

2022 – 2024 East Regional Plan Modification

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

The 2022 – 2024 East Regional Plan Modification is now open for public comment from Tuesday, March 8, 2022, through Tuesday, March 22, 2022, until 5:00 pm EDT. Please send any comments to Autumn Derrick at aderrick@sedev.org. Please include Regional Plan Modification in the subject line and begin by including the name of the section and the question/response that you are commenting on.

On behalf of the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board, we appreciate your valued input.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

Utilizing regional data provided by the Workforce Insight Research and Reporting Engine Unit (WIR2ED) and comparing to information included in your current plans, share detail for the following:

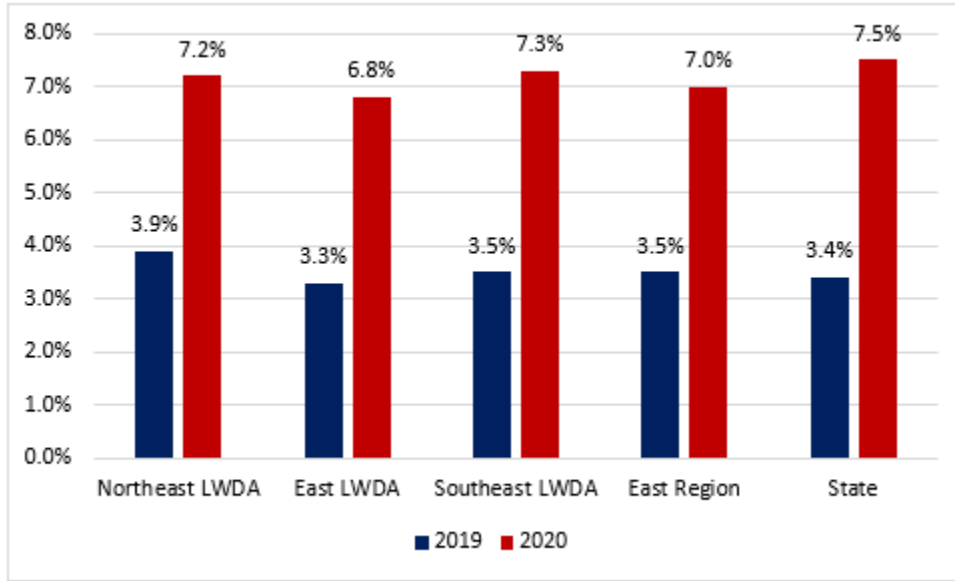
1. How is the region changing in terms of demographics, labor supply, and occupational demand?

The East Region had population growth of 21,492 in 2020, an increase of 0.87 percent from 2019 for a total of 2,484,692. The population is 51.1 percent female and 48.9 percent male. East LWDA's total population in 2020 is the largest in the grand region reported at 1,258,865. Southeast LWDA's population total is 711,844 and Northeast LWDA's total population is 513,983 in 2020. The population increased in each of the LWDA's in 2020 with East LWDA's increasing by 11,795, Southeast LWDA's increasing by 8,523, and Northeast LWDA's increasing by 1,174 people from 2019 to 2020. The East Region population ages 55 and over is 718,465, with the East LWDA's total makes up more than half at 362,782, Southeast LWDA's at 188,893 and Northeast LWDA's at 166,700. The East Region's population ages 20-24 is 161,442, and 15-19 is 145,563.

The 2020 annual average unemployment rate for the region reported at 7.0 percent, below the state rate of 7.5 but two times the region's 2019 rate of 3.5 percent. The East LWDA had the lowest average unemployment rate of all nine local areas in the state at 6.8 percent. Northeast LWDA's average rate was 7.2 and Southeast LWDA's average rate was 7.3 in 2020.

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Figure 1: East Region Average Annual Unemployment Rate - 2019, 2020



All LWDA's in the East Region had Average Annual Unemployment Rates below the state's average rate of 7.5 percent in 2020. The East LWDA had the lowest average unemployment of all nine LWDA's in the state.

Source: TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, WIR2ED Division

From 2019 to 2020, the labor force in the East Region declined by 15,119 individuals, down 1.3 percent. In 2019, there was a total of 1,137,700 individuals in the labor force, with only a total of 1,122,580 in 2020. This is slightly higher than the state's labor force rate which was down 1.2 percent. Total employment in the East Region declined by 5.0 percent, from 1,097,887 to 1,043,464 for a total loss of 54,423 jobs. The state's employment declined by 4.0 percent, a loss of 124,300 jobs.

According to the publication, citing the most recent US Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 2019, 5-year Estimates for ages 16-24, the East Region's Youth Labor Force total is 170,304 with 18,076 unemployed youth. The East Region Youth Unemployment Rate for ages 16-24 in 2019 is 10.6 percent, with Northeast LWDA reported at 11.3 percent, East LWDA at 10.1 percent, and Southeast LWDA at 11.1 percent

Table 1: US Census 2015-2019 American Community Survey Youth Unemployment Ages 16-24, 2019 (5-Year Estimate)

Area	Labor Force	Unemployment	Rate
Northeast LWDA	34,368	3,875	11.3%
East LWDA	91,602	9,258	10.1%
Southeast LWDA	44,334	4,943	11.1%
East Region	170,304	18,076	10.6%
Tennessee	483,146	53,227	11.0%

Credit: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR2ED Division

A table representing the disability status of those in the labor force was provided in the 2020 - 2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy, citing U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 – 2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. The report indicates the East Region's number of unemployed individuals with a disability is 9,724, or 12.7 percent compared to the state's total number of 23,240 at 11.5 percent. The East LWDA has the highest percentage of unemployed individuals with a disability at 13.0 percent representing 4,822 individuals. Northeast LWDA's

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percentage of unemployed with a disability is reported at 12.6 percent and Southeast LWDA’s percentage is reported at 12.1 percent, representing 2,333 and 2,569 individuals, respectively.

Table 2: Disability Status of Those in the Labor Force, 2019

Area	Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	Total Labor Force	Total Employed	Employed with Disability	Employed without Disability	Total Unemployed	Unemployed with Disability	Unemployed without Disability
Northeast LWDA	301,980	211,457	199,847	16,134	183,713	11,610	2,333	9,277
East LWDA	736,030	542,938	514,196	32,146	482,050	28,742	4,822	23,920
Southeast LWDA	393,483	292,064	276,447	18,637	257,810	15,617	2,569	13,048
East Region	1,431,493	1,046,459	990,490	66,917	923,573	55,969	9,724	4,645
Tennessee	4,053,247	3,052,526	2,893,064	179,393	2,713,671	159,462	23,420	136,042

Source: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR2ED Division, 2020 -2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy
US Census Bureau 2015-2019 ACS 2019 5-Year Estimate

Table 3: Disability Status of Those Not in Labor Force, 2019

Area	Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	Total Not In Labor Force	Not In Labor Force with Disability	Percent Not In Labor Force with Disability	Not In Labor Force without Disability	Percent Not In Labor Force without Disability
Northeast LWDA	301,980	90,523	36,620	40.5%	53,903	59.5%
East LWDA	736,030	193,092	66,352	34.4%	126,740	65.6%
Southeast LWDA	393,483	101,419	36,316	35.8%	65,103	64.2%
East Region	1,431,493	385,034	139,288	36.2%	245,746	63.8%
Tennessee	4,053,247	1,000,721	337,665	33.7%	663,056	66.3%

Source: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR2ED Division, 2020 -2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy
US Census Bureau 2015-2019 ACS 2019 5-Year Estimate

Educational attainment rate for individuals 25 years and over with some college or higher is 53.2 percent for the East Region, below the state’s rate of 55.4 percent. The East Region’s educational attainment rate is also the lowest of Tennessee’s three grand regions. Northeast LWDA’s educational attainment rate is 49.9 percent, East LWDA’s is 53.6 percent, and Southeast LWDA’s is 55.1 percent. Southeast LWDA’s rate is the third highest in the state, behind Northern Middle and Greater Memphis. East and Northeast LWDAs rank 4th and 5th respectively of the nine local areas.

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Table 4: East Region Educational Attainment Rate

Educational Attainment	East Region White Only	East Region Black Only	East Region Hispanic or Latino Only	Statewide White Only	Statewide Black Only	Statewide Hispanic or Latino Only
Population 25 years and older	1,495,824	93,733	46,046	3,641,698	697,227	173,116
High school graduate only	929,927	63,957	20,504	2,191,041	457,713	81,607
Percent high school graduate only	62.17%	68.23%	44.53%	60.17%	65.65%	47.14%
High school graduate or higher	1,292,059	79,246	27,479	3,194,533	595,489	107,877
Percent high school graduate or higher	86.38%	84.54%	59.68%	87.72%	85.41%	62.31%
Bachelor degree or higher	362,132	15,289	6,975	1,003,492	137,776	26,270
Percent bachelor degree or higher	24.21%	16.31%	15.15%	27.56%	19.76%	15.17%

Source: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR2ED Division, 2020-2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy

The 2019 Poverty Estimate for All Ages in the East Region is 15.7 percent, slightly higher than the state rate of 15.2 percent. The Northeast LWDA has the highest rate of poverty for all ages at 17.5 percent. The East LWDA rate is 15.4 percent and Southeast LWDA is the lowest at 15.0 percent.

The average annual industry wage in the East Region increased by 4.6 percent in 2020 to \$45,372. The median occupational wage also increased by 4.6 percent to \$35,525. Each average is below the state's average by \$2,000, indicating that labor is cheaper in the East Region.

The East Region seeks to remove barriers to employment through coordination of services available in the public workforce system, with a goal of increasing the labor force participation rate, educational attainment, and average wages. The table details the East Region's total number of individuals with significant barriers to employment.

Table 5: Individuals with Significant Barriers

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	Northeast LWDA	East LWDA	Southeast LWDA	East Region Total	State Total
Number of American Indians or Alaskan Natives Alone	1,263	4,005	1,703	6,971	18,189
Population Ages 15-19	30,416	75,339	39,808	145,563	422,111
Population Ages 20-24	33,185	84,813	43,444	161,442	458,394
Population Ages 55+	166,700	362,782	188,983	718,465	1,784,288
Number of Veterans 2020	39,483	89,342	43,727	172,552	456,197
Number Below Poverty	86,237	184,750	95,168	366,155	996,930
Number with Disability	89,936	156,150	77,133	323,219	737,731
Number of Single Parent Families	12,631	28,163	15,845	56,639	184,062
Probationers and Parolees	5,623	10,935	4,697	21,255	68,391
Community Corrections	425	1,460	525	2,410	7,454
Mental Health Court Statistics FY2020	4	0	90	94	218
Limited English Speaking	829	5,532	3,069	9,430	38,144
Youth Aged Out of Foster Care (by county of commitment)	44	153	69	266	717
Clients in Recovery Courts	152	555	188	895	3,159
Veterans Recovery Courts	0	16	6	22	208
In-School Youth Experiencing Homelessness in 2019	1,214	2,261	1,987	5,462	17,228
TANF Ending Within 24 Months 2020 Total	106	261	171	538	1,773
Prison and Jail Population Total 2020	2,120	3,208	2,505	7,833	26,908

Source: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR2ED Division, 2020-2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy

2. What sectors/industries/occupations/skills are in demand and targets of opportunity?

Between 2018 and 2028, employment is projected to grow from 1,097,460 to 1,184,240, or 0.76 percent annually. According to the East Region's Long-Term Projections 2018 -2028 provided by TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, WIR²ED Division, Education and Health Services is the largest industry sector in the East Region, with 2018 through 2028 projected employment expected to reach 249,947. The Trade, Transportation and Utilities sector is expected to employ 204,809 and Manufacturing is expected to employ 144,491 by 2028. All three of these sectors are in demand and targets of opportunity.

Additional in-demand, targets of opportunity in the East Region are Professional and Business Services, which is also listed as the fastest growing sector with annual growth of 1.6 percent, and 144,841 projected employments.

Leisure and Hospitality has projected employment of 139,748 and includes Food Preparation and Serving Workers which represents 9.5 percent of the occupational employment in the East

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Region; however, the wages for this sector are significantly lower than other sectors. This sector is important to the regional economy and is a target of opportunity. Positions in food service are an opportunity for the emerging workforce, serving as an entry point for youth and others who may be reentering the workforce. Others who were affected by COVID-19 disruptions are targets for upskilling, but the industry needs replacements to fully recover.

Location quotients (LQ) in this plan indicate the sector's share of regional employment compared with the state. An LQ of above 1.0 indicates that sector makes the regional economy unique, and those with a high LQ often indicate the export of goods and services out of the region. Note that Manufacturing has an LQ of 1.21 indicative of exports that are valuable to the region's economy. Leisure and Hospitality has an LQ of 1.11 combined with growth of 14,554 and is a target of opportunity for the East Region, representing an important part of the region's economy.

Although Natural Resources and Mining, which includes mining, other natural resources, and agricultural industries has an LQ of 1.11, those jobs are projected to decline by 2,159. The East Region has lost employment due to the decline of coal, and this has affected rural communities in the region where coal mines are closed, and coal-fired power plants are shut down. Agricultural industries are also expected to decline. Even though the LQ is above average, this sector is not considered to be in demand.

Industry Sector Employment Projections provided by the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, WIR²ED Division, East Region Long Term Projections 2018 -2028 are displayed in Table 2 below:

Table 5: Long Term Industry Projections 2018 - 2028

Industry Sector Title	Estimated Employment 2018	Projected Employment 2028	Change	East Location Quotient	Median Annual Wage(s)
Information	11,964	11,670	(294)	0.92	43,876
Natural Resources and Mining	14,144	11,985	(2,159)	1.11	39,649
Other Services (except Government)	40,740	42,372	1,632	0.96	31,811
Construction	42,404	47,164	4,760	1.02	41,419
Financial Activities	47,905	54,801	6,896	0.87	41,630
Government	61,678	65,102	3,424	0.98	42,076
Professional and Business Services	123,489	144,841	21,352	0.89	37,553
Leisure and Hospitality	125,194	139,748	14,554	1.11	20,373
Manufacturing	141,674	144,491	2,817	1.21	37,553
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	201,372	204,809	3,437	0.94	31,001
Education and Health Services	223,881	249,947	26,066	1.00	41,024

Source: TN Dept of Labor and Workforce Development WIR²ED Division, 2020 -2021 Reference Guide, Tennessee's Economy

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The top sectors in the East Region include:

- Education and Health Services
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
- Manufacturing
- Professional and Business Services
- Financial Activities
- Construction
- Information (as industry adopts automation, this sector is expected to grow. This may not be detected in current labor market reports.)

The top industries in the East Region include:

- Educational Services
- Ambulatory Health Care Services
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Truck Transportation
- Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing

The top occupations in the East Region include:

- Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers
- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Billing and Posting Clerks
- First-line supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Accountants and Auditors
- Computer User Support Specialist
- Software Developers, Applications
- Software Developers, Systems Software
- Computer Systems Analysts
- General and Operations Managers
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
- Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
- Construction Laborers
- Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
- Construction Managers
- Elementary School Teachers
- Secondary School Teachers
- Pre-School Teachers

- 3. Describe the top five regional sectors/industries/occupations that are priorities, in order of priority, and how these were determined. Explain how the status of growing, maturing, and emerging was factored into the ranking.**

The top five East Region sectors are:

1. Educational and Health Services (Growing by 26,066 through 2028, considerable employment in the regional economy)

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2. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (Maturing, second largest employer industry in the region)
3. Professional and Business Services (Growing, more than 21,352 projected growth through 2028, considerable employments in the regional economy)
4. Manufacturing (Maturing, with considerable employment in the region)
5. Financial Activities (Growth of 21,352, considerable employment in the region)

The top five East Region Industries are:

1. Ambulatory Health Care Services (Growing at a rate of 2.59 annually, considerable employment in the region, cost savings due to regulations)
2. Educational Services (Maturing, largest employment industry in the region)
3. Transportation and Warehousing (Growing at rate of 2.31, changing customer preferences related to e-commerce)
4. Truck Transportation (Growing at rate of 2.27 annually, changing customer preferences related to e-commerce, large concentration of employment in the region with 1.14 LQ)
5. Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing (Growing, especially as part of the Advanced Energy Sector)

The top five East Region occupations are:

1. Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers (Growing, high number of annual job openings)
2. Registered Nurses (Growing, high number of annual job openings)
3. Accountants and Auditors (Growing, considerable number of annual job openings)
4. Elementary School Teachers (Maturing, high number of annual job openings due to replacements)
5. Licensed Practical Nurses (Growing, high number of annual job openings)

- a. **Explain how the education and skills needs of the workforce and employment needs of the employer, have an impact on growing, maturing, and emerging employers.**

The education and skills need of the workforce and the employment needs of the employer have an impact the regional economy. A prepared workforce is important for the region to remain competitive, allow emerging industries to survive, and retain existing businesses.

Maturing industry sectors/industries/occupations have passed the initial development and growing phase, and growth begins to slow. Mature industry sectors/industries/occupations require a steady pipeline of qualified talent to maintain and remain competitive and resilient. Educational services is a maturing industry that has a significant impact on skill and talent development. Education professionals are needed to provide a high-quality workforce.

Growth sectors/industries/occupations experience higher-than-average growth due to changing technologies, consumer preferences, and government regulations. Growth industries

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rely on talent to achieve success. The Advanced Energy – Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Industry is the fastest growing sector in the East Region. Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services industry is growing nearly six times as fast as total employment in the East Region.

Emerging sectors/industries are in initial stages of development and expected to grow quickly, often formed around new products or ideas that replace an older technology. The transition from Internal Combustion Engines (ICEs) to Electric Vehicles (EVs) is an example of an emerging industry that will impact all three regions in Tennessee. Major vehicle manufacturers in each region are making the switch. This will impact existing suppliers that supported ICEs. Some suppliers will be able to change over and produce new parts, and production will attract new EV suppliers, such as battery production. There will be an increase in research intended to improve performance and storage of the EV batteries, efforts to lower the purchasing price, and to build consumer confidence and adoption as the industry grows.

An emerging occupation does not have a significant amount of employment numbers but is expected to grow in the future. Analyzing new and emerging occupations may be challenging because the data can go undetected until real growth begins. Information is a sector that does not appear strong in the East Region; however, as other industries invest in automation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, this occupation is expected to grow in demand. Cybersecurity occupations are emerging as a strong need to support new technologies. A website, cyberseek.org, is dedicated to closing the skills gap and providing actionable data on career pathways and supply and demand in cybersecurity. According to cyberseek.org, the state of Tennessee has 6,729 open positions in cybersecurity, the Knoxville MSA has 664, and the Chattanooga MSA has 290.

Additional details on the East Region’s top sectors/industries/occupations can be found in the [2020 -2021 Reference Guide – Tennessee’s Economy](#).

Strategies for Service Integration

Utilizing the information provided in the Economic and Workforce Analysis section, describe how the needs will be met through strategic service delivery:

- 1. Describe how supportive services are coordinated within the region. Include how your region is implementing local practices at the regional level for those supportive services based on participant need (whether physical, virtual, or both).**

Data from the Economic and Workforce Analysis section, which captures the definition of In-Demand occupations; drive the region's strategic service delivery. This modification includes newly defined indicators to further the region's efforts to execute regional objectives. Multiple sources are utilized, including a regional performance dashboard, WIR2ED, and EMSI information to support the region's plan. Quarterly Regional Planning Council meetings steer the processes ensuring objectives are attained.

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2. Describe the coordination of activities between regional economic development agencies and workforce system service providers.

The region has, as part of the local board membership, a strong partnership with Economic Community Development (ECD), WIOA Titles II, III, and IV, and regular input with ECD regional directors. This partnership continues in regional planning as ECD representatives guide discussion regarding anticipated regional opportunities and expected future developments in the region. The region meets emerging workforce needs as in the case with Blue Oval, Tritium, and Amazon. Coordination of activity occurs through each area at the local, regional, and agency tiers.

a. Describe the projected employer engagement strategy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to better connect business with well trained and qualified applicants.

Technical Assistance training that parallels the business service strategy is conducted throughout the region including employer engagement and retention and streamlining services available to the business community. This technical assistance training aids affected parties in the employer's pursuit of qualified applicants. State level staff is spearheading the changes.

Utilizing Business U's Certified Business Engagement Professional certification for members of the business services team, the East Region is poised to deliver targeted employer engagement including sector strategies, career pathways, and work-based learning.

The East Region utilizes Content Development Professionals from Coursera to provide an alternative to traditional Incumbent Worker Training. Employers' customized training plans are shared with Coursera to facilitate potential regional career ladders and regional training opportunities.

b. How will the region measure the effectiveness of the strategy for all stakeholders, including key performance indicator (KPI) measures?

The East Region implemented a dashboard reflecting KPI data updated monthly based on reports generated by the One Stop Operator in each local area. This dashboard and its data are reviewed at the quarterly RPC meetings. Strategies are discussed for improvement at both the regional and local level.

3. What new and existing regional service delivery strategies with workforce system partners will be used or expanded based on a promising return on investment (ROI) for job seekers and employers, including regional education and training needs?

COVID-19 affected the workforce service delivery system. The Region's plan to establish Specialized American Job Centers at Tennessee Department of Correction facilities was halted.

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As COVID-19 restrictions are gradually lifting, the region will resume its plans to serve Justice Involved Individuals by opening Specialized AICs in correctional facilities, both State and local, within the region. Continued outreach at Day Reporting Centers, or the equivalent, strengthens efforts to deliver integrated service to this population. Returning talent represents an untapped pool of potential workers to the community. This available talent, provided it is appropriately equipped, will have a demonstrated impact on ROI.

As a new strategy, the region will encourage partnering agencies to register (for free) with Unite Us, the nation's leading technology company, bridging the gap between health, and social care services. Registration provides a regional network of cross-sector resources, in real time, to enable expansion of supportive services. WIOA Title II partners in the region continue their integrated educational programs primarily in the healthcare industry that have been successful in the attainment of post-secondary credentials while customers simultaneously receive their High School Equivalency Diploma. Additionally “weekend colleges” and “boot camps” provide opportunities for ROI in technical trades. Regionally the area continues to experience success in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that also demonstrate ROI.

The region continues to build robust relationships with its education partners as evidenced by the FRP2 (Five Rivers Partnership for Future Ready Pathways), a consortium of eight counties across the region. The consortium seeks to address workforce development needs identified by regional manufacturing employers. All parties involved should realize an expansive ROI. Employers are assured of a targeted training program producing well equipped/trained perspective employees; Job Seekers earn industry recognized certifications and attain the necessary technical/soft skills essential for a high paying career choice.

- 1. What plans are being made at the regional level to ensure more consistent and efficient service delivery, training opportunities, as well as enhanced performance and reporting structures across the region? These may include administrative and/or programmatic activities that are planned, or currently occurring, to ensure a more robust collaboration between the local areas in the region.**

Recognizing the "Great Resignation" of 2021 changed the face of workforce and the resulting outcry from the employer community regarding a qualified labor force, the East Region is piloting a "Work First" program to ameliorate the effects of low supply of workers. The three local workforce boards of East Region are committed to providing supportive services to give workforce system customers greater opportunity for success. The Regional Planning Council coordinates with transportation, housing, childcare, and mental health providers to develop solutions for customers. These ongoing conversations include TANF, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic and Community Development, and other agencies that serve populations with barriers in order to identify, promote, and replicate common strategies; streamline funding; reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts; and foster clear data reporting that advances predictive analysis.

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Training that addresses local, regional, and state resources that support customers' persistence in their achievement of self-sustaining employment will be held quarterly for AJC staff, AJC partner staff, and regional and local partnering agencies.

- a. **Describe how the Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) are making efforts to ensure regional policy drives alignment with local boards and how Chief Elected Officials support this effort to drive regional performance with outcome-based accountability.**

The Regional Planning Council is cognizant of the need for outcomes-based accountability. The East Region is exemplary in its reporting of Federally Negotiated Performance Metrics and KPIs, proving that the strategies outlined in the 2020-2022 Regional Plan are effective. The region continues to expand its targeting of disadvantaged groups, thereby reducing barriers to employment, delivering less dependency on public assistance, and reporting a greater return in self-sufficiency and employment. All county mayors including the CLEO nominate a member to serve on the LWDA boards. These board members assume an active role in the development of policies that drive initiatives where outcome-based results are monitored.

4. **Describe your regional strategy to reach individuals in priority populations (recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and veterans). How will you ensure they are included in work-based learning and other innovative practices to improve their employability and viability in a rapidly changing workforce?**

Career Specialists work with Labor Staff and SNAP Employment and Training Coordinators to not only recruit individuals who wish to attend training, but also co-enrolling Title I clients with SNAP E&T in order to maximize funding for individuals. Staff members who assist RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment) participants have opportunity to co-enroll and assist those individuals in becoming job-ready, find employment, and provide supportive services until the individuals are receiving steady paychecks. Staff conducts visits to local jails to inform inmates of services available upon release through the American Job Centers, Access Points, and the Virtual AJC.

The region continues to explore available resources to ensure staff has an adequate foundation to identify existing barriers and realistic solutions encompassing cross-discipline case management.

Vision Goals and Implementation Strategies

This section will outline how the LWDB(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education, and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local

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areas. The responses must illustrate that business, education and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are in agreement with the plan.

1. Utilizing the State’s key objectives (listed in Section I(B) above), define the region’s strategic vision to support local economic growth.

The East TN Region’s Workforce System Vision is to increase the competitive position of East Tennessee businesses through the development of a highly skilled Workforce. The East Region envisions a regional system that:

- Is employer-centric and built on the collective efforts of economic development partners with strong industry partnerships
- Is holistically focused on the industry sectors that are recognized as regional sector strategies
- Uses current, available labor market data to understand both the supply and demand sides of the regional economy, including the talent needs and qualifications of employers and the effectiveness of the education and training systems in meeting those needs
- Builds on educational opportunities throughout the region to identify and create career pathways for all on-ramps within targeted industry sectors and associated occupations
- Creates a system of workforce, education, and economic development partners to meet the needs of businesses and individuals while growing a vibrant and robust regional economy.

The East Region Planning Council agreed upon the following strategies that align with the state plan to facilitate a shared vision among workforce system partners:

I. State Objective: Create an Integrated Intake System to Efficiently Deliver Services

Regional Strategy:

- Develop an implementation plan for utilizing the state developed integrated intake system across the American Job Center System partners.
- Identify methods to streamline enrollment process to make the process more efficient.

II. State Objective: Create a Shared Vision for Supporting Tennesseans with the Greatest Number of Barriers to Entering the Workforce

Regional Strategies:

- Support the state objective to advance opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment by increasing enrollment of priority populations.
- Increase Labor Force Participation rate via actively engaging in the state’s LFPR project.
- Streamline and improve strategies, including enhancing follow-up services, to encourage and support long-term, stable employment.

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III. State Objective: Create a Trained Workforce to Meet Current Industry Needs

Regional Strategy:

- Collaborate with employers and training providers to reassess skills gaps and facilitate the alignment of educational outcomes and industry needs.

IV. State Objective: Create New Dashboards to Measure the Effectiveness of the Integrated Workforce Strategy

Regional Strategy:

- Utilize dashboard(s) provided by the state to make informed, data-driven decisions aimed at attainment of performance goals.

V. State Objective: Create a Simple and Effective Engagement Experience for All Candidates

Regional Strategies:

- Adopt state created pathway to simplify and increase participant engagement.
- Increase customer and staff awareness and utilization of Virtual American Job Center.

2. Describe any regional partnerships, new collaborations, or innovative practices the RPC is considering to pursue.

The East Region will be forging new partnerships and collaborative efforts as part of the Labor Force Participation Rate project through the Governor's Rural Taskforce. Phase II of this project will begin in late Spring/Early Summer of 2022. Counties included will be:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| • Campbell | • Cocke |
| • Claiborne | • Rhea |
| • Hancock | • Bledsoe |
| • Union | • Grundy |
| • Granger | • *Scott |
- *Continued from Phase I

a. Is your RPC considering a request for statewide funds to support regional initiatives (training, other)? If so, what activities will your region plan to support utilizing statewide funds?

East region is considering the request of statewide funds for the following initiatives:

- Serving targeted populations
- Augmenting Business Services Team functions
- Youth Programming

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b. Is your RPC considering applying for any other grants that will provide additional resources to be leveraged?

Specific grants that the East Region RPC will consider applying for as appropriate:

- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grants
- Community Development Block Grants
- Second Chance Grants

East region would consider applying for other grant funding for the following initiatives:

- Increasing Access Points
- Services for individuals who do not meet current eligibility guidelines
- Transportation Assistance
- Justice Involved/Reentry

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