TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development

WIOA Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Regional Plan Modifications Template

PYs 2026-2027



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Regional Plan Tracker (Sample)

Regional Plan Tracker- PY 2024-2027

Click the link above to use the sample tracker.

***Regional Plan Tracker will be updated in coordination with TDLWD after the Region receives plan approval from the Tennessee State Workforce Development Board. ***

Regional Plan Guidance Tracker- SAMPLE

REGIONAL AREA:

Priority Initiative	What state initiative does this support?	GOAL description- what is success?	Targeted Success Date	Milestone		Milestone		Milestone	
				Action Items	Targeted Success Date	Action Items	Targeted Success Date	Action Items	Targeted Success Date

Regional Labor Market Analysis:

a. Utilizing the data provided by TDLWD WIRRED Report, provide an updated analysis of regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand sectors and occupations, and the employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations.

The eastern region of the State of Tennessee—comprising the East, Northeast, and Southeast Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), as well as the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) of Chattanooga, Knoxville, Johnson City, and Kingsport—experienced moderate economic growth between 2023 and 2024. An analysis of key economic indicators, including employment, wages, business establishments, and labor force participation, reflects a generally positive, though nuanced, economic outlook for the region.

The unemployment rate remained stable at 3.9%, reflecting a steady labor market, though not one experiencing rapid expansion in employment opportunities. The regional labor force increased from 1,147,069 in 2023 to 1,163,923 in 2024, a gain of 16,854 individuals (1.47%). This growth, combined with a stable unemployment rate, indicates that job creation largely kept pace with new labor force entrants, demonstrating overall economic resilience.

In 2024, total employment in the East Region (excluding self-employed and agricultural workers) reached 1,065,642. The five largest industry sectors by employment were:

- Manufacturing (150,626)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (149,394)
- Retail Trade (127,745)
- Accommodation and Food Services (118,451)
- Educational Services (82,852)

(See Appendix A – Figure 1: East Region's Largest Industry Sectors by Employment, 2024.)

Within these major industries, several emerging sectors have been identified as those projected to experience the highest growth rates through 2030. These include:
hanging economic conditions.

- Leisure and Hospitality
- Health Care and Social Assistance (the largest industry in 2020 and projected to remain the largest by 2030, ranking second in projected job growth)
- Manufacturing

b. Describe the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to meet the employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations.

In February 2026, Jobs4TN identified the most frequently advertised job skills across the state. These skills strongly align with the East Region's five priority industry sectors and reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) most sought by employers. Using this labor market information in conjunction with results from the regional employer needs assessment, the East Region will collaborate with training providers to ensure that these competencies are effectively integrated into program curricula.

Additionally, American Job Centers (AJCs) within the East Region will play a critical role in connecting participants to training providers that emphasize these high-demand skills. AJCs will also support employer engagement by promoting the use of platforms such as Alison to help address identified workforce skill gaps. (See Appendix A, Table 2: East Region Advertised Job Skills.)

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, through the Jobs4TN website, also tracks in-demand certifications, tools, and technologies based on real-time job posting data. This information provides valuable insight into the technical qualifications and credentials required across key occupations. The most frequently requested certifications reflect a strong demand in healthcare, transportation, and professional services, including:

1. Registered Nurse (RN) Nursing 3,210
2. American Red Cross Certifications Nursing 2,876
3. American Heart Association (AHA) Certifications Nursing 1,869
4. Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses (LPN & LVN) Nursing 1,208
5. Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Ground Transportation 1,174
6. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) Nursing 680
7. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications Financial Specialists 296
8. Social Worker Credentials & Certifications Social and Human Services 238
9. National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) Fire Rescue 214
10. ASE Parts Specialist Certifications

In addition to certifications, employers frequently request proficiency in a range of tools and technologies essential for workplace productivity and safety. The most commonly cited include:

1. Microsoft (MS) Office
2. Cash Register
3. Forklift
4. Personal Protective Equipment
5. Motor Vehicles
6. Artificial Intelligence Software
7. Microsoft PowerPoint

See Appendix A - Table 4 Advertised Tools and Technology

c. Provide an updated analysis of the regional workforce, incorporating current labor employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Employment and Unemployment

Total employment in the East Region increased from 1,055,216 in 2023 to 1,065,642 in 2024, marking a net gain of 10,426 jobs or approximately 0.95% growth. Within the MSAs, employment growth varied by area: Chattanooga experienced the highest increase at 2.35%, followed by Knoxville at 2.08%, Kingsport at 1.13%, and Johnson City with a more modest 0.93% rise. Non-MSA areas also saw employment growth of 1.3%, which indicates relatively consistent economic activity across both urban and rural parts of the region.

The eastern region of the state of Tennessee, comprising the East, Northeast, and Southeast Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), along with the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) of Chattanooga, Knoxville, Johnson City, and Kingsport, demonstrated moderate economic growth from 2023 to 2024. A detailed analysis of key economic indicators such as employment, wages, business establishments, and labor force participation reveals a generally positive, though nuanced, picture of the region's economic health.

The average annual industry wage in the region, calculated by dividing the total payroll by the average number of workers, increased by over 20 percent to $56,372 from $46,124. The median occupational wage increased by 8.5 percent to $38,532, which is slightly below the state's median.

The region's labor force also grew, increasing from 1,147,069 in 2023 to 1,163,923 in 2024—a gain of 16,854 individuals or 1.47%. This rise in the labor force, coupled with stable unemployment, implies that job creation generally kept pace with labor force entry, a sign of economic resilience.

Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The East Region, inclusive of the East, Southeast, and Northeast Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), represents a diverse and strategically important labor pool with significant opportunities to strengthen workforce participation and economic mobility. Collectively, these three areas account for a substantial population of individuals with barriers to employment, including youth, older workers, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

The East LWDA serves as the largest population center within the region, with over 79,000 youth ages 15–19 and more than 84,000 individuals ages 20–24, indicating a strong pipeline of emerging talent. Additionally, the presence of over 330,000 individuals age 55+ highlights the importance of strategies focused on engaging and retaining older workers in the labor force. The East area also includes more than 69,000 veterans and

d. How will these updated analyses be shared with all partners and used to influence decisions regarding the regional workforce system?

The East RPC members actively engaged in data collection and stakeholder input through labor market analysis, employer engagement, and public meetings to inform regional workforce strategies. To ensure meaningful community participation, the RPC convened additional meetings with regional employers, community colleges, Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) institutions, workforce partners, and other stakeholders. (This aligns with Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

To validate labor market data with real-time industry demand, employers and partners will convene regularly to assess supply and demand trends. Using these insights, the East Region will implement sector-focused strategies in key industries including Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Retail, Accommodation and Food Services, and Educational Services. (This aligns with Pillar 3: Integrated Systems and Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

The East RPC will continue to align workforce investments with priority and emerging sectors (e.g. Health to strengthen talent pipelines. Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs) will lead sector strategy implementation, ensuring employer-driven solutions and alignment with TNWorks (This aligns with Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Key strategies include:Utilizing WIRED data and employer input to identify and validate in-demand sectors. (Aligns with Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Ensuring workforce decisions are employer-led and aligned with industry needs. (Aligns with Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Partnering with sector groups to develop industry-specific training and career pathways. (Aligns with Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Aligning Business Services Team outreach with TNWorks and sector strategies to ensure consistent, streamlined employer engagement. (Aligns with Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Structuring LWDB membership to reflect priority industries. (Aligns with Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Performance and impact will be measured through employer penetration rates, LFPR, customer satisfaction, and economic impact data, with quarterly reporting to the RPC to track progress, identify challenges, and share best practices. (This aligns with Pillar 4: Accountability).

Through this coordinated, employer-driven, and data-informed approach, the East RPC advances the core pillars of America's Talent Strategy by strengthening employer leadership, aligning systems, scaling career pathways, and delivering measurable

Support of State Initiatives:

a. Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

i. Describe how the region will coordinate a collective approach to ensuring a regional workforce system that helps people, particularly those within special populations, enter, reenter, and advance within the labor market, in effort to increase the regional LFPR.

To increase the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), the East Region employs targeted advocacy and engagement strategies focused on special populations. Based on East TN Region – Significant Barriers to Employment data provided by WIRED, priority populations include youth, aging populations, and individuals with disabilities. (This aligns with Pillar 2: Worker Mobility and Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Stakeholder Collaboration

The East Region will convene key stakeholders—including community organizations, advocacy groups, educational institutions, employers, and state agencies—to form a collaborative task force. (Aligns with Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Employer Partnerships

The region will strengthen partnerships with employers committed to inclusive hiring practices and workforce development by positioning employers as active partners in the design, implementation, and evaluation of workforce strategies. Through ongoing engagement with industry leaders, sector taskforces, and Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs), employers will help identify skill gaps, validate training programs, and co-develop career pathways aligned with real-time business needs.

Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation, economic development organizations, and the use of Dun & Bradstreet data will support the development of diverse, job-ready talent pipelines. Employers will also be engaged in expanding work-based learning opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Youth Employment Program (YEP) placements, ensuring direct connections between training and employment.

Additionally, the region will leverage employer partnerships to promote inclusive hiring practices, increase access for priority populations, and support retention strategies through flexible work models, supportive services, and upskilling opportunities. Employer feedback will be continuously incorporated through surveys, TNWorks data, and sector convenings to improve service delivery, strengthen alignment with industry demand, and enhance overall workforce system effectiveness.(Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility)

Monitoring and Evaluation

ii. What regional initiatives will be implemented to promote reemployment and career mobility through multiple avenues; work-based learning, short-term credentials, stackable training opportunities, and pathways that recognize prior experience and demonstrated ability?

East Region will advance the implementation of TNWorks through a coordinated, data-driven, and industry-focused approach aligned with the pillars of America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age.

The region will implement a sector-based service delivery model led by Business and Workforce Directors, using WIRED data to prioritize high-demand industries. Strategies will be employer-driven, with strong partnerships to develop industry-specific training programs, including industry-recognized, short-term, stackable credentials aligned with career pathways. Governance structures, including LWDB membership, will align with sector priorities, with success measured through key indicators such as employer penetration, LFPR, customer satisfaction, and economic impact. (This aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, and Pillar 4: Accountability).

Under TNWorks, a business lifecycle framework will guide service delivery, with the East RPC providing training and tools (e.g., Econovue) to tailor services to businesses at every stage of growth. (This aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Regional utilization of TNWorks sector strategies focus will strengthen industry partnerships and pursue diversified funding. (This aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Employers will be case-managed as customers through a single point of contact model, ensuring streamlined engagement and consistent service delivery. (This aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

To enhance the AJC network, the RPC will align Business Services Team roles with state priorities, expand staff training, and utilize Mobile AJCs to increase access across the region. (This aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Through targeted training and continuous improvement, the region will build staff capacity and regularly evaluate performance to strengthen outcomes and service delivery. (This aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

Finally, TNWorks will be implemented regionally through consistent regional messaging, coordinated service delivery, and improved communication systems, ensuring a unified approach to business engagement and workforce solutions. (This aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

b. Business Engagement

i. How will the region ensure consistent implementation of TNWorks to provide streamlined solutions and consistent messaging to employer customers?

East Region will champion the application of TNWorks through a coordinated, employer-driven, and data-informed approach aligned with the pillars of America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age.

Sector-Based Approach to Service Delivery

Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs) will lead sector strategy implementation using WIRED data to prioritize high-demand industries. Strategies will remain employer-driven, with partnerships supporting industry-specific training and talent pipeline development. LWDB membership and outreach efforts will align with sector priorities, with performance measured through employer penetration, LFPR, customer satisfaction, and economic impact. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Business Cycle Framework

The East RPC will provide tools (e.g., Econovue) and training to align services with businesses at each stage of the lifecycle, enabling responsive and customized solutions. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Case Managing Employers as Customers

LWDAs will utilize TNWorks and a single point of contact model to streamline employer engagement and improve service delivery. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems.)

AJC Network

The RPC will align Business Services Team roles, expand staff training, and deploy Mobile AJCs to increase outreach and accessibility. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Training and Development

The RPC will build staff capacity through targeted training and apply a continuous improvement framework to evaluate and strengthen outcomes. (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation.)

Enterprise Alignment

Under TNWorks, BWDs will serve as primary employer contacts, ensuring alignment of business services, consistent messaging, and coordinated communication across the

ii. How will the RPC utilize established regional business intermediaries and economic development groups to facilitate the sector partnerships necessary to drive sector strategies and address the needs of business and industry?

The Regional Planning Council (RPC) plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and coordinating efforts among stakeholders to advance sector partnerships. These efforts align with America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age.

Stakeholder Engagement

The East RPC will engage employers, industry associations, education providers, workforce boards, economic development agencies, and community organizations to support sector strategies. The RPC will also leverage established regional business intermediaries (e.g. Nuclear Industry Intermediaries such as Oak Ridge Associated Universities) and economic development organizations (e.g. Nuclear - East Tennessee Economic Council) to strengthen employer engagement and align with regional priorities. (Aligns with:Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Needs Assessment

The RPC will conduct comprehensive needs assessments using surveys, task forces, and stakeholder input to identify workforce demands. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Formation of Sector Task Forces

The RPC will convene sector task forces representing in-demand industries to facilitate collaboration and communication across partners. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Development of Sector Strategies

Sector task forces will co-develop workforce, education, and training strategies aligned with industry needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Identification of Skills Gaps

The RPC will identify skills gaps and develop targeted training solutions to strengthen talent pipelines. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Promotion of Apprenticeships and Training Programs

The region will promote Registered Apprenticeships (RAPs), OJT, and industry-recognized credentials in partnership with employers. (Aligns with: Pillar 2:

iii. Describe how the RPC will utilize TDLWD Regional Directors to facilitate TNWorks and promote alignment with economic development within the region, including how the Regional Directors will report progress to the RPC.

The utilization of TDLWD Business & Workforce Directors (BWDs) to facilitate business engagement and align workforce efforts with regional economic development reflects a coordinated, employer-driven approach aligned with America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age. The East RPC will leverage BWDs to ensure consistent implementation of **TNWorks** by aligning business engagement activities, service delivery, and employer messaging across all LWDAs, creating a unified and streamlined experience for business customers. (Overall aligns with: Pillars 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, and Pillar 4: Accountability).

Establishing Clear Roles and Responsibilities

In support of **TNWorks**, the RPC will ensure BWDs clearly understand their role in aligning workforce and economic development efforts and reinforcing consistent service delivery. (Aligns with:Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Collaborative Business Engagement Strategy

The RPC will work with BWDs to implement an employer-driven engagement strategy aligned with regional economic priorities, informed by labor market data and employer input. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Communication and Outreach

Regular communication between the RPC and BWDs will ensure alignment in strategy, messaging, and service delivery across the region. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Networking and Relationship Building

Utilizing the **TNWorks** framework, the BWDs will actively engage employers, industry associations, and economic development organizations to strengthen partnerships and understand workforce needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Promoting Workforce Development Programs

The RPC will collaborate with BWDs to promote AJC services, training programs, and apprenticeships aligned with employer demand and sector strategies. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Alignment with Economic Development Goals

Business engagement strategies will align with regional economic development priorities to support industry growth and competitiveness. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems

c. Youth Employment Program (YEP)
   i. What opportunities exist for a collective approach to YEP implementation across the region, particularly focused on work experience placements within high demand and emerging sectors?

Implementing a collective approach to the Youth Employment Program (YEP) across the region presents strong opportunities for collaboration. These efforts align with America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age.

Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building

Local areas and partner organizations will share best practices, expertise, and program strategies, while the region develops and delivers training for CSP staff, partners, and stakeholders. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Sector-Aligned Work Experience Placements

The East Region will prioritize connecting youth to meaningful work experiences in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and skilled trades. Using EconoVue, the region will identify employers and engage them in YEP, including mentorship and rotational opportunities. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Data-Informed Participant Alignment and Access

The region will ensure each participant completes an assessment of aptitudes and interests to support placement in sector-aligned opportunities. Standardized applications and coordinated outreach through partners (e.g., foster care agencies, Boys & Girls Clubs, CTE programs) will expand access. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 4: Accountability, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Marketing, Outreach, and Continuous Improvement

The region will collaborate on marketing and outreach to recruit youth and employers, supported by quarterly meetings to share outcomes and improve performance. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 4: Accountability, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

ii. How will the RPC leverage partnerships to increase YEP participation and job placement within the region? Include how the RPC will utilize employer partnerships, non-profits, and program partnerships, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, within the Region.

On March 25, 2026, the RPC convened a robust membership of organizations and employers to advance understanding of **YEP** and the importance of post-program employment. This convening reflects an ongoing regional effort to promote year-round youth work experiences aligned with TNWorks and the Business Engagement Plan (BEP), with a focus on connecting youth to high-demand sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and skilled trades. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

These efforts are guided by industry demand and supported through coordinated employer engagement and consistent messaging to deliver streamlined, customer-centered workforce solutions. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

The East RPC will leverage employer partnerships, nonprofit organizations, and program partners—including Vocational Rehabilitation—to expand access to sector-aligned work-based learning opportunities, particularly for youth with barriers to employment. Ongoing coordination with education partners and stakeholders ensures alignment, consistency, and shared accountability. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Through collaboration with state and local partners, the region will expand work-based learning models, with employers serving as co-designers of work experiences and community partners providing supportive services and case management. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

By uniting employers, nonprofits, and workforce partners, the region will expand youth enrollment, strengthen business engagement, and build a comprehensive, sector-driven talent pipeline while addressing barriers to employment. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Leveraged partnerships—including CTE programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, community-based organizations, and workforce partners—support coordinated service delivery and system capacity building across the region. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Ongoing expansion of these partnerships and strategic contracting will enhance service delivery, improve outcomes, and ensure alignment with TNWorks and regional economic development priorities. (Aligns with: Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Through this coordinated, sector-based, and partnership-driven approach, the East RPC delivers a unified, data-driven, and employer-centered workforce system with consistent

d. State Registered Apprenticeships

i. Describe how the RPC plans to collectively expand State Registered Apprenticeships through diversifying and accelerating apprenticeship programs aligned with in-demand sectors for the region.

The East RPC will implement a coordinated, sector-based strategy to expand State Registered Apprenticeships by diversifying and accelerating program development in high-demand and emerging industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, nuclear energy, and skilled trades. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Through alignment with TNWorks, the RPC will engage employers as primary partners in the design and expansion of apprenticeship programs, with BWDs and partners leading targeted outreach to employers and industry associations (Hospitality & Tourism Regional Taskforce and Nuclear intermediaries). (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

The RPC will leverage partnerships with industry, education providers, CTE programs, community-based organizations, and Vocational Rehabilitation to expand access for underrepresented populations and support recruitment, pre-apprenticeships, and supportive services. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Strategies to Accelerate Apprenticeship Growth

Utilize labor market data (WIRED, EconoVue) to identify priority sectors and occupations. (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

Support pre-apprenticeship and work-based learning models, including YEP, as entry points into apprenticeships. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Promote industry-driven program design, including competency-based and hybrid models. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Align funding streams (WIOA and other investments) to support sustainability. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

The RPC will ensure consistent implementation across LWDAs through regional coordination, shared training, and standardized messaging under **TNWorks**. BWDs will strengthen connections with economic development partners and provide regular updates to the RPC. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 4: Accountability

Progress will be measured through key performance indicators, including apprenticeship program growth, employer participation, enrollments, completions, and placements in high-demand sectors. These metrics will guide continuous improvement. (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

ii. Describe how the RPC will coordinate a regional plan to scale apprenticeships, aligning education and training programs to career pathways, and targeting federal and state investments toward employer-led upskilling initiatives designed to fill talent shortages in high demand sectors.

The East RPC will coordinate a regional plan to scale Registered Apprenticeships by aligning education, training, and workforce strategies with clearly defined career pathways in high-demand and emerging sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, information technology, nuclear energy, and skilled trades. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Through a sector-based approach, the RPC will engage employers as primary partners in the design and expansion of apprenticeship and work-based learning programs, ensuring alignment with industry needs and regional talent demands. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

The RPC will strengthen alignment between education and workforce systems by partnering with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, postsecondary institutions, and training providers to expand career pathway models that incorporate pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

To scale apprenticeship efforts, the RPC will coordinate across Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to standardize processes, share best practices, and promote consistent messaging aligned with TNWorks and the current Business Engagement Plan (BEP). BWDs and Business Services Teams will lead employer engagement and co-develop apprenticeship models. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

The East RPC will strategically align federal and state investments—including WIOA and other workforce and economic development resources—to support employer-led upskilling initiatives and reduce barriers to participation. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Additionally, the RPC will leverage partnerships with economic development organizations, community-based organizations, and program partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation to expand access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Progress will be measured through key performance indicators, including apprenticeship program growth, employer participation, enrollment and completion rates, and placement in high-demand occupations. These data will guide continuous improvement and ensure alignment with regional talent needs. (Aligns with:Pillar 4: Accountability).

Regional Service Strategies:

a. Provide an updated analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, focused on industry driven needs within the region.
    i. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities and the collective capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individual with barriers to employment.

Workforce development in the East Region is driven by the needs of business and industry to support a competitive regional economy. The East RPC works in close coordination with employers, industry associations, economic development partners, and education providers to identify in-demand occupations and align workforce strategies accordingly. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Through a sector-based approach, the region ensures training investments respond to current and emerging industry needs, supporting talent pipelines that lead to sustainable wages and economic mobility. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Training services are prioritized based on high-demand occupations and aligned with employer-validated skills and career pathways. The East RPC emphasizes ETPL programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials while maintaining informed customer choice. Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Key Strategies Alignment

Target training investments toward middle-skill and high-demand occupations using labor market data and employer input. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies and Pillar 4: Accountability).

Partner with employers to validate industry-recognized credentials.Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Expand work-based learning opportunities, including OJT, Registered Apprenticeships, internships, and incumbent worker training. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Align education and training systems (K-12, CTE, postsecondary, Adult Education) to support sector-based career pathways and stackable credentials. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems and Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Integrate workforce preparation into education to develop technical and durable skills including digital equity. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

b. Provide an updated plan for how the RPC will support alignment and integration of education and workforce and economic development across the region?
    i. How will the RPC assess and measure impact of integrated workforce strategies?

The East RPC will implement the following strategies and initiatives to ensure job seekers are prepared to enter and retain employment while effectively meeting regional business needs. All activities will be guided by ongoing assessment, performance data, and measurable outcomes to ensure continuous improvement and impact. (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

Strategy Alignment

The RPC will utilize Tennessee's Benefits Cliff data analysis and facilitate the use of consistent financial modeling using the CLIFF tool regionally. The tool is designed to assist two key populations: individuals currently receiving public assistance, who benefit from increased awareness of cliff risks and strategies for building long-term earning power; and individuals not receiving benefits but unaware of available supports that could help stabilize their career path. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).
- Leverage the BWDs to provide consistent messaging across the region as to the significance and availability of this tool.

Target training investments toward in-demand occupations, with outcomes measured through wage gains, employment placement, and retention. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Collaborate with employers to validate and promote industry-recognized credentials, tracking credential attainment and employer utilization. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Develop and evaluate short-term pre-vocational services aligned with employer expectations, measured by employability gains and employment outcomes. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 4: Accountability).

Partner with K-12, CTE, and postsecondary institutions to expand career pathways, tracking enrollment, completion, and employment transitions. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Coordinate with WIOA Title II partners to deliver integrated education and training, tracking credential attainment and entry into high-demand occupations. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs), measuring growth, participation, completion, and placement into high-demand sectors. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies)

c. Describe how the RPC has updated its strategic vision to support federal priorities and state initiatives that foster regional economic growth.
    i. What innovative service strategies will be used to address regional educational and industry-driven training needs?
    ii. What cooperative procedures, either formal or informal, will the partners establish to best align regional services and coordinate regional delivery?

The East Regional Planning Council (RPC) convenes regional partners to provide industry-focused feedback and direction to the regional strategic planning process. That feedback is utilized to identify a strategic vision and advance state workforce priorities, align with TNWorks, and foster regional economic growth through data-driven, industry-led strategies. (Aligns with:Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies. Pillar 3: Integrated Systems, Pillar 4: Accountability).

State Strategic Goal 1: Increase/Sustain Competitive LFPR

RPC Strategy 1: Increase LFPR by 0.5% annually (2024–2027)

Targeted outreach for priority populations (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Partner with employers, CTE, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Expand work-based learning and flexible employment models (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility and Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Measure LFPR, placement, and retention outcomes (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

RPC Strategy 2: Increase Youth Employment Program placements

Expand employer and partner engagement (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

Promote career exploration and work-based learning (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility).

Track outcomes and transitions (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

RPC Strategy 3: Increase Co-Enrollment

Strengthen referrals and case management (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

Improve service integration and outcomes (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems and Pillar 4: Accountability).

RPC Strategy 4: Increase Digital Equity

Sector Initiatives for In-Demand Sectors or Occupations:

a. Identify in-demand industry sectors and occupations for 2026-2027 within the region using updated data provided from TDLWD WIRRED Report.

Based on recent growth, employment size, projected trends, and average weekly wages, seven industries are highlighted as key contributors to Tennessee's labor market:
• Leisure & hospitality – Arts, entertainment, and recreation led the sector in growth, while accommodation and food services maintained steady expansion.
• Health care and social assistance – Remains a top employer, adding thousands of jobs and sustaining strong workforce demand.
• Manufacturing – Durable and nondurable goods production contributed to continued goods producing sector expansion.
• Transportation, warehousing, and utilities – Despite a slight overall decline, the sector remains essential for supporting supply chains and regional commerce.
• Professional, scientific, and technical services – One of the fastest-growing private service sectors, reflecting continued demand for specialized skills.
• Construction – Growth continues in infrastructure and commercial projects, reinforcing overall employment gains in goods-producing industries.
• Information – Employment remained robust, supported by ongoing technology adoption across multiple sectors.

Total employment in the East Region in 2024, excluding self-employed and agricultural workers was 1,064,717. The five largest industry sectors for the East in 2024 were:

• Manufacturing (150,626)
• Health Care and Social Assistance (149,394)
• Retail Trade (127,745)
• Accommodation and Food Services (118,451)
• Education Services (82,852)

See Figure 1 in Appendix A.

* Emerging Sector: Energy (Nuclear / Advanced Energy)

The Nuclear and Advanced Energy sector is an emerging and strategically significant industry for the East Region, anchored by major assets such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and a growing ecosystem of advanced energy employers. Tennessee is a national leader in nuclear innovation, including small modular reactor (SMR) development, advanced materials research, and clean energy technologies.

This sector is characterized by high-wage, high-skill occupations spanning engineering, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, cybersecurity, and technical operations. Continued federal and private investment in nuclear energy, grid modernization, and energy resilience is expected to drive sustained job growth and create new career pathways aligned with both traditional energy roles and emerging technologies.

The East Region is well positioned to support this growth through sector-based strategies

b. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations. Include a description of how the RPC will ensure sector initiatives are driven by industries within the region.

Tennessee aligns with **TNWorks** to carry out its regional sector strategies. Within this employer-centric framework, these strategies are put into action by Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), ensuring that statewide priorities are aligned with each region's unique economic conditions, industry strengths, and workforce needs. Under TNWorks, Business Engagement provides a cohesive design that links key partners, including RPCs, LWDBs, American Job Centers, economic development organizations, and education and training providers. This approach ensures that sector strategies are both evidence-based and responsive to local conditions, enabling regions to focus on the industries most essential to their economic growth. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

To ensure regional initiatives remain industry-led, East Tennessee will utilize the TDLWD's Operational Business Engagement Plan to shift employer engagement from transactional outreach to a consultative, outcomes-driven model. The core of this strategy is predicated on an employer-centric vision, where the industry dictates the skills gap and the public sector builds the bridge to cross it. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Strategic Alignment: Industry-Driven Framework

The East Tennessee RPC will ensure regional sector initiatives are authentically driven by local industries through the following:

1. Industry-Led Model

The RPC will not simply invite businesses to meetings; it will empower them to lead. Each sector-specific taskforce (e.g., Hospitality & Tourism, Logistics, Nuclear) will be chaired by an Industry Champion—a recognized leader from a regional organization. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies)

The RPC will support statewide industry-led initiatives such as Tennessee's **Rural Healthcare Initiatives** and **TN Talent Initiative** in which the state and regions are responsive to the needs identified by business and industry partners.

The East Region's healthcare sector strategy directly supports Tennessee's **Rural Healthcare Initiative** by aligning workforce development, education, and healthcare providers to address critical workforce shortages in rural communities. Through targeted investments in career pathways, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning opportunities, the initiative expands access to healthcare careers while ensuring employers have a sustainable pipeline of skilled talent. By engaging healthcare employers as primary partners and leveraging collaboration with CTE, postsecondary institutions, and workforce programs, the region delivers training that is responsive to real-time industry

c. How will these sector initiatives be tracked and measured for impact? Include any accountability measures assigned to LWDAs within the region.

The East Tennessee Regional Planning Council (RPC) will maintain a culture of transparency and continuous improvement by grounding all sector initiatives in data-driven accountability. To ensure these strategies truly serve the regional economy, the RPC will implement the following performance and evaluation framework: (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

1. Collaborative Performance Architecture

The RPC will partner with department leadership and WIRED to define rigorous performance metrics that track the success of in-demand sector strategies. By utilizing the Employer CRM, the region will move beyond simple data entry to capture qualitative measures—such as the depth of a business relationship and the specific nature of industry engagement—ensuring a holistic view of regional impact. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

2. Real-Time Needs Assessment & Gap Analysis

To stay ahead of market shifts, the RPC will conduct periodic assessments for every high-growth sector. This process includes establishing baseline workforce conditions, maintaining a live repository of industry needs through a data management system, and mapping those needs against current educational offerings to identify and address training gaps in real time. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation; Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies)

3. Industry-Defined Success & Long-Term Sustainability

In an industry-led model, success is defined by employers. The RPC will empower Sector Taskforce Leadership to establish performance benchmarks and evaluate system effectiveness. Regular surveys of taskforce members will serve as a primary feedback mechanism to assess whether workforce strategies are meeting business expectations. The RPC will also maintain a long-term, sustainable approach through scheduled re-evaluations, while supporting sector benchmarking efforts to measure the region's ability to deliver a qualified, work-ready talent pool. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To maintain a clear understanding of workforce system performance, the East RPC will track and report key metrics aligned with regional and state priorities. These include supporting the TDLWD Operational Business Engagement Plan goal of 2,200 annual business engagements statewide, with at least 75 percent of East Region engagements focused on high-demand, in-demand, and emerging sectors. Additionally, business customer satisfaction will be measured through direct employer feedback on the quality of talent and workforce services. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies)

Economic Development/Business Engagement:

a. How will the RPC ensure employers play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and steering investments toward the roles and credentials that matter most? Include how the RPC will prioritize results and reward programs that place workers directly into apprenticeships or other work-based learning opportunities leading to in-demand jobs.

The coordination of economic development and workforce investment activities in a region requires a collaborative approach among government agencies, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations. The partnership between TDLWD and the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development (TNECD) is critical to strengthening business engagement and driving regional economic growth through aligned workforce strategies. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies)

To ensure that the regional economy is not only supported by—but actively driven by—industry needs, the East Tennessee RPC will transition to an employer-centric model that positions employers as active architects of the workforce system rather than passive advisors. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

The following strategies outline how the RPC will increase industry engagement and deliver high-impact workforce outcomes.

1. Employer-Led Validation & Strategic Steering

The RPC will prioritize investments that support in-demand sectors and directly address identified talent gaps through employer-led input and validation. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

Defining In-Demand Skills: Sector Taskforces will develop detailed competency maps, with employers identifying specific technical tasks, tools, and skills required for immediate productivity.

Validating Training Models: All programs promoted or supported by the RPC will be reviewed and approved by industry taskforces to ensure alignment with current workforce needs.

Strategic Investment Alignment: Resources will be directed toward sectors demonstrating strong growth and employer commitment, including financial investment and work-based learning opportunities. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

2. Prioritizing Results & Performance

b. How will the RPC ensure a collective regional approach to initiatives (such as registered apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, and customized training solutions) be modified to facilitate increased engagement of businesses, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand sectors and occupations, and how will their impact be measured?

To establish a unified and high-impact economic environment, the East Tennessee Regional Planning Council (RPC) will synchronize services across county lines to ensure a seamless experience for employers. This regional approach will scale business engagement strategies—particularly for small businesses and those in in-demand sectors—through coordinated service delivery and shared resources. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Collective Regional Strategy for Work-Based Learning

The RPC will transition from localized outreach to a Regional Service Portfolio by standardizing the delivery of Registered Apprenticeships (RAPs), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Customized Training Solutions. This approach will simplify access for small businesses through turnkey administrative support, coordinate Business Service Teams (BSTs) under TNWorks to ensure consistent engagement, and leverage strategic partnerships to align training resources with real-time industry needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Regional Implementation

1. Sector-Based Service Delivery: Business and Workforce Directors will lead sector strategy implementation using WIRED data to identify in-demand industries. LWDB membership will be aligned to reflect these sectors, ensuring workforce decisions remain employer-driven and responsive to regional economic needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

2. Business Lifecycle Alignment: The RPC will utilize business lifecycle data (e.g., EconoVue) to tailor services based on a company's stage of growth, supporting talent acquisition, retention, and expansion strategies aligned with employer needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

3. Integrated Employer Case Management: Manage employer relationships across the region, ensuring continuity of service, reducing duplication, and delivering a streamlined, high-quality customer experience. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

4. Mobile AJC Deployment: Mobile American Job Centers will be strategically deployed to support outreach in rural areas and targeted industry hubs, bringing workforce services directly to employers and job seekers. (Aligns with: Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 5 –

c. Considering federal priorities and state initiatives, provide an update on what innovative initiatives, utilizing tools such as registered apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, and customized training solutions, will the RPC coordinate to meet the training needs of employers across LWDAs?

America's Talent Strategy: Industry-Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, Integrated Systems, and AI-Driven Innovation

Strategic Regional Framework: Building the Workforce for the Future

The East Tennessee RPC aligns local board policies with the five pillars of America's Talent Strategy to create an industry-led, high-performance workforce ecosystem. By transitioning from a fragmented "college-for-all" approach to one that prioritizes high-wage, in-demand career pathways, the RPC ensures that all workforce investments—from OJT to IWT—are aligned with the evolving needs of a modern, re-industrialized economy. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

1. Industry-Driven Strategy & Co-Investment

The RPC advances a Industry-Led, employer-driven model in which industry plays a central role in shaping workforce strategies and investments. Sector taskforces—comprised of industry leaders, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development partners—define in-demand skills and validate training models to ensure alignment with real-world business needs. The RPC prioritizes investments in Credentials of Value, including stackable, industry-recognized certifications that lead directly to high-wage employment in priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, and energy. The RPC will leverage state initiatives such as Rural Healthcare Initiatives and TN Talent Initiatives in addition to federal initiatives like Workforce Pell Grant (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

2. Enhancing Worker Mobility through Data & AI

The region is modernizing workforce navigation through the integration of labor market intelligence and AI-enabled tools that support skill identification and career advancement. Through skill-based assessments, the RPC helps individuals—including veterans and long-term unemployed individuals—identify transferable skills and access clear pathways into higher-wage opportunities. Additionally, readiness and soft skill assessments ensure participants are prepared to succeed in technical training and retain employment in high-demand industries. (Aligns with: Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

3. Scaling "Earn-and-Learn" & Regional Apprenticeships

The East Region prioritizes work-based learning as a primary workforce strategy,

Coordination of Supportive Services:

a. Applying flexibility and innovation, describe how supportive services, including transportation and childcare, will be aligned and coordinated throughout the region.

To transform East Tennessee into a truly accessible economic engine, the region is shifting from a traditional service model to a dynamic, integrated support ecosystem. This approach prioritizes regional alignment and innovative flexibility to ensure that barriers such as childcare and transportation do not prevent individuals from accessing career opportunities. (Aligns with: Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

By aligning policies and resources across county lines, the region ensures a seamless experience for participants regardless of location. This unified regional infrastructure enables services to operate efficiently and responsively, supporting the needs of a modern, mobile workforce. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility)

1. Braided Resource Integration

The region will move beyond siloed funding by braiding local, state, and private resources to create a comprehensive support system. This approach enables participants to access a full range of services—from childcare assistance to training-related supports—through a coordinated, single point of contact. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

2. Agile Case Management

Staff will operate as a cross-trained, multi-disciplinary team, allowing case managers to serve as navigators across the entire regional network. Through coordinated service delivery and “warm handoffs,” participants will experience seamless transitions between programs and providers. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

3. Predictive Resource Mapping

The region will utilize data-driven mapping to identify service gaps and underserved areas. This approach enables proactive deployment of mobile services and flexible transportation solutions to ensure equitable access to workforce and supportive services. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility)

4. Feedback-Loop Innovation

Participant feedback will be continuously captured and used to refine service delivery models. By treating feedback as a driver of innovation, the region can adapt quickly to emerging needs, such as non-traditional childcare hours or digital literacy supports. (Aligns with: Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

5. TN Benefits Cliff Tool

b. Explain where diverse demographics make regional coordination of supportive services a challenge. What has been done to provide solutions and how the RPC will ensure barriers are equitably addressed?

The East Region's approach ensures that supportive services align with workforce demands by supporting populations critical to meeting industry needs. Through equitable resource distribution and targeted engagement strategies, the region helps build a more inclusive talent pipeline. Ongoing collaboration with employers and community stakeholders ensures that services are responsive not only to worker needs but also to regional economic priorities. (Aligns with: Pillar 1: Industry-Driven Strategies).

By addressing barriers to participation—such as care-giving responsibilities and unequal access to resources—the East Region has supported greater worker mobility. Expanded supportive services and equitable resource allocation enable individuals from diverse backgrounds to access training and employment opportunities, helping them move more freely into and within the workforce. East RPC intends to focus on taking services into its communities rather than waiting on customers to visit brick and mortar facilities. This process has started with the sharing of LWDA best practices and the aligning of strategies across the region. (Aligns with: Pillar 2: Worker Mobility, Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

The East Region will strengthen coordination through policy alignment across local, state, and federal systems, ensuring a cohesive approach to workforce and economic development. By integrating supportive service policies region-wide, the East RPC promotes seamless service delivery that reduces fragmentation and improves access for priority populations, including youth, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. (Aligns with: Pillar 3: Integrated Systems).

To ensure equitable outcomes, the East Region is committed to strong accountability through data-driven decision-making. By collecting and analyzing disaggregated data, the region can identify disparities in service access and utilization across demographic groups. Tools such as the KPMG report help pinpoint service gaps within each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), enabling targeted interventions and continuous performance monitoring to ensure fairness and measurable impact. (Aligns with: Pillar 4: Accountability).

The East Region recognizes that coordinating supportive services across diverse populations requires adaptive and forward-thinking approaches. By modernizing policies—such as expanding traditional "childcare" support into broader "caregiver support"—the region is innovating to meet evolving family and workforce realities. Additionally, tailored outreach strategies using culturally relevant messaging, multilingual resources, and community-specific communication channels ensure services remain flexible and responsive to varying demographic needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 5: Flexibility and Innovation).

Performance Accountability:

a. Describe updated strategies relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators to include State and Local Measures (Key Performance Indicators), to include:
   i. How the RPC will work with each LWDA to achieve the negotiated federal measures and state KPIs?
   ii. How will the KPIs be monitored and impact assessed and measured?

a. Performance accountability in workforce development requires a coordinated, data-driven approach to setting, tracking, and achieving regional targets aligned with negotiated federal performance measures and state key performance indicators (KPIs). The East TN Regional Planning Council (RPC) will partner closely with each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) to ensure alignment, accountability, and continuous improvement across the region. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems)

i. Partnership with LWDAs to Achieve Negotiated Measures

Collaborative Goal Setting:

The RPC will work jointly with each LWDA to establish and refine performance targets aligned with federal measures and state KPIs. This process ensures integration of regional and local priorities while maintaining a shared focus on outcomes such as employment, earnings, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems)

Customized, Data-Driven Strategies:

In collaboration with LWDAs, the RPC will develop targeted strategies reflecting local economic conditions, industry demands, and workforce challenges. These strategies will align training, job placement, and supportive services with in-demand occupations to improve KPI performance and support employer needs. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility)

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:

The RPC will provide ongoing training, tools, and technical assistance to strengthen each LWDA's ability to track and improve performance outcomes. This includes enhancing capabilities in data collection, analysis, and the effective use of state systems. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Ongoing Communication and Regional Alignment:

Regular regional meetings, performance calls, and peer learning sessions will ensure alignment across LWDAs. These engagements will support problem-solving, promote

b. What additional metrics, outside of KPIs, will the region measure to determine success of regional strategies and assess impact of initiatives? How will the RPC know if the workforce needle is moving?

The East Region will move beyond static data points to embrace longitudinal impact modeling and real-time performance intelligence. By integrating these measures, the region ensures that workforce strategies not only meet performance benchmarks but also drive innovation, resilience, and long-term economic growth. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Impact Measurement Framework

Regional Strategic Initiative Tracker:

The RPC will deploy a centralized digital tracker to monitor the velocity of regional goals, providing visibility into how quickly initiatives progress from planning to implementation across the region. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems)

Strategic Cross-Mapping:

By auditing local initiative trackers against regional benchmarks, the RPC ensures both vertical and horizontal alignment, while identifying best practices that can be scaled across the East Tennessee region. (Aligns with: Pillar 3 – Integrated Systems; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Stakeholder Sentiment:

The region will assess the perceived value of workforce and supportive services through advanced survey methods, including sentiment analysis, to better understand the qualitative impact on participant confidence and career readiness. (Aligns with: Pillar 4 – Accountability; Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 5 – Flexibility and Innovation)

Employer Integration Metrics:

The East Region will evaluate the industry readiness of its talent pipeline by collecting direct employer feedback, including return on investment in workforce programs and their impact on recruitment and retention. (Aligns with: Pillar 1 – Industry-Driven Strategies; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

Economic Mobility & Sustainability:

The RPC will track long-term outcomes such as retention and wage progression over 12-, 24-, and 36-month intervals to assess the effectiveness of workforce strategies in supporting upward economic mobility. (Aligns with: Pillar 2 – Worker Mobility; Pillar 4 – Accountability)

Placement Durability

Coordination of Cost Arrangements:

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

Administrative cost coordination among AJC partners is formalized through Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), which establish clear methodologies for cost sharing based on proportionate use and relative benefit. These agreements are reviewed regularly, with IFAs updated quarterly and monitored by partner leadership to ensure accuracy and accountability. Local board fiscal staff invoice partners on a monthly basis to ensure timely reconciliation of shared costs.

The East Region strategically braids WIOA funds with other federal and state programs—including Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), TN Promise, TN Reconnect, SNAP E&T, TANF, SCSEP, Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs, and RESEA—to reduce duplication, maximize resources, and enhance service delivery.

MOUs further support system alignment by promoting resource sharing, improving efficiency, and reducing administrative burden across partners. Under the guidance of the Regional Planning Council (RPC), local areas will also pursue regional cost-sharing opportunities for administrative functions such as regional planning, outreach and marketing, annual reporting, technical assistance, and grant development. These coordinated efforts ensure efficient use of resources while strengthening the overall effectiveness of the workforce system.

b. Identify any additional funding resources the region plans to collectively seek, including opportunities for LWDAs to partner towards application of non-WIOA grants.

The East Region will collaboratively pursue non-WIOA funding opportunities to strengthen workforce development initiatives and support in-demand industry sectors. These efforts will focus on diversifying resources, expanding capacity, and aligning investments with regional economic priorities.

Federal Funding Opportunities

The region will pursue federal grants aligned with workforce and economic development goals, including:

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Critical Sector Job Quality Grants
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) programs (e.g., WORC, INSPIRE)
Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

State-Level Funding

The RPC will coordinate with state agencies to identify and secure funding that complements WIOA investments, including:

Youth Employment and Career Exploration funding
State Apprenticeship funding
Office of Reentry programs

Multi-Level Government Funding

The region will engage state, county, and local governments to pursue matching or expansion funding opportunities that enhance WIOA resources. These investments may support infrastructure, service expansion, and targeted initiatives that address regional workforce needs.

Employer and Industry Partnerships

The RPC will collaborate with major regional employers and industry leaders to develop sponsorships and strategic partnerships that support workforce initiatives and sector-based strategies. Key partners may include Eastman Chemical Company, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Private and Philanthropic Funding

The region will seek grants from private foundations that support workforce development, education, and skills training initiatives.

The RPC will continuously identify and pursue additional funding opportunities that align

c. Identify opportunities for the RPC to collaborate with industry groups or sector partnerships to coordinate cost-sharing arrangements, or to partner towards application of sector-based grant funds.

Below are possible opportunities for collaboration in the East Region:

Sector Task Forces: Utilize task forces comprised of representatives from in-demand sectors within the region to engage in regular discussions to identify workforce needs, skills gaps, and opportunities for collaboration. Align training programs, education curricula, and workforce initiatives with the specific needs of each industry sector.
- Industry Events and Job Fairs
- Advocacy for Sector-Specific Policies
- Sector Talent Retention Strategies
- Shared Resources for Outreach and Recruitment

Sector Partnership Grants: Collaborate with industry groups to apply for sector-specific grant funds. Leverage the collective expertise and insights of industry partners to strengthen grant applications.

Cost-Sharing for Regional Training Programs: Coordinate cost-sharing arrangements for training programs that benefit in-demand industries across the East region.

Regional Apprenticeship Programs: Pool resources to create apprenticeship opportunities that address common skill requirements within the region.

Cross-Sector Training Initiatives: Identify common skills across industries and develop training programs that facilitate workforce mobility.

By actively engaging with industry groups and sector partnerships, the RPC can strengthen its capacity to coordinate cost-sharing arrangements, access sector-based grant funds, and implement targeted workforce development strategies that align with the needs of key industries in the region.

Public Comment:

a. Describe the process used by the region to provide a period of at least 15 but no more than 30 days for public comment.

The process for providing a period of at least 15 days but no more than 30 days for public comment involves several key steps to ensure transparency, engagement, and feedback from partners and community. Below is an outline of the process used by East Region:

Public Notice: Issuance of a public notices to inform the community about the upcoming public comment period. The notice is disseminated through various channels: local workforce development board (LWDB) websites, social media, and community bulletin boards.

Document Availability: The relevant documents, proposals, plans, or initiatives are made available to the public. Copies of the documents are made available at accessible locations such as LWDB offices and online platforms.

Public Meetings: Public meetings are scheduled during the public comment period to allow community members to express their views, ask questions, and provide feedback. These meetings are held at convenient times and locations to maximize community participation.

Feedback Channels: East Region provides multiple channels for submitting feedback, including email, postal mail, and in-person submissions. The various available options are clearly communicated to the public.

Public Comment Period Duration: The start and end dates of the comment period are clearly communicated in the public notice.

Feedback Compilation: Systematically compile all received public comments, whether submitted in writing, online, or verbally during public meetings. Maintain transparency in the compilation process and avoid selective inclusion or exclusion of comments.

Analysis and Reporting: Analyze the compiled public comments to identify common themes, concerns, or suggestions. Prepare a report summarizing the feedback received and detailing any modifications or adjustments made based on public input.

Public Response: Publicly respond to the comments received, acknowledging the input from the community. Clearly communicate any changes, modifications, or decisions made in response to public feedback.

Documentation: Document the entire public comment process, including the public notice, meeting transcripts, and submitted comments. These documents are accessible to the public, promoting transparency and accountability.

Stakeholder Involvement:

a) Describe how stakeholder requirements were met for the regional plan modifications, pursuant to the TDLWD Regional and Local Plan policy.

The RPC, made up of members from required and additional partners across the 34 county region, met on April 15, 2026 to discuss and provide input on the East Regional Plan Modification for the period of 2024-2027. Prior to the meeting, all available resource data, plan guidance and previous plans were shared with all stakeholders invited for analysis. The meeting notices were also posted on the LWDB's websites and in the American Job Centers.

During the stakeholder engagement session, TDLWD staff provided an overview of WIOA planning requirements and shared WIRED data. Following the presentation, the RPC focused on strategy topics related to the Regional Planning Modification Guidance. The RPC facilitated breakout sessions for each strategy topic, and each group presented recommendations and suggested approaches to address concerns and opportunities for growth. Information gathered during the sessions was incorporated into the plan responses.

The RPC Executive Committee, consisting of Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors and Business and Workforce Directors for TDLWD, met weekly during the planning process and will continue with the required quarterly meetings. The RPC will review quarterly progress reports to determine the status of regional initiatives.

The Regional Plan was released for public comment for a minimum of 15 business days with a final opportunity for input from the public during an evening session in each local area.

b) Describe outreach efforts to all required planning partners and provide relevant information on all plan modification meetings, listening sessions, or other public meetings related to the plan modifications process.

The RPC, made up of members from required and additional partners across the 34 county region, met on April 15, 2026 to discuss and provide input on the East Regional Plan Modification for the period of 2024-2027. No stakeholders were in attendance and no public comments were received.

Prior to the meeting, all available resource data, plan guidance and previous plans were shared with all stakeholders invited for analysis. The meeting notices were also posted on the LWDB's websites and in the American Job Centers.

During the stakeholder engagement session, TDLWD staff provided an overview of WIOA planning requirements and shared WIRED data. Following the presentation, the RPC focused on strategy topics related to the Regional Planning Modification Guidance. The RPC facilitated breakout sessions for each strategy topic, and each group presented recommendations and suggested approaches to address concerns and opportunities for growth. Information gathered during the sessions was incorporated into the plan responses.

The RPC Executive Committee, consisting of Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors and Business and Workforce Directors for TDLWD, met weekly during the planning process and will continue with the required quarterly meetings. The RPC will review quarterly progress reports to determine the status of regional initiatives.

The Regional Plan will be released for public comment for a minimum of 15 business days with a final opportunity for input from the public during an evening listening session for each local area.

Attachments:

a. Documentation of CLEO approval (sample provided)

Department of Labor & Workforce Development

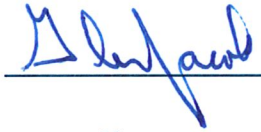
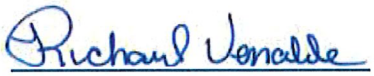
Regional Plan Signatures

This Regional Plan represents our area's collective efforts to maximize and coordinate efforts and resources available under Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. (WIOA)

Instructions:

The Chief Local Elected Officials in this region must sign and date this form.

By signing below, the Chief Local Elected Officials in this region request approval of region's 2026-2027 Regional Plan Modifications.

Chief Local Elected Official Name	Signature	Date
Mayor Weston Wamp		04/24/2026
Chief Local Elected Official Name	Signature	Date
Mayor Glenn Jacobs		04/24/2026
Chief Local Elected Official Name	Signature	Date
Mayor Richard Venable		04/24/2026

Appendix A

Figure 1

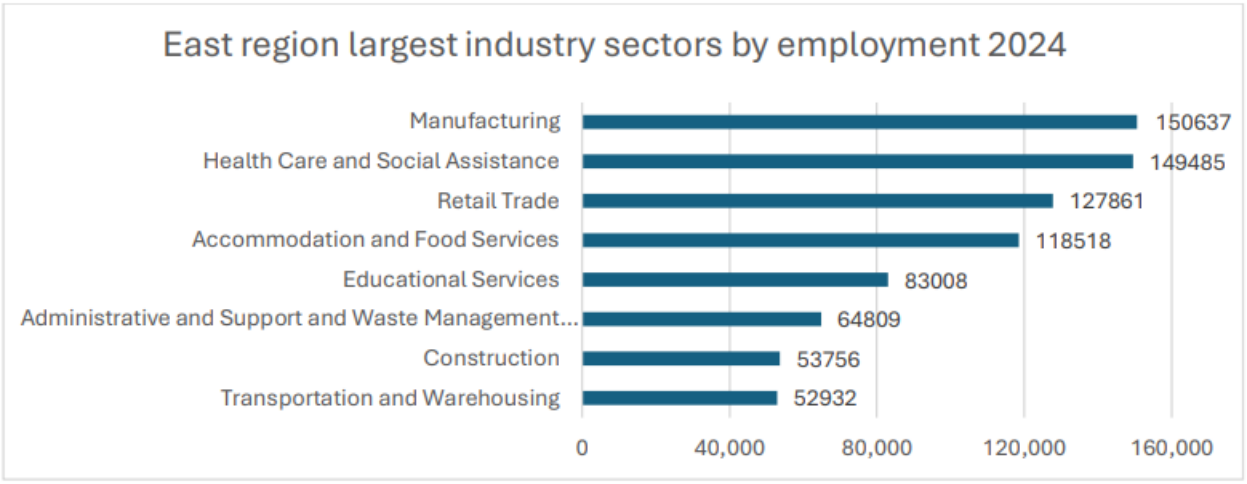


Table 1

Area Profile for East Region, TN

Occupations by Projected Growth Table

The table below shows the occupations with the highest annual openings in East Region, TN for the 2018-2028 time period.

Rank	Occupation	2018 Estimated Employment	2028 Projected Employment	2018-2028 Annual Avg. Percent Change	Annual Openings
1	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	28,648	33,979	1.72%	6,109
2	Cashiers	32,191	29,889	-0.74%	5,625
3	Retail Salespersons	31,700	29,825	-0.61%	4,306
4	Waiters and Waitresses	19,208	20,565	0.69%	3,953
5	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	24,455	30,138	2.11%	3,672
6	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	20,294	22,319	0.96%	3,161
7	Customer Service Representatives	20,065	21,428	0.66%	2,901
8	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	18,154	20,440	1.19%	2,770
9	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	18,555	18,835	0.15%	2,516
10	Office Clerks, General	20,571	20,663	0.04%	2,476

Source: TN Dept of Labor & Workforce Dev. Div Emp Sec. LMI
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Table 2

Area Profile for East Region, TN

Advertised Job Skills Table

The table below shows the top advertised detailed job skills found in job openings advertised online in East Region, TN in February 2026.

Rank	Advertised Detailed Job Skill	Advertised Skill Group	Job Opening Match Count
1	Customer service	Customer Service Skills	9,703
2	Inventory management	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	1,022
3	Cash handling	Cashier Skills	907
4	Inventory control	Bill and Account Collectors Skills	772
5	Mops floors	Housekeeper Skills	760
6	Preventative maintenance	Maintenance Technician Skills	726
7	Welding	Welding Skills	715
8	Developing new business	Business Development Skills	610
9	Typing	Office Clerk Skills	594
10	Mathematical Skills	Mathematical Skills	557

Source: Online advertised jobs data
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Table 3

Area Profile for East Region, TN

Advertised Job Certifications Table

The table below shows the top advertised certification groups found in job openings advertised online in East Region, TN in February 2026.

Rank	Advertised Certification Group	Advertised Certification Sub-Category	Job Opening Match Count
1	Registered Nurse (RN)	Nursing	3,210
2	American Red Cross Certifications	Nursing	2,876
3	American Heart Association (AHA) Certifications	Nursing	1,869
4	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses (LPN & LVN)	Nursing	1,208
5	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Ground Transportation	1,174
6	Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)	Nursing	680
7	American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications	Financial Specialists	296
8	Social Worker Credentials & Certifications	Social and Human Services	238
9	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	Fire Rescue	214
10	ASE Parts Specialist Certifications	Automotive	152

Source: Online advertised jobs data

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Table 4

Area Profile for East Region, TN

Advertised Tools and Technology Table

The table below shows the top advertised detailed tools and technologies found in job openings advertised online in East Region, TN in February 2026.

Rank	Advertised Detailed Tool or Technology	Advertised Tool and Technology Group	Job Opening Match Count
1	Microsoft (MS) Office	Office Suite Software	2,892
2	Cash Register	Cash Registers	1,258
3	Forklift	Forklifts	1,064
4	Personal protective equipment	Hazardous Material Protective Apparel	1,063
5	Motor vehicles	Automobiles or Cars	985
6	Artificial intelligence software	Industrial Control Software	792
7	Microsoft PowerPoint	Presentation Software	745
8	Constant Contact	Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software	683
9	Keyboard	Keyboards	592
10	Cell Phone	Mobile Phones	547

Source: Online advertised jobs data

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Table 5

Area Profile for East Region, TN

Number of Candidates and Openings for Jobs by Occupation Table

The table below shows the occupations with the highest job openings advertised online in East Region, TN on March 29, 2026 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2).

Rank	Occupation	Job Openings	Potential Candidates	Potential Candidates Per Job Opening	Median Wage
1	Registered Nurses	1,682	52	0.03	N/A
2	Customer Service Representatives	1,264	379	0.30	N/A
3	Physicians, All Other	1,087	0	N/A	N/A
4	Retail Salespersons	731	99	0.14	N/A
5	Fast Food and Counter Workers	651	47	0.07	N/A
6	General and Operations Managers	564	165	0.29	N/A
7	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	474	15	0.03	N/A
8	Cashiers	453	120	0.26	N/A
9	Personal Care Aides	415	32	0.08	N/A
10	Managers, All Other	399	108	0.27	N/A

Job Source: Online advertised jobs data

Candidate Source: Is comprised of individuals whose resumes have been active in the workforce system over the past twelve months

Wage Source: TN Dept of Labor & Workforce Dev, Div Emp Sec, LMI

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