

**Middle Tennessee Regional Workforce Area
WIOA Regional Plan Modifications
Program Years 2022 -2024**

The Local Workforce Development Areas of Middle TN, **Northern Middle** serving Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphrey, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson, **Southern Middle** serving Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne, and **Upper Cumberland** serving Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, and White Counties have completed the Regional Plan Modifications for the 2022-2024 program years.

**The Middle TN Regional Plan Modifications will be
open for Public Comment March 7-21, 2022**
and will be available at any American Job Center or online at:
www.ucwork.org
www.sctdd.org/notices/
<https://nm-wb.com/board/public-notice>

Please submit comments or questions to: wioaplan@workforceessentials.com

A Virtual Public Listening Session will be held on
MARCH 8, 2022, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Zoom Meeting ID: 917 8985 1911, **Passcode:** Middle
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/91789851911?pwd=b0h1WkY2ME1KaldZWFNXSkpmM1RtQT09>

All meetings are open to the public. For additional information on joining the meeting or accessibility, contact Selina Moore at Selina.Moore@tn.gov



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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?

Demographics

Population in the Middle Region in 2020 was estimated at 2,832,779, an increase of 1.3 percent over 2019. This is a slower rate of growth than the 2019 rate of 4.7 percent. All three LWDA's in the Middle Region increased in population: Northern Middle by 29,029, Upper Cumberland by 3,954, and Southern Middle by 2,716 people. Northern Middle LWDA had the highest percent of females in the population (51.1 percent).

The lowest rate of higher educational attainment (attainment of some college or more for those 25 years of age or older) is in the Upper Cumberland LWDA, with a rate of 41.4 percent compared to the Middle Region's rate of 58.1 percent and the State's rate of 55.4 percent. In the Middle Region, the greatest percentage of those with a high school degree or more (88.67) were those who identified as white. Those who identified as Hispanic, or Latino only had the lowest percent at 66.1. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Middle Region Educational Attainment by Race, 2018

Educational Attainment	Middle Region White Only	Middle Region Black Only	Middle Region Hispanic or Latino Only	Statewide White Only	Statewide Black Only	Statewide Hispanic or Latino Only
Population 25years and over	1,527,939	230,328	89,410	3,641,698	697,227	173,116
High school graduate only	893,398	143,689	44,726	2,191,041	457,713	81,607
Percent high school graduate only	58.47%	62.38%	50.02%	60.17%	65.65%	47.14%
High school graduate or higher	1,354,842	201,485	59,114	3,194,533	595,489	107,877
Percent high school graduate or higher	88.67%	87.48%	66.12%	87.72%	85.41%	62.31%
Bachelor's degree or higher	461,444	57,796	14,388	1,003,492	137,776	26,270

Percent bachelor's degree or higher	30.20%	25.09%	16.09%	27.56%	19.76%	15.17%
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Labor Supply

The labor force participation rate in the Middle Region was 64.9 percent, which is 3.5 percentage points higher than the State's rate of 61.4 percent. Northern Middle LWDA had the highest labor force participation rate at 68.6 percent, Southern Middle's was 57.4, while Upper Cumberland had the lowest at 53.6 percent. Average unemployment rates increased in all the three LWDA's in the Middle Region, for a Middle Region average of 7.1 percent. The Southern Middle LWDA had the highest unemployment rate at 7.9 percent, 0.8 percentage points above the Middle Region and 0.4 percentage points above the State's rate of 7.5 percent. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Middle Region Labor Force Data

	Upper Cumberland LWDA	Southern Middle LWDA	Northern Middle LWDA	Middle Region	State Total
Total Population 2019	364,637	404,797	2,027,646	2,797,080	6,830,325
Total Population 2020	368,591	407,513	2,056,675	2,832,779	6,886,834
Male Population 2020	182,202	201,530	1,005,290	1,389,022	3,358,020
Female Population 2020	186,389	205,983	1,051,385	1,443,757	3,528,814
Labor Force Participation Rate 2018 (5-Year Estimate)	53.4%	57.4%	68.4%	64.6%	61.2%
Labor Force Participation Rate 2019 (5-Year Estimate)	53.6%	57.9%	68.6%	64.9%	61.4%
Annual Average Unemployment Rate 2019 Percent	3.9%	3.5%	2.7%	2.9%	3.4%
Annual Average Unemployment Rate 2020 Percent	7.2%	7.9%	7.0%	7.1%	7.5%
Educational Attainment 25 Years and Over (2019) Some College Or Higher - Percent	41.4%	44.7%	64.4%	58.1%	55.4%
Poverty Estimate, All Ages, Percent (2019)	18.0%	14.3%	11.8%	13.1%	15.2%
Percentage of Unemployed with a Disability (2019)	10.3%	11.7%	8.6%	9.3%	11.5%

Percent of Those Not in the Labor Force with a Disability (2019)	37.6%	37.9%	28.1%	31.5%	33.7%
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Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2019

The percent of the unemployed with a disability in the Middle Region was 9.3 percent, 1.8 percentage points lower than the State’s percent of the unemployed with a disability of 11.5 percent. The Southern Middle LWDA had the highest percentage at 11.7 percent; the Northern Middle LWDA had the lowest percentage at 8.6 percent. The percent of those not in the labor force with a disability was at 31.5 percent in the Middle Region, lower than the State’s 33.7 percent. The Southern Middle LWDA had the highest percent of those not in the labor force with a disability at 37.9 percent, while the Northern Middle LWDA had the lowest at 28.1 percent. (See Table 3 & 4)

Table 3: Middle Region Disability Status of Those in the Labor Force, 2019

Area	Civilian Non-Institutional Population	Total Labor Force	Total Employed	Employed With Disability	Employed W/O Disability	Total Un-Employed	Unemployed W Disability	Unem-ployed W/O Disability
Upper Cumberland LWDA	203,910	142,052	134,782	9,133	125,649	7,270	1,049	6,221
Southern Middle LWDA	259,971	190,524	181,392	11,982	169,410	9,132	1,589	7,543
Northern Middle LWDA	1,229,801	982,998	943,044	55,867	887,177	39,954	5,250	34,704
Middle Region	1,693,682	1,315,574	1,259,218	76,982	1,182,236	56,356	7,888	48,468
Tennessee	4,053,247	3,052,526	2,893,064	179,393	2,713,671	159,462	23,420	136,042

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 4: Middle Region Disability Status of Those Not in the Labor Force, 2019

Area	Civilian Non-institutional Population	Total Not in Labor Force	Not in Labor Force W Disability	Not In Labor Force W/O Disability	% W Disability	% W/O Disability
Upper Cumberland LWDA	203,910	61,858	23,266	38,592	37.6%	62.4%
Southern Middle LWDA	259,971	69,447	26,302	43,145	37.9%	62.1%
Northern Middle LWDA	1,229,801	246,803	69,470	177,333	28.1%	71.9%

Middle Region	1,693,682	378,108	119,038	259,070	31.5%	68.5%
Tennessee	4,053,247	1,000,721	337,665	663,056	33.7%	66.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2020, the average unemployment rate in the Middle Region was 7.1 percent, which was below the state average of 7.5 percent. Of the two Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the Middle Region, the Clarksville TN-KY MSA had the higher unemployment rate at 7.6 percent in 2020. This was higher than the revised 2019 rate of 4.2 percent. The Nashville, TN MSA had an unemployment rate of 6.9 percent in 2020, up from the revised 2019 rate of 2.6 percent.

Six micropolitan statistical areas are in the Middle Region. Lewisburg, TN (Marshall County) micropolitan statistical area had the highest unemployment rate at 9.1 percent in 2020, higher than the revised 2019 rate of 3.5 percent. Cookeville, TN (Jackson County, Overton County, and Putnam County) micropolitan statistical area had the lowest unemployment rate in 2020 at 6.7 percent, higher than the revised 2019 rate of 3.6 percent. (See Table 5)

Table 5: Middle Region Annual Average Unemployment Rates, 2019 to 2020

Area	2020 Annual Averages				2019 Annual Averages			
	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment Number	Unemployment Percent	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment Number	Unemployment Percent
UNITED STATES	160,742,000	147,795,000	12,947,000	8.1%	163,539,000	157,538,000	6,001,000	3.7%
TENNESSEE	3,289,426	3,043,894	245,532	7.5%	3,329,279	3,216,916	112,363	3.4%
MIDDLE REGION	1,447,185	1,343,995	103,190	7.1%	1,466,858	1,423,777	43,081	2.9%
Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)								
Clarksville, TN-KYMSA	116,852	107,940	8,912	7.6%	117,019	112,161	4,858	4.2%
Montgomery County	86,234	79,666	6,568	7.6%	86,537	83,283	3,254	3.8%
Kentucky Portion	30,617	28,273	2,344	7.7%	30,482	28,878	1,604	5.3%
Nashville-Murfreesboro, TN MSA	1,070,473	996,206	74,267	6.9%	1,085,649	1,057,176	28,473	2.6%
Cannon County	6,506	6,083	423	6.5%	6,653	6,450	203	3.1%
Cheatham County	21,313	20,113	1,200	5.6%	21,882	21,308	574	2.6%
Davidson County	402,058	369,787	32,271	8.0%	402,736	392,552	10,184	2.5%
Dickson County	26,354	24,799	1,555	5.9%	27,132	26,318	814	3.0%
Hickman County	11,103	10,458	645	5.8%	11,425	11,076	349	3.1%
Macon County	11,156	10,428	728	6.5%	11,370	11,018	352	3.1%
Maury County	49,915	45,854	4,061	8.1%	50,244	48,658	1,586	3.2%
Robertson County	37,300	35,018	2,282	6.1%	38,227	37,125	1,102	2.9%

Rutherford County	184,368	171,731	12,637	6.9%	187,178	182,384	4,794	2.6%
Smith County	9,259	8,701	558	6.0%	9,503	9,218	285	3.0%
Sumner County	102,069	95,424	6,645	6.5%	104,025	101,247	2,778	2.7%
Trousdale County	5,383	5,055	328	6.1%	5,527	5,360	167	3.0%
Williamson County	126,997	120,874	6,123	4.8%	131,365	128,178	3,187	2.4%
Wilson County	76,694	71,882	4,812	6.3%	78,383	76,285	2,098	2.7%
Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCSAs)								
Cookeville	49,398	46,097	3,301	6.7%	49,746	47,931	1,815	3.6%
Jackson Co.	4,740	4,363	377	8.0%	4,670	4,456	214	4.6%
Overton Co.	9,689	9,074	615	6.3%	9,942	9,567	375	3.8%
Putnam Co.	34,970	32,661	2,309	6.6%	35,134	33,908	1,226	3.5%
Crossville (Cumberland Co.)	22,733	20,988	1,745	7.7%	23,320	22,300	1,030	4.4%
Lawrenceburg (Lawrence Co.)	19,092	17,603	1,489	7.8%	19,195	18,410	785	4.1%
Lewisburg (Marshall Co.)	15,374	13,978	1,396	9.1%	15,766	15,211	555	3.5%
Shelbyville (Bedford Co.)	20,956	19,293	1,663	7.9%	21,082	20,297	785	3.7%
Tullahoma-Manchester	49,004	45,249	3,755	7.7%	49,506	47,873	1,633	3.3%
Coffee Co.	25,612	23,620	1,992	7.8%	25,665	24,813	852	3.3%
Franklin Co.	19,782	18,213	1,569	7.9%	20,218	19,542	676	3.3%
Moore Co.	3,610	3,416	194	5.4%	3,623	3,518	105	2.9%

Source: TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, WIR²ED Division, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Youth unemployment for those ages 16 to 24 topped 9 percent in all three LWDA's in the Middle Region. The Upper Cumberland LWDA had the highest youth unemployment rate at 12.6 percent compared to Southern Middle LWDA at 10.1 percent and the Northern Middle LWDA at 9.0 percent. The total youth unemployment rate for the Middle Region was 9.5 percent. (See Table 6)

Table 6: Middle Region Youth Unemployment, Ages 16-24 in 2019

Area	Labor Force	Unemployment	Rate
Upper Cumberland LWDA	23,002	2,899	12.6%
Southern Middle LWDA	28,172	2,842	10.1%
Northern Middle LWDA	158,113	14,169	9.0%
Middle Region	209,287	19,910	9.5%

Poverty rates decreased in the Middle Region from 14.0 percent in 2018 to 13.1 percent in 2019. The Upper Cumberland LWDA had the highest poverty rate at 18.0 percent, which is above the Middle Region and 2.8 percentage points above the State’s poverty rate of 15.2 percent. Northern Middle had the lowest poverty rate at 11.8 percent. The percent of those in poverty who were unemployed was 13.1 percent. Also, in 2020, on average, there were two unemployed persons for each job opening. The forecast for long term projections to 2028 is for an average of 178,632 job openings annually in the state.

Occupational Demand

Total employment in the Middle Region, excluding agriculture and the self-employed, decreased from 1,423,777 to 1,343,995, a decrease of 5.6 percent or 79,782 jobs. This rate of job growth was 1.6 faster than that of the state. The Middle Region contains two Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Clarksville TN-KY MSA and Nashville. The Nashville MSA had the second greatest percent decline in employment among MSAs in the state (4.4 percent); Clarksville fared much better while showing a decrease of 2.9 percent. The average annual industry wage in the region, calculated by dividing the total payroll by the average number of workers, increased by just over \$2,000 to \$49,724 in 2020, which was \$2,191 over the state average. The median occupational wage increased by 4.2 percent to \$38,964, also above the state average.

In 2020 compared to 2019, the Middle Region saw more rapid employment losses than the state as a whole. The Nashville-Rutherford County MSA had the second most rapidly declining employment rate in the state, and the Clarksville MSA the fourth slowest. Only 7 of the 40 counties increased employment. The average annual wage and median wage were higher than the state, and this region had the second highest unemployment rate. However, in 2019 youth employment was lower than the state rate.

The office and administrative support occupational group was the largest in the Middle Region in May 2020, according to the annual Occupational Employment Survey, which provides data on all industries except agriculture, the self-employed, and a few not covered by Tennessee’s unemployment insurance system. Employment was 14 percent of total employment in the region and exceeded 171,640 workers, with average entry level wages about \$2,340 more than the average for all occupations in the Region (\$23,455). Salaries of experienced workers in the group averaged \$47,219.

Other employees with greater than five percent of occupational employment in the Region included:

- Transportation and Material Moving workers- 128, 190 (10.5%)
- Food Preparation and Serving workers- 105,110 (8.6.%)
- Sales and Related workers- 111,920 (9.2%)
- Production workers - 95,670 (7.9%)

- Management workers- 85,250 (7.0%)
- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical workers - 79,770 (6.5%)
- Business and Financial Operations workers- 70,690 (5.8%)
- Education, Training, and Library workers- 61,200 (5.0%)

Compared to state occupational employment, the Middle Region has a smaller percentage of transportation and material moving employees (10.5 vs. 11.2 percent) and larger proportions of management (7.0 vs. 6.3 percent) and business and financial operations employees (5.8 vs. 4.8 percent). The median annual salary for the Middle Region was 104 percent of the state median pay; that is, about four percent or \$1,500 higher per year. Several occupational groups in the Middle Region had higher median salaries than the state, notably Architecture and Engineering occupations (\$3,015 greater), and Life, Physical, and Social occupations (\$2,600 greater).

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

In-Demand Sectors

Per the Tennessee Economy 2020-2021 Reference Guide, the Middle Region is the most rapidly growing region in the state and is expected to continue that trend, with employment growing at an annual rate of 1.07 percent. Total employment in the Middle Region in 2018 was 1,349,880 and is projected to increase to 1,502,140 employment by 2028. Job openings will result from new job growth of 152,270 plus 1,634,060 job openings created from workers exiting the labor market or transferring into other jobs.

The largest industry sectors are education and health services, expected to employ more than 310,000 people by 2028; trade, transportation, and utilities, forecast to employ 256,200; and professional and business services, with nearly 220,000 jobs projected. All three are expected to grow over the decade. The three sectors expected to grow the most rapidly include professional and business services (1.9 percent annually); leisure and hospitality (1.6 percent); and information (1.5 percent). Only natural resources and mining (which includes agriculture) is expected to decline.

The five largest in-demand sectors/industries by projected 2028 employment are:

- Education and Health Services
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities
- Professional and Business Services
- Leisure and Hospitality
- Manufacturing

In-Demand Industries

Per the Tennessee Economy 2020-2021 Reference Guide provided by WIR²ED, the table below indicates the top industries for our 3 largest sectors:

Education and Health Services	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Professional and Business Services
Educational Services	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	Administration and Support Services
Ambulatory Health Care Services	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Hospitals	Truck Transportation	Management of Companies and Enterprises
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	Food and Beverage Stores	Waste Management and Remediation Service
Social Assistance	Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	
	Warehousing and Storage	
	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	
	Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	
	Health and Personal Care Stores	
	Gasoline Station	

A recent report by the Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council identifies industries included in the Advanced Energy (AE) sector in utilities and construction; manufacturing; information; professional, scientific, and technical services; and other services. The study found that statewide the AE sectors employed 393,756 workers in 2019, a 9.9 percent increase since 2016, and employment growth, payroll, and the number of establishments were growing faster than the state. The definition of AE activities in the report includes "...being directly involved with researching, developing, producing, manufacturing, distributing, selling, or implementing components, goods, or services related to alternative fuels and vehicles; energy efficiency; renewable, nuclear, and natural gas electricity generation; smart grid; and other related technologies." It also includes activities supporting AE which encompass legal services, finance, consulting, and tax services. All three of Tennessee's three major automotive manufacturers are producing electric vehicles, which is creating additional related electric vehicle suppliers and related industries.

The tables below list the largest detailed industries with positive growth in the five major industry sectors included in Advanced Energy.

AE Information Industries	AE Manufacturing Industries	AE Utilities and Construction
Software Publishers	Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	Building Equipment Contractors
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	Medical Equipment and Supplies Mfg.	Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors
Other Information Services	Electrical Equipment Mfg.	Residential and Non-Residential Building Construction
	Other Electrical Equipment and Component Mfg.	Building Finishing Contractors
		Utility System Construction

		Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution
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AE Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	AE Other Services	
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment (except Automotive and Electrical) Repair and Maintenance	
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	Electronic and Precision Equipment Repair and Maintenance	
Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services		
Scientific Research and Development Services		

In-Demand Occupations

As listed in Appendix A of the Tennessee Economy 2020-2021 Reference Guide, the below table indicates the top growing middle-skill occupations or those with the most openings for the above largest industries:

Education and Health Services	Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	Professional and Business Services
Registered Nurses	Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers	Employment Recruiters
LPN's	Light Truck/Delivery Service Drivers	Clerical and Production Workers
Pharmacy Technicians	Transportation Supervisors	Building and Grounds Workers
EMT's	School Bus Drivers	Accountants
Dental Hygienists	Clerical and Recordkeeping	Lawyers
Medical Secretaries	Shipping, Receiving, and Tracking Clerks/Dispatchers	Market Research Analysts
Insurance Claim Clerks	Sales Representatives, Services	Training and Development Specialists
Bill and Account Collectors	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Non-Technical	Accountants and Auditors
		Human Resource Specialists
		Tax Preparers

Per the Tennessee Economy 2020-2021 Reference Guide, the table below summarizes the number of new jobs projected and targets for opportunities in Advanced Energy for the decade ending in 2028 for the most prominent occupations in the AE industries listed above. (See Table 7)

Table 7: Top Five Job Categories in AE Professional and Technical Industries to Create More than 4,000 New Jobs by 2028

Middle Region - Largest Occupations in the Advanced Energy Industries	Estimated New Jobs 2018-28
Advanced Energy Manufacturing	

First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	250
Industrial Engineers	190
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	180
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	150
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	130
Helpers--Production Workers	130
Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	120
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	110
Dental Laboratory Technicians	100
Machinists	100
Advanced Energy - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	
Computer Systems Analysts	830
Software Developers, Systems Software	720
Computer User Support Specialists	570
Software Developers, Applications	570
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	380
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	360
General and Operations Managers	280
Customer Service Representatives	240
Computer Programmers	240
Training and Development Specialists	230

Middle Region - Largest Occupations in the Advanced Energy Industries	Estimated New Jobs 2018-28
Advanced Energy - Utilities and Construction	
Construction Laborers	810
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	690
Electricians	660
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	510
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	390
Construction Managers	280
Carpenters	250
General and Operations Managers	180
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	150
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	140
Advanced Energy - Other Services	
Phlebotomists	90
Billing and Posting Clerks	50
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	40
Computer, Automated Teller, and Office Machine Repairers	30
Customer Service Representatives	30

Advanced Energy - Information Technology	
Customer Service Representatives	620
Computer User Support Specialists	350
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	320
General and Operations Managers	260
Software Developers, Systems Software	220
Financial Managers	200
Software Developers, Applications	180
Computer Systems Analysts	180
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	170
Packers and Packagers, Hand	170

In-Demand Skills

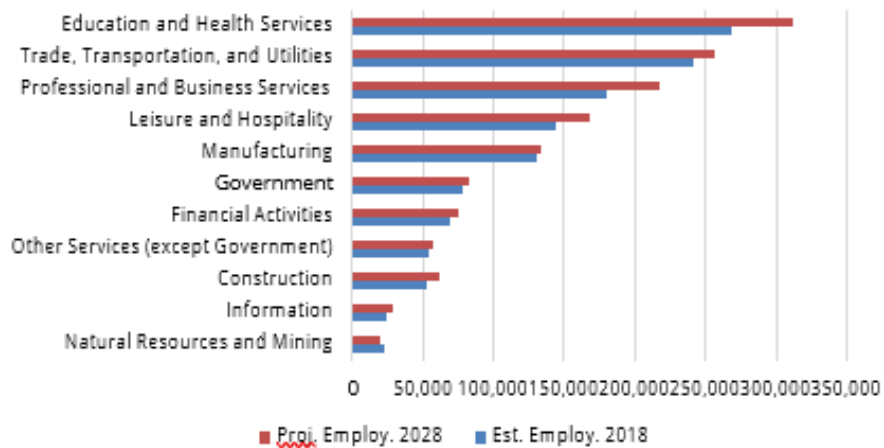
Per the Middle Tennessee Workforce Region Report, the Top 10 in-demand job certification and tools and technologies, listed in order from greatest demand to the least demand:

In-Demand Tools and Technologies	In-Demand Certifications
Microsoft (MS) Office	Nursing Credentials and Certifications
Ladders	American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications
Structured Query Language (SQL)	Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
Forklift	American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications
Microsoft PowerPoint	National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)
Personal Protective Equipment	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)
Motor Vehicles	Social Worker Credentials and Certifications
Microsoft Word	FINRA Financial Securities Professionals
Cash Register	American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Certifications
Microsoft Excel	Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)

In the report it shows the comparison of educational level of job postings versus candidates, and it shows a high school diploma or equivalent, a bachelor's degree, or no minimum education requirement as the three largest educational requirements. While the percentage of potential candidates is larger than the percentage of job openings requiring a high school diploma or equivalent, the number of job postings requiring a bachelor's degree is larger than the percentage of potential candidates with a bachelor's degree. AJC partners, including the SNAP program utilizes demand driven data to guide participants into high growth sector strategies.

3. Describe the 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.

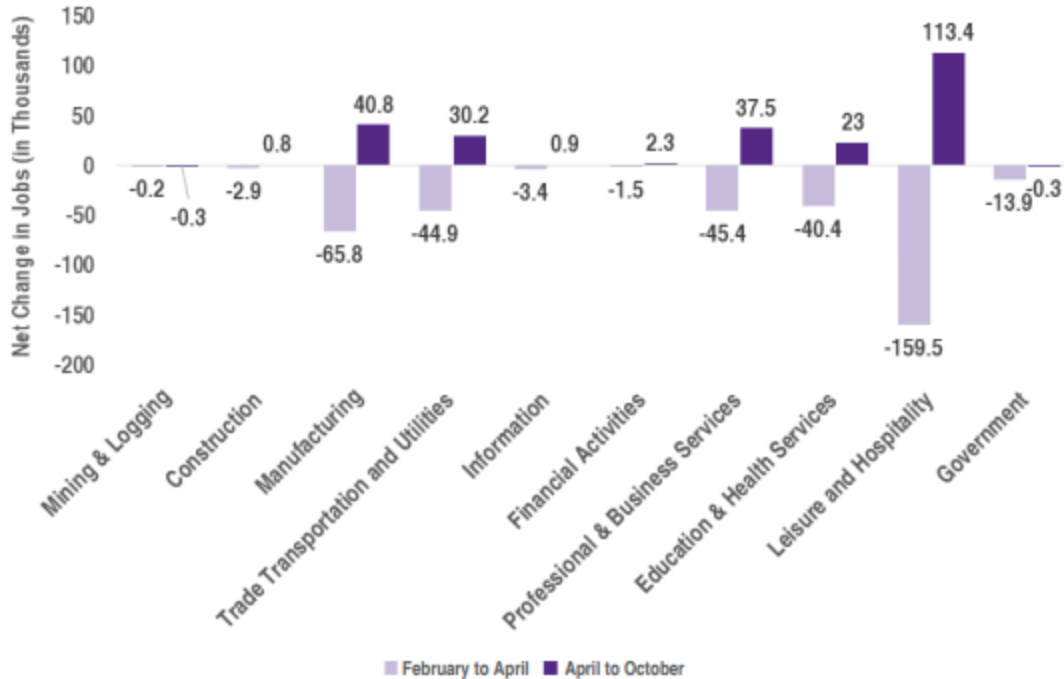
For a focus on growing and mature sectors, private, rather than public sector employment, and middle-skill jobs with self-sufficient wages, the Regional Planning Council (RPC) and partners have identified the top in-demand sectors, industries, and occupations, in order of priority based on current size and then growth of the sector in the region per the graph below from the Middle Tennessee Economy Growth 2020-2021 Reference Guide Figure 22:



Source: TDLWD, WIR²ED Division, Middle Region Long Term Projections 2018-2028, and TN Middle Region Occupational Employment and Wages Survey (OEWS) 2020

Tennessee’s employment sectors that are emerging after COVID align with Middle’s regional sector priorities to include manufacturing, transportation, education, and healthcare. See Figure 2.2 from *An Economic Report to the Governor of the State of Tennessee-Outlook 2021*.

Figure 2.2: Employment Gains in Most Tennessee Sectors Have Yet to Make up for the Spring Losses



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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.

Supplying workers ready to fill all levels of positions requires active engagement between the Regional Planning Council and regional industry. To better understand and meet needs of employers, Business Services Team members, across LWDAs and partner programs, are utilized to connect with area employers by participating in regional economic development groups. These include training providers, Chambers of Commerce, human resource managers, plant managers, and economic developers to determine high growth jobs and industries that are adding jobs to the local economy. The Business Service Teams and other AJC partner staff work with LWDA Board Staff to utilize labor market information to identify and meet employer needs, especially those identified as in-demand occupations. Information gathered through these connections are reported back to the Regional Planning Council at each quarterly meeting to provide responsive adjustments to industry needs. Areas of adjustments can be made through Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) additions or eliminations, Pathway’s development, and work-based learning initiatives to cultivate fulfillment of employer needs. The Title III, Wagner Peyser staff, consistently work to increase the lines of communication to business and industry through participation in local economic development and chamber of commerce events.

For new and emerging employers, skill gaps may be seen that new skills are going to be needed for new occupations. Established training programs may not be sufficient to meet the industry needs and may require new programs to be developed. Existing employers may also see a need for new upgraded skills requiring increased capacity for training. Expanding new training programs could include the development of registered apprenticeship programs where employers can “grow your own” talent pipeline. Apprenticeship programs are also beneficial for businesses who have a workforce near retirement and will have a shortage of new workers to fill those positions. Apprenticeship programs use the knowledge and skills of an already trained workforce at an employer to train new workers and the training program can be customized to fill the skill gaps for the employers. One example has been the establishment of a permanent “Grow Your Own” model, with the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System and Austin Peay State University’s Teacher Residency program becoming the first registered apprenticeship program for teaching in the country.

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).**

The Middle TN Region has an assorted labor pool including populations with significant barriers to employment (low income, lack of transportation or childcare, no high school diploma, justice involved, etc.). With those barriers to employment, supportive services must be contemplated. Supportive Service payments for WIOA enrolled participants are there to help to address those significant barriers by allowing individuals to participate in training and workforce activities to secure employment. Leveraging and braiding funds together with different regional partners and agencies also helps in this effort. The Region provides several types of Supportive Services including Transportation; Child Care/Dependent Care; Safety and Job-Related Equipment; Housing; Needs-Related Payments and more. These are primarily coordinated through regional policy alignment. They are coordinated through the One Stop Operators, AJCs, and Virtual AJC to participants.

Transportation in the Southern Middle and Upper Cumberland LWDAs consist of largely rural areas where urbanized transportation methods are not available. Many communities do not have access to bus or van routes and therefore rely on their own personal vehicles for transportation. Additionally, many individuals living in rural areas must drive long distances to participate in WIOA activities. This creates a financial barrier as the individual

must provide for gasoline and car maintenance. Local areas can address and help alleviate this barrier through supportive service payments towards transportation costs. For our many rural areas, one-way travel to a training institution can be over an hour drive. We partner with the local Human Resource Agencies and other community agencies to offer transportation services. Each of the local areas currently have transportation stipends available to eligible participants who attend occupational skills training programs through approved training providers. In contrast, the Northern Middle LWDA consists of primarily compact urban areas where participants accumulate less travel mileage. Additionally, public transportation is available through methods such as organized bus lines, commuter trains and taxis. Therefore, supportive service payments for transportation are generally lower in these urban areas as readily available options are more affordable. The key to regional coordination between these distinct LWDA transportation issues has been policy evaluation.

ACJ partners, include the Mature Worker program, coordinates services to older job seekers to locate and deliver low cost or free services including food resources, utility assistance, vision and hearing services and low cost internet.

The Regional Planning Council devotes substantial focus to policy alignment ensuring local area policies within the region promote consistency in service and do not create barriers between areas is important to regional alignment. Each of the three LWDA's supportive services policies were compared and contrasted against each other to assess transportation and all other types of supportive service payments. The Regional Planning Council was able to identify areas where the region was similar, some areas that were different yet equitable, and some that needed work to better align. Moving forward for the years 2022-2024, the region will focus on continuing to review these policy alignment efforts for best practices and to further strengthen our coordination of services between the regions.

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

Economic development agencies and workforce providers will forge ahead to be coordinated and strategized as a region through bringing all economic partners and stakeholders to the table. By including and requesting participation from all partners at quarterly Regional Planning Council meetings and Workforce Board meetings, continued growth plans are encouraged. Strategic planning for economic development will include our valued partners from Chambers of Commerce, TN Pathways, educational institutions, employer organizations, Business Services Teams, and local area economic development groups such as The Highlands Economic Partnership. The Regional Planning Council will

also explore collaboration of grant projects through economic development organizations such as the Appalachian Rural Commission.

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.

The Middle Tennessee Region is objectively represented by the Middle Tennessee Regional Planning Council (RPC) consisting of representatives from each LWDA Board staff, WIOA Core Partner programs, representatives from secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, economic development, and additional partner stakeholders. The Regional Planning Council meets regularly to gather partner feedback, analyze workforce data, and ensure consistent service and program improvement throughout the region. As part of this effort towards shared advancement, the RPC engages all representatives to contribute to the Regional Plan for upcoming program years. Plan development includes the collection and analysis of labor market information, establishment of regional service strategies, and development of a regional vision. The Middle Tennessee Regional Plan Modifications for Program Years 2022-2024 represents the concerted efforts of Northern Middle, Southern Middle, and Upper Cumberland to maximize our collaboration to achieve visions, goals, and key objectives of the Combined Tennessee State Plan. These plan modifications address the key elements to the success of workforce programs in the region collaboration and coordination of services and resources between each LWDA, our partners, and resources.

All three Middle Tennessee Workforce Boards are business led and demand driven. The Business Service Teams are led by the Business Service Coordinators that sit at the board level in partnership with the WIOA Core Partners and other American Job Center partners. This is each LWDA's employer engagement arm which consults with employers on their current needs, conducting on-site meetings to better acclimate with businesses, hosts in-person and virtual job fairs, provide information on up-skilling employees, presents Labor Market information and Data, and lay-off aversion strategies. Business engagement is led by the Business Services Team and coordinated through the One-Stop Operator. Believing our talent pool is regional by nature, the Regional Planning Council gives guidance to each One-Stop Operator within the region to ensure that duplication is minimized, and unity of effort is maximized. Business Services Teams work closely with local and regional economic development through Chamber events, Industrial Board, and economic group summits. Over the past two years, our Business Services Teams have participated in Economic Workforce 360 roundtable meetings coordinated with Economic Development to earn a better understanding of the needs of employers on a regional basis. Business Services Team job-fairs have been a proven method of engaging employers and will continue to be

grown, with a focus on regional job hiring events. Another successful method of engagement has been advertising employer job opportunities on AJC social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok. Our goal is to increase the awareness of employer needs throughout the region and our strategies to meet these goals and connect employers with highly trained and qualified job seekers can include, but not limited to:

- Having a consistent Menu of Services describing our available programs such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship support, job fairs including access to the Premier Virtual platform, job postings and recruitment of applicants, Coursera training classes, providing Labor Market data, a connection to targeted populations such as veterans, justice involved individuals, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Consistent branding so that job seekers and employers recognize our AJCs
- Developing qualified Business Service staff members to establish and maintain relationships with our employers and have knowledge of our AJC services and those of our agency partners
- Outreach promoting Jobs4TN, job fairs, AJC services, etc. to interested job seekers, but also businesses to utilize this method of advertising
- Having input from partners and Board members that our services are of value to them
- Partner engagement organized by the One-Stop Operators (OSOs) through partner meetings, quarterly training events, and functional team meetings

b. How will the region measure the effectiveness of the strategy for all stakeholders, including Key Performance Indicator (KPI) measures?

The Middle TN Region uses Jobs4TN to track the progress of most services within the American Job Center. Staff members enter service codes and data into Jobs4TN and that allows the region to track our progress for the negotiated federal performance measures. Employer penetration rate and repeat customers are the performance metrics that the regions are held accountable for with employers. When combined, these tools present a current picture of the workforce ecosystem across the region.

Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) data, which is the number of new enrollments into our core programs, is reviewed quarterly by the RPC for possible regional goals prior to the state negotiated targets being implemented. It is the responsibility of the region as a whole to monitor progress toward successful achievement of the KPI goals and hold each local area accountable for measures. The Data Sub-Committee presents quarterly to the RPC as a matter of transparency for all partners and to validate data. The KPI dashboard is used to measure the effectiveness of our strategies and our number of new participant enrollments. This is done in coordination with Board and State Staff under specific guidance from Executive Directors and Regional Directors. Each local Board monitors their

individual KPIs on a monthly and quarterly basis. Resources are adjusted through partners and contractors as needed based upon this monitoring. Areas of success will be acknowledged, areas of concern will be discussed, and advice on adjustments will be provided as needed. Current metric marks are shared at each Regional Planning Meeting and strategies for reform are discussed. In the event that a particular LWDA is lacking in an area of KPI attainment, our other LWDA's will provide best practices and program mentoring for improvement. Together we succeed.

The region also uses both job seeker and employer surveys to measure our system satisfaction. Opportunities for direct feedback, concerns or suggestions are taken back to the RPC for consideration. Best practices are shared and implemented to ensure high quality service to our customers and to ensure active engagement across the region. It is the long-term goal for the system experience to be seamless between local areas.

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?

The Middle TN Region will utilize our Business Committee of the Regional Planning Council along with our local Business Service Teams to establish and maintain strong partnerships with employers as part of our service delivery strategy. Employers have access to a multitude of available services such as On-the-Job Training, Work Based Learning opportunities, Jobs4TN, Incumbent Worker Training, Apprenticeship development and support, etc. Funding of these employer training programs allows a successful ROI.

The region also plans to use Coursera which has a large library of courses and provides opportunities to upskill workers at no cost to the employer. Employers will be able to customize their courses based upon their educational and training needs. We will also be focusing on layoff aversion strategies throughout the region with goals of advancement opportunities and job retention. Other regional strategies that we will continue or expand upon includes:

- Development of new regional job fairs
- More engagements with Community, Faith Based, and Re-Entry Organizations
- Establishing more apprenticeships that have a regional presence
- Using the Virtual AJC for participants that are not able to visit a brick and mortar location
- Create career pathways for our in-demand sectors for adult and youth populations
- Continue to utilize the Mobile AJCs for job service assistance for rural and distressed areas, job fair and hiring events, and applicant screening

- Have the three RPC sub-committees collaborate on regional initiatives to streamline services and breakdown barriers to ensure that we have a regional team approach

4. 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.

To ensure more consistent and efficient service delivery, providers and other partners collaborate regularly to provide technical assistance and share best practices. When customers cross regions, either by work or home address, it is the long-term goal for the system experience to be seamless between local areas. To ensure consistent levels of training opportunities across the local areas, quarterly reviews of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) providers are now performed and discussed at each Regional Planning Executive Council meeting. This is intended to closely align the training being received across the region and across providers. The local areas also streamline processes when assisting participants that are accessing services across multiple areas, so they do not experience the barriers of local workforce area lines. Other ideas include grant opportunities, regional planning and projects, employer trainings, and OSO training.

The Regional Planning Council has enhanced performance and reporting structures by incorporating the presentation of local area dashboards, performance scorecard, and KPI results on each quarterly meeting agenda. This has been beneficial in that it allows the partners to see each local area's wins, as well as struggles, towards goals and share best practices for improvements as a region.

Throughout the middle Tennessee region, the TANF program is the only program delivered by a single provider; thus, promoting consistency and shared resources across the 40 counties. TANF offers a 2GEN approach through individualize career and family empowerment plans with short and long term goals that lead to self-sufficiency.

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 Executive Committee and our sub-committees will continue to evaluate our local area policies and procedures to ensure that we have regional

coordination and performance. The local workforce board staff and chairs, along with the Chief Local Elected Officials will support regional performance and alignment through:

- Including the board chairs, local board members, local elected officials in regional planning and inviting and including them on regional performance and planning updates in the local area meetings
- Sharing regional best practices that promote efficiencies and consistency within each local area thus raising the bar for all
- Evaluating Key Performance Indicators on a regional basis
- Endorsing regional grant initiatives
- Reviewing regional and local plans for alignment to the state WIOA plan

5. 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?

Priority of service begins at the point of entry of all Middle Tennessee American Job Centers. The same priority of service is also provided via any web portal for those applying for services. It is the responsibility of the One-Stop Operator to ensure that all staff of the AJC are trained to assist those eligible for priority of service. All three LWDA's have Priority of Service Policies in place, as well as provider monitoring to ensure priority services are delivered to customers who qualify. Priority of service falls into two main areas: priority of service to veterans and priority of service for the WIOA Title I Adult program. All Middle Tennessee LWDA's have aligned their veteran programs under the Jobs for Veterans Act where employment and training programs are funded in whole or part by the Department of Labor. Additionally, our LWDA's have banners and signage up at the entrance of all comprehensive and affiliate centers notifying Veterans and eligible persons of priority of service. All provider staff and partners have received priority training. Providers have contractual measures in place to demand high quality customer service to those who take precedence. Our success with these measures is monitored through customer feedback surveys and follow-up monitoring.

The Middle TN Region supports adult basic education through WIOA Title II operators. Leveraging funding to support remediation, Adult Education often provides services to job seekers before they enter training and post-secondary education. Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs are created by Title II to bridge education and workforce gaps to support employers in the region.

We will continue to improve our outreach efforts to our community partners and by being active in events that focus on priority populations. The use of technology has widely

increased since the onset of the Covid pandemic and that plays a big role in being able to better reach priority populations for more opportunities. Our BST will also play a vital role in the outreaching efforts for the region. In order to increase training and employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals, there will be increased collaboration with education partners and employers. Business Solutions staff will drive efforts to connect employers to job seeking justice-involved individuals. Business solutions staff will work in tandem with VR Counselors to assist VR clients in obtaining employment. Regionally coordinated and focused efforts will continue to be the strategy to reach target populations and put them on a success path towards self-sufficiency.

The RPC along with our secondary, post-secondary, and industries will develop work based learning opportunities for our targeted populations through our Career Service Providers. We will utilize the already established pathways in partnership with our secondary and post-secondary institutions, technical educators, employers, and all workforce stakeholders to foster a Work Based Learning environment that aligns with our K-Job vision. Work Based Learning experiences will include internships, co-ops, On-the -Job Training, apprenticeships, and paid/unpaid work experiences.

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

1. Utilizing the State's key objectives, define the region's strategic vision to support local economic growth.

The Middle Tennessee Regional Planning Council continues to have a strategic vision to *increase the competitive position of businesses through the development of a highly skilled workforce that earns a competitive wage*. Effective engagement of all stakeholders including WIOA partners, community organizations, economic development partners, and educational institutions has been, and continues to be, key to the successful implementation of the region's vision.

Based upon a review of the Combined State Plan, data analyzation and input from local and regional stakeholders within business, education, workforce, and economic community groups, the Regional Planning Council sets the following strategies for developing economic growth within Program Years 2022-2024:

- (1) **Create an integrated intake system to efficiently deliver services**
 - Standardize utilization of VOS Greeter to measure intake of customers
 - Coordinate AJC Certification at all intake points

- Standardize Intake form that supports Jobs4TN.gov
 - Increase referrals and co-enrollment between programs to promote and leverage funding
 - Expand Virtual AJC offerings to increase access to AJC services
 - Expand assess points to simplify and encourage participation
 - Enhance utilization of AJC services for business and industry partners
- (2) **Create a shared vision for supporting Tennesseans with the greatest number of barriers to enter the workforce.**
- Provide professional development and training for AJC staff and partners to increase capacity and expertise in serving individuals with barriers
 - Increase the opportunity for individuals with barriers to enter the AJC system by increasing access points and virtual options
 - Target resources for rural and at-risk counties to provide opportunities for rural economic and workforce development
 - Expand opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth
 - Career exploration for in-demand industry pathways
 - Foster relationships with CTE Directors in each of our school districts
 - Support secondary and post-secondary GIVE grant funding opportunities
 - Create Youth Work Based Learning opportunities
 - Continue to support K – Job Pathways development
 - Expand opportunities for justice-involved individuals and other targeted populations
 - Coordinate adult education and post-secondary training in institutional facilities
 - Create regional re-entry task force to promote employment opportunities
 - Increase mental health and wrap-around support services for targeted populations
- (3) **Create a trained workforce to meet current Industry needs**
- Develop career opportunities within high-demand industry sectors
 - STEM development geared towards in-demand industry sectors
 - Create career pathways based upon employer's dynamic needs
 - Increase the regions support of in-demand, middle-skill career training opportunities and middle skill programs on the ETPL
 - Build upon the successes in apprenticeships and establish new ones for in-demand occupations
 - Utilize the services available through Business Solutions to support employer needs including:
 - Employer training for utilization of Jobs4TN system
 - Best practices for employing justice involved individuals
 - Co-enrollment and braiding of resources

- Use work experience, internships, and apprenticeships to address skill gaps
 - Use Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to upskill our workforce
 - Prepare economically disadvantaged residents for careers that provide a competitive wage
 - Maximize investments in our Distressed and At-Risk counties
 - Support the Labor Force Participation Rate task force established by Governor Lee
 - Continue to review each LWDA's Supportive Service Policy to ensure sufficient barriers are removed and ensure regional alignment across workforce borders
 - Provide "direct referrals" for individuals who are work ready
 - Expanding partnerships with community and economic development stakeholders
- (4) **Measure the effectiveness of the integrated workforce strategy**
- Enhance regional dashboard to measure performance of all partners
 - Create Return on Investment measures to determine effectiveness of operations
 - Develop key performance indicators to track numbers of individuals that obtain employment and placement wages on a real-time basis
 - Establish indicators to measure OSO effectiveness
- (5) **Create a simple and effective engagement experience for all candidates**
- Increase labor force participation rate in the region through serving priority populations and individuals with barriers
 - Increase outreach and training accessibility through apprenticeships, internships, and work experience
 - Increase the number of high school equivalency diplomas issued
 - Provide increased training opportunities and support for the justice involved population
 - Promote employer best practices in hiring the justice involved population
 - Identify and support youth in entering the labor force at the middle skill level
 - Increase veteran referrals, training and apprenticeship opportunities, and job recruiting opportunities
 - Ensure that individuals with disabilities have universal access throughout all AJC's and expand apprenticeship opportunities for our VR clients
 - Support TANF customers through Opportunity Grants which address the benefits cliff

The region's current employment landscape has been irreversibly affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. The Middle TN Regional Planning Council and our stakeholders will continue to work collaboratively to strengthen the economies of the region by delivering a workforce system that provides career growth opportunities for jobseekers and by ensuring a skilled

workforce is available to meet the needs of our employers.

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

- A Middle Tennessee Regional proposal supporting the TANF Pilot Opportunity Grant was recently submitted to the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The proposal covered territory in all three of Middle Tennessee's Workforce regions. While it was disappointing that the proposal was not selected for funding, it did provide the framework for regional collaboration in the future.
- Southern Middle and Upper Cumberland participated in an advanced manufacturing initiative created by the Northern Middle area to upskill/train industrial maintenance technicians in the repair and maintenance of Haas equipment.
- The Campbell Strong initiative has provided opportunities for both Upper Cumberland and Southern Middle employers to recruit veterans to their respective LWDAs.
- In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Middle TN Region requested, and was awarded, CARES act funding for the development and distribution of a Wage & Benefits survey through the Middle Tennessee Industrial Association.
- The Regional Planning Executive Committee which consists of Regional and Executive Directors from each of the Middle TN LWDAs meet quarterly for the purposes of planning, aligning, and executing regional strategies; establishing meeting dates, times and locations; reviewing and aligning service policies and strategies; as well as future opportunities for collaboration.
- The region successfully established the Direct Support Professional apprenticeship in partnership with United Healthcare and QUILTSS resulting in more than 30 apprentices completing the program to date.

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?

- The Middle Tennessee Regional Planning Council is actively researching options for funding an apprenticeship program for AJC Career Coaches. The region has experienced significant turnover at the career service provider level which has caused an erosion of workforce development knowledge. The RPC would like to develop a program that would increase capacity and consistency through-out the Middle Tennessee region. The funding request

would allow each local board to pay for related-technical-instruction (RTI) for a cross section of partners to participate in the apprenticeship program

- Northern Middle and Upper Cumberland have requested funding to provide Industrial Readiness training through Nashville State Community College for the justice involved
- Northern Middle, Southern Middle, and Upper Cumberland each committed a portion of their Justice Involved grant funding opportunity to training on Second Chance employment through the Dave's Killer Bread Foundation (DKBF). This training has also been completed by the State of TN Human Resource Agency
- Once the training with DKBF is completed, the region will host a job fair specifically intended for those employers who are interested in hiring the justice involved

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

- All three LWDAs applied for a Good Jobs Challenge Grant to provide additional funding to leverage workforce development in the region.
- The three LWDAs are collectively pursuing funding for the new TN Department of Education Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship to address the statewide teacher shortage
- The Middle Region is actively seeking funding for financial literacy training through a third-party vendor as part of their effort to move participants out of the poverty cycle
- Upper Cumberland and Northern Middle are collaborating with the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency to support a successful TANF Opportunity proposal. If awarded, the grant will address barriers for those at or below the poverty level including the benefit's cliff that individuals experience in low skill/low wage jobs



2022 REGIONAL PLAN MODIFICATION REVIEW

Middle Region (Upper Cumberland, Southern Middle, Northern Middle)	
2022 Plan Modification Recommendation	Approval

The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Division of Workforce Services, has completed the review of the Middle Regional Plan Modification submitted during the 2022 Regional Plan Modification Process. The 2022 Regional Plan Modification Process required the Regional Planning Committee to respond to questions and update the 2020 Regional Plan regarding regional labor market and economic conditions, regional approaches to service delivery and employer engagement strategies, workforce partners’ collaborative efforts, and innovative regional practices.

Based on this review, the 2022 Middle Regional Plan has **satisfied** the minimum compliance criteria outlined in the 2022 Regional and Local Plan Modification Guidance, released January 31, 2022. The Division of Workforce Services **recommends approval** of the Regional Plan Modification by the State Workforce Development Board.

The Division of Workforce Services commends the following strategies identified in the 2022 Regional Plan Modification.

REGIONAL COMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified opportunities to streamline policies across local areas, including a review of LWDB Supportive Services Policies with the intent to create a consistent regional policy that aligns needs to rural, urban, and suburban situations (transportation, childcare, other varying payments) • Highlighted multiple examples of aligned training opportunities, including industry specific training available to employers and individuals across local area boundaries which can then be further customized to meet local needs • Detailed regional employer and business engagement strategies, including regional outreach through local social media outlets to promote employment opportunities across the region • Developed list of common services which are distributed to business and employer partners to increase awareness of the benefits of the workforce system, and also developed a customer feedback and satisfaction survey processes to evaluate effectiveness of these services

The Division of Workforce Services observed the following which may require additional information and/or technical assistance to ensure compliance during implementation of the 2022 Regional Plan Modification.

REGIONAL OBSERVATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information will be requested and/or technical assistance may be necessary to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ detail outcomes and goals to determine what success looks like for regional employer engagement strategies ○ ensure consistent communication across core WIOA and additional workforce partners in the region to clearly inform partners of initiatives ○ identify strategies and resources to measure the health of the region, including return on regional investments, meeting emerging workforce needs, and creating programming and strategies to reach vulnerable populations across the region