watson, Kyra Jackson

Staff: Maty Partin, Michele Holt, Allison Schiavo, Christi Chapman, Alicia Zuidema and Patrinka Eaves.

Introductions and Approval of minutes

Jennifer Thacker called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm mentioning that she would be standing in for Chairman Freeman. Dr. Thacker gave a brief welcome to all guests in attendance and presented the minutes from November 20, 2025, meeting for approval. With no objections, Gary Behler made a motion to approve the minutes and the motion carried unanimously.

Participant Panel Discussion

Dr. Thacker called on Ms. Maty Partin to introduce the guest in attendance. Ms. Partin introduced Derron Watson who is participating as a paid work experience employer worksite. Mr. Watson works at Watson Insurance Agency and has worked with several of our participants over the last year. Mr. Watson introduced himself and thanked the committee for having him. Ms. Partin continued to ask Mr. Watson questions regarding what it means to be a worksite and how he believes it helps him as an employer as well as the participants he serves. He noted he feels that his impact by participating in this program makes a difference in the lives of the youth and he enjoys working with the program on building skills.

After some additional comments from the committee members, Dr. Thacker turned the meeting back over to Maty to provide the program oversight report.

Youth Program Oversight

Ms. Partin reviewed the program report. She noted the following expenditures as of December 31st:

- Expenditures should be at approximately 50 percent; however, actual spending is currently at 53% percent, with a little over \$178,000 used in participant expenses.
- ITA expenditures are at 99 percent, noting that all individuals who qualify for the adult program will be co-enrolled with the youth program for any ITA funds.
- Supportive Services spending is at 25 percent, which is lower than projected for this time of year.
- In School Youth and Out of School spending, the state's 50/50 waiver remains in place. Current spending is 24 percent for ISY and 76 percent for OSY.

The Committee reviewed the work experience for both WIOA and TYEP funding. Title I Work Experience is required to meet a 20 percent spending threshold. She noted that to date, a little over \$130,000 has been spent, noting that most of the year will be spent focusing on paid work experience going forward. She stated that work experience typically slows during the school year and increases again in the spring. Since July 1, a total of 73 individuals has participated in a work experience, with 15 currently active.

With no questions, she then moved to provide an update on the Tennessee Youth Employment Program (TYEP). She noted the increase in funds received from the state increase the total contract amount to \$567,083. Of this amount, \$269,585.41 has been left to spend. There are currently 177 enrollments toward the regional goal of 250. Ms. Partin noted she will begin reaching out to those on her waitlist to begin spending the remaining amount of funds.

MS. Partin also provided an update on the new VR TYEP grant, awarded at the end of September. This grant totals \$100,000 and is designed to serve individuals with disabilities through employer reimbursements of up to \$3,500 per participant, with a goal of serving 35 individuals. Ms. Partin stated there is still available funds in this grant and if there are any businesses interested in participating to reach out to her as soon as possible.

With no questions about expenditures, she noted since July 1, there have been 55 new enrollments. The total number of active participants has increased to 152, which includes both new and previously enrolled individuals.

After some conversation and input from Michele Holt, Ms. Partin, reviewed the back page of the report. She noted the addition of a Hamilton County Workforce Development Specialist, Angelina Jones. She then moved to call on Alicia Zuidema who introduced the CRRG initiative. Ms. Zuidema mentioned the CRRG initiative provides resources for individuals who have previously been incarcerated or has been justice impacted by a family member. With the grant, the American Job Centers are able to provide support such as obtaining documentation which could be creating a barrier to employment, trainings that are not on the ETPL, and the virtual reality headsets which will be used within the American Job Centers and in detention facilities for career exploration.

With no questions for Alicia, she noted the outreach and upcoming events in the 10 counties.

With no further questions, Ms. Partin turned the meeting over to Dr. Thacker who then called on Patrinka Eaves to introduce Kyra Deason to share her success story.

Participant Success Story

Ms. Eaves introduced Kyra and turned the meeting over to Kyra to share. Ms. Deason shared how the program improved her skills and gave her the ability to be hired after her paid work experience ended. She stated the program changed her life and without it, she would not have been able to obtain her dream job.

Other Business

After some questions and conversation, Dr. Thacker asked for other business. With no other business to come before the committee, Dr. Thacker called for adjournment of the meeting at 1:44 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Evann Freeman