

August 6, 2020


The Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board (Southeast LWDB) has established the attached modification guidance to facilitate the phased re-opening of the American Job Centers in the Southeast local area. The guidance provides specific processes and procedures for safer business operations and the monitoring of guidance provided by federal, state and local governments.

Health and safety concerns can be mitigated by adhering to the following guidance. The Southeast LWDB and American Job Center Partners to the Memorandum of Understanding agree to:

- Follow all guidance from the Governor and public health officials.
- Implement reasonable steps outlined in this guidance to clean American Job Centers and advise staff and customers on appropriate hygiene as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.
- Continue to practice social distancing for American Job Center staff and customers.
- Immediately shut down any facility or areas of the facility where a known risk is identified. This would include the identification of a staff member or customer who has been in the facility and is known to have contracted the virus (or any serious contagious disease). If this occurs, the facility will receive a thorough deep clean following the Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility for Community, Work & School protocols outlined by the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html> prior to reopening. Staff will provide services virtually until it is safe to return to the facility.
- Attempt to have any staff/customer who may have come in contact with an infected person tested by directing them to the nearest testing facility. If testing is refused or a positive result is reported, prevent that individual from entering the facility until he/she has received clearance from his/her health care professional. The employing agency's remote work or sick leave plan should be followed if a staff person cannot enter the facility.
- Follow all guidance provided in this document and guidance provided by the CDC on reopening guidelines for business at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>.

  
Mayor Jim Coppinger, CLEO  
Hamilton County Mayor

8/7/2020  
Date

  
John Proffitt, Chair  
Southeast LWDB

8, 6, 20  
Date

**Purpose:**

This guidance will establish the recommendations for re-opening and operating the American Job Centers (AJCs) following the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Background:**

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, the American Job Centers in the Southeast local area have been closed to the public. Partner agencies have been providing services virtually and by phone. Governor Bill Lee has released Tennessee Pledge: Reopening Tennessee Responsibly guidance.

**Instructions:**

**I. Protocols Prior to Re-Opening American Job Centers**

**a. Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) AJC Re-open Plan**

To protect the health and welfare of employees, customers and partners, in the AJCs a phased approach will be required by the Southeast LWDB. The use of the phased reopening of the AJCs is data-driven and follows the CDC Guidelines and guidance being issued by Governor Lee’s Task Force. In the event Governor Lee’s Task Force implements former phase transition the Southeast LWDB will follow protocol and transition to a former phase. The Southeast LWDB will follow this guidance closely and consult with all partners before moving to new or former phases.

AJCs located in the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Area	
Athens AJC - Comprehensive 410 N Congress Parkway Athens, TN 37 (423) 745-2028	Chattanooga AJC - Comprehensive 5600 Brainerd Road, Suite A-5 Chattanooga, TN 37411 (423) 894-5354
Cleveland AJC – Affiliate 3535 Adkisson Drive NW Technology Building Suite 130-A Cleveland, TN 37312 (423) 790-5552	Dayton AJC - Affiliate Regional Skills Center 200 4th Avenue Dayton, TN 37231 (423) 570-1107
Marion AJC - Affiliate 5510 US Hwy 41 Jasper, TN 37347 (423) 837-9103	Website: <a href="http://www.secareercenter.org">www.secareercenter.org</a>

**b. Phased Re-Opening and Service Availability**

The Southeast LWDB will use the following phases when opening AJCs.

Phase	Services Available	Locations and Capacity	Hours
Phase I Date: June 1	All partners will provide services virtually, by phone, or in person by APPOINTMENT ONLY	Chattanooga AJC Capacity: 66  Athens AJC Capacity: 53	7:00 am – 7:00 pm Monday – Friday  Vulnerable Populations: 7 – 9 am
Phase II Date: July 1	All AJC services are available virtually, by phone, or in person by APPOINTMENT OR WALK UP (DOORS LOCKED) with LIMITED CAPACITY	Chattanooga AJC Capacity: 66 Athens AJC Capacity: 53 Cleveland AJC Capacity: 15 Dayton AJC Capacity: 15 Marion AJC Capacity: 9	7:00 am – 7:00 pm Monday – Friday  Vulnerable Populations: 8 – 9 am
Phase III Date: August 10	All AJC services are available virtually, by phone, or in person with APPROPRIATE SOCIAL DISTANCING	Chattanooga AJC Capacity: 66 Athens AJC Capacity: 53 Cleveland AJC Capacity: 15 Dayton AJC Capacity: 15 Marion AJC Capacity: 9	8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday – Friday  <i>Note: Appointments for vulnerable populations can be scheduled as needed.</i>  <i>*Extended hours will be announced when as staff availability permits.</i>
Phase IV Date:TBD	Return to full operations	All Locations Normal Capacity	8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday - Friday
Closed due to confirmed case	Services may be offered virtually, or customers will be directed to other locations.	TBD	N/A

The following services will be made available in the AJC beginning in phase 1:

1. **Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth:** customer meetings may be conducted virtually, by phone, or in person when appropriate
2. **Title II Adult Education:** students will be seen in person and online programs will continue to be available. Testing will resume according to capacity limits.
3. **Title III Wagner Peyser:** customers will be encouraged to utilize online services through Jobs4TN, but those needing staff assistance may be served virtually, by phone, or in person
4. **Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation:** customer meetings may be conducted virtually, in person (by appointment only), or by phone

**5. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** TANF services are being provided via phone and online where possible. Appointments with individual clients will be scheduled only as needed.

**6. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA):** meetings, orientations or subsequent visits may be conducted virtually, by phone, or in person

**7. SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T):** customer meetings may be conducted virtually, by phone, or in person

**8. Unemployment Insurance:** Staff are trained to provide meaningful assistance by supporting self-service efforts when filing claims and certifying on Jobs4TN.gov, or by phone. Staff will also assist customers with creating help desk tickets, uploading requested documents to Jobs4TN, and referring customers to other available services as needed.

**c. Communication Plan**

The Southeast LWDB will provide information to the public on the opening and if necessary, the re-closing of their American Job Centers (AJCs). Stakeholders, including County and City mayors, board members and partners will be notified of any updates via email notification. Information on the status of the AJCs will be communicated directly on our website at <https://www.secareercenter.org> and Facebook page @AmericanJobCenter – Southeast Tennessee. The board will also utilize news media, and radio throughout the ten-county region to effectively reach the target audience. All planned opening and closing of AJCs will be communicated to the State Workforce Board at [Workforce.Board@tn.gov](mailto:Workforce.Board@tn.gov) to ensure AJC availability on <https://www.tn.gov/workforce> is accurate and up to date. The Southeast LWDB Communication Plan is included in Attachment A.

**d. Full Access to Services**

The One-Stop Operator must ensure that AJC customers have full access to available services, whether it is in-person or virtual, at all times. Staff members should be trained and provided a list of available services or how to access these services for customers. This should include access to all core programs and meaningful unemployment insurance assistance. Staff should be informed that AJC customers should never be told they cannot assist them with a core service and/or state that funds are not available if the individual is eligible for the respective program.

**e. American Job Center Hours**

The available hours for the AJC will be posted and communicated to the public through the <https://www.secareercenter.org> website and the American Job Center – Southeast Tennessee Facebook page. During the time of re-opening, the AJC will follow these hours:

1. Extended hours from 7 am – 7 pm will be required to serve the increased number of potential customers during Phase I and Phase II of reopening at the Comprehensive AJCs in Chattanooga and Athens. Affiliate offices will be closed during Phase I and Phase II.
2. Specialized appointments can be made for vulnerable populations
  - a. Vulnerable population defined by the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
3. The One Stop Operator will coordinate with partners and employer of record to establish and maintain alternating staffing schedules to ensure adequate

coverage.

**f. Challenges to Opening**

All contracted services are included in the annual budget and are subject to partner negotiations beginning July 1, 2020. Additional security and third-party cleaning services are being funded from the current Infrastructure Funding Agreement. If these funds become limited, prior phase transitioning may need to occur. The Fiscal Agent is responsible for the management of the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and will notify the partners of any concerns.

Sanitation, cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment has been ordered. Some items are backordered until mid to late May but should arrive prior to the Phase I reopening of the centers June 1, 2020. In the event proper sanitation supplies cannot be procured, prior phase transitioning may need to occur.

All AJC staff should work with his/her employer of record to address personal health and/or childcare needs. The One Stop Operator will need to address any changes in the staff plans for the AJCs.

**II. Re-Opening American Job Center Protocols**

**a. Staff Training**

Prior to opening any AJC, all staff (listed under the MOU) should receive training on the new protocols submitted in the re-opening plan. This training should consist of an explanation of new duties, how to serve customers, safety protocols, sanitation practices, and availability of services.

All AJC Staff will receive COVID-19 Workplace Protocols, Orientation and Training on the AJC re-opening plan and this must be completed by May 29, 2020. The training must cover all areas of the plan and a confirmation of training must be document by each employee signing the attached Orientation and Personal Responsibility Confirmation (Attachment B) Forms must be submitted to the LWDB by close of business on May 29, 2020.

The One Stop Operator is responsible for ensuring all orientation and training is completed; however, the OSO may delegate these duties to AJC Team Lead Functions so long as the AJC Team Leads have been properly trained prior. The One Stop Operator is responsible for reporting documentation to the Southeast LWDB that this function has been completed. As we transition between Phases, the One Stop Operator may need to provide similar or additional training at the direction of the Southeast LWDB.

It is recommended that all AJC supervisors/managers and employees should consult with their agency or human resource department on specific employer/employee guidance regarding medical assessments and maintain confidentiality as it relates to medical records for employees.

**b. Screening Protocols**

The Southeast LWDB has established screening protocols to prevent potentially infectious individuals from entering the AJC. The following steps will be implemented for screening:

- i. **Employees/AJC Partners** – Prior reopening the AJC all employees will required to review and sign the COVID-19 Workplace Protocols, Orientation and Training Confirmation (**Attachment B**). They will be asked to self-assess for symptoms or close contact to a confirmed case each day prior to reporting to the AJC. If the employee/partner answers yes to any of the questions they must coordinate their availability for work with their employer of record and it is recommended that they seek appropriate medical attention or screening. Employees will be provided a list of regional testing centers. A no – contact forehead scan thermometer will be available on site for use by employees if symptoms present during the workday.
- ii. **Customers/Visitors** – Only customers will be allowed to enter the facility for services and will not be allowed to bring additional guests. Prior to entering the AJC, all customers and/or visitors to the centers will be provided a Personal Self-Assessment (Attachment C) requiring them to answer health screening questions and states that by entering the facility, they agree to the best of their knowledge that they have not been diagnosed or had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and do not present with symptoms. A notice of the screening protocol with this acknowledgment will be posted to the entrance of each facility. This helps prevent the release of confidential medical information by ensuring that it remains with the individual. If they answer yes to any of the health screening questions, services will be provided remotely, and the customer will be given the opportunity to provide their name and contact information for appropriate follow-up. The OSO will designate a staff person to distribute Personal Self-Assessment Surveys to all customers, record names and contact information so customers waiting to enter the center can return to their vehicle to be called when they can enter the center.

**c. Sanitization**

**i. Cleaning Schedule**

All AJCs will undergo a thorough and deep cleaning via the contracted third-party cleaning prior to opening to the public. For the Comprehensive Centers located in Chattanooga and Athens deep cleaning will occur the last weekend in May prior to opening to the public on June 1, 2020. All Affiliate AJCs will be cleaned the weekend prior to reopening to the public. After opening to the public, cleaning will follow the regular schedule with added touch points being sanitized. In the event of a positive COVID-19 confirmed case, the building will be closed and will follow the CDC guidelines for sanitation protocol before allowing staff or the public to re-enter the facility.

**ii. Hand Sanitizing Stations**

The AJC should include hand sanitizing stations throughout the facility in places where multiple individuals may congregate. Mobile hand sanitizing stations can be moved throughout the facility; however, it is advised they be near entrances/lobbies, resource rooms, and client interview rooms. Supplies have been ordered and are anticipated to arrive prior to opening to the public. The One-Stop Operator is responsible for coordinating the use of supplies to adequately supply these areas and ensure availability. This can be delegated to staff at each physical location.

### **iii. Use of Public Equipment and Common Areas**

Equipment that is accessible to multiple individuals must be sanitized after each use. This includes computers (including the keyboard and mouse), copiers/printers, welcome desk (if staff members rotate schedules). The use of public spaces such as a break room and kitchen areas should be limited or restricted to mitigate risk. The use of water fountains is not recommended.

### **iv. Dedicated Staff for Maintaining Sanitization Protocols**

The One Stop Operator should dedicate a staff member for each AJC to maintain a clean working environment or disperse sanitization responsibly to all AJC staff (i.e. all partners). This staff member(s) should ensure that public equipment remains sanitized, customers are adhering to social distancing protocols, hand sanitizing stations are properly stocked, and overall sanitation standards are being followed. This includes cleaning all public areas, wiping door surfaces frequently touched by the public after each use (resource room computers, chair arms, door handles, pens, etc.) The One Stop Operator or functional team lead should assign and monitor duties for these roles at each AJC.

The Southeast LWDB has requested National Dislocated Worker Grant funding to help provide support to the cleaning/sanitization and screening protocols in the AJCs to aid in the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19. These funding opportunities have not been awarded, will be limited, and may not be available long-term. The One Stop Operator should ensure that a staffing rotation is readily available for all AJC staff that includes coverage in the absence (sickness, loss of staff, etc.) or loss of these grant supports.

## **d. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

### **i. Masks**

The use of masks is recommended for all staff members while moving through common areas in the AJC but is not required. Customers entering the AJC are not required to wear masks, but masks will be made available if needed or requested by customers. Any customer or staff member may choose to bring and wear his or her own mask. These recommendations are subject to change in any AJC as mandated by federal, state, and local guidance in specified areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Direction will be provided to the One Stop Operator for communication to all AJC staff and customers.

### **ii. Protective Barriers at Workstations**

Plexiglas protective barriers will be provided in high traffic areas (i.e. welcome desk, customer meeting rooms) to separate and ensure the safety of both the AJC staff and customers. Use of any station that does not have this barrier is not recommended by staff or customers when they are required to meet face to face. When staff meet with customers in designated rooms where no protective glass can be installed, social distancing of a minimum of six (6) feet is strongly encouraged as well as the use of facial masks.

### **iii. Gloves**

The Southeast LWDB will provide gloves for the use of cleaning in the AJC. Any staff member who is involved in cleaning or sanitizing equipment should

be provided the gloves to complete these tasks throughout their workday. Gloves will need to be disposed of properly.

**e. Customer Experience**

**i. Establishment of Social Distancing**

To ensure safety for all customers, social distancing protocols (six feet of separation) are recommended within the AJC. AJC Staff should work in coordination with the One Stop Operator and AJC Team Leads to implement the following visual aid indicators:

1. Creating visual social distance cues, such as lines on the floor, that mark six feet of separation in areas where lines will form to include inside and outside of the AJC.
2. Space all lobby chairs six feet apart.
3. Space resource room computer stations six feet apart (or close several computer stations with tape).
4. The use of cubicles/offices in Phases I and II for customer interaction should be avoided. Instead utilize large rooms, conference rooms, or large offices.

**ii. Check-in Kiosks**

Check-in kiosks should not be utilized by customers in order to reduce the risk of the spread of potentially harmful germs. Instead, utilize one of the following options to check-in customer:

1. For low traffic, the staff member working at the welcome desk can check- in customers from their computer.
2. For high traffic situations, dedicate a staff member to check-in customers at the kiosk or carry the kiosk tablet and check members in down the line. This method will create a queue of customers to be served and can allow customers to wait in their car until their turn to be served.

**iii. Security**

The Southeast LWDB have established safety protocols for the safety and protection of staff and customers. This includes fire safety, evacuation plans, and the use of security personnel. In anticipation of hundreds of dislocated workers that will need assistance, the One Stop Operator will ensure training is provided on de-escalation procedures to effectively communicate with irate customers, be prepared to manage large crowds, and potential threats. AJC Staff will also receive a review of the Security Plan which has been updated to include protocols on pandemics.

Effective May 5, 2020 the Southeast LWDB added security to include all open AJCs. This will remain in place in all locations until the June 1, 2020 when the local area moves to Phase I which includes closing Affiliate offices. Security will still be provided in the Comprehensive AJCs and security needs will be reevaluated at the time staff are allowed to return to Affiliate offices.

Security will be provided during normal business hours and as funding permits. Security expenses are being provided through the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and will remain in place so long as funding permits.



Security protocols will be reevaluated throughout this process and negotiated as part of the Infrastructure Funding Agreement. If existing and future funding allocations are not sufficient to support continued security the Southeast LWDB will request additional funds from Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. If funds cannot be made available security protocols will be reevaluated.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A - Communication Plan

Attachment B – Orientation/Training Confirmation

Attachment C – COVID-19 Self-Assessment