Local Plan Signatures

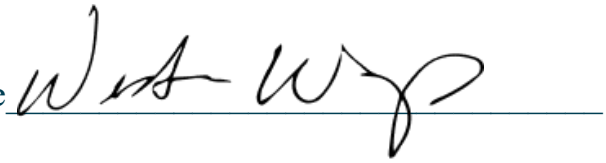
This Local Plan represents our area's collective efforts to maximize and coordinate efforts and resources available under Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. (WIOA)

Instructions:

The Chief Local Elected Official must sign and date this form.

By signing below, the Chief Local Elected Official request approval of Local Workforce Development Board's 2026-2027 Local Plan Modifications.

Chief Local Elected Official Name Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp

Chief Local Elected Official Signature 

Date 04/24/2026

TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development

WIOA Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Local Plan Modifications Template

PYs 2026-2027



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Local Area Information

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Date of Submission:

Local Plan Tracker (Sample)

Local Plan Tracker- PY 2026-2027

Click the link above to use the tracker.

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

Local Plan Guidance Tracker- SAMPLE									
Local Plan Guidance Tracker- SAMPLE									
LOCAL AREA:									
				Milestone		Milestone		Milestone	
Priority Initiative	What State initiative or regional priority does this support?	Goal Description- what is success?	Targeted Success Date	Action Items	Targeted Success Date	Action Items	Targeted Success Date	Action Items	Targeted Success Date

Regional and Local Analysis:

a. Provide an updated analysis of regional economic conditions, including how conditions may have shifted since the 2024-2027 plans were drafted and inclusive of the following areas:
   i. Existing and emerging in-demand sectors and occupations,
   ii. The employment needs of businesses in those sectors and occupations; and
   iii. How the LWDA compares to the region and any unique contributors to the regional economic conditions and business needs.

Regional economic conditions in the East Region have continued to shift since the 2024–2027 plans were developed, with employment growth concentrated in manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and professional and technical services, while healthcare remains the region's largest long-term employment sector and is projected to remain a leading source of job growth through 2032. These trends are consistent with findings described in the East Region WIOA Plan Modifications Regional Labor Market Analysis and Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development economic reports.

Emerging and expanding sectors expected to shape future workforce demand across the region include healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, construction, information, and leisure and hospitality. Occupational demand remains particularly strong in transportation and material moving occupations, production occupations, business and finance roles, construction and extraction occupations, and healthcare practitioner and technical occupations. Employers also continue to report ongoing need for management, sales, and technical positions that support operational growth across multiple industries.

Employer demand reflects both high-volume frontline workforce needs and increasing demand for specialized technical skills aligned with industry modernization and sector expansion. These trends support continued emphasis on short-term credential attainment, work-based learning strategies, and employer-aligned training pathways connected to hiring demand. Additional detail regarding certification and skill requirements is provided in the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities section of this modification.

Within this broader regional context, Southeast LWDB shares many of the same priority sectors identified in the Regional Labor Market Analysis section of this modification, particularly manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and logistics, construction, and education. However, Southeast continues to experience distinct workforce participation and access challenges. The local area reported the highest poverty rate in the East Region at approximately 18.8 percent, reinforcing the importance of strategies that expand labor force attachment and increase access to education, training, and employment opportunities.

Compared with the broader East Region, Southeast LWDB's workforce strategy must respond to both sector growth opportunities and participation barriers. Although unemployment across the region has remained low and wages have increased in recent years, labor force participation continues to trail statewide levels, highlighting ongoing opportunity to reconnect residents to employment through credential attainment, career pathway strategies, and coordinated partner service delivery aligned with regional sector priorities.

b. Provide an updated description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to meet the employment needs of businesses, including those in in-demand sectors and employing individuals in demand occupations.

Employers across Southeast Tennessee continue to report demand for workers with a combination of technical occupational skills, industry-recognized credentials, foundational workplace competencies, and transferable employability skills aligned with priority sectors identified earlier in the Regional Labor Market Analysis section of this modification.

Recent job posting trends and WIRED workforce analysis confirm continued hiring demand across healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, construction, education, and professional and technical services. Occupations with persistent workforce shortages across the East Region include commercial drivers, industrial equipment operators and mechanics, respiratory therapists, diagnostic imaging technicians, laboratory personnel, childcare workers, school counselors, automation and robotics technicians, accounting technicians, project management specialists, and computer-aided design professionals. Across these occupations, employers consistently identify several categories of workforce capability needs.

Industry-specific technical skills continue to include healthcare clinical competencies, automation and mechatronics skills supporting advanced manufacturing environments, logistics and commercial driving operations, construction trades skills, and accounting and project coordination functions supporting business services industries.

Digital workplace competencies remain important across sectors and include proficiency with productivity software, warehouse technologies, point-of-sale systems, and other occupation-specific digital tools that support efficient workplace participation and advancement.

Industry-recognized credentials continue to support entry into both frontline and technical career pathway occupations. Certification demand trends aligned with regional hiring patterns are described further in the Regional Labor Market Analysis section and supported through Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) programs and work-based learning strategies.

Transferable employability skills requested across industries include communication, customer service, leadership, planning, operations support, and team-based problem solving. Employers continue to emphasize these competencies as critical factors influencing hiring success and retention outcomes.

Regional employment trends also show increasing wage growth in higher-skill occupational groups such as management, engineering, legal, and technical occupations across the Chattanooga metropolitan area and surrounding Southeast counties. These trends reinforce the importance of career pathway strategies that support progression from entry-level employment into higher-skill occupations aligned with employer demand.

Together, these workforce capability needs continue to guide Southeast LWDB investments in short-term credential attainment, work-based learning strategies, and coordinated education and training pathways aligned with regional economic priorities.

c. Provide an updated analysis of the regional and local workforce, including how conditions may have shifted since the 2024-2027 plans were drafted and inclusive of the following areas:
   i. Current labor force employment and unemployment numbers;
   ii. Information on any trends in the labor market; and
   iii. Educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Since the 2024–2027 plans were developed, the East Tennessee regional workforce has continued to experience steady employment growth alongside tightening labor supply conditions. As of December 2025, the East Region labor force totaled approximately 1,198,248 individuals, including 1,159,416 employed workers and 38,832 unemployed workers, resulting in an unemployment rate of approximately 3.2 percent. Within the Southeast LWDA, the labor force totaled approximately 332,029 individuals, with 320,642 employed and 11,387 unemployed, for an unemployment rate of approximately 3.4 percent.

County-level conditions within Southeast remain mixed, reflecting variation between urban and rural labor markets. Hamilton and Bledsoe Counties reported lower unemployment rates, while Meigs, Rhea, McMinn, Grundy, and Sequatchie Counties reported comparatively higher unemployment rates, reinforcing the importance of localized outreach strategies and mobile service delivery approaches described later in this modification.

Across the broader East Region, employment increased between 2023 and 2024 alongside growth in business establishments, payroll levels, and average wages. However, employment gains became more geographically concentrated during this period, suggesting that regional expansion has not occurred evenly across all counties. These trends reinforce the importance of targeted workforce access strategies in rural areas within the Southeast local workforce development area.

Educational attainment across the region has improved modestly but continues to influence workforce participation trends. Approximately 56.4 percent of adults age 25 and older in the East Region have completed some college or higher education compared with 58.2 percent statewide. The Southeast LWDA compares favorably within the region, with approximately 58.9 percent of adults completing some college or higher and a labor force participation rate of approximately 60.4 percent.

Despite these strengths, barriers to employment remain significant. Regional workforce analysis indicates higher-than-average shares of individuals with disabilities, veterans, older adults, and individuals living in poverty across East Tennessee, including the Southeast LWDA. These trends reinforce the need for coordinated outreach, co-enrollment strategies, and supportive service alignment across partner programs to expand workforce participation.

Taken together, these indicators show that the regional workforce remains stable with low unemployment and rising wages but continues to face participation challenges tied to educational attainment, disability status, and rural access barriers. These conditions support continued expansion of work-based learning, short-term credential attainment, and career pathway strategies that connect individuals with barriers to employment to in-demand occupations aligned with regional sector priorities.

d. Provide an updated analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. Include any changes and necessary adjustments since the 2024-2027 plans were developed.
   i. Identify strengths and weaknesses of these workforce development activities, and;
   ii. Discuss the LWDB's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the local workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of businesses.

Workforce development activities in the Southeast LWDB continue to be delivered through the American Job Center (AJC) system and partner network across the ten-county service area. Services include Wagner-Peyser, SNAP E&T, DVOP/LVER, RESEA, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programming, along with coordinated services delivered through Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, postsecondary providers, and community-based partners. Since the 2024–2027 plans were developed, Southeast LWDB has expanded service access by deploying Title I staff throughout the region using "AJC in a Box" mobile service kits, increasing co-location with both mandated and strategic partners, and supporting virtual participation through scheduled remote meetings for individuals with transportation barriers. The Southeast LWDB also deploys TransfrVR career exploration technology at youth-focused events and in justice-involved settings to strengthen early career pathway awareness aligned with regional industry demand.

Customer access to education and training continues to rely heavily on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) supported by career coaching and labor market information from WIRED and Jobs4TN. During the previous plan cycle, 1,716 individuals received ITA-supported training totaling $3,716,606.05, with the largest investments concentrated in healthcare, Transportation and Logistics, and manufacturing—industries that remain among the region's highest-demand sectors. Since the previous plan cycle, Southeast has expanded coordination with Registered Apprenticeship programs, pre-apprenticeship activities, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant (CRRG) programming, and rural healthcare workforce investments, allowing the LWDB to leverage non-WIOA funding streams to increase access to credential-based training opportunities. Co-enrollment strategies across Title I, Title II, Title III, RESEA, SNAP E&T, and partner programs continue to strengthen service alignment and reduce duplication while supporting participants with barriers to employment.

Work-based learning remains a core strength of the Southeast workforce system. The LWDB supports pre-apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeship expansion, OJT, IWT, youth paid work experience, and employer-connected training strategies aligned with regional demand sectors including healthcare, manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, construction, and education. The region maintains strong relationships with secondary schools, TCATs, community colleges, universities, Adult Education providers, and Eligible Training Providers on the ETPL, ensuring customer choice and alignment with in-demand occupations. Southeast also continues to demonstrate strong performance outcomes and effective coordination across partners through shared referrals, co-enrollment strategies, and coordinated career pathway planning.

Another system strength is the ability to extend services beyond physical centers through community

outreach events, co-located partner service delivery, and mobile workforce deployment strategies, which improve access for rural residents and individuals with transportation barriers. The use of TransfrVR technology and expanded outreach partnerships supports early engagement with youth and justice-involved populations and strengthens alignment with emerging sector strategies across the region.

Title I formula funding continues to limit the scale of training and supportive services available relative to employer demand and participant need. Staffing capacity and administrative requirements also affect the speed at which services can be expanded across the service area. While the Southeast LWDB leverages apprenticeship funding, CRRG investments, and rural healthcare workforce initiatives to expand training access, continued diversification of funding streams remains necessary to meet long-term workforce demand.

Coordination across multiple partner programs remains a system opportunity as well as a challenge. Differences in eligibility requirements, performance measures, and reporting structures can create confusion for customers and staff and require ongoing cross-training and alignment. Continued efforts to strengthen Business Services Team coordination with regional partners and economic development stakeholders will support more consistent employer engagement and sector-aligned training investments as the region moves into formal sector strategy implementation.

Regional employer feedback continues to highlight the importance of foundational workplace competencies. Approximately 76 percent of in-demand occupations in Southeast require a high school diploma or less, and recent employer survey data indicate that 62.3 percent of employers report concerns about new hire soft skills and 92 percent report gaps in essential employability skills. These findings reinforce the need to expand work readiness training, essential employability skills instruction, and career navigation supports delivered through AJCs, partner locations, and community-based outreach strategies.

The Southeast LWDB has strong capacity to deliver workforce development activities aligned with both employer demand and participant needs through its integrated AJC partner network, expanded co-location strategies, mobile service deployment model, and coordinated use of non-WIOA funding streams. Leveraging apprenticeship initiatives, CRRG programming, rural healthcare workforce investments, and partner-supported training pathways allows Southeast LWDB to extend services beyond traditional formula-funded activities. Continued alignment with WIRED labor market intelligence, Regional Planning Council priorities, and upcoming sector convening efforts positions Southeast to strengthen employer partnerships while expanding access to education and training for individuals with barriers to employment and supporting long-term regional talent pipeline development.

Support of State Initiatives:

a. Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

i. How will the LWDB ensure a local workforce system that helps more people, particularly those within special populations, enter, reenter, and advance within the labor market, in effort to increase in the local LFPR?

ii. What regional or local initiatives will the LWDB support 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?

The Southeast LWDB will support the East Regional strategy to increase its LFPR by 0.5% annually by implementing a sector driven, employer led workforce system that expands access to employment, reemployment, and advancement, particularly for individuals within special populations. Consistent with Tennessee's State Plan modifications and America's Talent Strategy, the local approach will prioritize data driven talent systems, system alignment, work based learning, and stackable credential pathways aligned with regional industry demand as identified in the Regional and Local Analysis.

The Southeast LWDB will operationalize regional priorities through alignment with sector strategy task forces, ensuring employers serve as the primary drivers of skill definition, training validation, and pathway design. Task forces guide workforce investments across advanced manufacturing, healthcare, nuclear/construction, and emerging quantum industries, ensuring training leads to industry recognized credentials and supports career mobility. Employer input collected through these structures will inform short-term training, credential sequencing, and work-based learning models tied directly to in demand occupations.

To promote reemployment and advancement, the Southeast LWDB will support work-based learning and earn and learn pathways, including work experience, On the Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), pre apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeships. These models recognize prior experience and demonstrated ability, allowing individuals to advance without duplicative training while building skills in real world environments. Sector specific applications include:

- Advanced Manufacturing: on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and incumbent worker training supporting automation, maintenance, and production technician roles.
- Healthcare: Work based learning and upskilling pathways (e.g., EMT to Paramedic) addressing rural workforce shortages.
- Nuclear/Construction: Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pipelines supporting skilled trades and long-term infrastructure needs.
- Quantum and Emerging Technologies: Early-stage credential and work-based learning pathways aligned with networking, cybersecurity, and advanced systems through existing intermediaries.

In coordination with Perkins V secondary and postsecondary CTE partners, Adult Education, and other Eligible Training Providers, the Southeast LWDB will support short term, stackable credential pathways aligned with sector guidance. These pathways support rapid entry into employment while creating clear progression to advanced credentials or postsecondary education, reinforcing career mobility rather than single exit outcomes.

Additionally, the Southeast LWDB will support implementation of the State's Benefits Cliff Pilot Project upon its anticipated release in all of Tennessee int the Summer 2026. The local workforce system will incorporate benefits cliff awareness and available pilot tools into intake, assessment, and career planning activities to help individuals, particularly those within special populations, make informed decisions regarding employment, hours, wages, and advancement opportunities. In coordination with regional partners and employers, the LWDB will align work-based learning, credential pathways, and advancement strategies with pilot guidance to promote sustained labor force participation, reduce unintended barriers to reemployment and wage progression, and support increases in the local and regional LFPR.

Consistent with East Regional priorities, the Southeast LWDB initiatives will focus on youth, aging workers, individuals with disabilities, justice impacted individuals, and rural residents through targeted outreach, flexible training models, and coordinated supportive services.

b. Business Engagement

i. How will Southeast LWDB support and utilize TNWorks to provide consistent messaging and streamlined solutions to employer customers?

ii. How will Southeast LWDB Business Services staff, including LWDB staff and AJC Business Services Teams, work in coordination and alignment with the TNWorks strategy?

The Southeast LWDB will support and utilize TNWorks as the primary platform for delivering consistent messaging, coordinated employer engagement, and streamlined business solutions, fully aligned with the East Regional strategy and the pillars of America's Talent Strategy. Through standardized processes, shared tools, and employer driven sector strategies, TNWorks will enable Southeast LWDB to provide responsive, data informed services to employers across all stages of the business lifecycle. The Southeast LWDB will align local policies, procedures, and service delivery models with the East Region's consistent TNWorks implementation framework to ensure employers experience a unified workforce system regardless of point of entry. TNWorks will be used to document employer interactions, capture sector specific needs, and coordinate services aligned with regional priority industries, including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, nuclear/construction, and emerging quantum technologies.

Local employer outreach and engagement efforts will align with sector strategy task forces, ensuring that training referrals, talent pipeline development, and workforce solutions promoted through TNWorks reflect employer validated demand. Business engagement outcomes will be measured using shared regional performance indicators, including employer penetration, customer satisfaction, LFPR impacts, and economic outcomes, supporting ATS pillars of Industry Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, and Accountability.

By integrating TNWorks with regional tools such as WIRED labor market data and business lifecycle frameworks, Southeast LWDB will deliver consistent, customized workforce solutions that evolve as businesses grow, expand, or adapt, advancing flexibility and innovation within a standardized regional system. Local Business Services staff, including Southeast LWDB staff and American Job Center (AJC) Business Services Teams, will operate in close coordination with the East Region's TNWorks strategy. Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs) will serve as the primary employer contacts, using a single point of contact model supported by Zendesk CRM and TNWorks to case manage employers as valued customers. This structure ensures consistent communication, clear accountability, and seamless handoffs across workforce, education, and training partners.

Business Services Teams will align their outreach, employer follow up, and service delivery with regional sector priorities and the East Region's Business Cycle Framework, enabling staff to anticipate employer needs and offer timely solutions such as work based learning, incumbent worker training, on the job training, and customized recruitment. Ongoing staff training and shared performance expectations will reinforce consistency in how TNWorks is used to support employers, document services, and track outcomes.

Through alignment of staff roles, shared data systems, and coordinated outreach, including the use of mobile AJCs to expand access, the Southeast LWDB will support an integrated, employer focused Business

Services function that advances ATS pillars of Integrated Systems, Industry Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, and Accountability. By fully aligning local business services operations with the East Region's TNWorks strategy, the Southeast LWDB will deliver consistent, employer centered workforce solutions that are data driven, sector informed, and responsive to business needs. This coordinated approach strengthens employer engagement, improves service efficiency, and ensures TNWorks serves as a unifying system that supports regional economic competitiveness and talent development across Southeast Tennessee.

c. Youth Employment Program (YEP)
   i. Describe how the LWDB will expand YEP in Southeast LWDB and focus on youth work experiences within high demand industries?
   ii. Describe how the LWDB will leverage partnerships and current connections with both in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as employers, to increase YEP year-round participation.
   iii. How will the LWDB conduct outreach to employers and youth participants to ensure increased youth skills and work experience satisfaction?

Southeast LWDB continues expanding participation in the Tennessee Youth Employment Program (YEP) as a strategy supporting early workforce attachment, career exploration, and development of transferable workplace skills aligned with regional sector priorities identified earlier in this modification.

Employer engagement strategies support development of additional worksites that provide structured skill-building experiences connected to in-demand industries. Southeast LWDB utilizes Jobs4TN and EconoVue labor market tools to identify employers within priority sectors and coordinate outreach supporting expansion of youth placements.

Employers participating in YEP provide structured job descriptions, mentoring opportunities, exposure to multiple job functions, and career pathway awareness activities. These experiences support youth understanding of workplace expectations and future training opportunities.

Southeast LWDB is also developing a governmental and social services workforce exposure pilot supporting youth engagement in public workforce and community service occupations. These experiences strengthen transferable skill development while supporting recruitment pipelines into public service careers and nonprofit employment pathways.

Partnerships with Perkins V secondary Career and Technical Education programs, school systems, the Hamilton County Schools Future Ready Institute, and regional workforce partners support expansion of participation among in-school youth. Partnerships with local governments, community organizations, and American Job Centers strengthen engagement strategies for out-of-school youth.

Relationship-based outreach strategies remain especially important in rural communities, where collaboration with board members, school districts, and local governments continues expanding employer participation and increasing available youth worksites aligned with high-demand occupations.

Co-enrollment strategies across Title I youth programming and partner initiatives further support year-round participation and coordinated service delivery.

d. State Registered Apprenticeships

i. Describe how the LWDB plans to expand State Registered Apprenticeships through diversifying and accelerating apprenticeship programs.

ii. Describe how the LWDB plans 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 priority industries.

The Southeast LWDB will assist in expanding State Registered Apprenticeships (SRAs) by diversifying and accelerating program development in alignment with the East Regional strategy, Tennessee's State Plan modifications, and the pillars of America's Talent Strategy (ATS). Apprenticeship expansion will be guided by a sector-based, employer-driven approach focused on filling critical talent shortages while providing participants with clear pathways to long term career advancement. The Southeast LWDB will support the expansion of SRAs across high demand industries, including advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, nuclear/construction, and skilled trades, using sector strategy task forces as the primary mechanism for employer engagement and validation. Employers will serve as co designers of apprenticeship programs, ensuring competencies, credentials, and training models align with real world workforce needs.

In alignment with the East Regional Planning Council (RPC), the Southeast LWDB will:

- Partner with Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs) and Business Services Teams to conduct targeted outreach to employers and industry associations
- Use WIRED and EconoVue labor market data to identify priority occupations and inform apprenticeship development
- Promote industry driven program design, including competency based and hybrid apprenticeship models that allow flexibility and faster time to productivity
- Leverage pre-apprenticeship and work-based learning models, including Youth Employment Program (YEP) opportunities, as entry points for youth and other priority populations

These efforts advance industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, and flexibility and innovation while expanding access to employer validated career pathways. To scale apprenticeship efforts, the Southeast LWDB will align education and training programs with clearly defined career pathways that integrate pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and post apprenticeship advancement opportunities. This alignment will be achieved through close collaboration with Perkins V secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, Adult Education, postsecondary institutions, community-based organizations, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Southeast LWDB will provide regional support to:

- Standardize apprenticeship development processes and messaging through TNWorks, ensuring consistency across local areas
- Coordinate education to apprenticeship pipelines that allow credentials earned through CTE or training programs to stack into apprenticeship pathways

- Align WIOA and other federal, state, and non WIOA funding sources to support employer led upskilling initiatives, reduce barriers to participation, and improve program sustainability
- Prioritize investments that support inclusive participation and address workforce shortages in priority sectors

BWDs and Business Services Teams will lead employer engagement and serve as the primary points of contact, ensuring apprenticeships are integrated into broader business service strategies and aligned with economic development efforts. Progress will be measured using shared regional performance indicators, including apprenticeship program growth, employer participation, enrollments, completions, and placements in high demand occupations. These metrics will be tracked using TNWorks and other regional tools to support accountability, continuous improvement, and alignment with evolving employer and regional talent needs.

Through coordinated, sector-based apprenticeship expansion; strong employer leadership; alignment of education and training systems; and strategic investment of workforce resources, the LWDB will assist in scaling State Registered Apprenticeships as a core strategy for reemployment, upskilling, and career mobility.

This approach advances industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, flexibility and innovation, and accountability, while ensuring apprenticeships serve as a high impact solution to Southeast Tennessee's priority workforce challenges.

e. Infrastructure
   i. Provide an updated plan for how the LWDB will implement an innovative and effective funding structure to incorporate the blending and braiding of resources.
   ii. What additional funding sources, beyond WIOA formula dollars, does the LWDB plan to seek?
   iii. How does the LWDB plan to staff and administer any programs funded through non-WIOA sources?

Southeast LWDB continues implementing a flexible, integrated, and regionally aligned workforce service delivery strategy that emphasizes accessibility, innovation, coordinated partner investment, and efficient use of resources. Consistent with the priorities outlined throughout this modification, the LWDB utilizes braided funding strategies, coordinated staffing models, and partner-aligned infrastructure to expand workforce services beyond traditional formula-funded capacity while supporting employer demand, worker mobility, and regional labor force participation goals.

Since the previous planning cycle, Southeast LWDB has transitioned away from maintaining multiple underutilized affiliate American Job Center locations and increased co-location of services at Chattanooga State Community College and the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Athens campus. This approach reduces administrative and infrastructure costs while strengthening alignment with education and training providers that support career pathway development, credential attainment, work-based learning, and sector-based training strategies.

The Southeast LWDB continues expanding virtual and mobile service delivery models to improve accessibility across the ten-county region. Virtual appointments, phone-based services, online engagement tools, and remote case management increase access for rural residents and individuals with transportation barriers. Mobile workforce deployment strategies, including “AJC in a Box” service kits and community-based outreach, allow staff to deliver workforce services directly within partner locations, community events, correctional and justice-involved settings, and targeted outreach initiatives throughout the region. These approaches strengthen system responsiveness while supporting regional workforce participation and worker mobility objectives.

To strengthen workforce system capacity, Southeast LWDB actively leverages non-WIOA funding sources to expand participant services, employer engagement activities, work-based learning opportunities, supportive services, and career pathway investments aligned with employer-validated regional priorities. Current and anticipated leveraged funding sources include ApprenticeshipTN and related apprenticeship expansion initiatives, Youth Employment Program, Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant (CRRG) programming, justice-involved initiative (JII) funding, rural healthcare workforce investments, Appalachian Regional Commission funding, Benefits Cliff Pilot implementation support, employer reimbursement initiatives, and additional state, federal, local, and philanthropic grant opportunities aligned with regional sector strategies.

The LWDB also continues exploring partnership and sponsorship opportunities with local governments, regional employers, economic development entities, utilities such as Tennessee Valley Authority, healthcare systems, educational institutions, and private foundations that support workforce development, economic mobility, and talent pipeline initiatives. These investments support expansion of work-based learning opportunities, apprenticeship pathways, upskilling strategies, supportive services, and sector-based workforce initiatives in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, construction, information technology, and emerging regional

innovation sectors.

Braided funding strategies support both direct participant services and workforce system infrastructure by allowing Southeast LWDB to expand training access, increase supportive service capacity, support employer-connected training models, cost-share staffing resources across initiatives, and reduce reliance on a single funding source. Positioning the Southeast LWDB within the Southeast Tennessee Development District further strengthens coordination with economic and community development initiatives while expanding organizational capacity without duplicating administrative infrastructure.

Programs funded through non-WIOA sources are administered through integrated staffing and partner coordination models aligned with the broader American Job Center system. Business and Workforce Directors (BWDs) and Business Services Teams coordinate employer engagement, sector strategy implementation, apprenticeship expansion, and work-based learning activities. Title I staff support participant eligibility determination, career services, case management, training coordination, supportive services, and co-enrollment activities across funding streams. Fiscal and administrative staff support reporting, monitoring, procurement, contract management, and cost allocation activities to ensure compliance and effective stewardship of leveraged resources. Partner staff across Wagner-Peyser, SNAP E&T, RESEA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and community-based organizations further support integrated service delivery through shared referrals, co-enrollment strategies, and coordinated career pathway planning.

The annual Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) remains the foundational framework supporting this approach. The MOU formalizes partner roles, infrastructure contributions, staffing coordination, shared service delivery expectations, and cost-sharing responsibilities across physical, virtual, and mobile access points. This structure provides flexibility to adapt service delivery strategies as workforce needs evolve while supporting continued alignment with TNWorks implementation, sector strategy task forces, Regional Planning Council priorities, and integrated workforce system goals.

Southeast LWDB will continue using shared regional performance indicators, employer engagement outcomes, participation metrics, credential attainment data, apprenticeship growth measures, and workforce placement outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of braided funding investments and integrated staffing strategies. These coordinated funding and staffing approaches allow Southeast LWDB to align workforce investments with employer-validated regional priorities while expanding long-term system capacity, improving access to services, and strengthening workforce participation outcomes across Southeast Tennessee.

Strategic Planning Elements:

a. How has the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, been updated to align with State Plan Modifications and federal strategic priorities?

   i. How do Southeast LWDB's workforce development programs, including programs provided by partner agencies, support this updated strategic vision?

   ii. How will Southeast LWDB, working with the entities that carry out the core programs, align available resources to achieve the updated strategic vision and goals?

The Southeast LWDB's strategic vision and goals have been updated to align with Tennessee's State Plan Modifications, the East Regional Planning Council (RPC) strategy, and the federal priorities outlined in America's Talent Strategy. The Southeast LWDB's vision focuses on preparing an educated and skilled workforce, particularly youth and individuals with barriers to employment, through industry driven, data informed, and integrated workforce strategies that increase Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and support long term economic competitiveness. Consistent with East Regional priorities, the local strategy places greater emphasis on sector strategies, targeted outreach, work-based learning, co-enrollment, digital equity, and system alignment.

The Southeast LWDB's goals have evolved from compliance focused coordination to a performance driven approach that directly responds to labor participation gaps and employer identified workforce needs. The LWDB;s programs and partner services support this updated strategic vision through coordinated, sector aligned service delivery.

The Southeast LWDB works closely with employers, Perkins funded CTE programs, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and community-based organizations to ensure education, training, and employment services are aligned with high demand industries and regional sector strategies. Programs prioritize:

- Targeted outreach and engagement of priority populations, including youth, aging individuals, individuals with disabilities, justice impacted individuals, and rural residents
- Expansion of work based learning and flexible employment models, including work experience, On the Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), pre apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeships
- Career pathway models that include short term, industry recognized, and stackable credentials, supporting both rapid labor market entry and advancement
- Youth Employment Program (YEP) participation to increase early workforce attachment, career exploration, and transitions into education and training
- Digital equity initiatives, including technology enabled access to education and career services for justice involved individuals

These program strategies directly advance ATS pillars of Industry Driven Strategies, Worker Mobility, Integrated Systems, and Flexibility and Innovation, while supporting regional LFPR and youth employment

goals.

Working in partnership with entities that carry out the WIOA core programs, the Southeast LWDB aligns available resources through coordinated planning, shared data systems, and strategic use of funding. The AJC network serves as the primary service delivery platform, offering integrated, in person, mobile, and virtual services that support cross program referrals and co-enrollment. To achieve the updated vision, the Southeast LWDB:

- Utilizes WIRED, EconoVue, and labor market information to guide training investments and sector priorities
- Aligns workforce, education, and supportive services to reduce duplication and improve outcomes
- Supports regional implementation of TNWorks to strengthen employer engagement, standardize service delivery, and improve performance tracking
- Aligns LWDB governance and membership with state identified priority sectors to ensure employer leadership and accountability
- Tracks LFPR, enrollment, placement, retention, youth outcomes, and employer satisfaction to support accountability and continuous improvement

Through this approach, the Southeast LWDB advances State Strategic Goals related to competitive LFPR growth, expanded youth employment, increased co enrollment, improved digital equity, enhanced data utilization, and superior service delivery. Local implementation of the East Regional strategy ensures workforce investments are employer validated, system aligned, and effective in preparing Southeast Tennessee residents for sustainable, in demand careers.

b. Describe the LWDB's goals relating to accountability and workforce system impact. What assessments will be made outside of federal and state performance metrics? How will the LWDB know if the workforce needle is moving?

Southeast LWDB evaluates workforce system impact using multiple indicators beyond federal and state performance measures to ensure workforce investments support regional economic priorities and strengthen long-term talent pipeline development.

Key indicators include:

- coordinated partner referral activity
- co-enrollment rates across partner programs
- access to training for individuals with barriers to employment
- employer engagement outcomes
- participation in work-based learning strategies
- utilization of non-WIOA funding streams supporting workforce training

Labor market intelligence from WIRED and Jobs4TN supports ongoing monitoring of occupational demand trends and training alignment with regional workforce needs. Employer engagement coordinated through the Business Services Team and Regional Business and Workforce Director further supports evaluation of workforce system responsiveness to employer demand.

Together, these indicators allow Southeast LWDB to assess whether workforce services are strengthening career pathway participation, supporting employer workforce needs, and expanding access to employment opportunities across the region.

c. Provide a description of how the LWDB will support the strategy identified in State Plan modifications and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including those authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to support service alignment.

The Southeast LWDB has updated its approach to support the strategies identified in Tennessee's State Plan modification by building upon existing coordination efforts and moving toward a more intentional, employer led, and integrated workforce system. While prior efforts focused on collaboration and access, the LWDB is refining its role to emphasize sector-based alignment, stackable credentials, work based learning, and shared accountability across workforce and education partners.

The Southeast LWDB will continue to work closely with entities carrying out the WIOA core programs; Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner Peyser, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation, while strengthening alignment with Perkins funded secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This coordination is increasingly centered on developing and sustaining career pathways aligned with state identified priority sectors, ensuring that education and training services lead to industry recognized, portable, and stackable credentials that support both immediate employment and long-term career advancement. Youth transitions from secondary education into postsecondary training, work-based learning, and employment are a particular focus of this alignment.

In response to State Plan modification priorities, the Southeast LWDB will incorporate TNWorks as a central system for service alignment. TNWorks will support coordinated referrals, improved communication among partner agencies, and enhanced visibility into participant progress across programs. Increased and consistent use of the system will help reduce duplication of services, promote effective co-enrollment, and support more seamless participant navigation of workforce and education services.

Closer alignment with Perkins V represents an important enhancement to the Southeast LWDB's strategy. The LWDB will work with Perkins partners to better align CTE programs of study with regional sector strategies, expand access to work-based learning opportunities, and ensure credentials earned through CTE programs are connected to postsecondary education and workforce pathways. This approach reinforces the ATS focus on skills-based hiring, credential transparency, and employer validated training outcomes.

Through coordinated planning, shared data systems, and employer informed investment decisions, the Southeast LWDB will align available workforce and education resources to achieve a more integrated and demand-driven system. These updates strengthen alignment with state and federal priorities while improving service coordination, supporting individuals with barriers to employment, and ensuring employers have access to a skilled and sustainable workforce across the region.

Local One-Stop System:

a. Describe the LWDA's progressive service strategy focusing on flexibility and innovation and prioritizing increased access through virtual appointment services. How will the annual Partner's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will support the implementation of this strategy?

AJC partner staff support individuals in our comprehensive centers and follow a job seeker as they move through services to meet unique needs and address barriers, from resource room to assessment to enrollment in one or more programs, and follow-through. This model provides each job seeker with seamless access to a comprehensive set of services and will reduce attrition as job seekers move from one referral point to another.

LWDB and AJC Team Leads work collaboratively with the One Stop Operator and other community service providers to identify and develop needed workshops and trainings published on an efficient and effective workshop calendar that utilizes staffing resources within the center to attract new and different customers, expand universal services so job seekers can receive support without enrollment, and leverage existing workshop providers in the community including adult education, banks, independent living programs, family resource centers, community-based organizations, and more.

The annual Partner's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines how partner programs collaborate to achieve a high-quality public workforce system operated under the common identifier of the American Job Centers (AJCs). All parties to the MOU have agreed to:

- Maintain the one-stop delivery system by funding the One-Stop infrastructure, providing career services, and working collaboratively.
- Provide access to programs through the AJC network.
- Participate in the operation of the AJCs.
- Participate in boards and board committees.
- Ensure that the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, youth, and workers are met through physical and programmatic access to services.

b. Identify programs that are part of Southeast LWDB's one-stop system, highlighting any additional or non-traditional parters included since the 2024-2027 plans were developed, and describe the role and resource contribution of each, including:
   i. Core programs;
   ii. Additional partner programs, including those that support alignment under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006; and
   iii. Other workforce development programs, if applicable.

The partners in the Southeast one-stop system are outlined in the MOU, which also outlines the operating budget and financial contribution per partner based on full-time equivalent staffing. The programs listed below are parties to the MOU:

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth: physical presence at all AJC locations
Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy: physical presence at comprehensive AJC centers
Title III Wagner Peyser: physical presence at comprehensive AJC centers
Title IV Rehabilitation Services: available through direct linkage and onsite at comprehensive AJC centers by appointment
Post-Secondary Career and Technical Education under Perkins: direct linkage
Unemployment Insurance: direct linkage
Job Counseling, Training and Placement Services for Veterans: physical presence at comprehensive AJC centers
Trade Adjustment Assistance: physical presence at comprehensive AJC centers
National Farmworker Jobs Program: physical presence at comprehensive AJC centers
Community Services Block Grant: direct linkage
Senior Community Services Employment Program: direct linkage
TANF: direct linkage
Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training Activities: direct linkage
Job Corps: direct linkage

Services provided by each partner are outlined in the MOU and can be found on Attachment C, page 74.

c. Describe how the LWDB will support modified state plan strategies and work with the entities carrying out programs in the one-stop system to coordinate and support service alignment.

The Southeast LWDB will support implementation of the State's modified workforce strategy by aligning local services with employer demand, expanding career pathway access, strengthening coordination across partner programs, and increasing work-based learning opportunities that support employment and advancement. These efforts reflect priorities outlined in the draft State Plan Modification and America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age, including industry-driven training investments, worker mobility, integrated service delivery, accountability, and innovation.

Southeast LWDB works closely with the Regional Planning Council, the Regional Business and Workforce Director, and American Job Center partners to align training investments and business engagement with regional sector priorities. Employer input and labor market intelligence from Jobs4TN guide training decisions and support development of talent pipelines in key sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, transportation and logistics, and education. Business Services Team activities support consultative employer engagement and help connect workforce services to hiring needs, incumbent worker skill development, and apprenticeship pathway expansion.

To support worker mobility, Southeast LWDB prioritizes industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning strategies that help participants move into higher-quality employment. Local strategies include expanding Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship participation, increasing use of On-the-Job Training for adults and dislocated workers entering priority sectors, and coordinating with Adult Education and post-secondary partners to support transitions into short-term credential programs aligned with employer demand.

The Southeast workforce system also supports the State's emphasis on integrated service delivery through coordinated referrals, co-enrollment strategies, and shared use of Jobs4TN across partner programs including Title I, Title III, RESEA, SNAP E&T, and Trade. The LWDB also leverages non-WIOA funding streams, including apprenticeship funding initiatives, Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant (CRRG) activities, and rural healthcare workforce investments, to expand access to credential-based training opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment.

Participation in Regional Planning Council activities and use of labor market information help ensure training investments remain aligned with high-demand occupations and regional economic conditions while supporting continued innovation in service delivery across the Southeast workforce system.

Workforce Development and Career Pathways

a. Describe how the LWDB will work with providers to facilitate the strengthening of career pathways utilizing stackable credentials, particularly within in-demand sectors and occupations, including co-enrollment in core programs and academic training programs when appropriate.

The Southeast LWDB will increase worker mobility by partnering with education and training providers to expand access to industry-recognized postsecondary credentials that support employment, advancement, and long-term economic mobility. Consistent with the Tennessee PY 2026–2027 State Plan Modifications and the East Regional Plan, the Southeast LWDB prioritizes credentials that are employer-validated, aligned with in-demand sectors, and embedded within clear career pathways. Through co-enrollment, coordinated career navigation, and aligned supportive services, individuals can access training that leads to immediate employment while maintaining opportunities for continued skill development.

The LWDB ensures credentials are industry-driven and portable by grounding training investments in labor market data and direct employer input. Credentials supported through WIOA and Perkins-aligned programs must align with regional demand identified through tools such as WIRED and Jobs4TN and be validated through employer engagement activities coordinated by Business Services Teams and sector partners. The LWDB prioritizes statewide and nationally recognized credentials that apply across multiple employers and occupations, ensuring individuals can transfer their skills as business needs evolve and supporting workforce flexibility across industries.

To ensure credentials are stackable, the LWDB supports training programs designed as part of sequenced career pathways, rather than standalone outcomes. In Southeast Tennessee, programs offered through TCATs, community colleges, and Perkins-funded CTE partners are aligned to allow individuals to build from entry-level credentials to advanced certifications and, where applicable, degrees. Co-enrollment across Adult Education, WIOA training, and work-based learning enables participants to earn credentials progressively while remaining connected to employment. This pathway-based structure supports repeat engagement, ongoing advancement, and sustained wage growth.

Through employer-validated credential selection, coordinated education and workforce partnerships, and intentional pathway design, the Southeast Tennessee LWDB advances worker mobility by ensuring postsecondary credentials are accessible, portable, and stackable. This approach supports the State's integrated workforce strategy while preparing individuals to enter, advance, and adapt within a changing labor market.

b. Describe how the LWDB will increase worker mobility by working with providers to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials.
   i. Explain how the LWDB will ensure these credentials are industry-driven and transferable to other occupations or industries ("portable").
   ii. Explain how the LWDB will ensure these credentials are part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time ("stackable")? If yes, please explain.

The Southeast LWDB will increase worker mobility by aligning education and training activities with how workers enter, move within, and move between industries across the region. Guided by the Tennessee PY 2026–2027 State Plan Modifications and East Regional priorities, the Southeast LWDB will work with training providers to ensure postsecondary credentials support rapid labor market attachment while preserving flexibility for advancement, re-employment, and transition into adjacent occupations. This approach recognizes that worker mobility is driven by employer demand, evolving skill requirements, and the ability to build on prior learning over time.

Worker mobility begins with ensuring credentials are defined and validated by industry rather than by individual programs. The Southeast LWDB uses labor market intelligence and sustained employer engagement to prioritize training that reflects transferable skill sets common across multiple employers and roles. Employers help define core competencies through advisory input, sector engagement, and work-based learning partnerships, ensuring credentials align with real-world requirements and changing business needs.

To support mobility across occupations and industries, the Southeast LWDB prioritizes statewide and nationally recognized credentials that retain value beyond a single employer or job title. In Southeast Tennessee, this approach is particularly relevant in sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and skilled trades, where foundational technical skills, safety certifications, and process knowledge apply across multiple job functions. By focusing on portable credentials, workers are better positioned to move laterally, advance, or retrain without restarting training when economic conditions or employer needs shift.

In Southeast Tennessee, stackable credentials are designed to support how individuals move through jobs and careers over time. The Southeast LWDB's approach recognizes that workers benefit most when credentials align with career stages; entry, skill specialization, and advancement, rather than being tied to a single occupation. Entry-level credentials provide quick access to employment by establishing foundational skills and early labor market connections. As workers gain experience, additional credentials build those skills, supporting advancement into higher-wage, specialized, or supervisory roles or enabling transitions into related industries.

This model relies on intentional coordination among Adult Education, Perkins-aligned CTE, TCAT programs, community colleges, WIOA training, and work-based learning so that each credential builds on the last. Prior learning is being recognized, duplication is minimized, and workers can pause and re-enter training as life and work circumstances allow. For example, a worker may enter employment using a

short-term technical credential, return later for an advanced certification while working, and subsequently stack that training toward a diploma or degree if needed. Stackability, in this context, supports ongoing mobility, allowing workers to respond to employer demand while progressively increasing skill level and earning potential.

By anchoring credential pathways in employer demand, portability, and cumulative skill building, the Southeast LWDB advances worker mobility beyond initial placement. Stackable credentials function as a flexible system that allows individuals to enter quickly, advance over time, and transition across industries as regional economic needs evolve—supporting both workforce resilience and business competitiveness.

Access to Employment and Services:

a. Through flexibility and innovation, describe how the LWDB and its partners will modify the current plan to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

The Southeast Local Workforce Development Board continues to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services by working closely with American Job Center partners and community organizations. These efforts focus on making services easier to reach for individuals with barriers to employment by strengthening referrals between partners, increasing services in community locations, and coordinating support across programs so participants can move more easily into training and employment aligned with regional workforce needs.

Southeast LWDB works with a broad network of partners, including Adult Education providers, local school districts, Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, community colleges, community-based organizations, and state workforce partners to expand access points for services and training. Staff participate in community outreach events and regularly provide services at partner locations, including both required MOU partners and other community partners that serve participants directly. Priority of service remains in place to ensure individuals with barriers to employment—including veterans, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, and individuals who are basic skills deficient—receive targeted support and access to training connected to in-demand occupations and career pathways.

The LWDB continues to strengthen coordinated intake and referrals through a tracked referral system supported by the One-Stop Operator. This helps individuals access services more quickly regardless of where they first enter the workforce system. Referrals are reviewed during bi-weekly welcome team meetings, and partner staff participate in regular cross-training to improve coordination and follow-up. When transportation or scheduling barriers exist, staff offer virtual meetings to help participants stay connected and continue moving forward with services.

As described in the strategies section of this plan, the Southeast LWDB will also support implementation of the State's Benefits Cliff Pilot Project upon its anticipated release in July 2026. In the context of access to employment and services, the LWDB will incorporate benefits cliff awareness into intake, referral, and career planning activities to support individuals with barriers to employment. This approach will help participants make informed decisions as they engage in employment and training, reducing unintended barriers to participation and advancement while sustaining access to supportive services.

Southeast LWDB also expands access through co-enrollment strategies and by using both WIOA and non-WIOA funding to support participants. This includes coordination with Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, Community Reinvestment Reentry Grant (CRRG) activities serving justice-involved individuals, and rural healthcare workforce training initiatives that help expand access to credential programs in high-need communities. Using multiple funding sources together helps reduce barriers to training and supports participants in completing industry-recognized credentials that lead to employment.

Southeast LWDB continues to increase access through work-based learning opportunities such as On-the-Job Training and short-term credential programs connected to employer needs and regional priority sectors. These approaches help participants enter employment more quickly while building skills that support long-

term career growth.

Through these strategies, Southeast LWDB and its partners continue to improve access to services, strengthen coordination across programs, and expand opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment to enter training, earn credentials, and connect to sustainable employment.

b. Provide an updated description of how the LWDB will provide services to priority populations as outlined in the State Plan, including:
    i. Directions and accountability measures given to the One-Stop System Operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
    ii. How the LWDB will determine priority populations and how to best serve them, along with any other state requirements.

Southeast LWDB aligns with WIOA regulation and the State Plan through a local priority requirement for funds allocated to Adult employment and training activities. Under this requirement, American Job Center staff must give priority to certain customers when using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services, training services, or both. Priority is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Priority of service begins when the individual registers for services at the point of entry to the system. Points of entry include physical AJC locations, Jobs4TN.gov, career and job fairs, recruitment events, Rapid Response activities, and the online referral mechanism.

Strategies to provide training services to this targeted population include assessments, career counseling, staff support, case management, pre-employment services, supportive services, and coordination and co-enrollment with partners to support the unique needs of the individual. For additional information, refer to the Adult Priority of Service Policy in Attachments.

Board oversight and the Adult Priority of Service Policy ensure that Title I Career Service staff focus efforts on priority populations to adhere to federal requirements and meet negotiated federal performance measures and state KPIs. Accountability for implementation is supported through routine monitoring of enrollment and training activities, case documentation reviews, and performance tracking to ensure priority populations are appropriately identified and served. Staff review participant eligibility and priority status at enrollment and prior to training approval to confirm compliance with priority requirements.

Southeast's Priority of Service Policy also includes a fourth category that allows additional focus on residents of rural, distressed counties, individuals with disabilities, returning talent, and underemployed individuals to better reflect local workforce needs and access challenges.

Further, as described in the strategies section of this plan, the Southeast LWDB will support implementation of the State's Benefits Cliff Pilot Project upon release in July 2026. In support of priority populations, the Southeast LWDB will incorporate benefits cliff awareness into intake, referral, and career planning activities to help individuals understand how employment, training, and wage advancement may interact with public benefits, reducing unintended barriers and supporting sustained engagement in workforce services.

Through coordination with core partners in the one-stop system, the One-Stop Operator leads efforts to

ensure priority populations remain the primary focus through regular partner meetings, cross-training, and service coordination. Partner collaboration strengthens co-enrollment opportunities and helps maximize available funding while avoiding duplication of services. Ongoing coordination between the LWDB, One-Stop Operator, and partner staff helps ensure priority of service is applied consistently across entry points and service delivery locations.

c. Update how Southeast LWDB will facilitate access to services though the One-Stop delivery system, including remote areas, though the use of technology and virtual appointments.

Southeast LWDB expands access to workforce services by deploying Title I staff throughout the service area using "AJC-in-a-Box" kits that allow staff to provide center-aligned services wherever individuals are located. These portable service kits support eligibility screening, career services, job search assistance, and training navigation outside traditional American Job Center locations and help ensure consistent service delivery across rural communities and partner sites.

Southeast also uses innovative tools to increase engagement with individuals who face barriers to employment. TransfrVR headsets are deployed at youth-focused outreach events and within local correctional facilities to support career exploration and exposure to in-demand occupations. These tools help participants better understand career pathways and training opportunities before enrollment and support stronger connections to workforce services.

Partners in the public workforce system use Jobs4TN as a shared platform for job search support, referrals, and data management across Title I, Title II, Title III, RESEA, SNAP E&T, and Trade programs. Self-registration and referral through Jobs4TN and the Virtual AJC are available anywhere in Southeast LWDB where internet access is available, allowing individuals to begin services regardless of location.
Workforce system partners also utilize a coordinated online referral process that is tracked and monitored by the One-Stop Operator to support timely engagement with job seekers and businesses and improve coordination across programs. Staff regularly review referrals through partner meetings and cross-training activities to ensure individuals are connected quickly to appropriate services.

To further increase access across the region, Southeast LWDB staff participate in routine outreach events and maintain regular service presence at partner locations, including public high schools, post-secondary training providers, correctional facilities, and community-based organizations serving priority populations. These distributed access points help expand awareness of services and reduce transportation barriers for individuals living in rural communities.

Mobile American Job Center (MAJC) units remain available for deployment in remote areas and can provide computer access, workshops such as résumé development and interview preparation, and employer recruitment support similar to services available in comprehensive centers. In addition to these units, Southeast continues expanding the use of smaller technology-enabled deployment models such as laptops, mobile hotspots, and portable materials that allow staff to respond quickly to community needs and deliver services directly within partner locations and outreach settings.

Through these strategies, Southeast LWDB strengthens access to workforce services across its service area by meeting individuals where they are, supporting coordinated service delivery across partner programs, and expanding opportunities for engagement in career services, training pathways, and employment.

d. Focusing on integrated systems, update how AJCs are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology enabled intake care management information system.

Southeast LWDB utilizes the Virtual One-Stop System (available online through Jobs4TN) to provide an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system. This system is designed to support functions for job seekers and employers and supports the following partner programs: Title I, Title II, Title III, Trade, RESEA, Adult Education, SNAP E&T. The system also integrates labor market information and the ETPL, providing a single technology-based tool for integrated services.

The Southeast LWDB has not authorized the use of funds to purchase or lease management information systems to aid in the management of WIOA programs.

e. Provide an updated description and assessment of the type and availability of programs and services provided to adults and dislocated workers in Southeast LWDB, including how the LWDA ensures these programs and services align with local and regional industry needs.

The Southeast Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) provides a comprehensive set of career and training services to adults and dislocated workers through the American Job Center (AJC) system and its partner network. Services include career services, occupational skills training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways, skills upgrading and retraining, transitional jobs, entrepreneurial training, and adult education and integrated education and training opportunities delivered in coordination with Title II partners. Follow-up services are provided for up to twelve months after employment to support retention and advancement.

Training opportunities are available through the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and through employer-based work-based learning strategies that allow participants to earn wages while building skills. These approaches expand access to short-term credentials and employment-connected training consistent with priorities identified in the State Plan Modification and the U.S. Department of Labor's America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age, which emphasize skills-based hiring, sector partnerships, and earn-and-learn models as key strategies for strengthening regional talent pipelines.

Services for dislocated workers are coordinated closely with Rapid Response activities and partner referrals to support early engagement following layoffs or closures and to reduce time between job loss and reemployment. Dislocated workers have access to the same range of individualized career and training services as Adult participants, with an emphasis on rapid attachment to employment, credential attainment aligned with regional demand occupations, and transitions into growth sectors.

Availability of services across the Southeast region is supported through multiple access points, including comprehensive AJC locations, co-located partner sites, outreach events, secondary and postsecondary education partners, and technology-enabled service delivery through Jobs4TN. Title I staff are deployed throughout the service area to ensure individuals in rural communities and areas with limited transportation can access services and training navigation support.

The Southeast LWDB aligns Adult and Dislocated Worker services with local and regional industry needs through ongoing engagement with employers, sector partnerships, Business Services Team activities, and labor market information from Jobs4TN and WIRED. Training investments prioritize occupations in key regional sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, transportation and logistics, and education. Work-based learning strategies, including OJT and apprenticeship pathways, are used to connect participants directly to employer demand while supporting both immediate employment and long-term career advancement.

Through coordination across partner programs and continued emphasis on industry-aligned training pathways, the Southeast LWDB ensures Adult and Dislocated Worker services remain responsive to employer needs while expanding access to credential attainment, employment opportunities, and career mobility for participants across the local workforce area.

f. Describe how workforce activities will be coordinated with the provision of transportation and childcare, along with other appropriate supportive services in Southeast LWDB, to support worker mobility and more people entering the workforce.

The Southeast Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) coordinates workforce activities with transportation, childcare, and other supportive services to reduce barriers to employment and help more individuals enter and remain in the workforce. Supportive services are provided based on documented participant need and are coordinated across the American Job Center (AJC) partner network to avoid duplication and maximize available resources.

Southeast LWDB Supportive Services Policy allows eligible participants to receive assistance with transportation, childcare and dependent care, vehicle-related costs needed for employment, uniforms and tools, and limited emergency needs such as utilities or medical services when those barriers affect participation in training or work. When possible, participants are connected to community-based and public assistance resources to ensure longer-term stability beyond WIOA-funded supports.

Supportive services are coordinated across WIOA Title I programs, partner programs including SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and National Dislocated Worker Grant (QUEST) resources, along with strategic and MOU partners to expand access to transportation and childcare supports and increase participation in training and employment activities.

Transportation remains a significant barrier in both rural and urban parts of the region. The LWDB works with SETHRA, public transit providers, and AJC partners to support access to fixed-route transportation where available and to provide gas cards, bus passes, mileage assistance, and shared ride services when needed for participation in training and employment. The One-Stop Operator coordinates with partners to align transportation resources and staffing support across programs.

Childcare and dependent care supports are coordinated through WIOA supportive services and referrals to community and state partner programs to help participants begin and continue training and employment. Through this coordinated approach, the Southeast LWDB helps improve worker mobility, reduce participation barriers, and support successful entry into employment aligned with regional workforce needs.

g. Provide an updated description of services available to veterans and eligible spouses, to include priority of service and the use of available Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) staff.

The Southeast LWDB is committed to delivering a coordinated, veteran-centered experience across the American Job Center (AJC) system. Through the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program, veterans and eligible spouses receive structured access to individualized services, employer engagement support, and Priority of Service (POS).

Priority of Service (POS)
Priority of Service is applied immediately when a veteran or eligible spouse enters the American Job Center (AJC) workforce system, whether online, by phone, or in an AJC. Veteran status is identified during the Welcome Function intake process and is flagged in the jobs4tn systems for veteran eligibility and may be referred to a DVOP if qualified for JVSG employment services.

POS implementation includes:
· Immediate notification to veterans of their POS rights
· POS signage in all AJC locations and digital platforms
· Priority access to workshops, job referrals, and training opportunities
· Application of POS across all DOL-funded programs
· Wagner Peyser (WP) Staff training in POS procedures and compliance

The One-Stop Operator ensures POS is consistently implemented through staff oversight and periodic review.
Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists
DVOP specialists deliver Individualized Career Services (ICS) to veterans and eligible spouses with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs).

ICS includes:
· Comprehensive employment and barrier assessments
· Development and ongoing refinement of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
· Case management and scheduled for 30/60/90-day follow-up
· Resume development and interview preparation
· Referrals to supportive services, including VR, VA, housing, and healthcare partners
· Coordination with WIOA Title I and partner programs

DVOP specialists also assist veterans in accessing virtual services when transportation or distance presents a challenge.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)
LVER staff support the region's employer engagement strategy by:
· Conducting outreach to businesses to promote veteran hiring
· Supporting VEVRAA/OFCCP compliance among federal contractors
· Educating employers on hiring incentives and military skills translation
· Coordinating veteran-focused hiring fairs and employer events
· Working with the Business Services Team to align job openings with veteran talent

Screening & Referral Process
The Welcome Function screens veterans and eligible spouses for QEBs. Once identified:
· Veterans with QEBs may be referred to a DVOP for ICS
· Veterans without QEBs receive POS within universal career and training services
· If a DVOP is unavailable, AJC staff provide interim ICS and ensure timely follow-up

This structured approach ensures that all veterans receive the appropriate depth of service aligned with federal JVSG guidance.

Integrated Service Delivery
Southeast coordinates JVSG staff with AJC partner programs through:
· Cross training between DVOPs, LVERs, WIOA staff, VR, RESEA, TANF, and SNAP E&T
· Joint case staffing and communication
· Co-enrollment strategies to maximize training access
· Shared service plans aligned to veterans' employment goals
This model ensures seamless transitions between programs and reduces duplication.

Career, Training & Supportive Services
Veterans may access:
· Employment counseling and career pathway planning
· Skills translation and MOS crosswalk reviews
· Resume writing support and interview coaching
· On-the-job training, apprenticeships, and short-term certification pathways
· Supportive services including transportation, childcare, and housing referrals
Virtual and hybrid service options support veterans in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
The Southeast LWDB and One-Stop Operator monitor veteran service delivery through:
· POS compliance checks
· JVSG case file reviews
· Employer feedback
· Ongoing staff training
· Corrective action processes when needed
This ensures the region’s services remain aligned with federal requirements and responsive to the needs of veterans.

h. Provide an update on initiatives the LWDB plans to implement to best serve individuals who have been justice involved?

Southeast Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is committed to serving justice-involved individuals through coordinated workforce development, education, and supportive service strategies delivered in partnership with American Job Center (AJC) partners and correctional stakeholders. The Southeast LWDB will continue collaborating with local partners that are well-positioned to lead and support services for justice-involved individuals, ensuring access to education, training, career readiness, and reentry resources both during incarceration and following release.

Adult Education currently provides high school equivalency programming in all ten county jails within the region, including implementation and expansion of jail tablet programming to increase educational access for incarcerated individuals. In alignment with the State Plan, Adult Education continues strategic partnerships with the Tennessee Office of Reentry, Tennessee Board of Regents Correction Education Initiative, Tennessee Higher Education Initiative, Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs, and the Tennessee Department of Correction to establish comprehensive education-to-workforce pathways for justice-involved individuals. These partnerships create direct referral opportunities and streamline co-enrollment into Title I programs, allowing eligible participants to access supportive services with minimal barriers and reducing duplicative outreach efforts among AJC partners.
To strengthen service delivery, Southeast LWDB recognizes the need for enhanced cross-partner case management strategies specifically designed to serve justice-involved individuals. Continued staff development and partner training will support stronger alignment across agencies, improve service coordination, and increase successful workforce outcomes for this population.

Southeast LWDB has prioritized deeper collaboration with correctional facilities to integrate workforce services directly within local jails. In partnership with Adult Education and other service providers, Southeast coordinates workshops and career readiness activities for currently incarcerated justice-involved individuals, including resume development, interview preparation, soft skills training, goal setting, and career pathway exploration. These services ensure participants begin building workforce competencies prior to release, supporting AJC goals related to early engagement, career pathway development, and successful workforce attachment.

In fall 2021, the Southeast Tennessee Development District was awarded a $500,000 ARC INSPIRE Grant to develop recovery-to-work programs across the region in response to the substance use disorder crisis impacting both rural and urban communities. This funding established dedicated staffing capacity to provide workforce and reentry support services directly within local correctional facilities and to serve justice-involved individuals throughout the region, particularly those impacted by substance use and other barriers to employment.
Through funding provided by the Office of Reentry, Southeast LWDB was also awarded the PROWD Grant to expand workforce services for justice-involved individuals transitioning from federal incarceration back into the community. This initiative specifically serves individuals recently released from federal correctional facilities to the local Residential Reentry Center (RRC) and supports their successful transition from incarceration to meaningful employment and long-term economic stability. Through the PROWD grant, Southeast LWDB provides education and occupational skills training, job readiness preparation, and vocational training aligned with regional labor market needs and in-demand industries. Participants also receive individualized career and employment services, including career coaching, career pathway planning, resume development, interview preparation, job search assistance, and direct connection to employers. By combining workforce development services with intentional reentry support, Southeast LWDB is strengthening employment outcomes for justice-involved individuals and supporting successful reintegration into the workforce and community.

The Southeast LWDB continues expanding workforce training opportunities for justice-involved individuals through partnerships with community organizations, community colleges, local detention centers, and employers. Current programming includes industry-recognized training in high-demand sectors such as welding, plumbing, HVAC, and electrical, as well as development of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. These sector-based strategies align with regional labor market needs while preparing justice-involved individuals for sustainable, family-supporting employment.

Recognizing that not all facilities have the capacity to host full-scale workforce programs, Southeast LWDB has implemented innovative solutions to expand service access for justice-involved individuals. Through initial funding provided by the Office of Reentry, Southeast purchased and deployed Virtual Reality (VR) headsets within correctional facilities to allow incarcerated individuals to explore career pathways, gain exposure to in-demand industries, and earn micro-credentials. While initially acquired through grant funding, these resources will remain available for continued use beyond the grant period, ensuring long-term access to career exploration and workforce development services. This technology-driven approach supports AJC goals of increasing access, engagement, and skill development for underserved populations.

Moving forward, Southeast LWDB will continue strengthening partnerships with local detention centers, correctional partners, and AJC partners to expand and enhance workforce programming for justice-involved individuals. By engaging participants during incarceration and maintaining continuity of services post-release, Southeast is creating a more seamless transition into the workforce system. Upon release, justice-involved individuals are connected to the AJC network for job search assistance, training opportunities, supportive services, and ongoing career navigation, positioning them for long-term success in the labor market and reducing barriers to successful reentry.

i. Provide updates on any MOU agreements in place to enhance the quality and availability of services to people with disabilities, such as cross training to staff, technical assistance, or methods of sharing information.

In addition to the WIOA-required LWDA MOU/IFA, Southeast LWDB has the following MOUs in place:

Chattanooga Housing Authority:

1) co-enrollment of family self-sufficiency program participants.
2) participation in the 'People Plan' portion of the One Westside Project, which is part of the $50 million HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant.

j. Describe how One-Stop System Operators and One-Stop partners will comply with the nondiscrimination requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (section188), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding:
   i. The physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, and services;
   ii. Technology and materials for individuals with disabilities; and
   iii. Providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
   iv. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the One-Stop partners related to the nondiscrimination requirements of WIOA (section 188), and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)

The Southeast LWDB ensures individuals with disabilities have equal access to workforce services through coordinated service delivery across the American Job Center (AJC) system and its partner network. Southeast LWDB follows Section 188 nondiscrimination requirements and provides reasonable accommodations as needed so individuals with disabilities can participate fully in career services, training opportunities, and employment activities.

All AJC staff, service providers, and partners support universal access by using coordinated intake, outreach, assessment, and service delivery strategies that respond to local needs. These strategies include collaboration with community organizations, schools, Adult Education providers, and Vocational Rehabilitation partners to improve access to employment, training, and supportive services. Title I staff are deployed throughout the service area using flexible service delivery approaches, including community-based outreach and portable service tools, to help individuals connect with services regardless of location or transportation barriers.

Southeast LWDB continues to strengthen coordinated referrals and co-enrollment with partner programs so individuals with disabilities can access education, workforce services, and supportive resources without duplication of effort. Jobs4TN supports shared service coordination across several partner programs and helps individuals access job search tools, training information, and referrals from any location with internet access.

Improving access to workforce services for individuals with disabilities remains a priority for the Board. The LWDB works with core partners to review service delivery strategies, strengthen intake and assessment practices when needed, and support integrated services that connect individuals to career pathways leading to competitive integrated employment. Partner coordination helps ensure individuals with disabilities have access to training aligned with regional demand occupations and the supports needed to successfully enter and retain employment.

Business Engagement:

a. How will the LWDB 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 LWDB will prioritize results and reward programs that place workers directly into apprenticeships or other work-based learning opportunities leading to in-demand jobs.

The Southeast LWDB ensures employers play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and guiding workforce investments by aligning business engagement with TNWorks and the employer-driven framework outlined in the State and East Regional Plan Modifications. Employers are engaged through coordinated Business Services Teams and sector-based outreach to identify priority occupations, emerging skill needs, and credential requirements. Labor market tools, including WIRED and Jobs4TN, are used alongside direct employer input to confirm demand and ensure workforce investments reflect real hiring needs across the region.

Employer input is used to directly validate training relevance and design. For example, employers participating in sector discussions and hiring consultations have identified specific needs related to entry-level technical skills, safety certifications, and work readiness competencies, informing both curriculum emphasis and credential selection. This feedback is shared with education and training providers to refine program content and delivery. Training models that incorporate employer participation like Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training, and Incumbent Worker Training, are prioritized because they align training directly with workplace expectations and support immediate labor market attachment, consistent with State and Regional goals to expand earn-and-learn strategies.

The Southeast LWDB prioritizes results by directing resources toward programs that demonstrate strong employer engagement, placement into in-demand occupations, and successful transitions into work-based learning opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeships. Program performance is assessed using placement outcomes, retention, wage progression, and employer feedback to support accountability and continuous improvement. By centering decisions on employer-validated roles, credentials, and work-based learning pathways, Southeast LWDB advances an industry-driven workforce system that supports worker mobility and meets the evolving needs of regional employers.

b. How will local area 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?

Building on initiatives established in the previous local plan cycle, the Southeast LWDB will modify and refine work-based learning avenues to increase engagement of businesses, particularly small businesses and employers in in demand sectors, consistent with the employer driven approach outlined in the State and East Regional Plan Modifications. These initiatives will be streamlined and positioned as flexible, demand-led solutions that respond to business needs across the full business lifecycle. To reduce barriers for small and mid-sized employers, the Southeast LWDB will aim to simplify access to work-based learning and training initiatives by standardizing processes, coordinating outreach through Business Services Teams, and providing a single point of contact for employers.

RAs and pre apprenticeships should be expanded as shared or regional models where appropriate, allowing multiple employers within the same sector to participate without bearing the full administrative burden individually. IWT and OJT programs will continue to be emphasized as primary tools for upskilling and onboarding, with flexibility in training design to accommodate employer schedules, production cycles, and workforce needs. Customized training solutions will be targeted toward in demand occupations and sector priorities validated through employer input and labor market data, ensuring public investments align with real hiring demand.

The impact of local initiatives will be measured through clear, outcome-focused performance indicators, aligned with State and Regional expectations. The Southeast LWDB will assess effectiveness using metrics such as employer participation, especially from small businesses, placements into in-demand occupations, utilization of work-based learning, employee retention, and wage progression. Employer feedback and repeat engagement will be used alongside performance data to evaluate program relevance and return on investment. Initiatives demonstrating strong business engagement and measurable employment outcomes will be prioritized for continuation and expansion, reinforcing a results driven approach that supports both workforce mobility and regional economic growth.

c. Provide an updated description of how the LWDB will drive the partnerships necessary for effective business engagement, focusing on the use of established regional and local business intermediaries, employer consortiums, and economic development groups.

The Southeast LWDB drives effective business engagement by intentionally leveraging existing regional and local partnerships rather than creating new structures. Consistent with the TNWorks strategy and the PY 2026–2027 State and East Regional Plan Modifications, the Southeast LWDB aligns workforce activities with trusted intermediaries and economic development partners that already maintain strong relationships with employers across priority sectors. This approach ensures workforce solutions reflect how businesses operate regionally and reduces duplication of outreach while strengthening employer trust and participation.

The LWDB is housed within the Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETDD), alongside the Southeast Industrial Development Association (SEIDA), creating a structural advantage that integrates workforce development with regional planning, infrastructure coordination, and economic development. SETDD convenes local governments, economic development professionals, education providers, and community stakeholders through its planning role and development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). CEDS priorities related to industry growth, infrastructure readiness, and workforce gaps are used to inform sector strategies, training investments, and expansion of Registered Apprenticeships and other work-based learning models, ensuring workforce efforts support long-term regional economic goals.

SEIDA, also housed within SETDD, serves as a key convener of electric power distributors and industry stakeholders. Through its coordination of utilities, site-selection partners, and infrastructure stakeholders, SEIDA provides critical insight into workforce needs associated with capital-intensive development and large-scale industrial growth. This close coordination allows the LWDB to align workforce strategies proactively with anticipated labor demand rather than reacting after projects are announced.

In parallel, the Southeast LWDB works through established business intermediaries and employer consortiums, including the Bradley/Cleveland and Chattanooga chambers of commerce and the Chattanooga Regional Manufacturers Association (CRMA) and the Greater Marion County Manufacturers Association (GMCMA). These organizations provide direct access to employers, particularly in manufacturing and other high-demand industries, and serve as primary conduits for identifying skill gaps, credential needs, and talent pipeline challenges. Sector-focused intermediaries such as Apprenticeship Works and the Chattanooga Quantum Collaborative support employer engagement in apprenticeships, work-based learning, and emerging-industry training aligned with innovation-driven sectors including advanced manufacturing, construction, technology, cybersecurity, and energy.

Community-based partners, including organizations such as the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Construction Career Center, further strengthen this ecosystem by supporting outreach, career readiness, and equitable access to training and work-based learning opportunities aligned with employer demand. Business services staff operate through this coordinated network to provide employers

with clear entry points into workforce programs and meaningful opportunities to shape sector strategies, credential alignment, and training investments.

By integrating regional planning, economic development, employer-led intermediaries, and community partners, the LWDB reinforces an employer-centered, regionally aligned workforce ecosystem. This blended partnership model supports business expansion and retention, reduces employer fatigue, strengthens talent pipelines, and ensures workforce strategies reflect how work, infrastructure investment, and economic growth occur across Southeast Tennessee.

d. Describe how Southeast LWDB's workforce development programs and strategies will be coordinated and integrated with economic development activities to increase and enhance the region's economic competitiveness.
    i. Describe how these programs will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Southeast LWDB coordinates workforce development programs and strategies with regional economic development activities to increase and enhance the region's economic competitiveness, consistent with the TNWorks strategy and the PY 2026–2027 State and East Regional Plan Modifications. The Board works closely with regional economic development partners to discuss current and future workforce needs tied to business attraction, expansion, and retention. This coordinated approach also supports outreach related to new funding opportunities, grants, and project-based initiatives that link workforce solutions directly to economic development priorities.

The Southeast LWDB also integrates workforce strategies with entrepreneurship and microenterprise support, recognizing small businesses and self-employment as important contributors to regional competitiveness and job creation. When appropriate, referrals are made to the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC), which provides business planning, financial guidance, and technical assistance to startups and microenterprises across Southeast Tennessee. The Southeast LWDB also coordinates with regional entrepreneurial accelerators and support organizations, including the City of Chattanooga Small Business Resource Center, which serve as front doors for entrepreneurs and very small businesses seeking training, mentorship, and connections to capital.

Community-based partners such as the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Construction Career Center further strengthen these efforts by supporting outreach, entrepreneurship readiness, and access to training aligned with in-demand sectors. These partnerships help ensure entrepreneurial services are inclusive and connected to workforce opportunities. During early stages of business development, Southeast LWDB supports access to entrepreneurial skills training, workshops, and technical assistance related to business fundamentals, market research, planning, and regulatory requirements, in coordination with State and local partners.

Through engagement with these economic development, entrepreneurial, and community-based organizations, the LWDB establishes clear pathways for microenterprises to access workforce incentives as they transition into employers. By coordinating workforce development programs with economic development activities and entrepreneurship support, the Southeast LWDB strengthens regional talent pipelines, supports business development at multiple stages, and enhances the overall economic competitiveness of Southeast Tennessee.

e. Provide an updated description on how the LWDB will coordinate its workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response activities.

The Southeast LWDB coordinates workforce investment activities with statewide Rapid Response efforts through collaboration between the local Rapid Response Coordinator, the Regional Business and Workforce Director, the One-Stop Operator (OSO), Title I and Title III staff, and Business Services Team partners. These coordinated efforts ensure timely response to layoffs and closures and support early connection of impacted workers to reemployment services, training opportunities, and supportive services through the American Job Center (AJC) system.

When a layoff or closure is identified, the local Rapid Response Coordinator leads employer engagement and transition planning activities, including initial employer contact, completion of the Initial Contact Form, entry of WARN-related information in the system of record, and coordination with partners to determine appropriate services for affected workers. The Rapid Response Coordinator works with the OSO and AJC leadership to notify local staff, confirm staffing coverage, coordinate meeting logistics, and prepare customized worker transition materials.

During Rapid Response events, AJC partners provide coordinated service delivery that includes labor exchange services, eligibility screening for WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services, referrals to training opportunities aligned with regional demand occupations, and connections to partner programs and community resources. Title III staff complete required participant registration and service entry activities, while the OSO ensures documentation and employer record updates are completed to support statewide tracking and reporting expectations.

Following Rapid Response activities, Title I staff conduct follow-up outreach with affected workers to offer Dislocated Worker enrollment and career services, and the Rapid Response Coordinator works with the Business Services Team to identify additional transition supports such as recruitment events, job fairs, or employer connections as needed. Rapid Response activities are summarized and incorporated into quarterly reporting to support coordination with statewide workforce response efforts.

Through this coordinated approach, the Southeast LWDB ensures Rapid Response services are integrated with sector strategies, labor market information, and employer engagement activities so affected workers are connected quickly to reemployment opportunities and training aligned with regional workforce needs.

Training Services

a. Update how Southeast LWDB will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities aligning with industry needs. This should include industry-recognized credentials, registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, incumbent worker, on-the-job, and customized training programs.

The Southeast LWDB aligns Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities with regional industry needs through sector partnerships, employer engagement, labor market analysis, and coordinated service delivery across the American Job Center (AJC) system. Training investments prioritize industry-recognized credentials and employment in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations identified through employer input and regional labor market data.

Training services are delivered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and customized training strategies designed to support both participant advancement and employer workforce needs. The Southeast LWDB works closely with employers, education partners, and training providers to ensure training opportunities reflect demand across priority sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, Transportation and Logistics, education, and other regionally identified occupations.

Southeast LWDB prioritizes credential attainment through Eligible Training Provider List programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials and stackable career pathway opportunities. Training investments support short-term certificates, technical diplomas, industry certifications, and associate-level credentials aligned with employer demand. Participants receive individualized career services, assessments, and supportive services to support training completion and transition into employment.

Work-based learning remains a key strategy. The Southeast LWDB uses Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships to support structured career pathway entry, OJT to offset employer training costs while building participant skills, and IWT to help employers upskill current workers and create advancement opportunities.

The Business Services Team maintains ongoing engagement with employers to identify workforce needs and align training investments with hiring demand. Information gathered through employer outreach is shared across the AJC system to support coordinated service delivery and responsive training strategies.

The Southeast LWDB also coordinates closely with secondary and post-secondary partners, including TCATs, community colleges, Adult Education providers, and Perkins V-supported career and technical education programs, to strengthen career pathway alignment and expand access to credential-based training opportunities. Participants receive individualized career planning and coordinated partner services designed to support successful training completion and placement into unsubsidized employment.

b. Describe how contracts will be coordinated with the use of Workforce Pell and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

The Southeast LWDB utilizes Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) as the primary mechanism for funding participant training in accordance with local policy, federal guidance, and WIOA customer choice requirements. ITAs are established on behalf of eligible participants based on training selections made by the individual in consultation with AJC staff, with customer choice emphasized as a core principle of service delivery.

Consistent with the Tennessee PY 2026–2027 State Plan Modifications, the East Regional Plan, and the strengthened emphasis on Perkins alignment, the Southeast LWDB will integrate Workforce Pell as an expansion of the ITA framework. Workforce Pell will enable eligible participants to access Pell Grant funding for short-term, workforce-focused credential programs, particularly those offered through TCATs and community colleges delivering Perkins-funded Programs of Study. These programs will be prioritized based on direct employer input, including recommendations from employers serving on the Southeast LWDB and regional sector-based committees, ensuring credentials reflect current and emerging workforce demand. Workforce Pell will improve access to training, support faster return to work, and reduce the need to rely on local WIOA Title I funds to fully fund tuition costs.

The Southeast LWDB will use Workforce Pell as the first source of funding when participants and programs are eligible, while using WIOA Title I funds strategically to complement Pell-funded instruction. Rather than relying solely on ITAs to pay for classroom training, Title I resources may be used to expand work-based learning (WBL) opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and related instruction, allowing participants to earn wages while completing credentials. This approach supports stackable and portable credential attainment, accelerates reemployment, and allows for more effective braiding of Pell, Perkins, WIOA Title I, and employer resources, while increasing LFPR.

Training investments must prepare participants for high-demand occupations validated through labor market analysis and employer engagement at the local and regional levels. Where appropriate, Perkins-aligned programs and Workforce Pell-funded credentials recommended by employers will be intentionally aligned with Registered Apprenticeships and other earn-and-learn models to ensure training is employer-driven and directly connected to employment.

Consistent with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(G)(ii), the Southeast LWDB recognizes allowable exceptions to the use of ITAs and may use contracts for services when appropriate, including On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Transitional Jobs, sector-based cohort training, or pay-for-performance contracts, as detailed in the local ITA policy.

By coordinating ITAs, Workforce Pell, Perkins-aligned education, and Title I-funded work-based learning, the Southeast LWDB will expand access to training, improve speed to employment, and maximize the efficient use of public workforce funds. This integrated, employer-driven approach strengthens credential portability and stackability, supports earn-and-learn pathways, and ensures training investments align with regional workforce and business needs.

c. Describe how the LWDB will focus on in-demand occupations and priority sectors while ensuring informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how training services are provided.

Southeast LWDB provides multiple options for training services through the American Job Center (AJC) system and its partners. Training services are aligned with regional priority sectors and in-demand occupations and are provided to participants who meet program eligibility requirements and have a documented need identified through the individual employment plan or individual service strategy. Available training services include occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment; On-the-Job Training (OJT); Incumbent Worker Training (IWT); programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, including Registered Apprenticeships; skills upgrading and retraining; and adult education and literacy activities.

Training investments are guided by regional labor market information, employer engagement, and sector partnership strategies to ensure participants are connected to opportunities that lead to employment in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. The Southeast LWDB works closely with employers, training providers, and education partners to strengthen local talent pipelines in priority sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, Transportation and Logistics, education, and other regionally identified demand occupations. Emphasis is placed on industry-recognized credentials and earn-and-learn strategies that support both immediate employment and long-term career advancement.

Southeast LWDB prioritizes informed customer choice and a worker-centered approach in the selection of training services regardless of how training is delivered. AJC staff use WIRED, Jobs4TN.gov labor market information, employer input, and career pathway tools to help participants evaluate training options and understand employment outcomes associated with different programs. Participants review Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) performance information and are supported in researching training providers before selecting a program. AJC staff also work with participants to complete assessments of career interests, strengths, skills, and work values so training decisions reflect both individual goals and regional workforce needs while supporting economic mobility and skills-based career progression.

d. Provide an updated description of how the LWDB will ensure continuous improvement of eligible training providers of services and evaluate that the providers are meeting the needs of local employers and jobseekers.

Southeast LWDB utilizes the state's policy for the process, eligibility, application procedures, dissemination of the list, and reporting requirements. The local Board has approved its own Educational Training Provider Appeals Process Policy, and it is available for review on our website.

The Board's standing committee, the Operations Committee, reviews each application thoroughly when the institution's program is seeking initially eligibility. Eligibility criteria, which is included in the policy, are: All new programs must have prior authorization by the appropriate State authorizing agency (i.e., Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Board of Regents, etc.) before the institution can be added to the ETPL:

- A complete and accurate application;
- Proposing in-demand occupational training in Southeast LWDB:
- Number of enrollments compared to number of completers with a credential;
- A minimum of two (2) years of performance data;
- Forty percent (40%) completion and employment rates for WIOA students;
- Sixty percent (60%) completion and employment rates for all students.

Once the institution's program is approved, each year the program must meet the performance criteria noted above. Credentials will be judged based on their real value in the labor market, and ineffective training providers will be removed from public funding lists. This rigorous process results in thoughtful, data-driven decisions by the Operations Committee and ensures the providers will meet the needs of employers, employees, and job seekers.

Southeast LWDB will use the ETPL, local policy, and the industry-driven strategies as defined by Pillar I in the America's Talent Strategy to align workforce programs with high-growth industries and the Business Engagement Plan to inform the use of Title I training dollars.

Program Coordination:

a. Provide an updated description of how education and workforce investment activities will be coordinated in Southeast LWDB. This must include:
   ii. Coordination of Perkins V and relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs;
   iii. Co-locations and activities with education and workforce investment to coordinate strategies and enhance services; and
   iv. A description of how the LWDB will avoid duplication of services.

The Southeast LWDB coordinates education and workforce investment activities to operate as an integrated system aligned with employer demand and regional economic priorities. Consistent with the Tennessee PY 2026–2027 State Plan Modifications and East Regional strategies, the continued coordination will focus on Perkins alignment, strategic co-location, and streamlined service delivery to improve performance outcomes, increase LFPR, and maximize efficient use of public resources.

Perkins V coordination will be strengthened through direct alignment with secondary CTE providers, TCATs, and community colleges, ensuring Programs of Study connect to employer-validated, in-demand occupations and defined career pathways. Employer input from Southeast LWDB members and regional sector-based committees will continue to help inform credential relevance and sequencing. Workforce staff will continue to collaborate with education partners on referrals, co-enrollment, and career navigation to connect Perkins-funded instruction with Workforce Pell, WIOA services, and work-based learning, supporting credential attainment and employment outcomes.

Education and workforce coordination will be reinforced through AJCs. The Chattanooga AJC is co-located on the Chattanooga State Community College campus, and the Athens AJC is co-located at TCAT Athens, embedding workforce services directly within postsecondary education environments. Co-location improves outcomes by reducing access barriers and enabling individuals to receive career services, training navigation, financial aid guidance, and employer connections in one location, accelerating enrollment, credential completion, and placement into employment.

Co-location supports real-time collaboration among workforce, Perkins, and education staff, allowing faster assessments, coordinated case management, and direct transitions from training to employment, including Registered Apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities. These integrated services contribute to improved performance metrics such as employment rates, credential attainment, and retention, while supporting increased labor force participation by reducing time out of the labor market and simplifying re-entry pathways.

In addition to improving service delivery, locating AJCs on education campuses has resulted in cost savings compared to prior stand-alone locations by leveraging existing facilities and shared infrastructure. These savings are intentionally reinvested to strengthen frontline staffing capacity and increase funds available

for training and work-based learning opportunities, further supporting participant outcomes and employer engagement.

The Southeast LWDB avoids duplication through coordinated intake, shared referral protocols, and clearly defined partner roles supported by co-location. Workforce and education partners will continue to align funding strategies to prioritize Workforce Pell, Perkins, and employer resources before applying WIOA Title I funds. Daily coordination enabled by co-location reduces overlapping services, improves sequencing, and ensures resources are used efficiently. Employer-validated sector strategies will further align training investments and credentials and will be key to supporting consistent service delivery and measurable outcomes.

b. Describe updated plans, strategies, and assurances concerning the coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Southeast LWDB works collaboratively with the One-Stop Operator and TDLWD Administrators, and other AJC partners including Wagner-Peyser staff to coordinate service delivery, maximize impact, and avoid duplication of services. AJC Leads develop work schedules to ensure proper staffing and identify mandatory and additional partners and services to complement the programs at the AJCs.

All Wagner-Peyser employment services are available to customers in the two comprehensive AJCs with services such as LMI and job search assistance. Title III staff are located in the two (2) AJCs and provide Wagner-Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities in accordance with DOL regulations. The Site Lead and OSO have oversight and manage the daily functions and delivery of Wagner Peyser functions and services in coordination with all other programs and services. Employment services are integrated in WIOA, TANF, SNAP, and business services through local procedures, daily operations, and delivery of programs.

Every AJC, including affiliates, has a resource room that is equipped with computers for customers to use. Any individual interested in filing a claim may connect to the state's www.Jobs4TN.gov claims and benefits system to complete the online application and subsequent work registration steps. All AJC staff are available to assist customers with general computer and unemployment application questions. The AJCs are also equipped with telephones which customers may use to contact a representative for initial claims questions and assistance.

Southeast LWDB is working toward greater program partner integration with the online referral mechanism and quarterly meetings. Staff that work onsite participate in regular functional team meetings.

c. How will the LWDB update coordination of WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II?
   i. Include information on utilizing virtual services and mobile teams and units to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services provided through the local one-stop system for Title II participants with barriers to employment.
   ii. Include how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Sec. 232.

Southeast LWDB has strong partnerships with adult education providers offering Title II services: TCAT Athens, Cleveland State, and South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance. A representative from Adult Education sits on the Local Workforce Board. Collaboratively, this partner network strives to combine resources and evaluate labor market and industry needs to develop strategies that address skills gaps, including basic skills.

Access to employment training is provided both in-person and virtually to all participants enrolled in Title II. Integration of Education and employment training (IET) includes virtual learning platforms for students with barriers, such as the Pharmacy Technician Certification course conducted virtually and available 24/7. Other learning platforms for the workplace that can be conducted virtually are WIN, Burlington English, and NorthStar Digital Literacy software. Services are available at all local jails with job training taught concurrently and/or separately to those with access to APDS tablets.

Integration of education and job training (IET) is offered on location of local businesses with customized curriculum specific to the needs of the workplace. ABE and ESL classes are taught on site of employment location. Pathways are designed for the goal of earning a high school equivalency diploma and/or transitioning to post-secondary education/training and retaining or receiving promotions in employment.

Title II participants with barriers that cannot be met with Title II programming or funding alone are referred to partners that offer the necessary assistance for overcoming barriers such as transportation, childcare, and workplace supply needs, via Title I ETPL-approved
post-secondary education funds, TANF, VR, VA, and SNAP programs. Referral data is kept electronically via the One-Stop Operator and reported at LWDB meetings.

Providers compete for Title II funding via an RFA when the prior contracts are due to expire. LWDB staff review applications to ensure those plans align with local LWDB plans; the most recent procurement took place in 2023.

d. Provide an update on any currently executed or planned cooperative agreements that define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system. This includes cooperative agreements for co-location of services.

N/A - the umbrella MOU is the primary cooperative agreement. The MOU is included in Attachments.

e. Provide an updated description of how the LWDA's programs and strategies strengthen the linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?

The Wagner-Peyser Unemployment Insurance (UI) program is a mandatory partner under WIOA and is a vital program within the public workforce system. Employment is a primary performance indicator for all core partners and connecting UI recipients to employers with job openings through the Wagner-Peyser labor exchange program is critical to achieving this goal.

Many first-time visitors and returning customers to the one-stop system are receiving or filing for unemployment insurance. AJC staff provide meaningful assistance to customers struggling to complete the application and certification for unemployment insurance benefits. In some cases, the UI program requires individuals to participate in a Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, which informs UI customers of the programs and services available to them through AJC and connects them to staff-assisted services that include career planning, resume development, and other job search assistance determined by assessment to be a critical need. Title III Staff lead RESEA work and closely coordinate with all AJC partners to support job seekers who are eligible for services.

When a business experiences a closure or a mass layoff, Southeast LWDB Rapid Response team convenes local partners to deliver onsite workshops and orientations to impacted workers. Included in these events is an overview and discussion about unemployment insurance benefits, healthcare coverage, re-employment services, Veteran's benefits, and training resources. Staff help individuals understand the application process and eligibility criteria for UI benefits. This connection is vital to help workers access UI benefits and AJC resources during a stressful transition.

Youth Activities

a. Provide an updated assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in Southeast LWDB, including a description of how these activities will be focused towards in-demand and emerging sectors?

The WIOA Youth program is a comprehensive youth workforce development program for serving eligible youth, ages 14-24, who face barriers to education, training, and employment. Local programs provide youth services in partnership with American Job Centers and under the direction of the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (STLWDB). Services are delivered through a coordinated, partnership driven system designed to align youth with career pathways that lead to employment in in-demand and emerging industry sectors within Southeast LWDB. Consistent with state priorities, youth services increasingly focus on industry aligned, work-based learning opportunities, and career pathway development, ensuring that participants gain the skills and experiences necessary to enter high-growth occupations and advance in the workforce.

The Youth elements include the following:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services.

3. Paid and unpaid work experience that have as a component academic and occupational education that may include:

• Summer employment and other employment opportunities available year round

• Pre-apprenticeship programs

• Internships and job shadowing

• On-the-job training opportunities

4. Occupational skill training (with priority for training programs that lead to postsecondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors)

5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

6. Leadership development opportunities that may include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive civic and social behaviors.

7. Supportive services.

8. Adult mentoring for a total of not less than 12 months.

9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling.

11. Financial literacy education.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors, career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

b. Provide an updated description of how providers and LWDB staff ensure the WIOA elements:
   i. Connect back to the WIOA Youth Program Design Framework, particularly the Objective Assessments and ISS; and
   ii. Are made available to youth with disabilities by describing specific program practices, tools, and services that are tailored to serve youth with disabilities.

The WIOA Youth program design emphasizes evidenced-based programming around the fourteen elements. The framework requires an objective assessment of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service's needs, and developmental needs. Assessments must also consider each youth participant's strengths to build on, rather than focusing on opportunities for improvement. This comprehensive assessment provides information to design the most appropriate services and strategies. An individual service strategy (ISS) is then developed to identify career pathways, objectives, and goals directly linked to federal performance indicators. Emphasis is placed on comprehensive, customer-centered case management and the delivery of all elements necessary to support the youth's achievement of goals.

Southeast LWDB integrates core WIOA services for youth, co-enrolling and collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation to support youth with disabilities. Follow-up referral service is provided to youth who are assessed for learning disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation also provides the Transition School to Work Program to serve high school students eligible for high school students with disabilities who are interested in employment after leaving high school. Southeast encourages co-enrollment of out-of-school youth participants, if a youth meets partner programs' eligibility criteria and services are indicated in the youth's ISS. Title I Youth staff work with the youth participants to determine the best, quickest course of action to maximize available resources.

As outlined in this plan, Southeast LWDB has selected goals to address youth programming and increase work-based learning activities to strengthen connections to employers for in-demand sectors. As we implement strategies to achieve this goal, Southeast LWDB will utilize the Youth Committee, which meets quarterly and is comprised of Board members, representatives from local youth-serving agencies, and employers, to support and encourage connections and systems that benefit youth.

c. Provide an updated description of successful models for youth services from your local area, including but not limited to virtual work experiences, YEP, pre-apprenticeships, OSY recruitment and engagement strategies.

Youth services are tailored to meet the unique needs of each youth, focusing on flexible and comprehensive programming around the fourteen elements to help youth improve education attainment and employment skills.

Youth Work Experience is a successful model offering work-based learning, education, and mentoring along a youth's chosen career pathway. Youth learn positive work habits and develop a better understanding of the world of work and how they fit into it. Southeast LWDB engages with local partners and businesses for the paid work experience program.

One of the most successful initiatives implemented for youth services has been career exploration with virtual reality headsets. The headsets were used in all 10 counties by all school districts. They were also utilized in career exploration fairs throughout the region. The headsets allowed us to engage other populations that we were not able to reach such as middle schools and youth that are not eligible for Title 1 funding. Additionally, Southeast understands many individuals remain disconnected from high-wage jobs and career paths which has created a gap in seeing their skills, understanding career options and taking steps toward better jobs. Through virtual reality headsets, Southeast has taken steps towards finding new career exploration opportunities and career pathway development. This approach ensures that youth are connected to relevant program services that is aligned with workforce needs and creating additional worker mobility.

Southeast has followed a successful pre-apprenticeship program across the region developed by Valmont Industries in Marion County which aligns the needs of CTE programs in the region with the needs of employers. Once they saw a high demand for work-based learning opportunities, Valmont Industries worked with Marion County School District and Chattanooga State Community College to align the career pathway of students, the curriculum of Chattanooga State apprenticeship program, and the need in their facility. They focused on high schools with the most need, and schools with CTE programs offered to give students the best opportunity to succeed at Valmont. All students entering the program must be certified in OSHA-10 and complete 3 specialization classes before they can apply for the pre-apprenticeship. Once into the pre-apprenticeship, students must maintain academic success and meet all requirements in Valmont to finish their pre-apprenticeship program. Southeast will continue to partner with employer partners and education partners to align workforce development needs and education requirements.

After several years of positive experiences and success stories at Valmont, Komatsu America Corporation approached the LWDB, 3 school districts, and Chattanooga State Community College to follow the model developed by Valmont. This model has now been used by several other companies including Mueller Water Products and has attracted students in Sequatchie County, Marion County, and Hamilton County school districts and has proven to keep students engaged throughout their pre-apprenticeship.

Another promising practice in Southeast is a regular roundtable convening of youth service providers at various agencies in the region. This convening provides an opportunity to engage and develop partnerships that offer variations of the 14 elements that cannot be immediately offered in the American Job Centers.

This can include housing, counseling services, and outreach to OSY youth.

d. Provide an updated description of how the LWDB has defined the criterion of "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment" for OSY and ISY, including:
   i. Evidence supporting the established criteria, to include current labor market information, statistical evidence and other data deemed supportive;
   ii. A description of how the LWDB ensures regional alignment in this criteria; and
   iii. List any documentation required from the participant to support established criteria and any additional case management parameters the LWDB has deemed necessary.

Youth unemployment rates, as referenced in WIRED workforce analysis report, are higher than rates for adults. Southeast sets the "additional assistance" definition broadly to include as many at-risk young people in services to help increase the youth LFPR.
Youth unemployment rates, as referenced in WIRED workforce analysis report, are higher than rates for adults. Southeast sets the "additional assistance" definition broadly to include as many at-risk young people in services to help increase the youth LFPR.

Southeast LWDB defines an out-of-school youth (OSY) as one who "requires additional assistance" if they have one of the following barriers:
a. Expelled or suspended from a secondary or post-secondary training program
b. Has poor or sporadic work history, no work history, or has been fired from a job and has not gained employment as a result of being fired
c. Has been placed in a group home, foster care, or kinship between the ages of 14-16
d. Has parent(s) or guardian(s) who are currently incarcerated or have been incarcerated within the last five years
e. Has neither the work experience nor credentials required for an in-demand occupation for which approved training will be provided
f. Needs an Individual Training Account or supportive services to enter or complete an educational program or secure and hold employment
g. At risk youth who have been involved in domestic violence, human trafficking, gang involvement or at risk for gang affiliation
h. Would be a first-generation college student

Southeast LWDB defines an in-school youth (ISY) as one who "requires additional assistance" if they have one of the following barriers:
a. Needs to repeat a post-secondary course(s) or needs credit recovery to complete secondary school
b. Has been suspended or placed in alternative secondary school as a result of disciplinary action or involved in truancy
c. Has been placed in group home, foster care, or kinship between the ages of 14-16
d. Has parent(s) or guardian(s) who are currently incarcerated or have been incarcerated within the last five years
e. Needs support in completing dual credit or dual enrollment courses in the course of completing secondary

education
f. At-risk youth who have been involved in domestic violence, human trafficking, gang involvement or at risk for gang affiliation
g. Would be a first-generation college student
No more than 5% of ISY enrolled in a program year will be determined eligible based on the "additional assistance" criterion contained in local policy.

Regional alignment of the additional assistance criteria is coordinated through the Regional Planning Council.

Southeast LWDB local Youth Eligibility Policy in Attachments outlines acceptable documentation to verify the identified barrier. Title I staff make every effort to collect primary source documentation except when it presents a barrier to accessing services, at which point staff collect an applicant statement or document observations/attestation in case notes.

Administration

a. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds as determined by the Chief Local Elected Official(CLEO) or the Governor under WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

The Southeast Tennessee Development District is the Fiscal Agent selected by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO), Mayor Weston Wamp, and has been delegated the responsibility of managing and dispersing WIOA funds.

b. Describe the competitive process to be used to award subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities in Southeast LWDB.

The Southeast Tennessee LWDA delivers WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services through an in-house service delivery model approved by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). Because Title I services are provided directly by LWDB staff rather than through subrecipients, a competitive subgrant process is not used for these activities.

Although Title I services are delivered in-house, the LWDA follows all applicable federal, state, and local procurement requirements when purchasing goods and services necessary to support program operations. When contracts are required, the LWDA conducts procurement in accordance with 20 CFR Part 679 and 683, 2 CFR Part 200, State procurement policies, and SETD procurement procedures.

The LWDA ensures all procurement actions are conducted with full and open competition where required and maintains written documentation supporting procurement decisions, contract monitoring, and oversight.

c. Update the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and CLEO, and state KPIs, to be used to measure the performance of Southeast LWDB and to be used by the LWDB for measuring the performance of the fiscal agent, eligible providers, and the One-Stop delivery system, in Southeast LWDB.

State KPIs -
Wagner Peyser enrollments: 5,108
WIOA Title I enrollments: 484

Performance Outcomes -
Adult:
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit: 86.3
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit: 87.6
Median earnings of participants during second quarter after exit: $8,573.00
Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma within one year after exit: 83.3
Achievement of measurable skill gains toward credential or employment: 62.7%

Dislocated Worker:
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit: 85.6
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit: 83.8
Median earnings of participants during second quarter after exit: $8,956.00
Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma within one year after exit: 78.8
Achievement of measurable skill gains toward credential or employment: 74.5%

Youth:
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit: 83.3
Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit: 81.3
Median earnings of participants during second quarter after exit: $6,918.00
Percentage of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma within one year after exit: 73.2
Achievement of measurable skill gains toward credential or employment: 57.1%

Wagner Peyser: None for Southeast LWDB.

d. Describe the actions taken toward becoming or remaining a high-performing LWDB, consistent with the LWDB's assessment and certification by the University of Tennessee for Industrial Services (UTCIS), as overseen by the State Workforce Development Board.

In partnership with the State Workforce Board, the Southeast LWDB is currently participating in the board assessment process utilizing the University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services (UTCIS) assessment framework. This process is intended to support local boards in evaluating governance, partner coordination, business engagement, and system effectiveness, while identifying opportunities for alignment with America's Talent Strategy and state workforce priorities.

The Southeast LWDB received an orientation on March 11, 2026, and the Executive Director completed the initial board assessment meeting with UTCIS on March 27, 2026, marking the beginning of this ongoing evaluation and planning process. All board members received their survey link to begin the self-assessment evaluation the following week. The first steps established the assessment framework, clarification of roles and expectations, and a shared understanding of how the assessment will support strategic decision making and system improvement over time.

Given the timing of this initial engagement, the assessment process is in its early stages. As the assessment progresses, the Southeast LWDB will work collaboratively with UTCIS to review board structure, partner engagement, sector strategy implementation, and alignment between workforce, education, and economic development efforts. Findings from the assessment will be used to inform future board actions, strengthen alignment with state identified priority sectors, and enhance coordination with core and partner programs.

Results will also help guide continuous improvement efforts related to business engagement, career pathway development, and service delivery. The Southeast LWDB views the UTCIS supported assessment as a foundational step in strengthening board effectiveness and system integration. As additional phases of the assessment are completed, the Southeast LWDB will incorporate recommendations into strategic planning, partner coordination, and policy development to ensure continued alignment with state expectations and evolving workforce system priorities.

Public Comment:

a. Describe the process used by the LWDB to provide a period of at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, for public comment on plan modifications.

In compliance with WIOA Sec. 108(d), the local plan modification is being published for public comment between April 8, 2026 and April 22, 2026 in advance of submission to the State on April 24, 2026. Public notice is made at all American Job Center locations, on LWDB's website, through Chattanooga Times Free Press, and on AJC's Facebook page. The draft plan is published on LWDB's website and hard copy can be provided at any American Job Center location by request.

b. Include any comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan modifications.

None received.

Stakeholder Involvement:

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

Southeast LWDB engaged in collaboration with stakeholders to inform this local plan and sought input from Regional Planning Council, community partners serving targeted populations, business, education, labor organizations, and the job seeker community.

Pursuant to the TDLWD Regional and Local Plan Policy released on March 24, 2026, the following stakeholder involvement requirements were met for the local plan:

03/11/2026 - Email invitation to RPC Planning meeting sent to council members, board members and stakeholders, which referenced the modification of the 2024-2027 East Regional Plan and Local Plan modifications and the referenced the America's Talent Strategy Framework.

03/25/2026 - East Region RPC Planning Meeting held from 10:00am to 11:30pm. Meeting was open to the public.

4/1/26 - Email notification sent to stakeholders, which included the draft 2024 Combined State Plan, TDLWD Regional and Local Plan Policy, and references to the submission timeline, including a reference to the April 8, 2026, planned release date and public listening session scheduled for April 15, 2026.

04/08/2026 - Regional and Local Plan posted for public comment. Email notification sent to local stakeholders, posted on LWDB website, at all American Job Centers, and posted in Chattanooga Times Free Press.

04/15/2026 - Public listening session for local plan held at 5:30 pm EDT.

Attachments

Attachment A- Required Policies

In the space below, please provide a link to the LWDB policy page, which must include the following required local policies:

- Property Management Policy
- Supportive Services Policy
- Youth Program Design Policy
- Priority of Service Policy
- Local Governance Policy
- Co-Enrollment Policy
- Electronic Case Files Policy
- Grievance and Complaint Resolution Policy
- Minimum Participant Cost Rate Policy
- Monitoring Policy
- Youth Eligibility Policy

https://secareercenter.org/board-policies/

Attachment B- CLEO Signature page

Attachment B can be submitted one of two ways. If the LWDA has capacity for electronic signatures, it can be linked in the space below. In the alternative, the LWDA can provide via email. Please designate which option is selected.

☐ Attachment B is linked in the space below:

☒ Attachment B has been sent via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov

Attachment C- Partners MOU & IFA

Please affirm the LWDA has previously submitted a Partner's MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement pursuant to TDLWD-WFS Guidance-WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/One-Stop Service Delivery and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA). In the space below, provide the date on which these documents were most recently submitted:

Current MOU/IFA website link emailed to Evan Williams via email April 14, 2026.

Attachment D- Additional Cooperative Agreements

Please provide any executed cooperative agreements, other than the Partner's MOU, to which the LWDA is a party. Any additional cooperative agreements can be provided as "Attachment D to Local Plan" via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov. In the space below, please list the name of any additional cooperative agreement that will be included. If none exist, please state "none."

NONE

Attachment E- Budget Information and Supporting Materials

Please provide the following fiscal materials via email to Workforce.Board@tn.gov using the subject line "Local Plan Attachment E."

- Detailed budget listing the sources and uses of TDLWD pass-through funds and all non-Federal matching funds
- Supporting budget narrative explaining expenditures by line items listed on Standard Form 424A
  (Include purpose of travel and supply/equipment lists and describe expenses in the 'other' line item, if applicable. If the budget includes personnel or contractual expenses, cash or in-kind, estimate the number of hours/days and hourly rate, or portion of FTE and salary, for the time that is expected to be spent on the proposed project by key personnel, contractors, or consultants. If the budget includes land or buildings, provide an MAI appraisal or comparable appraisal. Include a description of all leveraged funds, including any fee based and/or revenue generated. Include description of any in-kind resources, including the methods used to determine their value).
- Letters of Commitment from each non-TDLWD funding source (federal state, local, or private) that specifies the amount and type of funds committed (grant, loan, cash, or in-kind)
- Any additional pertinent supporting materials, as applicable.

In the text box below, provide the date Attachment E was submitted and name of individual submitting.

Submitted April 23, 2026, by Michele Holt, Executive Director, Southeast LWDB

OMB Approval No. 0348 - 0044

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. **WIOA Title I - Adult**	17.258	$ -	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00
2.		-	-	-	-	-
3.		-	-	-	-	-
4.		-	-	-	-	-
5. Totals		$ -	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Personnel	$ 875,192.08	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 875,192.08
b. Fringe Benefits	263,612.96	-	-	-	263,612.96
c. Travel	14,760.00	-	-	-	14,760.00
d. Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
e. Supplies	21,312.00	-	-	-	21,312.00
f. Contractual	-	-	-	-	-
g. Construction	-	-	-	-	-
h. Other	313,770.96	-	-	-	313,770.96
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	$ 1,488,648.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00
j. Indirect Charges	-	-	-	-	-
k TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6 j)	$ 1,488,648.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,488,648.00
7. Program Income	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

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Previous Editions Usable

Standard Form 424A (Rev.7-97)
Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102

OMB Approval No. 0348 - 0044

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. **WIOA Title I - Dislocated**	17.278	$ -	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00
2.		-	-	-	-	-
3.		-	-	-	-	-
4.		-	-	-	-	-
5. Totals		$ -	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Personnel	$ 517,016.08	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 517,016.08
b. Fringe Benefits	155,729.08	-	-	-	155,729.08
c. Travel	14,760.00	-	-	-	14,760.00
d. Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
e. Supplies	21,312.00	-	-	-	21,312.00
f. Contractual	-	-	-	-	-
g. Construction	-	-	-	-	-
h. Other	841,113.84	-	-	-	841,113.84
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	$ 1,549,931.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00
j. Indirect Charges	-	-	-	-	-
k TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6 j)	$ ***1,549,931.00***	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,549,931.00
7. Program Income	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

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OMB Approval No. 0348 - 0044

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. **WIOA Title I - Youth**	17.259	$ -	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00
2.		-	-	-	-	-
3.		-	-	-	-	-
4.		-	-	-	-	-
5. Totals		$ -	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Personnel	$ 644,209.40	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 644,209.40
b. Fringe Benefits	194,040.60	-	-	-	194,040.60
c. Travel	14,760.00	-	-	-	14,760.00
d. Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
e. Supplies	21,312.00	-	-	-	21,312.00
f. Contractual	-	-	-	-	-
g. Construction	-	-	-	-	-
h. Other	688,289.00	-	-	-	688,289.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	$ 1,562,611.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00
j. Indirect Charges	-	-	-	-	-
k TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6 j)	$ 1,562,611.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,562,611.00
7. Program Income	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

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