



REGIONAL PLAN REVIEW RESULT EAST

BACKGROUND

To provide an in-depth review of Tennessee's local workforce development boards and regional planning councils using criteria established by the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) for evaluating and approving PY 2018- 2020 plans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

RECOMMENDATIONS DEFINITION

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Fully Approved	The local area has satisfied the minimal criteria standards as established by the SWDB.
Approved with Conditions	The plan has satisfied the minimal criteria standards, however, lacks sufficient detail as established by the SWDB. To ensure compliance with the criteria standards, the local board or regional planning council will submit a corrective action plan addressing the deficiencies within the plan.
Denial	The plan has <u>not</u> taken the necessary steps for compliance to WIOA regulations, federal/state policy, and standards set by the State Workforce Development Board. The local area or region must submit a revised plan detailing corrective action steps taken for approval consideration within 30 days.
Inconclusive	Recommendations cannot be made to the SWDB based on the information provided within the plan.

All revised plans must be resubmitted to workforce.board@tn.gov no later than March 13, 2019 for consideration.



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Results:

Following is a table detailing the conclusion from the 2018-2020 regional plan review along with recommendations to address these issues.

East Regional Plan	
Plan Recommendation	Inconclusive
The State Workforce Agency (SWA) could not provide a recommendation by the required deadline due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">East Local Workforce Development Area's local plan public comment period was <u>January 14, 2019 to January 29, 2019.</u>	
Recommended Action Steps	
East Regional Plan Council (RPC) to address deficient plan components below for full approval recommendation.	

I. Economic and Workforce Analysis	
Status	Inconclusive
East Regional Plan addressed required questions, but lacked sufficient strategy details in the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The plan did not thoroughly analyze the economic conditions	
<p>The East Tennessee region benefits from a highly and uniquely diverse economy. The presence of an economy where energy industry, chemical and automotive manufacturing, health care services, tourism, higher education and others gives the region a strong diverse foundation for growing and sustaining economic development and prosperity. Many industry sectors across East Tennessee function as stabilizing forces in the economy. The East Tennessee Region is anchored in manufacturing that is distributed across the areas and experiencing ongoing new investment.</p> <p>East Tennessee is home to more than 47,000 business establishments. These businesses are widely distributed across industries and firm size, as demonstrated in the area's reputation for economic diversity. Almost half of the local businesses are comprised of the smallest size class (1-4 employees), and almost 70 percent of companies in the region employ fewer than 10 employees. The larger size business class encompasses 203 companies that employ between 250 and 499 workers, 80 companies with 500 to 999 workers, and roughly 50 with more than 1,000 workers each.</p> <p>The role of small business and entrepreneurship is equally very important to East Tennessee, represented through vibrant business communities in smaller urban areas as well as recognized reputation for entrepreneurial innovation in major metro regions. The presence of advanced manufacturing and energy sectors are two leading examples of sectors where research and business formation combine. The research activity of Oak Ridge National Laboratories, the University of Tennessee and other institutional campuses, and of private research and development in the automotive, chemical and other sectors are leading examples of opportunities for diverse parts of East Tennessee to achieve mutual benefit from the innovation, supply chains and talent generation that already exists. A variety of patterns is clear from the data in terms of composition of business establishment representations that include healthcare, education, tourist related business, finance establishments, retail and manufacturing.</p>	



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(continued) Mobility and commuting also shape how well the East Region performs. Commuting capabilities in the region influences both the labor market's efficiency as well as the quality of life that may attract or detract from immigration and retention of population and workforce. Mobility issues are of two types in the East Region:

- 1) maintaining high levels of efficiency in metropolitan areas where daily commuting increases can burden transportation systems and cause worker supply imbalances to result as worker preferences alter, and
- 2) ensuring that viable, diverse occupational opportunities exist in smaller cities and more isolated areas where commuting to other employment centers is undesirable or impractical.

Two of the largest financial outlays for most household budgets in the East Region are housing and transportation costs. This impacts workers with the fewest options available in jobs, mobility or housing the most. While housing remains relatively affordable in many areas of East Tennessee compared to the state or the nation, cost burdens in more urbanized areas and the location of all housing relative to access to jobs are key considerations in achieving a good fit between workforce supply and demand in any one region.

The East Tennessee households' incomes are slightly lower than the median household at the national level. The recent strong economic performance of key metro areas in East Tennessee has played an important role in sustaining and growing income and earnings among residents. The affordability factors in East Tennessee are much more favorable than that of the state as a whole by a large measure, with average rent costs being 25% lower than the state as a whole and housing costs being even more favorable.

As of 2018, the East Region's population increased by 2.9% since 2013, growing by 67,700. Regional population is expected to increase by 2.3% between 2018 and 2023, adding 56,020. Bledsoe, Loudon and Sevier counties led in rate of growth in the current five-year period and that same pattern is anticipated through 2020. Knox County, the largest county in the region, is projected to gain at the seventh-fastest rate among all 34 East Tennessee counties again from 2015 to 2020 as it has in the current five-year span. Hamilton County is expected to grow at the fourth-fastest rate among the counties. Six counties are expected to grow more quickly in the next five years than in the previous five: Grainger, Hawkins, Meigs, Polk, Sullivan and Union.

Numerous counties in East Tennessee continue to see population loss. Fourteen counties experienced losses from 2010 to 2015; 10 are expected to decline further through 2020. While the rate of loss is slowing in several counties and the growth levels are stable in many others, the issue of slow population growth could become a greater constraint on generating the workforce supply needed for existing business demands as well as potential new and expanding industry. East Tennessee population growth levels from 2010 through 2020 trail those of the state and the nation by a consistent margin.

The aging population is the most significant change and challenge to the local workforce. Over 1 million of the current population are in the primary working age, 20-54. Nearly 300,000 people ages 55-64 will move into retirement age within the next decade, indicating that the area will require significant number of replacement supply for those who are currently employed. Even more importantly, among those age 20 to 54, a disproportionate share are going to move into "pre-retiree" age groups soon. In short, the demographic composition of the area does not have the balance needed whereby younger workers and future workers are as numerous in a supply pipeline as those exiting the workforce.

From 2013 to 2018, jobs increased by 6.9% in 34 Tennessee Counties from 1,031,644 to 1,102,839. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 7.4% by 0.5%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 55.9% to 56.9% between 2013 and 2018. Concerning educational attainment, 14.3% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (4.3% below the national average), and 7.2% hold an Associate's Degree (0.9% below the national average).



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- The plan did not thoroughly analyze the employment needs of employers.

Significant attention is given to middle-skills in the East Tennessee Region's economy. Results find a large and important set of occupations fall within certain key industries in the area. Middle-skill jobs are those which require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree, and a median wage of \$13.16 an hour in all of East Tennessee, so this wage varies within each Local Workforce Development Area. Currently, East Tennessee is home to more than 267,000 middle-skills jobs with a density 12% over the national average. Other parts of Tennessee also experience comparatively high concentrations of middle-skill jobs.

A key concern with middle-skill workforce in East Tennessee remains sustaining needed supply of workers. Currently, one in five middle-skill workers in the area is age 55 or over. A large number of middle skill occupations are in short supply of workers. Jobs that are chronically difficult to fill include many in manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare. Technical roles in manufacturing, such as computer-controlled machinery operation, commercial machinery repair, and advanced assembling and setting will be vital to the region's manufacturing backbone. Increasingly, more employers cite the importance of cultivating and retaining workers who also possess a strong set of "soft skills" and leadership ability regardless of the roles they fill, in addition to the content and technical skills that are more explicit requirements of those jobs.

Current skills needed in the full set of job openings illustrate certain technical systems that are nearly ubiquitous, recognizing that LWDA 1 also has many employers with highly specific training needs for its workforce.

Soft Skills Needed in All Industries (per area/regional SWAT analysis):

- communication skills
- work ethic
- attendance
- interview/resume skills
- personal appearance, hygiene, grooming
- basic math understanding and ability
- basic grammar
- drug free
- computer skills

Construction Skills Needs:

- skilled truck drivers
- highly trained tradesmen who possess specific skills, tools, and knowledge based on the trades
- bricklaying
- carpentry
- pouring cement
- installing drywall
- instillation of specific types of equipment



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(continued)

Advanced Manufacturing Skills Needs:

- advanced manufacturing/higher level manufacturing skills
- software utilizers and programmers for product design and research and development programs
- manufacturers of technical products for medical use and electrical equipment
- operators of extruding and drawing machines operators whose work is critical to the production of downstream chemicals, small arms, mechanical use rubber products and ceramics
- manufacturers of healthcare and medical devices cluster to include production of medical equipment, supplies, and pharmaceuticals, as well as medical research
- manufacturers of heat-treated materials to produce glass, rubber, and clay products
- occupational health and safety specialists for pharmaceutical manufacturing, logistics industries, and the production of chemical products

Health Care and Social Assistance Skills Needs:

- assist with diet and fluids
- report changes in patient condition
- basic housekeeping
- moving and handling
- basic literacy and numeracy skills
- oral care
- personal care
- maintain patient hygiene
- effective communication

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities:

- heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers
- excavating and loading machine and dragline operators
- industrial truck and tractor operators

Wholesaling:

- laborers and freight, stock, and material movers
- sales representatives for both wholesale, manufacturing, and technical and scientific products

The Retail Trade

- cashiers
- customer service representatives
- first-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers
- salespersons
- stock clerks
- order fillers

Information Technology (IT):

- computer user support specialists
- direct-to-consumer services such as medical wholesaling, computer wholesaling, and
- e-commerce
- cybersecurity
- cloud
- data analytics



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(continued)

Aerospace and Aviation:

- maintenance
- aircraft mechanics
- aircraft service technicians
- aircraft structure assemblers
- repair and overhaul (MRO) operations
- completion and delivery centers
- passenger to freighter conversion centers
- manufacturers
- engineering technicians involved in computer facilities management as well as the manufacture of aerospace parts, analytical laboratory instruments, and chemical products
- mechanical and electrical skill for aerospace maintenance and repair

Professional and Business Services:

- software developers and applications and systems software specialist
- janitors and cleaners
- laborers and freight, stock and material movers

Office and Administrative Support:

- customer service representatives
- desktop publishers
- financial specialists
- clerks
- customer service representatives
- telecommunications
- active listening
- communication and problem solving

Accommodation and Food Service:

- first-line supervisors/managers of housekeeping
- and janitorial workers
- desk clerks
- managers
- maids
- housekeeping cleaners.
- workers involved in dine out, purchase take-out meals, food delivery
- and particularly fast-food and casual dining restaurants
- non-traditional food service



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- The plan did not properly analyze the regional workforce, specifically regarding individuals not in the labor force who have a disability

According to the US Bureau of Census County Population Tables, the East Region has an average of 15.758% of the population aged 65 or younger with a disability. The Northeast Area has an average of 17%, the East Area has an average of 14.725%, and the Southeast Area 15.55%. Based on the population. Extrapolating the disability percentages based on East Regional population indicates that the region has a disability population of 378,438 individuals under the age of 65 residing in the region. The Northeast Area has a population of 509,188, resulting in a disability population of 86,562, the East Area has a population of 1,235,092 resulting in a disability population of 181,867, and the Southeast Area has a population of 657,281 resulting in a disability population of 102,207.

According to the TDOC 2018 Statistical Abstract, the East Region has a felon population of 6,321. Utilizing the same source, the East Area has a local jail population of 5,599, the Northeast has a local jail population of 3,023, and the Southeast Area has a local jail population of 3,191.

The East Region, within its sub-areas, has initiatives as “works in progress” to address these special populations. Our partnerships within the region with TDOC and TDHS, as well as our board memberships, are a beginning, to meet the needs of these special populations. We as a region are dealing with historically low unemployment rates and lower than average workforce participation rates. The region is working on building a base of companies that are both disAbility and justice involved individual friendly. As these special populations sometimes require extensive support services, policies will need to be monitored closely to ensure that funds are not exhausted. Special attention will be given to the braiding of funds and the resource mapping of the areas/Region to enhance the ability of providing services, meeting the needs of these individuals. Information regarding SNAP, TANF, and VR participants in VOS was detailed on page 11, viii, of the regional plan.

- **The plan fails to detail the service implications of meeting the needs of special populations.**

The East Region and its partners understand the need for collaborative tracking of training related employment outcomes to measure the effectiveness of the training provided to the customer, as well as to gauge the usefulness of the training for the businesses who hire from our talent pool. Training-related employment will be tracked alongside of the tracking of industry-recognized credentials. Each area within the East Region is working on the development of customer driven surveys to match training participant job outcomes with current performance metrics to determine that the participants' job outcomes matched the industry/occupation in which they were being trained.

The information gathered will be compared with the required training provider quarterly performance data being submitted to the state and the relevant regulatory body (THEC, SACS, etc.,)

This information will be analyzed annually to determine the effectiveness of training programs. Those programs garnering insufficient results will be reviewed by the partners, with industry engaged, to determine where deficiencies lie and to help develop a more relevant program that will result in stronger outcomes for the participants involved.

Each area within the region has, as part of the information available in the AJCs, community resource (supportive services) guides for the counties that are served in the county/area/region. Page limitation on the regional plan made these extensive documents prohibitive; however, any documents listing community resources such as supportive services will be included as an attachment.



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- **The plan lacks occupational job growth data.**

Occupational growth data from 2018 to 2025 for the East Region is attached. An abridged table is a Word document and a more exhaustive list of occupations and their respective growth can be found in the Excel spreadsheet.

- The plan does not detail a timetable for the referenced planned public or private partnerships.

The East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council will formalize public-private partnerships no later than Q4 2019. The three local areas will formalize partnerships first during Q1 – Q3 2019, and the East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council will leverage those partnerships.

Recommended Action Steps

- East Regional Planning Council (RPC) to address the deficient plan components above for full approval recommendation.
- State Workforce Agency can provide technical assistance if necessary



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II. Strategies for Service Integration

Status

Inconclusive

East Regional Plan lacked to provide sufficient detail in the following:

- **The plan does not describe how well existing training programs in the region and local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment.**

Regional community colleges, TCATS, and Registered Apprenticeship Programs, sponsored by either employers or community colleges (Northeast State and Chattanooga State) as well as Incumbent Worker (IWT), On-the-Job (OJT), and Transitional Jobs Training are providing training opportunities designed to meet the skills needs of regional employers. The East Region's three local boards and its respective Career Services staff promote career pathways and sector strategies that are focused on training and career pathways in in-demand occupations throughout the region. The Business Services Teams and board staff partner with postsecondary training providers, local area Chambers of Commerce, Economic and Community Development, and other stakeholders as appropriate to work jointly to reach out to businesses and industry to provide opportunities for WIOA training grants for high quality training program that result in a more competitive and skilled workforce in the local area. The partnerships' outreach efforts have resulted in an increased number of participating employers to create solutions for improving the skill levels of the workforce in the region.

Regional staff review ETPL training providers to evaluate the institutions' performance outcomes to ensure that the return on investment of WIOA resources is sufficient in terms of placement and retention of program completer and graduates. This helps ensure that training programs are meeting the needs of students and that the program specifics relate to job openings and skill requirements to increase likelihood of placement and retention.

TBR institutions which comprise the majority of training programs utilizing WIOA resources report average placement rates of between 90% - 93%, with emphasis on placements in the specific training field, thus documenting the levels of student success and effectiveness of curriculum in meeting employer needs. Utilizing the TN Trained model, all TBR institutions participate in collaborative interactions with local, regional and statewide employers in the development of targeted, often customized training programs specifically designed to meet employer needs. The TN Trained model is a collaborative effort between the TN Board of Regents, the TN Department of Economic and Community Development and the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The TN Trained process results in curriculum which contains learning objectives and work-based outcomes and required competencies developed through specialized employer consultations. Each training provider also deploys ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement strategies for each institution to ensure cutting edge, real time classroom and hands on strategies.

Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) are also increasingly developed through collaboration between training institutions, secondary school CTE leadership and employers who specific curriculum elements which would meet their skill needs. Moreover, the success of training programs is demonstrated by the fact that Local Workforce Development Areas are attaining the required WIOA performance metrics related to 2nd and 4th quarter employment and retention, as well as meeting median earnings requirements. AJC participants are advised through informed choice discussions which results in IEPs/ISSs which outline career paths and participation in training programs which maximize individual job seeker strengths, aptitudes and abilities.



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IWT contracts for training existing employees have proven to be well-received by the employers especially since the training can be custom-designed and delivered by education/training entities, TBR institutions, and industry-recognized professional/trade organizations. Cohort, customized training (class of 20 LPN students) results in well-trained and job-ready new hires, and employers find that these employees are superior to students from the general population. Work-based learning combined with classroom instruction (e.g. Registered Apprenticeship) has also been demonstrated to be a successful training model for the region.

That said, there is still a common refrain throughout the region regarding skills shortage in the area's workforce as evidenced by the surveys received from regional employers (see Attachment "Additional Feedback from Regional Employers"). Additionally, Volkswagen, for example, is struggling to find approximately 80 candidates with electrical and physics credentials for the production of its new electric SUV. The Northeast area is concerned about an immediate need for 40 to 50 aviation technicians for a mid-sized aviation company.

The lack of technical and computer skills was also raised as a barrier to employment because of the changing nature of many jobs and the increased use of technology across sectors. This has a particularly deep impact on dislocated workers, who may need to upgrade their skill sets to re-enter the same profession they left, as their skills may have become outdated. A skills mismatch exists between the qualifications of the labor force and the requirements for the available positions, especially in the manufacturing industry, and oftentimes training is neither customized nor responsive enough to address this skills gap. There is also a basic skills deficiency in a significant portion of the population, with low math and reading literacy rates, at a time when resources for literacy programs are being cut. Another challenge is the lack of general work-readiness skills or soft skills (i.e., communication, problem solving, work ethic, work etiquette, etc.) that keep people from obtaining or retaining jobs.

Regional stakeholders and partners need to think about career preparation as a pathway (vocational training and education), and one that leads to jobs of various skill levels (middle skill and higher skill positions). This includes the need to think more about "skills sets" rather than degrees and to think about how knowledge transfers from occupation to occupation and even across career tracks and how education and training both have a role to play.

There is also a need to build a regional consensus for more traditional vocational education pathways. Preparing and training the workforce does not always mean sending people to a traditional four- to six-year university/college. Perceptions are slowly changing about available jobs that are seen as "blue collar" (labor, plumbers, etc.) in order to be able to recruit and train workers to meet the needs of these jobs that are available in the region.

Finally, these pathways need to allow flexibility for workers to earn wages while they are receiving training or education or be able to step in and out of a pathway as needed to be able to move up. Subsidized employment is a viable strategy to support jobseekers as they are gaining experience or training. There is also a concern about not enough support for life-long learning and advancement. Employers need to support career advancement and pathways for their workers, and youth should hear about various pathways very early on to think in terms of long-term career advancement rather than just preparing for the next job. It is incumbent upon the East Tennessee Regional Workforce Alliance to lead the efforts to ensure the above-noted training strategies are implemented in order to fully meet the skills needs of regional employers. These strategies are feasible and realistic and will positively impact the region's workforce and economic development outcomes.



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- The plan does not identify organizations currently providing supportive services.

Regional organizations that currently provide supportive services include TN Department of Human Services, (e. g., Smart Steps Program), TN Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, TDLWD (SNAP, E & T, TAA, etc.), TN Human Development Agency (i.e., CSBG, LIHEAP, commodity distribution, self-sufficiency programs, etc.), Community Service Centers, First TN Human Resource Agency, Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness, Area Agency on Aging, TANF/Families First program, Trio and Upward Bound Programs, PDAM Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment coalition, Keystone Dental Services, Area United Way organizations, local food banks/warehouses (e.g. Second Harvest Food Bank), Niswonger Foundation, local areas' Housing Authorities, Eastern 8 Community Development Corporation, Appalachian Community Federal Credit Union, Insight, Inc. faith-based organizations, (i.e., Holy Friendship Coalition, Salvation Army, Shepherd's Corner,), Frontier Health, Ballard Health Project Employment Hope, local areas' community colleges (i.e., specialized child care grant, food distribution, etc.), local areas' Job Corps, Rural Community Health Collaboratives (i.e., RAM People, Inc.). Senior Nutrition Assistance, local areas' Legal Aid of Tennessee, Regional Public Health office and Departments of Public Health, Chattanooga Room in the Inn, Grace House, local areas' SETHRA, Tri-County Center, Goodwill Industries, Coordinated Charities, Meigs Ministries, Sweetwater Area Ministries, and Lion's Club. Additional regional resources that may provide some level of supportive services can be found in the attachments as "Community Resource Supportive Services Guide."

- The plan does not describe the policy or procedure being developed to promote coordination of supportive services.

The region is committed to providing a holistic approach to supportive services to give participants in the workforce system greater opportunity for success. The three local workforce boards of the East Tennessee Region will be in contact with transportation, housing, child care, and mental health providers to develop solutions for program participants. These conversations will include TANF, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other agencies that serve populations with barriers so as to find common strategies, streamline funding, and reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts.

Based on customers' needs, staff serving in the Welcome Function make referrals to appropriate agencies for support and other services. For example, customers may be referred to the Department of Human Services or a Head Start program to apply for childcare services, to Access from AT&T for discounted home internet service, or to various community agencies regarding assistance for commodities, electric bills, and telephone access. Each AJC maintains appropriate contact and other information to facilitate referrals for services. Telephones and computers are also available for customers to access offsite partners. Staff in the AJCs also coordinate with partner programs such as TANF or Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) for participants receiving transportation assistance from another partner organization. For example, participants receiving transportation assistance through TANF or TAA may have the total amount anticipated to be received in transportation assistance deducted from the transportation assistance amount Title I staff expects to pay. If the partner program covers the full expense, Title I staff will coordinate to provide other needed services such as case management and job search assistance, to maximize services for the customer.

To enhance the provision of transportation and other supportive services, the Council will ensure the sharing of best practices for possible replication, such as the use of gas cards for the payment of transportation stipends. Additionally, the region will continue to maximize funding available for supportive services by coordinating services through programs such as TN Promise and TN ReConnect, as well as forms of financial aid such as Lottery scholarships and Pell grants, allowing Title I funding to be awarded to customers for supportive services instead of training services.



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(continued) Through collaboration with other organizations offering supportive services, the region will also maximize customers' access to services not available through the AJC. For example, region will consider partnering with agencies offering transportation or child care services on behalf of customers in need to coordinate schedules, arrange services, or to potentially fund such services for both individuals and groups. Coaching and mentoring services available through the AJCs and partner programs, such as TN ReConnect, will also be utilized to assist customers in obtaining needed services. Each local area maintains policies and procedures for administering and coordinating support services to ensure funds are spent in a manner that avoids redundancy. The RPC will continue to provide oversight and guidance regarding the need for additional support services, policies, and procedures

- The plan fails to describe the input provided by economic development and businesses that were incorporated into the regional plan.

The foundational resource used for input into the East Regional Plan was the comprehensive labor market study conducted by the Research Center of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. The resulting 170 page document relied on extensive data collection and analysis from multiple resources including the TN Department of Economic and Community Development, the UT Center for Industrial Studies, JOBS4TN, EMSI, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the American Community Survey, Burning Glass and related meta data sources applicable to the region which may be both descriptive and predictive of labor market demand and sectoral skills gaps as it relates to the more than 47,000 business establishments in the East region. In addition to reliance on published databases described above, the primary investigator/researcher, Dr. Garrett Harper, conducted a deep dive into each LWDA's specific employer base, including sole proprietors, farmers and government workers who may not be included in covered employment utilized by these types of data resources. This was accomplished through face to face and telephone interviews with more than 50 key industry and regional leaders. This approach revealed special emphasis on current and future hiring trends, identification of difficult to fill positions, retirement trends, challenges in worker hiring and retention and involvement with secondary and postsecondary education systems. The study revealed both macro and micro employment trends which guided the development of the regional plan and included quantitative information and qualitative recommendations which may be deployed by the local area, as well as the region as a whole. A key result area of the study revealed the unique challenges of each LWDA which require local level decision making for resource allocation for both the supply and demand elements of local and regional economies.

In addition, the East Regional Plan relied upon the TN Department of Economic and Community Development's Center for Economic Research in TN (CERT) data base for identifying labor market resources and challenges that could be applied at the local county level or aggregated at the regional level. CERT provided workforce maps which included occupational specific information which fed the development of the East Regional Plan. Additional data from the website of the TN School Board Association was utilized to reinforce sectoral/cluster analytics related to creation of pipelines and career pathways.

Other Economic Development Entities provided data analytics and related input, including Networks Sullivan Partnership, the Northeast TN Regional Economic Partnership, regional Industrial Development Boards and Chambers of Commerce. In addition to data mining of these organizations' databases, the local area's strategic planning listening sessions conducted in December 2018, included representatives from the TN Department of Economic and Community Development, multiple private sector business and industry representatives (both large and small employers), discrete employment sectors, specific apprenticeship programs, non-profit and other community-based partners and elected officials. When aggregated, data gleaned from these sessions guaranteed and reinforced the level of involvement of business and economic development entities in the strategic planning and decision-making process. Results from this multi-pronged approach are available in the labor market study, "Strengthening the East Tennessee Region 2020," and from the published results of local planning sessions which are available on each local area's website. In summary, this labor market research blueprint relied upon economic development organizations at both the state and local level, interfaced with specific employers, to identify sectors as well as specific occupational strategy recommendations for each local area and for the region as a whole.



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- **The plan fails to describe the coordination of the administrative cost arrangements, including pooling of funds.**

Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) are developed with onsite partners at the AJCs in order to establish methods of cost sharing. IFAs are updated quarterly and reviewed by partner leadership for accuracy and monitoring of shared costs and expenditures. The fiscal staff for the local board invoices partners monthly to ensure timely payment of shared costs. Program funds are also braided with other Federal and State programs, such as Trade Adjustment Act, TN Promise, TN Reconnect, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T), TANF, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs, and Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) in order to eliminate duplication and leverage dollars to maximize resources and services. AJC partners also enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in order to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services, and improve effectiveness, thereby decreasing administrative and program costs. Current MOUs and IFAs reflect the sharing of infrastructure costs among partner programs, based on proportionate use of the AJCs and relative benefit received. A variety of methods to allocate costs are evaluated during the process for establishing infrastructure cost sharing agreements, possibly including: the proportion of a partner program's occupancy percentage of the AJC (square footage); the proportion of a partner program's customers compared to all customers served by the AJC; the proportion of partner program's staff compared to all staff at the AJC; or a partner program's use of equipment or other items that support the local AJC delivery system. Under the guidance of the Regional Planning Council, the local areas in East TN will also consider utilizing cost sharing arrangements when appropriate, for administrative costs such as the development of the regional plan, developing outreach materials, a regional Annual Report, and seeking, regional technical assistance, and applying for regional grant funding.



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Recommended Action Steps

- East Regional Planning Council (RPC) to address the deficient plan components above for full approval recommendation.
- State Workforce Agency can provide technical assistance if necessary

III. Vision, Goals, and Implementation Strategies

Status

Inconclusive

East Regional Plan met all requirements for this component.

- East incorporated a true regional vision with aligned objectives.
- The East Regional Plan detailed how important industry engagement and input is in their regional decision making.

Recommended Action Steps

N/A

IV. New Planning Element (Workforce –Correction Partnership)

Status

Inconclusive

East Regional Plan meet the requirements but lacked clarity in the following:

- Details from the potential cooperative agreement with TN Department of Correction that aligns objectives (shared communication, case management) and joint outcomes.

The potential cooperative agreement with the Tennessee Department of Correction and the East Tennessee Regional Workforce Council will align objectives first by serving the same customers—parolees and those on probation. An initial meeting will establish communication methods convenient for all parties of the agreement. Communication methods must also be established with the clients. The local area Career Services staff will meet with both the client and the parole/probation officer. Case management will be a shared effort and will help identify needed Supportive Services to ensure a successful individual employment plan. A TRICOR referral form (see Attachments) will already have information for both the Career Services staff as well as the parole officer if not already made available. WIOA partner referrals and co-enrollments may be necessary if multiple needs are identified. The justice-involved individuals will be enrolled, and customized services will be made available. Shared outcomes may include earned credential/certification (if applicable), job placement, job retention, wage gains and decreased recidivism.

Recommended Action Steps

N/A