



MEMO

To: Tennessee Workforce System Stakeholders

From: Tim Berry
Chair, State Workforce Development Board

Deniece Thomas
Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Date: September 1, 2026

Subject: Workforce System Governance Transition

On Friday, August 28, 2026, the Tennessee State Workforce Development Board reviewed and adopted the Workforce System Governance Framework Policy, marking a significant step in modernizing Tennessee's workforce governance structure. The policy reflects a deliberate progression: from evolving federal workforce expectations and an independent assessment of Tennessee's system, to the identification of structural opportunities and the use of federal flexibility to address them. The Framework Policy moves Tennessee beyond compliance by strengthening integration, regional impact, strategic consistency, accountability, and innovation to better position the state to respond to emerging workforce challenges and economic opportunities.

The Workforce System Governance Framework Policy establishes an integrated regional governance model to strengthen strategic leadership, coordination, and accountability across Tennessee's workforce system. The Framework Policy transitions existing Regional Planning Councils to Regional Workforce Development Boards (RWDBs) as the official governing entities and Local Workforce Development Boards to Local Advisory Councils (LACs), preserving meaningful local engagement and insight. It also establishes Regional Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Councils to jointly carry out statutory responsibilities and aligns decision-making and service delivery at the regional level. The Framework Policy shifts the focus of governance from administrative processes to strategic leadership, employer engagement, and measurable workforce outcomes, with the WIOA Regional Plan serving as the guiding regional strategic document.

While the Workforce System Governance Framework Policy takes effect September 1, 2026, implementation will occur in phases through a series of milestones, with the transition to the new governance structure concluding by July 1, 2027. Over the coming months, the Department will partner with workforce stakeholders to establish RWDBs and transition governance and administrative functions in alignment with the Framework. The attached Framework Policy establishes the vision and governance structure, while accompanying guidance documents



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provide initial direction for operational implementation. Additional guidance addressing RWDBs, LACs, American Job Centers, and other fiscal and administrative considerations will be issued as appropriate throughout the transition.

The State Workforce Development Board and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development look forward to partnering with workforce stakeholders to implement the Framework Policy and strengthen Tennessee's workforce system.

Tim Berry, Chair
Tennessee State Workforce Development Board

[Deniece Thomas \(Sep 1, 2026 11:02:29 CDT\)](#)

Deniece Thomas, Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Attachments:

1. Workforce System Governance Framework Policy
2. Workforce System Governance Standards Guidance