



# NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2018-  
2019

Helping Employers and Job Seekers Navigate  
the World of Workforce

# WHO IS THE NORTHWEST TN WORKFORCE BOARD?

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board (NWTNWB), designated by local elected officials, is charged with administering workforce development services in nine counties in Northwest Tennessee: Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley. Jennifer Bane serves as the Executive Director for the NWTNWB. The NWTNWB is established in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).

The purpose of the NWTNWB is to provide policy guidance and exercise oversight with respect to activities under the WIOA in partnership with the units of local government for the local area. The NWTNWB supports WIOA activities that develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers. The majority of the members of the NWTNWB are private business leaders from throughout the nine county service region and include business owners, chief executives, operating officers, and other executives with optimum policymaking and hiring authority. Representatives from Labor Organizations, Education & Training, Government, Economic & Community Development, and other community organizations also serve on the board. The NWTNWB, with the agreement of the chief elected officials for the local area, designate a one-stop operator and provider(s) of Career, Business, and Youth services for the local One-Stop Delivery System, operated through the American Job Centers (AJCs), where job seekers and employers connect.

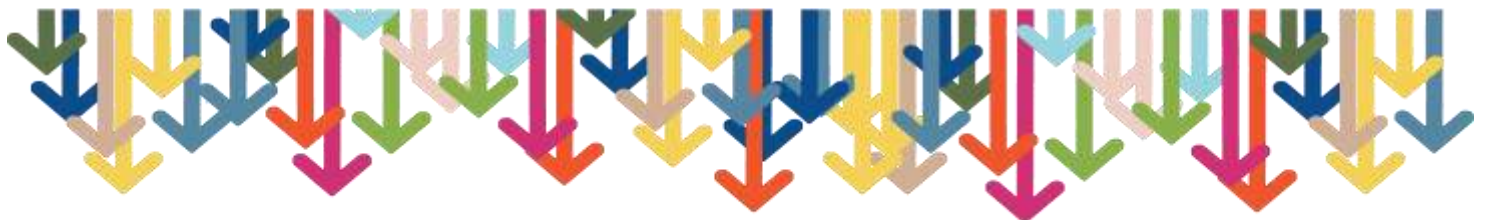


## OUR MISSION

*The mission of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers.*

## OUR VISION

*Northwest Tennessee is an area where business and industry thrive based on the availability of a skilled workforce and a robust talent pipeline, and where increasing wealth fuels prosperous communities and a high quality of life.*



# 2018-2019 RECAP

**30,733 INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN JOB CENTER SEEKER VISITS**

**42,491 AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES PROVIDED**

**2,972 TITLE I ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, YOUTH VISITS**

**1,247 ADULT EDUCATION / HISET CUSTOMER VISITS**

**18,587 JOB SEARCH CUSTOMER VISITS**

**11,486 UNEMPLOYMENT CUSTOMER VISITS**

**190 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CUSTOMER VISITS**

**2,197 TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES VISITS**

**5,000+ SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS**

**1,010 EMPLOYERS SERVED**

**3,855 EMPLOYER SERVICES PROVIDED**

**234 JOB FAIRS/HIRING EVENTS & RECRUITMENT SERVICES**

**1,233 CUSTOMERS ATTENDED JOB FAIRS/HIRING EVENTS**

**570 INCUMBENT WORKERS TRAINED WITH 23 EMPLOYERS**

**115 PLACED IN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING POSITIONS WITH 17 EMPLOYERS**

**3 RE-ENTRY ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PROGRAMS**

**106 RAMP PARTICIPANTS TO DATE**

**1,100+ STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN MANUFACTURING DAYS**



# NORTHWEST TN WORKFORCE BOARD

## LOCAL CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Gary Reasons, Chair - Crockett  
Mayor Brett Lashlee, Benton  
Mayor Joseph Butler, Carroll

Mayor Chris Young, Dyer  
Mayor Tom Witherspoon, Gibson  
Mayor Brent Greer, Henry

Mayor Denny Johnson, Lake  
Mayor Benny McGuire, Obion  
Mayor Jake Bynum, Weakley

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD MEMBERS

The Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB), appointed by the county mayors and certified by the Governor, includes representatives of private business/industry, education, economic development, labor, and community based organizations. The NWTNWB provides policy and oversight for all workforce development activities in the 9 county region, including the American Job Centers.

Neely Ashby - Henry	Lana Hammons - Dyer
Kristie Bennett - Regional	Kristy Mercer - Gibson
John Bucy - Regional	Charlie Moore - Crockett
Karla Carpenter - Regional	David Parrish - Regional
Doug Clark - Weakley	John Penn Ridgeway - Carroll
Keith Cursey - Weakley	Stewart Stanfill - Regional
Jon Dougherty - Dyer	Jennifer Starks - Henry
Bedford Dunavant - Obion	Cliff Sturdivant - Carroll
Lindsay Frilling - Obion	Gayanne Williams - Lake
Landy Fuqua - Weakley	Sandra Woods - Gibson

**Board Officers:**  
Jimmy Williamson, Chair - Dyer  
Ted Piazza, Vice-Chair - Gibson  
Brad Hurley, Secretary - Carroll

**American Job Center Committee:**  
Rita Alexander, Chair - Gibson  
John Killen, Vice-Chair - Carroll

**Outreach & Opportunities Committee**  
Ben Marks, Chair - Benton  
Glad Castellaw, Vice-Chair - Crockett

**Non-Board Member**  
**Committee Members:**  
Karen Bowyer  
Tim Climer  
Justin Crice  
Mark Chandler  
Sherry Fowler  
Melinda Goode  
Ronnie Gunnels  
Janna Hellums  
Alvin Smothers  
Blake Swaggart

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD STAFF

### Northwest TN Workforce Board Administrative Office

Jennifer Bane, Executive Director  
208 N. Mill  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 286-3585

Lana Burchfiel, Public Information Specialist  
Theresa Ethridge, Business Services Representative  
Maleia Evans, Business Services Representative  
Gina Johnson, Assistant Director of Finance & Administrative Services  
LeAnn Lundberg, Director of Facilities & Computer Services

Margaret Prater-Senior Executive Advisor  
Derrick Quinn, Compliance Officer  
Laura Speer, Director of Performance & Compliance/EO Officer  
Terry Williams, Finance Coordinator  
Lana Wood, Business Services Representative

## JON DOUGHERTY NAMED BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Jon Dougherty, License Manager/Education Director for Amteck, headquartered in Lexington, KY, was named the 2018-19 Board Member of the Year. Nominated and elected by the staff to the Board, Dougherty was recognized for not only his dedication and input on the Board, but also his passion for developing the future workforce. As Apprenticeship Representative on the Board, Dougherty has coordinated with staff and the local Amteck located in Dyersburg, TN, to design and implement the Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP) program. Dedicating hours of time and travel expense to visit 8 high schools to “showcase” apprenticeships, and giving up a weekend to conduct the “Shock & Awe!” event, resulted in young men and women having an opportunity to participate in the two-week pre-apprenticeship program.



“Jon is so easy to work with and is totally committed to helping young people explore a career as an Electrician,” said Margaret Prater, NWTN Workforce Board Senior Executive Advisor. “He encourages the young people, but never ‘sugar coats’ the reality of being an electrician. Jon provides great insight as a Board Member since he experiences the challenges of being an employer and training provider every day.”



# PERFORMANCE & FISCAL

Performance Report for 2018-2019		WIOA Performance Metrics	PY 2018 Goal	PY 2018 Actual
Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit		85%	93%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit		84%	91.3%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit		\$6,483	\$6,791
	Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after exit		58%	87.2%
Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit		83%	88.3%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit		783	92.8%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit		\$6,800	\$7,853
	Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit		68.5%	83%
Youth	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit		79%	94.5%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit		75%	92.70%
	Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit		70%	79.9%

Fiscal Report for 2018-2019	PY 2018 Funding Available	Current Year Expenditures	Percent Expended	De-obligated Funds	Carryover July 1, 2019
Administration	\$ 815,928.41	\$ 523,540.95	64%	\$ 95,558.04	\$ 196,829.42
Adult Formula	\$ 1,689,614.29	\$ 1,437,422.13	40%	\$ 85,829.07	\$ 166,363.09
Dislocated Worker Formula	\$ 1,861,009.62	\$ 1,037,274.38	24%	\$ 462,964.22	\$ 360,771.02
Youth Formula	\$ 2,606,381.33	\$ 1,473,624.65	37%	\$ 348,429.04	\$ 784,327.64
Consolidated Business Grant	\$ 527,778.00	\$ 322,459.67	61%	\$ -	\$ 205,318.33
Rapid Response	\$ 680,855.53	\$ 475,000.00	70%	\$ 205,855.53	\$ -
RESEA	\$ 132,600.00	\$ 80,185.83	60%	\$ 11,517.87	\$ 40,896.30
RAMP	\$ 143,060.00	\$ 143,060.00	100%	\$ -	\$ -
REAP	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 34,798.92	72%	\$ 13,201.08	\$ -
Transitional Funding	\$ 693,000.00	\$ 644,621.88	93%	\$ 48,378.12	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ALL GRANTS</b>	<b>\$ 9,198,227.18</b>	<b>\$ 6,171,988.41</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>\$ 1,271,732.97</b>	<b>\$ 1,754,505.80</b>

\* \$1,061,963.12 of the \$1,271,732.97 deobligated funds was reissued back as part of the realignment of the local areas. Of the \$209,769.85 not reissued, \$131,161.04 was lost in formula funding as a result of the realignment. The remaining funds were RESEA, REAP, and transitional funding.

Participant Funding	Minimum Requirement	Actual
Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR)	40%	48.5%
Youth Work Experience	20%	41.52%
Youth Out-of-School	75%	98.75%

Local Area exceeds all performance and participant funding requirements.



# AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

## Network of Partners Makes American Job Centers a One-Stop Shop

The American Job Center (AJC) system is built upon a foundation of partners linked together to deliver a comprehensive array of services and reach the shared outcomes of employment, education, skills gains, and earnings. All partners are invested in the development and implementation of service delivery to connect customers to resources. "Each partner provides a valuable service and all are connected to reach the desired outcome for the customer," --says Erica Nance with Odle Management, One-Stop Operator.



One-Stop Operator Odle Management	WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth <i>Dyersburg State Community College</i>	WIOA Title II Adult Education <i>Henderson County Schools</i>	WIOA Title III Wagner Peyser <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</i>	WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation <i>TN Dept. of Human Services</i>	WIOA Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program <i>NWTHRA: NWTN Community Services Agency</i>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families <i>Workforce Essentials</i>	Veterans Services <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</i>
	Trade Adjustment Assistance <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</i>	Career & Technical Education <i>Dyersburg State Community College TN Colleges of Applied Technology</i>	Community Services Block Grant <i>NWTEC Economic Dev. Council</i>	Unemployment Insurance <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</i>	Migrant Farmworker Program <i>TN Opportunity Program</i>	SNAP E&T <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</i>	RESEA <i>TN Dept. of Labor &amp; Workforce Development: Dyersburg State Community College</i>

## Single Mom Overcomes Barriers with Assistance from Many Partners



Stephanie Farmer, 31, came to the Families First (FF) program with a desire to return to school and improve her life for her and her two young sons. Stephanie knew that she wanted to enter the healthcare field, and Workforce Essentials (WFE) and Family Focused Solutions (FFS), helped her realize her desire of earning an LPN certificate.

Stephanie got put on the waiting list for the TCAT Paris LPN class to start in January but unfortunately there wasn't an open spot for her. Not to be discouraged, she quickly found a neighboring county that offered the LPN class beginning in May, completing all the necessary paperwork to get financial assistance through WIOA. Unfortunately, Stephanie did not get the letter until the day of a rescheduled, earlier orientation. She called the school and communicated what happened, offering to attend a different orientation or wait for another LPN class if necessary. Impressed with Stephanie's honesty and her ability to stay calm in a stressful situation, the school allowed her to make up the orientation.

Stephanie faced many difficulties and barriers after starting LPN classes, including childcare and transportation issues, as well as the death of a close friend. Stephanie never gave up, and her Career Coach referred her to Family Focused Solutions (FFS) to work on her barriers. After graduation, Stephanie passed her licensing exam the first time, and immediately began looking for jobs. She was hired as an LPN working on the floor of a health and rehabilitation center.

Stephanie was always compliant with WFE and FFS while on FF. She attended all her appointments and followed through with all of her activities as assigned. Stephanie has currently been accepted into Jackson State Community College where she will complete the pre-requisites that she needs to be accepted into a LPN-RN bridge program. She will start taking these pre-requisite classes in August 2019 and hopes to have them completed and be accepted into the LPN-RN bridge program by December 2020. She is excited to work full-time and complete her education and career goals. Stephanie looks forward to being able to provide a stable home for her children through her hard work. Stephanie credits SNAP, FF, WFE, WIOA & FFS with offering her opportunities for assistance, education, and motivation to set and reach her education and career goals. Stephanie knew what she wanted to do with her life and through the assistance she got from the State of Tennessee and WIOA, she was able to make those goals a reality.

## July 2018-June 2019 American Job Center Traffic Count

2018-2019	Camden	Alamo	Humboldt	Paris	Tiptonville	Union City	Dresden	Affiliate Subtotal	Dyersburg	Huntingdon	Comprehensive Subtotal	Total AJC
July 18	176	95	389	489	62	442	609	2262	470	433	903	3165
Aug 18	182	109	378	441	70	433	324	1937	728	376	1104	3041
Sep 18	158	69	259	340	30	268	189	1313	538	301	839	2152
Oct 18	127	88	323	399	47	128	354	1466	612	454	1066	2532
* There were over 42,000 visits to the 9 AJCs by nearly 31,000 individuals.	105	68	226	298	37	170	263	1167	484	439	923	2090
Nov 18	121	110	239	302	50	155	245	1222	659	441	1100	2322
Dec 18	178	163	383	478	62	690	329	2283	648	693	1341	3624
Jan 19	119	83	259	277	49	183	202	1172	520	479	999	2171
Feb 19	93	59	256	297	36	55	142	938	510	418	928	1866
Mar 19	119	64	346	311	50	44	242	1176	795	372	1167	2343
Apr 19	105	56	400	319	61	242	340	1523	938	365	1303	2826
May 19	116	64	295	301	41	539	287	1643	582	376	958	2601
Jun 19	1599	1028	3753	4252	595	3349	3526	18102	7484	5147	12631	30733
Subtotal	133	86	313	354	50	279	294	1509	624	429	1053	2561
Mo. Avg	5.2%	3.3%	12.2%	13.8%	1.9%	10.9%	11.5%	58.9%	24.4%	16.7%	41.1%	100.0%
% Avg												

Source: Affiliates VOS Greeter

# AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

## Reaching Individuals Most in Need

Under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), the workforce system is emphasizing serving those who are most in need. WIOA Title I services for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth, are prioritized for veterans, low income, basic skills deficient, and other individuals with barriers to employment. The Outreach & Opportunities committee of the NWTNWB provides guidance for reaching and serving such populations. Social media accounts are also used to connect with customers and other agencies and inform them of the services available through the AJC. The Mobile AJCs are also available for outreach and services throughout rural areas.

## Mobile American Job Center Staff Enhance Skills



Mobile American Job Center staff Johnny Polk and Karen Davison have recently gone above and beyond their job duties by completing training and adding additional certifications to serve the individuals of West Tennessee. Johnny and Karen took it upon themselves to attend a certification training class in the use of both intranasal and intramuscular naloxone use. At completion of training, they were also provided an overdose reversal kit to keep on the Mobile AJC.

Additionally, in March 2019, Johnny also completed the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals' eligibility standards for Peer Support to individuals with Substance Use Disorders, and is now recognized as a National Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist. In the words of Dayton "Benny" Roberts, Team Lead at the American Job Center-Huntingdon, "Johnny has spent a lot of hours in training and classroom education to receive this certification. This will be a huge asset to the outreach of the Mobile AJC into new targeted areas such as re-entry and individuals with SBEs [Significant Barriers to Employment]."

## Customers Receiving Title 1 Funding July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

County	Adults	Dislocated Worker	Youth	TOTAL Served	OJT Only	IWT Only	Youth WE Only	All Other Services
Benton	30	6	15	51	1	0	6	44
Carroll	48	9	17	74	0	8	4	62
Crockett	22	6	7	35	0	3	4	28
Dyer	365	31	71	467	43	186	14	224
Gibson	180	20	34	234	14	33	1	186
Henry	242	10	21	273	42	150	0	81
Lake	22	2	21	45	1	7	5	32
Obion	197	10	29	236	4	85	11	136
Weakley	89	12	9	110	7	0	2	101
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>1525</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>894</b>

Target Group PY18	Total Enrolled	New Enrolled	Services to Employers	PY18
Underemployed	110	32	Provided Job Fair Services	109
Single Parent	53	12	Provided Job Order Follow-ups/ Assistance	150
SNAP	77	24	Promotional Calls	157
Low Income	255	78	Reviewed Resumes and Referred Eligible Individuals	2,406
Veterans	9	3	Workforce Information for Employers	53
Individual w/Disability	12	5	Referred Qualified Applicants	581
Underemployed Claimants/ Exhaustees	12	0	Notification to Employer of Potential Applicants	36
Long-Term Unemployed	63	26	Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Certifications	15
Offender	54	29	Training	111
Pregnant/Parenting Youth	31	8	Recruitment Services/Candidate Pre-Screening	170
Foster Care (incl. aged out)	4	0	Layoff-Rapid Response Services	26
Living High Poverty Area	3	0	Labor Market Study/Strategic Planning	20
Other Public Assistance (TANF, SSDI, SSI)	17	4	Services to Untapped Targeted Demographic Groups	21
English Language Learners/ Basic Skills Deficient	6	0		

## PY 18 Top 10 Reasons for AJC Visits

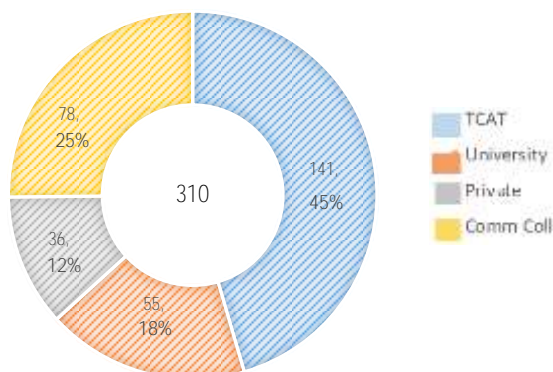
1. Job Search/Resource Room; Resume Assistance (19,264)
2. Unemployment (11,486)
3. Career Coaching (5,503)
4. RESEA (1,462)
5. Job Fairs/Hiring Events (1,233)
6. Adult Education (1,120)
7. Resume Assistance (645)
8. Assessments (586)
9. Networking Events/ Third Party Interviews (406)
10. Employer Check-In (300)

# POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Often times when a job seeker cannot find employment it is because they do not possess the skills to qualify for technical jobs. American Job Center partners can provide scholarships to eligible participants to attend training of their choice. This past year, 310 participants received scholarships totaling over \$751,500 to attend 19 different institutions. Of the 310 participants, 45% chose to attend TN Colleges of Applied Technology, 25% community colleges, 18% universities, and 12% private certification institutions for occupations such as Truck Driving, Lineman and Certified Nursing Assistant.

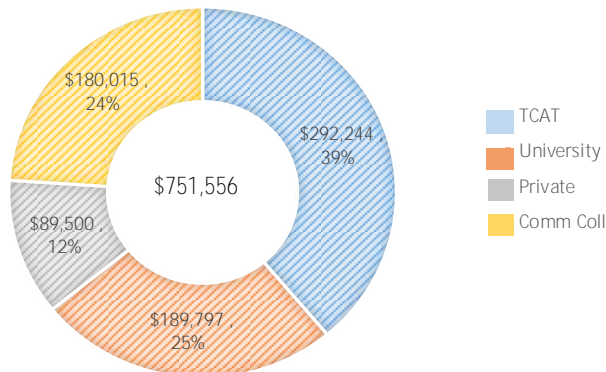
Participant By Training Provider Type Served

2018-2019



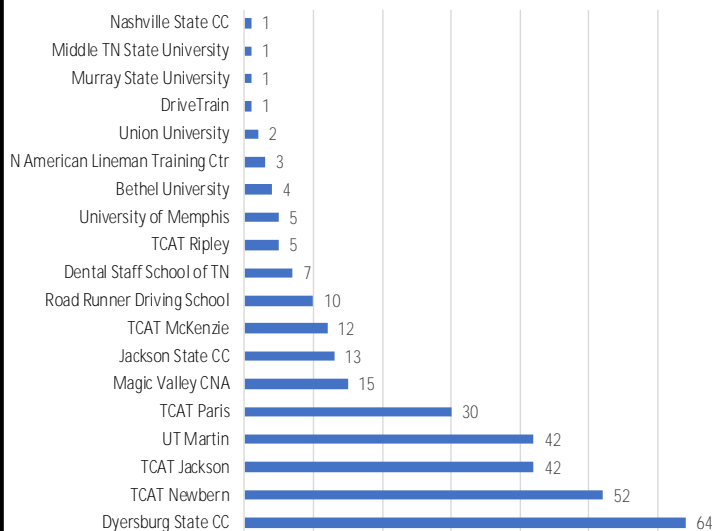
Investment By Training Provider Type Served

2018-2019

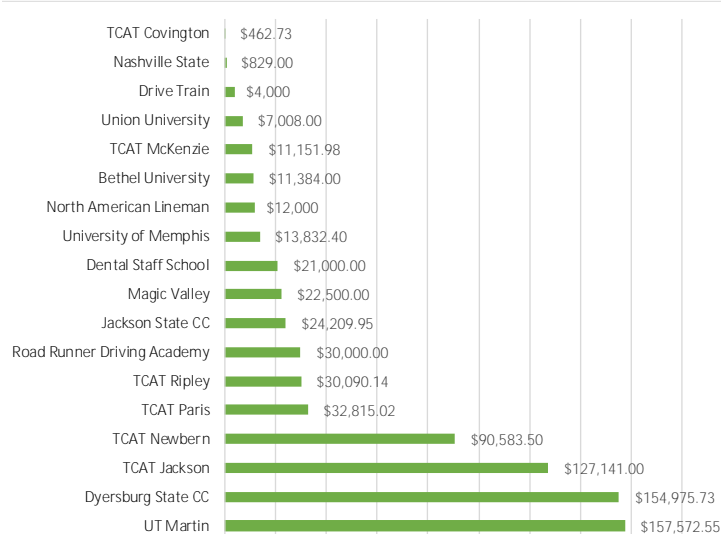


## Training Providers 2018-2019

Providers by Participant



Providers by Investment



## Transportation Assistance to Attend Postsecondary 2018-2019



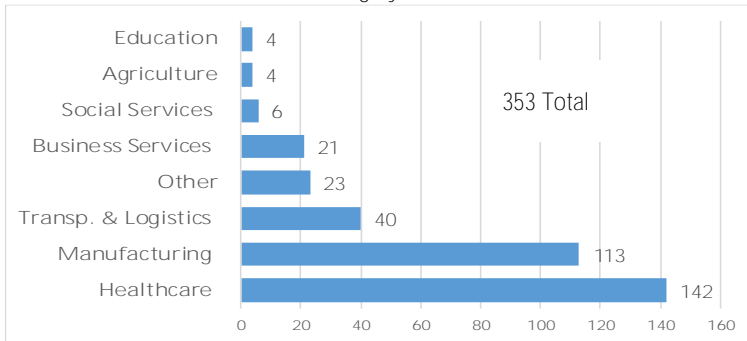
Over 350 students used gas cards to help them attend school the past year, with a total of \$134,343.21 awarded. Most students attending postsecondary are eligible to receive a gas card. The Career Advisor determines the mileage they will travel daily and establishes the amount they are eligible to receive on their gas card. The program requires a monthly verification of attendance before loading the card.

"Serving the most in need requires us to be flexible in the services we offer. Many students receive tuition assistance through programs such as TN Reconnect and TN Promise, which allows our funding to be utilized for transportation assistance and other supportive services," says Jennifer Bane, Executive Director.



# POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Classroom Training by Sector 2018-2019



Healthcare was once again the number one sector for new occupational skills training enrollments, making up about 40% of all customers trained. Registered nursing, licensed practical nurse, certified nursing assistant and EMT Paramedic are some of the occupations trained for.

Manufacturing nearly doubled since last year, going from 18% to 32% this year. Transportation was 11%, followed by Other, Business Services, Social Services, Agriculture, and Education, which together totaled the remaining 17%.



Jill Castellaw contacted the American Job Center-Alamo in Fall 2017 looking for help completing her bachelor's degree in Education. Jill's previous employment at Alamo Church of Christ Daycare helped her realize her desire of wanting to work and mentor children. Jill knew that teaching would be the career she would love. The Career Advisor assessed Jill's needs and was able to provide Jill WIOA financial assistance and support needed to attend the University of Memphis.

"Jill has been an outstanding student with excellent attendance and grades, earning a 3.96 grade point average," states Career Advisor, Wilma Capps. Jill has been student teaching at Bells Elementary School, and has recently been offered a full-time job at Pope Elementary School in Jackson, TN, starting Fall 2019. Jill says she couldn't have achieved what she did without the WIOA, and she wants everyone to know about WIOA and what a blessing it was to her.



Jearom Obas wanted to follow in his father's footsteps as a truck driver, but needed assistance to attend training. He came to the American Job Center-Camden unemployed, ready to enter the workforce and obtain full-time employment. Jearom participated in the WIOA approved training program, and receiving a training voucher and travel assistance. After enrolling in the Truck Driving/CDL training with Drive Train in Jackson in November 2018, he completed later that month at the top of his class and received his CDL, excited to be entering employment with a skill.

Jearom is now employed full-time and able to support himself. Jearom was hired by Roadliner/Union Transportation out of Bakersfield, California, earning \$27.00 an hour, with the possibility of co-driving with his father in the future. He says he is very grateful for the opportunity and to WIOA for the assistance and encouragement.



Paxton Stover, a student at Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC), wanted to get ahead of the game with valuable on-the-job experience before heading to the University of Tennessee at Martin. The American Job Center-Dyersburg was able to place Paxton in a Work Experience position in the Business Office at DSCC. Connie Stewart, Executive Director for Career Service Provider, Dyersburg State Community College, says that Paxton has been an excellent worker, and she is happy that the American Job Center was able to help Paxton with hands on experience before he continues his studies at UTM to pursue a degree in business management.



# YOUTH SERVICES



## Carroll County

24 Students from McKenzie High School & Huntingdon High Schools toured Granges in 2 separate tours. Students got a real feel for the job, as they were required to wear hard hats and steel-toed shoes.



## Dyer County

Over 400 students from Dyersburg and Dyer County High Schools experienced manufacturing days and events. Around 120 students from Dyersburg High School toured Ermco and Dot Foods, then the following day heard from 5 speakers from Nordyne, Caterpillar, Develley, Hexpol and Dot Foods about decisions that lead them to their current positions in Advanced Manufacturing. Each speaker explained about types of equipment in their facilities, job opportunities, opportunities for travel, benefits for insurance and retirement plans. Approx 300 students from Dyer County High School listened to a panel discussion with representatives from Nucor and Dot Foods. Presenters used a tape measure to illustrate a person's lifetime, the inches representing the person's age, and stressed the importance of planning for the future.



## Gibson County

120 Students from 6 high schools in Gibson County toured Chicago Metallic, Dana Corporation, and Ceco Door. They also attended a session at the Humboldt Higher Education Center with Jackson State Community College and Tyson Foods. Dr. Andre Temple of the UT Center for Industrial Services donated a Manufacturing Day themed t-shirt for each student and the manufacturers provided lunch for the schools each day.



## Henry County

Around 300 Henry County High School 300 students toured Dana, Euro, PML and TCAT, along with having a motivational speaker as a session at the high school. This opportunity to experience "real hands on getting a look at the equipment used to produce everyday conveniences of life we use" was very educational for students. Many experienced wearing safety equipment for the first time. Students were introduced to the vast opportunities of careers in advanced manufacturing, including CNC operators, engineers, safety professionals, along with accounting and management positions.





# YOUTH SERVICES

## Lake County

Approximately 100 students from Lake County High School listened to speakers Keith Knighten and Tiffany Cathey from Tyson Union City. The Union City location is expanding, and plans to hire over 600 new employees next year.



## Obion County

A total of 50 students from Obion Central High School, South Fulton Middle High School toured Greenfield Products, ICI Scientific, and CenterPoint. Lindsey Frilling CEO of the Obion County Joint Economic Council, explained what how Obion County recruits new industry to the area. She also explained how the employees' wages impact on the county. Amy Watts demonstrated interviewing skills, good work ethic, and soft skills employers sought in prospective employees. Students were impressed to see how transferable the advanced manufacturing skills were for each industry.

• A total 20 students from Obion County Central Welding Class and Union City Carpentry wood working class toured Greenfield Products. Students were given some insight for working straight out of high school verses going to a technical college for a trade.



## Crockett

Crockett County High School Seniors and Juniors were treated to a field trip experience by Jackson State Community College, this year, with an opportunity to tour Pacific in Jackson, TN, as their official Manufacturing Day event for 2018. Plans are underway for 2019 events to expose students to careers opportunities available within manufacturing facilities located in Crockett County.



## Weakley

A total of 45 students from Dresden High School, Gleason High, Westview High, and Greenfield High, along with their CTE instructors, Mr. Marvin Flatt of Weakley County Schools and Janna Hellums of TN ECD, toured MTD. In between sessions, MTD leadership gave presentations on various careers in manufacturing which are available within MTD's operations.



## MANUFACTURING DAYS 2018 AT A GLANCE

21 Employers	1,100 Students
9 Partners	20 High Schools

# YOUTH SERVICES

## #WORKLIFE

## WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Name of Job Site	Sector/Industry
American Job Center- Crockett	Government
American Job Center- Dyer	Government
American Job Center- Lake	Government
American Job Center- Obion	Government
Alamo Tire	Automotive
Amteck	Construction
Baptist Memorial Hospital	Healthcare
Amteck	Manufacturing
Benton County Farmers Co-Op	Agriculture
Big Sandy Christian Community Outreach	Community Service
Bill King Auto Repair	Automotive
Carroll County Farmers Co-Op	Agriculture
Bill King Auto Repair	Automotive
Carroll County Library	Community Service
Champion Roofing and Construction	Construction
City of Dyersburg	Government
Colonial Rubber	Manufacturing
Crockett County Times	Business
Develey	Manufacturing
DSCC EMS	Healthcare / Business
DSCC Trenton	Business
Dyer County Sheriff Dept.	Government
Family Eye Care	Healthcare
Food Rite	Retail
Helping Hands	Community Service
Jordan's Grab and Go	Retail
Little Lambs	Child Care
Mclver Grant Library	Community Service
Northdown Industries	Manufacturing
NWTN Economic Development	Government
Northwest TN Workforce Board	Business
Obion County Library	Community Service
Precious Moments	Childcare
Pumpkin Patch	Childcare
Signature Healthcare	Healthcare
TCAT McKenzie	Business
TN Homeless Solutions	Community Service
Trudy's Café	Food / Community Service
Union City Housing Authority	Government
Weakley County Schools	Education / Government
Total Participants: 57	Total Wages Paid: \$141,326.45

The Work Experience Program through the American Job Center offers short term work opportunities for eligible young adults (18-24 years of age & out of school) with little or no work experience.

Employer partners serve as mentors by training youth on proper work procedures and developing positive work habits.

Goals:

- ▶ Provide work experience at safe, well-supervised job sites
- ▶ Develop positive work habits and employment related skills, such as: self-confidence; ability to work as a team; improved communication with employers, co-workers, and customers; time management; problem solving skills; ability to accept and learn from criticism; adaptability; and a positive work ethic
- ▶ Enhance opportunities for long-term employment and self-sufficiency
- ▶ Increase understanding of higher education and career options available



Megan Gallivan & Shane Smith both participate in the WIOA Youth Work Experience program with Big Sandy Community Outreach Center. The goal of the center is to meet the needs of the community, building relationships, strengthening and equipping people to lead productive lives.

Megan and Shane both help with daily activities and provide meals to

the community. Megan and Shane also work with the youth of the community through activities at the center and their after school program. Their employer states they are an asset to their program and the individuals they serve.



**Ayisha Hockett's** first interaction with the youth work experience was through Connie Stewart, Executive Director, who attended a meeting at Lake County High School before graduation. Impressed by the program, Ayisha came to speak with Marcia Fields, Career Service Coordinator, at the American Job Center. She

had been working for a little over a year at the local food market in Tiptonville, but knew this was not going to give her the foundation for her future she desired.

Marcia determined Ayisha eligible because she lived in Lake county—a county with a high poverty rate—and she was working a job that would not lead to her being self-sufficient. She told Marcia that she was interested in pursuing optometry as her future career. She and Marcia developed a plan that included her working at an optometrist office to gain experience for applying to optometry school. After interviewing with Family Eye Clinic in Dyersburg, it was decided she would work there starting June 3, 2019 as an optometry technician.

Ayisha has been working at Family Eye Clinic since her start date and has been praised by the owner for her impressive work ethic. When she starts her undergrad degree in the fall, she will already be ahead of the game in terms of more closely understanding the field she is wanting to go into. She already knows how to use the equipment and read the scans, and will be able to write about her previous experiences, all of which will benefit her and give her the edge over the other applicants when she applies to optometry school.



# YOUTH SERVICES



Cheyenne Phillips had previously lost her job and filed unemployment insurance, when she saw a flyer in the Dyersburg AJC for Youth Work Experience, and was referred to WIOA Career Advisor Kelcey Coble. In April 2019, Cheyenne was made eligible for WIOA services as an out-of-school youth due to her barrier of being 22 and a parent of 3. Her main priority was to provide for herself and her children- so she needed to find employment quickly.

She had previous experience as a patient access representative, receptionist, and CNA, but her ultimate goal is to become a family nurse practitioner. Kelcey set up an interview with Gina Johnson at the Northwest TN Workforce Board, and Cheyenne was selected to start work as an Account Clerk for her work experience assignment in May 2019. Gina says that Cheyenne assisted in fiscal, business services, and performance. She said Cheyenne caught on quickly, was reliable and very smart.

Travel assistance and resume assistance helped Cheyenne to successfully complete the program only a month later, and begin a full-time job at the Reelfoot Family Walk-In Clinic on June 25, 2019. Cheyenne says, "We all have our own determination whether we win or lose." She also shares that she loves her job and works with a great team.



Adrian Maze was previously enrolled with WIOA at TCAT Newbern in HVAC but was suspended due to attendance (medical issues). "He came into the American Job Center-Dyersburg wanting work experience," says Career Advisor Kelcey Coble. "I helped him create a resume, we did a mock interview workshop, and he interviewed at the City of Dyersburg as a Transitional Work Experience participant." Adrian began as a light equipment operator in June 2019. Everyone at the city speaks very highly of him. His goal is to either become a police officer or own his own HVAC business.



Natalee was a Families First participant referred by her Employment Specialist, Rhonda Davis. After speaking with Natalee in January 2019, Career Advisor, Katie Treece, determined that it would be best for Natalee to finish her HiSet before she was put placed in work experience. Natalee attended Adult Education in Obion County and graduated with her HiSet in May 2018.

As a single parent, Natalie was interested in working in child care, but lack of transportation limited where she could work. **Natalee's son went to** daycare at the Pumpkin Patch in Union City, which would be an ideal job since she already had a reliable ride to this location. She interviewed at Pumpkin Patch and started **working there a week later in the Youth Experience Program. Natalee's supervisor, Erin Dalton, praised Natalee, stating she** was hard-working, showed up on time, and was good with the children. She was so impressed with her work ethic she hired Natalee before her work experience ended.

Natalee has worked at the Pumpkin Patch since August 25, 2018. AJC partners worked together to help Natalee get a job when she needed one, and allowed the employer to take a chance on someone without a steady employment history. Natalee credits the Youth Work Experience program for her employment success.



Allana Johnson came to the American Job Center-Huntingdon with very little work experience, living with a family friend, no job training or degree, and had no vehicle. She had no family support or anyone to help her. Allana had only been employed once before, and was only employed less than four weeks in a fast food operation making minimum wage.

Through the Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act, Allana participated in the Youth Work Experience program and was placed with the Carroll County Library as a Library Assistant working 28 hours per week for 12 weeks making \$8.00 an hour. She then transferred to Baptist Memorial Hospital in Huntingdon working 28-37.5 hours per week as a Housekeeper making \$8.00 an hour. Allana is appreciative of the opportunity to have steady employment.

Arielle Bradshaw came to the American Job Center-Dyersburg in 2015. Arielle was only 21 years old, unemployed, and would soon have a daughter to support. Career Advisor, Connie Stewart, started Arielle on her career track in August 2015 by enrolling her in the work experience program as a career assistant in Dyer County. She continued to stay with WIOA, working part-time as an advisor to the RESEA program in February 2016 at the American Job Center-Ripley. While there, she applied for and was accepted to the LPN program at TCAT Newbern in September 2018. She approached Connie, now Executive Director, about her next steps, and Connie referred her to the American Job Center-Dyersburg to receive funding for tuition and travel reimbursements to and from school. Arielle is set to complete the LPN program in August 2019.

Connie says, "through all the struggles, busy life, and even having two kids, Arielle never gave up and went on to accomplish her goals." Arielle says now that she knows the services offered by WIOA to the community, she refers everyone she can to WIOA, believing that there is no reason anyone shouldn't strive to reach their goals. "I couldn't have done it without WIOA," says Arielle. "The funding and career guidance they gave me helped me reach my goals and give not only me, but my entire family a better life." She thanks Connie Stewart, Melissa Bane, Wilma Capps, as well as everyone with WIOA for helping her reach her goal.



# BUSINESS SERVICES

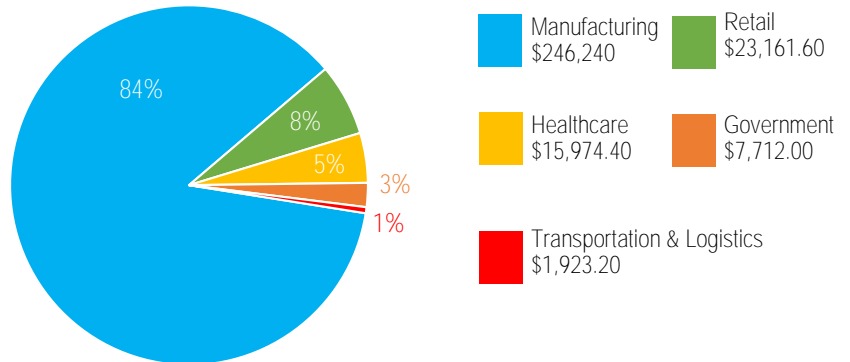
## Employer Participation by Program 2018-2019

County	Employer	On-the-Job Training	Incumbent Worker Training
Carroll	Carroll County Bank & Trust		✓
	Tri-County Publishing		✓
Crockett	Cavaller Pharmacy		✓
Dyer	Choctaw Transportation		✓
	City of Dyersburg	✓	
	Develey Mustard & Condiments	✓	✓
	Ermco		✓
	Firestone Industrial Products		✓
	Frazier Industries		✓
	Hexpol Compounding	✓	
	Nortek		✓
	NSK Steering Systems America,	✓	
	PolyOne		✓
	<b>Russom's CARSTAR Collision</b>		✓
	Tyson		✓
	West TN Healthcare	✓	
Gibson	Ceco Door Products	✓	✓
	Dyer Station Pharmacy		✓
	Quad Industries	✓	
	United Ammunition Container,		✓
Henry	Dana Sealing Products, LLC	✓	✓
	Insource Materials, LLC	✓	
	Institutional Casework		✓
	Nobel Automotive		✓
	PML Inc.	✓	
Lake	ECM of Ridgely, LLC	✓	
	Rett Express, LLC	✓	✓
Obion	Center Point Business Solutions	✓	
	Cox Oil	✓	✓
	Discovery Park of America	✓	
	Greenfield Products		✓
	JD Distributors Inc.	✓	
	Maverick		✓
	KMI Group		✓
Weakley	Allergy Lab Solutions, Inc.	✓	
	Christian Professional Services,	✓	
Total Awarded		\$295,000	\$290,295.25
Number of Employees Trained / Jobs		115	570

## Local Employers Receive 50% Wage Reimbursement for New Hires

Companies in Northwest TN have received wage reimbursements in excess of \$295,000 to train their own workers. For new hires with little or no experience in the occupations, this gives employers an opportunity to save money while training the employee. Business Service staff with the American Job Center developed contracts with 18 companies, placed job orders and referred eligible job applicants to fill 115 positions.

## PY18 On-the-Job Training Expenditures by Sector



The majority of On-the-job Training is focused on the Advanced Manufacturing Sector. Other target sectors primarily train through postsecondary opportunities.

## Paid Internships Target Job Seekers with Barriers

The *Ready, Set, Hire!* transitional program, is similar to Youth Work Experience program, however, it targets Adults and Dislocated Workers with barriers. The program includes up to 320 hours for both a paid internship and On-the-Job (OJT).

Employers may qualify for a Work Opportunity Tax Credit ranging from \$1,200 to \$9,600 for hiring individuals with barriers who are members of a qualified targeted group.

## Grants Awarded for Training Incumbent Workers

The Consolidated Business Grant was made available to employers to provide training for their current workforce to improve processes and upgrade skills. Nearly \$300,000 was awarded to 23 companies to train 657 workers through September. As of this report, 570 employees had completed training.

## AJCs Provide Rapid Response to Dislocated Workers

When layoffs occur, companies can choose to hold mass employee meetings or distribute materials from the American Job Centers about services available for dislocated workers. Rapid Response Teams often provide onsite services including resume assistance, Career Fairs, and other customized partner services.

This year in Dyer County, Heckethorn Manufacturing had 152 employees affected due to closure, while 200 employees were dislocated due to layoffs at McKenzie Regional Hospital in Carroll County, and 66 at Gibson County's Hobb's Bonded Fibers, resulting in a total of 418 employees being served by Rapid Response from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. This is up from the roughly 235 served last year in the Northwest TN region.

# BUSINESS SERVICES

"NWTN Workforce Board has helped us tremendously. The OJT grants have allowed us to hire 4 new people to suit our needs with the new equipment we are buying to expand our company. Theresa [Ethridge] and others were always there to answer any questions.

The IWT Grant has helped us get continued training in DOT to be up to standard with their rules and regulations. IWT also helped with extended training for our Drivers. This place is amazing, and we are so grateful for the help they give to small businesses."

--Gabby Readonour, HR Manager, Rett Express, Ridgely

"We had a manufacturing job-skills need with the addition of new business. We were able to reach out to Lana [Wood] and NWTN Workforce Board to secure an IWT grant to help get the training we needed. This training helped us gain the skills needed to ensure quality work was being performed without undue manufacturing costs or negative impacts to our customers."

--Jonathan Ballantine, Quality and Continuous Improvement Manager, Nortek Global HVAC, Dyersburg

"Dana had the privilege being awarded an On-The-Job training grant by the Northwest TN Workforce Board. With the support of our Business Services Representative from the board, the process was easy to follow.

The OJT new hire training program was a positive experience for our company, giving us means to effectively train our new hires to have a successful probationary period. Since training, the turnover percentage is < .2%, which is lower than the turnover percentage for our total campus workforce. For Dana's Paris Campus, the OJT grant has proven to be a productive investment of our time." --Margaret Crafton, Training Coordinator, Dana Sealing Products, LLC

Understanding and meeting the needs of employers is given the utmost importance and is achieved through a collaboration of the NWTNWB and partners serving on the Business Services Team, such as Title I Career Services, Labor Exchange, Veterans Programs, Trade Act, Re-Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance, Economic Development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Business Services Team is responsible for connecting with companies in targeted industry sectors and occupations, and other employers that have hiring needs, in order to understand and meet their needs through a variety of employer-driven initiatives and services. Business Services can assist with Recruitment & Screening, Grants and Incentives, and Workforce Support to address the needs and skills gaps as identified by local employers. Labor market information (LMI) is also available.

"The job fair coordinated by the NWTN Workforce Board provided our employees with hope for a brighter future. Overall, it was a resounding success with 18 local employers and over 100 Heckethorn employees in attendance. Moreover, it played a pivotal role in the reallocation of skilled labor within our community."

--Tyler Council, HR Director, Heckethorn Manufacturing, Dyersburg

**"The OJT program is an outstanding program which has allowed the City of Dyersburg the opportunity to provide employment to qualified individuals in various city departments. We are thankful to the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and AJC for the program and the benefits provided to us."**

-- Dyersburg Mayor John Holden



"The IWT grant has allowed our pharmacies to learn a new workflow process that saves times, improves customer satisfaction, and benefits cash flow management. The employees who attended the training were able to come back into the stores and train other employees and streamline our prescription filling process. The improvements have created more time to give immunizations, counsel and educate patients, and monitor our inventory levels. As we continue to fine tune our new procedures, I'm confident that even more benefits will be seen by our staff and patients."

--Derek Holyfield, Owner Dyer Station Pharmacy



# CONNECTING JOB SEEKERS



**Jordan's Grab 'n Go**, a Dyersburg convenience store that specializes in quick service food, gelato, and custom desserts, was founded by the owners to create a job for their 22 year-old daughter, Jordan, who has autism. Jordan's mother, Cristine Coronado, explains that the family had never run a store before and had no idea what their staffing needs were. Vocational Rehabilitation was a perfect fit, as the family could provide jobs for other special needs individuals and receive reimbursement of employee wages while they grew the business. The American Job Center offered training and provided a special needs employee through the Youth Work Experience Program. The reimbursement of wages provided funding for the employer to use in equipment repair and other unforeseen expenses.

The presence of special needs workers has helped provide awareness so that customers feel good about patronizing the store, and they continue to advertise by word-of-mouth. The store also took advantage of NWTN Workforce Board's Facebook Live option, providing free advertising during their ribbon cutting in April 2019. The video was viewed over 2,000 times and reached 4,744 people.

Jordan's Grab 'n Go is a great example of a small business that took advantage of several programs through the NWTN Workforce Board and American Job Centers, and their partners. Through programs such as On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Business Services' use of promotional social media, Jordan's Grab 'n Go can continue to provide a safe place for Jordan and other special needs employees to work.



*Job Fair, Union City*



*Schneider Job Fair, Dyersburg*



*Caterpillar Job Fair*



*A sample of our Facebook Live Events*



*Tyson Job Fair, Union City*



# CONNECTING JOB SEEKERS



*Small Business Forums, Dyersburg & Huntingdon*



*Ermco IWT Training at AJC-Dyersburg*



*Heco  
Job Fair*



*"With the addition of new business, we needed more skilled candidates. Lana and the American Job Center helped us with Facebook live posts, flyers posted on the Facebook page, and an onsite job fair utilizing the Mobile America Job Center Career Coach."* --Tina Spicer, Talent Acquisition Specialist, Nortek Global HVAC

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## COMMISSIONER HOSTS TOWN HALL MEETING



Under the first executive order issued by Governor Bill Lee in January 2019, all state executive departments were required to issue a statement of rural impact and provide recommendations for better serving rural Tennessee. In carrying out his plans for serving rural communities, Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Dr. Jeff McCord, hosted a Workforce Development Town Hall Meeting in Lake County in May 2019. One of

several stops by the Commissioner in various at-risk and distressed counties, the town hall meeting allowed workforce development stakeholders, including Local Elected Officials, employers, educators and high school students, re-entry partners, and more, to discuss training, education, workforce development, obstacles, and opportunities in the area. Governor Lee's workforce initiatives, including re-entry services, apprenticeships, and technical education were also among the topics discussed at the town hall meeting.

"We appreciate Commissioner McCord taking the time to visit Lake County and were so pleased to have such a large turnout at the event" said Jennifer Bane, Executive Director for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. "We're excited to see more opportunities for our rural counties, particularly our distressed and at-risk counties" added Bane. Lake County is one of 15 distressed counties in the state and the only one in the Northwest area while Benton, Carroll, Obion, and Weakley counties are considered at-risk.

Before joining the Department, Commissioner McCord spent seven years at Northeast State Community College in Kingsport where he was Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development. Prior to Northeast State, McCord spent over twenty years in business and industry holding a variety of leadership positions with specific experience related to corporate learning and development, organization effectiveness, process improvement, and information technology.



## INDUSTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Revel Enterprises, Inc. —Henry County

64 Jobs, \$2.3 million investment

Pottery Direct —Carroll County

40 jobs, \$8 million investment

ZLINE Kitchen and Bath —Carroll County

74 jobs, \$3 million investment

## Labor Market Information Tools Available



**Emsi**

Economic Modeling Systems, Inc.'s (EMSI) labor market information software, utilized by

the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB) for many years, is a valuable resource of local and regional current, customized, labor market information (LMI). Information available includes job growth, wages, in-demand occupations, emerging skills, skills transferability, job posting analytics, educational attainment, postsecondary training opportunities, and much more. All data is

customizable to both the local area and surrounding region. "EMSI has been an invaluable

tool not only for existing employers, but also for prospective industries looking to locate to the area as well," commented Margaret Prater, Senior Executive Advisor and supervisor of the NWTNWB's Business Services Representatives.



Labor Market FAQs can also be found on Jobs4TN.gov. Businesses can find the answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about the labor market.

**JOBS4TN.GOV**

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## HOT JOBS TO 2024



Occupation	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2019 - 2024 Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,242	2,430	188	285	\$20.46	Postsecondary nondegree award
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1,916	2,068	152	390	\$8.82	Short-term on-the-job training
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,145	2,276	131	327	\$13.22	Short-term on-the-job training
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,220	1,330	110	185	\$12.51	Short-term on-the-job training
Retail Salespersons	2,946	3,045	99	449	\$12.71	Short-term on-the-job training
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,064	1,158	94	125	\$18.05	High school diploma or equivalent
Personal Care Aides	404	498	94	82	\$11.03	High school diploma or equivalent
General and Operations Managers	1,035	1,127	92	105	\$41.70	Bachelor's degree
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	391	479	88	70	\$14.58	Short-term on-the-job training
Correctional Officers and Jailers	860	942	82	88	\$15.36	High school diploma or equivalent
Postsecondary Teachers	1,021	1,101	80	96	\$32.11	Doctoral or professional degree
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	763	831	68	90	\$26.57	High school diploma or equivalent
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	614	681	67	54	\$18.31	High school diploma or equivalent
Slaughterers and Meat Packers	310	369	59	53	\$10.88	Short-term on-the-job training
Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	1,164	1,222	58	104	\$21.94	High school diploma or equivalent
Office Clerks, General	1,940	1,996	56	241	\$14.36	High school diploma or equivalent
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	441	496	55	58	\$27.57	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Laborers	910	963	53	107	\$16.03	Short-term on-the-job training
Managers, All Other	577	628	51	52	\$29.81	Bachelor's degree
Customer Service Representatives	870	918	48	122	\$15.52	High school diploma or equivalent

## .....DECLINING JOBS

Occupation	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2019 - 2024 Change	Annual Openings	Avg. Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	2,800	2,705	-95	328	\$14.78	High school diploma or equivalent
Military-only occupations	357	333	-24	38	\$19.62	N/A
Postal Service Mail Carriers	288	270	-18	19	\$24.37	High school diploma or equivalent
Cooks, Fast Food	621	603	-18	87	\$9.51	Short-term on-the-job training
Legal Secretaries	113	97	-16	11	\$16.20	High school diploma or equivalent
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	255	240	-15	22	\$17.39	Moderate-term on-the-job training

Source: Emsi



# PROMISING PRACTICES



Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation



## REAP Program "Shocks and Awes" Ten Graduates

The Amteck Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP) program included an aggressive employer-driven awareness campaign, a hands-on orientation, and a two-week pre-apprenticeship work experience program. The NWTNWB Business Service Team and Amteck traveled to eight (8) high schools across the region to "showcase" the electrical apprenticeship occupation to graduating seniors. "Our high schools counselors were super enthusiastic about the opportunity Amteck was offering these students", said Lana Wood, Business Service Representative. "We even had one counselor text the kids to make sure they made it to the early morning Saturday event on time!" During the "showcase" Amteck employees provided hundreds of students an overview of the occupation, employer expectations, working conditions, wages, and hands-on activities with a mobile lab full of electrical equipment used in the profession. Potential applicants who were interested in learning more about the electrical apprenticeship were invited to an all day Saturday hands-on orientation. The Amteck "Shock & Awe!" Day (students were literally "shocked" with low voltage electricity and "awed" as they traveled 50+ feet above ground level in a bucket truck) provided an insight into the day in the life of an Electrician. Amteck also included some limited assessments and observations to determine interest and aptitude of the eighteen (18) students in attendance. Amteck covered the full cost of all "Showcases" and the "Shock & Awe" day. Eleven (11) young adults ultimately enrolled in a jointly funded WIOA/Amteck two-week Pre-Apprenticeship program to determine if they really wanted to pursue becoming an Electrician and for the employer to gauge their ability and desire to learn the necessary skills. Through a series of classroom and hands-on work experiences and assessments, designed by the employer, the participants were able to "learn and earn" for 80 hours in the Amteck shop. Participants learned basic math skills for electrical work, electrical

safety, hand tool usage, material identification and uses, installation practices, bending conduit, and simple circuit wiring for commercial construction applications. REAP participants earned wages through WIOA Title I, as well as, received supportive services including uniforms, tools, and gas cards to assist with transportation. According to Connie Stewart, Executive Director Workforce Services, Amteck was more than just an employer. "The local employees at Amteck took special interest in mentoring these young adults and making sure they would succeed. They provided encouragement, assisted one young man with lunch money and bought one a bicycle to get back and forth to training." Ten (10) of the eleven (11) enrolled, completed REAP, the two-week pre-apprenticeship program. Margaret Prater, NWTNWB Senior Executive Advisor, was pleased with the results. "We made some modifications from last year's pilot that produced great results. Amteck and our staff spent a lot of time upfront, but the end result is 10 young adults have an opportunity to start employment with Amteck and enroll in the Amteck University Registered Electrical Apprenticeship program. We plan to replicate this model with other employers/sectors next year." Due to employment assignments requiring travel to out-of-state construction sites, several will remain on work experience locally with Amteck until they are financially ready for assignment. Those who choose to accept employment with Amteck will earn \$12.50 per hour, with a 10% increase twice per year for completion of apprenticeship benchmarks on their way to becoming a Licensed Electrician.

*Since 1977, Amteck has built a reputation of delivering a quality product, in a cost-effective manner, while maintaining a safe work environment throughout a project's duration. Amteck's commitment to customer service, its safety program, and family atmosphere has grown the company into one of the most prominent electrical contractors in the southeast.*



# PROMISING PRACTICES

## "Workhouse" Model Provides Effective Transition from Jail to Job

The Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP) has offered inmates in 3 county jails an opportunity to learn manufacturing skills to prepare them to go to work. In partnership with the Sheriff's Office and higher education providers, the NWTNWB and AJC provides funding for the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council's Certified Production Technician (CPT) training. The training offered inside the jails includes online course work in Safety, Quality, Manufacturing Processes and Maintenance Awareness supplemented by demonstrations with hands-on equipment. During the first year, RAMP enrolled 111 total inmates in 10 classes at the 3 facilities. "As a pilot program, we learned a lot with each class that completed," commented Margaret Prater, Senior Executive Advisor for the NWTNWB and the coordinator of the program. "Working with 3 jails we were able to build on best practices, such as selection criteria, method of instruction, and use of hands-on equipment."

Our largest program in Gibson County served 58 inmates with 49 (88%) of the 56 who made it through the first module, Safety, also earning the full Certified Production Technician credential. This qualifies them not only for a job, but also for advanced standing for enrollment in local TCATs and 12 college credit hours in DSCC's Engineering Systems Technology Degree." Tennessee legislation was just passed to award a 60 day sentence reduction credit for completion of RAMP. The American Job Center staff, probation and parole, training providers, and Sheriff's Offices are all working to help secure employment for the graduates. While complete employment results are not available yet, early indications are that graduates who are released are getting jobs. According to Gibson County Sheriff Paul Thomas he has already seen a reduction in recidivism in the past year. "Of the program graduates so far we have only had two return back to jail. That's a success story on its own."

Combining RAMP with the previous Dyer County Jail2Jobs "workhouse" model, where inmates work in the private sector while

still incarcerated, has given the inmates an opportunity to earn wages to pay room and board, outstanding fines, child support, and build a savings account for when released. "Sheriff Box in Dyer County has developed a "correctional" model that not only helps reduce recidivism, but also meets the needs of local employers." explains Executive Director, Jennifer Bane. "During this tight employment market, local employers participating in the "workhouse" program know that they will have an employee that shows up on time everyday, is drug free and wants to be there. When this program is coupled with the RAMP program graduates, they also get employees with manufacturing skill training." The "workhouse" model is now being utilized with all three RAMP programs. The Business Service Team works with employers to provide information on federal bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and can provide training reimbursement up to 50% for those qualified for On-the-Job training.

Partnerships with faith based organizations like United Group and the Vineyard Church in Gibson County are providing the final piece of the puzzle for RAMP - counseling and a stable environment once released. The Orchard House, a 120 bed men's transitional facility will be opening this fall on the old Arsenal property in Milan. RAMP graduates and other inmates have donated thousands of hours to renovating the building, along with local businesses and individuals donating equipment and other services. "The men will have a stable place to sleep, eat and receive spiritual guidance after released", said Trevor Thompson, President of FW United Group. "We will also find them jobs, provide transportation to work, administer drug testing to keep them healthy and help them manage their earnings." Sheriff Paul Thomas will work with the local justice system to refer inmates who complete RAMP to The Orchard House.



# PRATER RECOGNIZED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



*Thirty-six years* of dedicated service to workforce development in Northwest TN has earned Margaret Prater a Lifetime Achievement Award. Serving in several roles during her successful career, Prater **assumed the position of Executive Director in 2010 after many years serving as the organization's Assistant Director of Administrative Services.** Upon assuming the position of Director, Prater quickly put her many years of experience to work to enhance and expand workforce development efforts, putting thousands of people to work throughout her career. That year, at the height of a recession, Prater oversaw the Lauderdale County Job Recovery Program which placed 154 individuals struggling to find employment in part-time subsidized employment at a time of up to nearly 20% unemployment. Similarly, in May 2011 over \$580,000 in National Emergency Grant (NEG) funds were awarded to the area to create temporary jobs to assist in clean-up and recovery efforts in the wake of severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and associated flooding. Over 100 individuals were placed in employment in a wide range of positions. In July 2011, Prater oversaw the expansion of the service area from seven to eleven counties with the addition of Benton, Carroll, Henry, and Weakley counties

while also simultaneously securing and administering a \$3.5 million NEG to provide services to the nearly 2,000 individuals dislocated due to the closure of Goodyear Tire & Rubber in Obion County. The NEG aimed to provide employment and training services to up to 850 individuals through March of 2014. Expectations were exceeded and a total of 981 individuals received services with 697 entering employment by the end of the grant.

## Prater Led ACT® Work Ready Communities Initiative & Other Workforce Pipeline Efforts

Shortly after the end of the Goodyear NEG in the Fall of 2014, Prater led the charge in forming workforce development committees to launch the ACT® Work Ready Communities initiative, a workforce system designed to assist sites and regions in developing their workforce pipeline to provide skilled workers for employers. The Work Ready Communities framework allows each participating community to quantify and improve the skill levels of its workforce through a standardized workforce skill credential, the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), and a robust data infrastructure that help measure, identify, and close existing skill gaps. By June of 2017, all eleven counties had achieved ACT® Work Ready Communities status and as a result of the initiative and prior years of NCRC testing, over 18,000 individuals in Northwest TN have earned a NCRC. To further enhance the workforce pipeline, Prater was a leader in the state in establishing annual

Manufacturing Days for high school students each October in honor of National Manufacturing Day. Last year events were held in 20 high schools with over 1,100 students and 20 manufacturing employers participating. Additionally, under the Labor and Education Alignment Program (LEAP), Prater further enhanced the manufacturing pipeline by negotiating a contract with the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) for unlimited access to its Certified Production Technician (CPT) training modules through December 2020 for local high schools. Under the grant, CPT training was funded for 609 students at 21 high schools. As a result, 519 students earned at least one of the four credentials - Safety, Quality, Manufacturing, and Maintenance, and 86 students achieved CPT status after earning all four credentials. The use of the training continues at several high schools today and has also been utilized through the Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP).





# PRATER RECOGNIZED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

## Promising Practices Enhance Workforce Development Efforts



Developed by Prater in partnership with local jails, training providers, and the American Job Centers, the Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP) provides CPT training to inmates at local jails who may also participate in work-release programs to earn wages and enhance skills while still incarcerated. To date, 106 students have been enrolled in RAMP across three county jails - Gibson, Henry, and Dyer counties. Of those, 91, or 86% have earned at least one credential with 62, or 58%, attaining full CPT status so far.

In Spring of 2018, Prater partnered with Amteck and Lake County High School to form the Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP) program. The pilot program provided graduating seniors with the opportunity to participate in a 10-week pre-apprenticeship program to learn the fundamentals of basic electricity and construction applications and the opportunity to continue training and potentially obtain employment at the Amteck Dyersburg facility upon successful completion. This year, the pilot project was refined and expanded and graduating seniors from across Northwest TN high schools had an opportunity to participate in the program.



Of this year's class of 11 students, 10 graduated and all will be offered employment with Amteck and acceptance into the Registered Apprenticeship program. Upon completion of the Registered Apprenticeship program, apprentices are prepared to take the exam to become a Journeyman/Licensed Electrician earning an estimated \$70,000 annually. Both the REAP program and RAMP have been highlighted by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development as promising practices.

## Leaving a Legacy...



Throughout the many federal laws authorizing employment and training activities, Prater has been a constant in workforce development in

Northwest TN. "Over the years (1983 until now) Margaret earned the title of the "Go To" person from her peers in the Workforce Investment Areas across the state. She earned this badge of honor by being the one who read and understood the hundreds of pages of the various Workforce Acts from the US Department of Labor and of similar documents from the TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development" says Dr. Karen Bowyer, President of Dyersburg State Community College, which served as the administrative entity and fiscal agent for the program for 34 years. "The Northwest TN Workforce Program was often the top-performer in TN under her leadership. Her devoted service to this area has improved the workforce in rural northwest TN. It has been my pleasure to work with Margaret since 1984" added Dr. Bowyer.

Recognized as a leader at the national level, Prater once testified before a Congressional hearing on "Reviewing our Economy: The Role of Higher Education in Job Growth and Development." During her testimony Prater

remarked, "I consider it a privilege to have witnessed the way thousands of people have changed their lives through education and training **over the years of my service.**"

Committee Chair, Congressman John Kline, wrote in his thank you letter to Prater "The Committee found your testimony informative and thought-provoking. In addition, your responses to our questions provided great insight into the status of our country's education system. Your contributions will prove invaluable as Congress continues to examine how post-secondary education can promote job growth."



Furthermore, Winston Tompoe, Acting Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration, upon hearing the news of Prater's upcoming retirement wrote "I want to express, on behalf of the Regional Office, my thanks and appreciation to Margaret for her contributions to workforce development. I have worked with Margaret on a number of areas in our business and will miss her passion, local expertise that we so relied on, and her commitment."

Since the beginning of her tenure as Executive Director, Prater oversaw services to nearly 26,400 individuals, and a total of 92,400 throughout her 36 year career, through her strategic vision, innovation, and drive. "Margaret leaves incredibly big shoes to fill but I couldn't have asked for a better role model and mentor" says Jennifer Bane, Prater's successor as Executive Director. "Margaret will be missed tremendously but the foundation she laid and the impact she has made will continue to shape workforce development for many years to come."

# NORTHWEST TN AMERICAN JOB CENTER LOCATIONS



Benton County  
Benton Co. Comm Resource Ctr.  
145 Hospital Drive  
Camden, TN 38320  
(731) 584-1711

Dyer County  
Comprehensive Center  
313 West Cedar Street  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 286-7700

Lake County  
Lake County Courthouse  
229 N. Church St.  
Tiptonville, TN 38079  
(731) 253-8171

Mobile AJC  
On-site recruitment &  
assessment. Self book at:  
[www.CareerCoach.Info@tn.gov](http://www.CareerCoach.Info@tn.gov)

Carroll County  
Comprehensive Center  
470 Mustang Drive  
Huntingdon, TN 38344  
(731) 352-8898

Gibson County  
1751 East Main Street  
Humboldt, TN 38343  
(731) 784-5221

Obion County  
204 South 2nd Street  
Union City, TN 38261  
(731) 884-3868

Northwest TN Workforce  
Board  
208 N. Mill Avenue  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 286-3585

Crockett County  
331 South Bells Street  
Alamo, TN 38001  
(731) 696-2530

Henry County  
55 Jones Bend Rd, Ext.  
Paris, TN 38242  
(731) 641-1020

Weakley County  
Weakley Co. Courthouse  
116 W. Main Street  
Dresden, TN 38225  
(731) 364-0100



*On-site partners: Dyersburg State Community College, TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Workforce Essentials, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Basic Education.*

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as in what **direction** we are moving.”* --Oliver Wendell Holmes



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