

# Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board

**Annual  
Report**  
2021-2022



Developing a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers so that 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.

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# • THE NORTHWEST TN WORKFORCE BOARD •



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

## LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Gary Reasons\* - Chair, Crockett  
Mayor Chris Young\* - Vice-Chair, Dyer  
Mayor Brett Lashlee, Benton  
Dr. Randy Shannon, Benton, Interim  
Mayor Joseph Butler, Carroll

Mayor Tom Witherspoon, Gibson  
Mayor John Penn Ridgeway, Henry  
Mayor Denny Johnson, Lake  
Mayor Benny McGuire, Obion  
Mayor Jake Bynum, Weakley

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, designates 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.

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD MEMBERS

New Members	One to Five Years	Six to Nine Years	Ten or More Years of Service
Kelly Buffington (Henry)	Melinda Goode (Regional), 1 Year	Kristie Bennett (Regional), 6 Years	Keith Cursey (Weakley), 11 Years
Rachel Carroll (Henry)	Monica Heath (Carroll), 1 Year	David Parrish (Regional), 6 Years	Rita Alexander* (Gibson), 12 Years
AJ Douglas (Regional)	Willie Huffman (Carroll), 1 Year	Glad Castellaw* (Crockett), 6 Years	Ted Piazza* (Gibson), 17 Years
Randa Hardin (Crockett)	Brendan Powell (Gibson), 1 Year	Jon Dougherty (Dyer), 7 Years	Brad Hurley* (Carroll), 21 Years
Zabian Sanders (Lake)	Amy McDonald (Regional), 2 Years	Lindsay Frilling (Obion), 7 Years	Jimmy Williamson* (Dyer), 23 Years
Sam Sinclair (Obion)	Dr. Randy Shannon* (Benton), 2 Years	Landy Fuqua (Weakley), 7 Years	
	Eddie White (Henry), 2 Years	Ben Marks* (Benton), 7 Years	
	Lana Hammons* (Dyer), 4 Years	Kristy Mercer (Gibson), 8 Years	

\*Board Officer or Committee Chair

## NON-BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Karen Bowyer	Mark Chandler	Ronnie Gunnels	Blake Swaggart
Justin Crice	Sherry Fowler	Janna Hellums	

## NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD STAFF

<b>Jennifer Bane, Executive Director</b>	<b>LeAnn Lundberg</b> Director of Facilities & Computer Services	<b>Laura Speer</b> Director of Performance & Compliance/EO Officer
<b>Lana Burchfiel</b> Public Information Specialist	<b>Ginger Powell</b> Deputy Director	
<b>Maleia Evans</b> Business Services Representative	<b>Margaret Prater</b> Workforce Consultant	<b>Terry Williams</b> Finance Coordinator
<b>Gina Johnson</b> Director of Finance & Administrative Services	<b>Derrick Quinn</b> Compliance Officer	<b>Lana Wood</b> Business Services Representative

<b>Sector Strategies</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Business Services</b>	<b>American Job Centers</b>	<b>Postsecondary Training</b>	<b>Youth Services</b>
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## • PERFORMANCE & FISCAL •

Performance Report for 2021-2022	WIOA Performance Metrics	PY 2021 Goal	PY 2021 Actual
Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	82.5%	90.5%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	82.5%	82.2%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,680	\$7,578.00
	Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After exit	63.5%	86.9%
	Measurable Skills Gains	53%	67.4%
Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	82.5%	95.5%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	82.5%	90.0%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,650	\$6,879.00
	Credential Attainment Within 4 Quarters After Exit	67%	86.7%
	Measurable Skills Gains	49%	77.8%
Youth	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	77%	91.3%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	76%	77.6%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,400	\$6,105.00
	Credential Attainment Within 4 Quarters After Exit	70%	83.3%
	Measurable Skills Gains	47%	69.0%

Fiscal Report	PY 2021 Funding Available	Total Expenditures	Percent Expended	De-obligated Funds	Carryover July 1, 2022
Administration	\$ 633,361.44	\$ 454,976.32	72%	\$ 2,648.90	\$ 175,736.22
Adult Formula	\$ 1,253,793.89	\$ 975,331.69	78%		\$ 278,462.20
Dislocated Worker Formula	\$ 974,375.29	\$ 719,385.46	74%		\$ 254,989.83
Youth Formula	\$ 1,790,145.35	\$ 1,284,332.21	72%		\$ 505,813.14
Re-Entry	\$ 32,076.90	\$ 27,690.80	86%	\$ 4,386.10	\$ -
National Dislocated Worker Grant	\$ 727,000.00	\$ 711,151.00	98%	\$ 15,849.00	\$ -
SWA/Apprenticeship	\$ 1,441,044.16	\$ 1,360,888.82	94%	\$ 17,226.06	\$ 62,929.28
RESEA	\$ 389,350.00	\$ 222,707.80	57%		\$ 166,642.20
TOTAL ALL GRANTS	\$ 7,241,147.03	\$ 5,756,464.10	79%	\$ 40,110.06	\$ 1,444,572.87

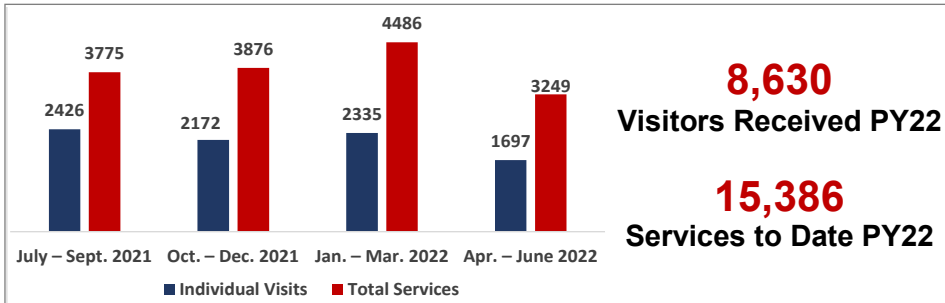
Of the de-obligated administration funds, \$1,761.02 will be reissued in the new program year along with the \$15,849 National DWG funds due to a contract extension. Of the de-obligated Statewide (SWA) / Apprenticeship funds, \$7,080.85 was de-obligated apprenticeship funds and \$10,145.21 was de-obligated Incumbent Worker Training funds due to training expenses being less than contract awards.

Participant Funding	Minimum Requirement	Actual
Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR)	40%	50.2%
Youth Work Experience	20%	48.4%
PY 20 Youth Out-of-School	75%	82.4%
PY 21 Youth In-School	35%	38.8%

Local Area on track to meet all performance and participant funding requirements.

# AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES

## NW TN American Job Center (AJC) Visits



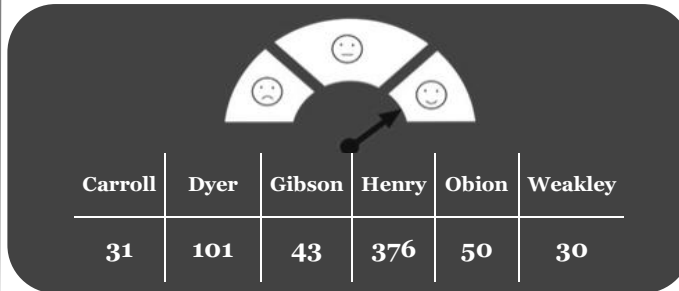
## AJC Surveys Results

Overall, how satisfied were you with our services?

**99%**

631 out of 637 answered "Completely Satisfied"

Number of Completed AJC Surveys by County for 2021-2022



## Job Fairs and Hiring Events

During the last year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, employers and business services representatives sought to provide innovative, out-of-the-box formats to safely and effectively connect jobseekers to local employers. Using the Premier Virtual platform, participants took advantage of the online event registration, customizable hiring rooms, live reporting during events, and video interviews with candidates.



Drive-thru job fairs were also implemented. Nortek held drive-thru job fairs in 2021, blocking off the parking lot and offering prospective candidates who did not complete an online application prior to the event the option to pick up applications and complete while sitting in their cars. Candidates drove up to meet the HR staff who then reviewed the application and made on-the-spot job offers pending employment checks. This trend continued until industries began to allow more visitors into their facilities. Eventually, modified on-site job fairs with limited exposure to the general plant population were implemented by Nortek, Develey, The Discovery Park of America, Ceko Door, MacLean Power Systems, and Tyson-Humboldt. Many of these employers also developed recruitment videos featuring employees describing what they liked about working for each company.

In August 2021, multi-employer regional job fairs were held simultaneously at the American Job Centers in Dyersburg, Huntingdon, Humboldt, and Union City. **Seventy-four** employers participated with **82** jobseekers attending in-person and **26** attending virtually through Premier Virtual. Regional Re-Entry Job & Resource Fairs, multi-employer job fairs geared toward individuals re-entering the workforce, were held in April 2022 in Dyersburg and Huntingdon. These events focused on opportunities for individuals with justice-involved backgrounds.



As employers continued to face difficulties in recruiting applicants, the Northwest area saw continued demand for job fairs / hiring events with **45 events** being held throughout the year, with **425 jobseekers** attending.



The Northwest TN Workforce Board, in coordination with a variety of AJC partners, recently produced a micro video series featuring information about resources, programs, and services available directly from the NW TN American Job Centers and Partner Agencies whose programs and services can be obtained by referral through the AJC. This series was created to assist RESEA customers, to present resources and assistance available to help them achieve their workforce goals, but is available to anyone wanting to learn more about the services. Videos are available for viewing at [www.nwtnjobs.org/jobseekers](http://www.nwtnjobs.org/jobseekers).



## Current Unemployment Rate by County (June 2022)

Benton 5.1% | Carroll 5.0% | Crockett 3.8% | Dyer 4.6% | Gibson 4.5% | Henry 4.4% | Lake 6.0% | Obion 4.9% | Weakley 4.2%



# AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES

## *Title I Career & Training Services*

	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth	Total Title I	Re-Entry Enrollments
Goal	296		78	374	52
YTD (Jul-Jun) New Enrollments	282	111	94	487 (130%)	75 (144%)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) consists of five core partner programs: Titles I—IV, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). These partners provide services through the American Job Center network in order to develop a quality workforce system to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers.

## *Title III & Other Employment Services*

New Enrollments	Goal	YTD (July-June)
Wagner Peyser	989	1,113 (113%)
SNAP E&T	98	104 (106%)
Jobs for Veterans	19	18 (95%)
Re-Entry Participants	52	44 (85%)

Co-Enrollments with Title I	Goal	YTD (July-June)
RESEA	34	34 (100%)
Trade Adjustment Assistance	100%	40% (3/5)

## *Title II Adult Education Enrollments*

New Enrollments	Goal	YTD July-June
Jackson State	278	232 (83%)
Weakley County Schools	248	188 (76%)

## *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*

As of 6/30/22 TANF had 258 active cases in Northwest Tennessee, including 105 employed. Thirty-one were closed in successful employment throughout the year.

## *Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*

As of 6/30/22, Vocational Rehabilitation served 664 customers in Northwest Tennessee, including 237 new enrollments and 151 closed in successful employment throughout the year.

## *Title V*

Participant Exits	Goal	YTD (July-June)
Senior Employment (SCSEP)	6	2 (33%)

## *Justice-Involved Individuals Grant Enhances Re-entry Services*



The Tennessee Department of Labor's Office of Re-entry awarded the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board a grant to serve both employers and justice-involved individuals to assist in reducing the rate of recidivism in our communities. In 2021 the rate of recidivism in Tennessee was roughly 46%. This means almost half of all those released from jail or prison were estimated to return within three years. A major reason is due to the process of re-entry, returning to society after incarceration, being difficult.

In June 2021, the Tennessee Office of Re-entry was created with the goal of improving the re-entry process through collaborative, strategic, and data-driven initiatives. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board was awarded a grant to put these initiatives in motion for the rural area. During National Second Chances Month, the Board released a series of videos including one focused on employing justice-involved individuals as part of an employer talent strategy with guest speakers Sid Crocker with Kaiyuh Services in Milan, TN and Gibson County Sheriff Paul Thomas. Another valuable video covered Expungement 101 with guest speaker Danny Goodman, District Attorney General for Dyer and Lake Counties. These are available for viewing by visiting [www.nwtjobs.org](http://www.nwtjobs.org).

Two Regional Re-entry Job & Resource Fairs were held at the American Job Centers in Huntingdon and Dyersburg with 22 employers participating and additional resource booths for the justice-involved participants. The Office of Probation and Parole referred jobseekers. An additional 20

hiring events were hosted throughout the Spring by employers open to hiring individuals with justice involvement.

In partnership with Alliance Staffing Group, LLC, the Workforce Board awarded training grants for several justice-involved individuals to gain skills in a production manufacturing environment through on-the-job training and mentorship, gaining long-term career skills while earning self-sufficient wages. Alliance Staffing also operates a Production Technician Apprenticeship program registered with the US Department of Labor in which they have enrolled 18 justice-involved apprentices to date.

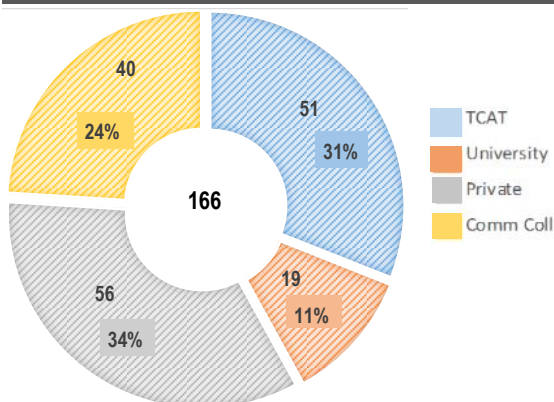
The Related-Technical Instruction (RTI) component of the apprenticeship program is the Manufacturing Skill Standard Council's Certified Production Technician (CPT) program, funded through the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's Re-Entry Advanced Manufacturing Program (RAMP). As of June 2022, 222 participants have been served through 20 completed RAMP classes with 177 of those tested earning a credential in Safety, 137 in Quality, 111 in Manufacturing Processes, and 101 in Maintenance Awareness. Ninety-eight individuals have earned all four credentials to earn the full CPT credential.



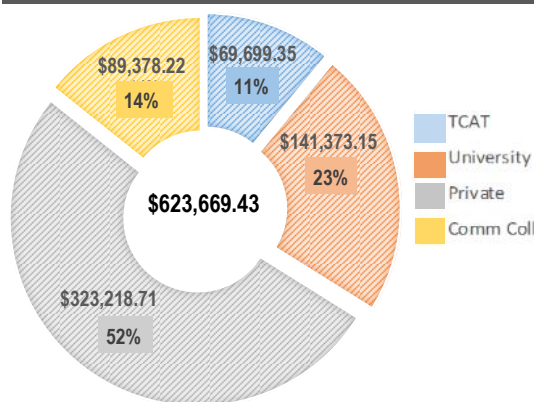
# TRAINING SERVICES

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, **166** new participants received scholarships to attend **16** different institutions. Of the **166** new Title I participants, **31%** chose to attend TN Colleges of Applied Technology, **24%** community colleges, **11%** universities, and **34%** private certification institutions for occupations such as Truck Driving, Lineman, and Certified Nursing Assistant. In total, nearly **\$624,000** was expended this year on Occupational Skills Training for new and existing participants.

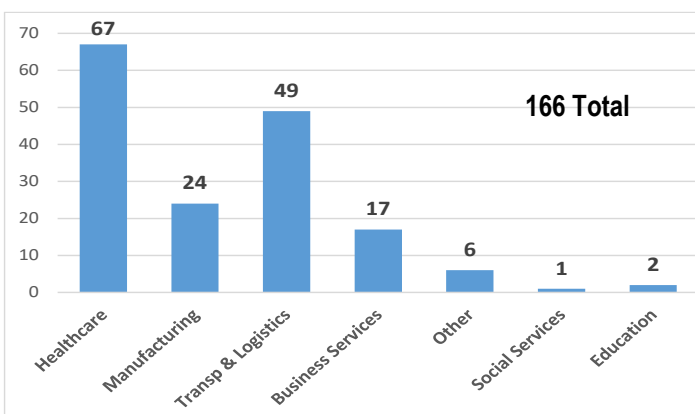
*NEW Participants By Training Provider Type*



*Investment By Training Provider Type (All Participants)*



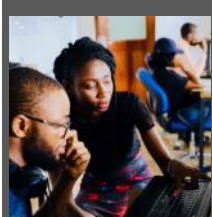
*New Classroom Training Enrollments by Sector*



*Transportation & Supportive Services*

Over **168** students used gas cards to help them attend school or work last year, with a total of more than **\$82,561** expended. 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.

## National Dislocated Worker Grant Enhances Training Services



As part of the state of Tennessee's Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) for COVID-19 Relief, the **Northwest area** was awarded nearly **\$808,000** to provide Disaster-Relief Employment (DRE) and career and training services to an estimated **123 participants** between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.



DRE provides temporary employment of eligible individuals in clean-up and recovery positions at public worksites. A total of **19 individuals** were enrolled, or **105.6%** of the proposed goal of 18, to provide cleaning and screening services at 13

public worksites. Additionally, **111** individuals were enrolled in training services, or **105.7%** of the goal of **105**. Of the **111** enrolled, **55 (49.5%)** were enrolled for On-the-Job Training and **56** were enrolled for classroom training, supportive services, and/or work experience. A total of **\$790,167.76 (97.8%)** of the amount awarded was expended on participants, program staffing, and administrative costs. The grant has been extended for another year and additional funding has been requested to continue services.

"The DWG is a tremendous asset for our area," stated Jennifer Bane, Executive Director. "With formula allocations decreasing, the additional funds helped sustain services for eligible individuals and support staff to provide the services," added Bane.

# TRAINING SERVICES



**William 'Shawn' Clark** came into the American Job Center in Humboldt at the end of June 2021. An unemployed veteran, he was eager to go to school to earn his CDL. Shawn stated he had gone through many obstacles in life and was ready to make a change to make a better life for himself and his wife. Career Advisor, Olivia Capps determined Shawn eligible for services and enrolled him with WIOA to assist with the cost of attending school to earn his CDL. Shawn attended Roadrunner Driving School in Sharon, TN starting in mid-July 2021 and completed training at the beginning of August. Soon after finishing training and earning his CDL, he secured a job with Doyle Sims & Sons Trucking, Inc. Shawn has been employed with Doyle Sims & Sons Trucking since September 2021 and enjoys traveling the country for work with his wife by his side.

After High School, **Collin Niegocki** was fascinated by the concept of Heating and Cooling and was encouraged to consider the HVAC program at the TCAT. Shortly thereafter in Fall 2020, he decided to enroll at TCAT-McKenzie. He earned his credential in the HVAC program in Fall 2021 and began working at Culley Mechanical Services.

Collin is thankful for the extra encouragement from his Career Advisor, Rhonda Mithcum. He says she guided him through the WIOA program by staying in contact with him and reminding him when he needed to complete paperwork. "School helped develop my way of thinking to use logic and work through problems that seem impossible," says Collin. "It has prepared me to never give up and to patiently work through things. I came to love HVAC and I have discovered that it is the right path for me. Most importantly, it has taught me that hard work is all it takes."



**Jarrod Ashby** had worked as a Correctional Officer, but had always wanted to be a Truck Driver. Unemployed and in need of training to enter the workforce, he came into the AJC Camden requesting WIOA assistance. Roadrunner Driving School Office Manager Victoria states, "Truck drivers make sure that millions of people have food, gas, clothing, and other essential everyday supplies. In short, truck drivers keep American moving." Jarrod was enthusiastic and eager to learn and caught on quickly, mastering the backing and driving techniques needed to pass his final skills/driving test. He is now employed in the field of his training as a Truck Driver with DOT Foods in Dyersburg, TN, beginning in January 2022. Alicia, Human Resources with DOT Foods, stated that they are impressed with Jarrod and excited to have him on their team.

**Gage Lowry** graduated from high school knowing that he wanted to enter the workforce in a high paying trade career. After receiving information from family, friends, and school counselors about Journeyman Lineman training, Gage visited the North American Lineman Training Center in McEwen, TN. After a visit to the center confirmed this was the right path for him, Gage visited the American Job Center-Huntingdon to inquire about WIOA funding for his training.

The North American Lineman Training Center's mission is to provide the safest, most comprehensive training to the next generation of linemen. Linemen have always taken pride in their work and continue to strive to be first rate in this trade. They remain heroes to the community in times of outages.

In May 2021 Gage began training with North American Lineman Training Center, successfully completing a total of 528 hours by August 2021. He began his new career in November 2021 as a Telecom Groundsman with Mas Tec, Nashville. With the shortage of workers in skilled trade, Gage is thankful he made this decision. He is excited about his future opportunities and appreciates the assistance he received through WIOA to become a certified Lineman.





# BUSINESS SERVICES

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.

Business Services can assist with Recruitment & Screening, Grants and Incentives including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Workforce Support to address the needs and skills gaps as identified by local employers. Labor market information (LMI) is also available and customizable to both the local area and surrounding region. Economic Modeling Systems, Inc.'s (EMS) 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, LMI. LMI and FAQs can also be found on [Jobs4TN.gov](http://Jobs4TN.gov).

For more information about services available to employers through the American Job Centers, visit [www.nwtjobs.org/employers](http://www.nwtjobs.org/employers).

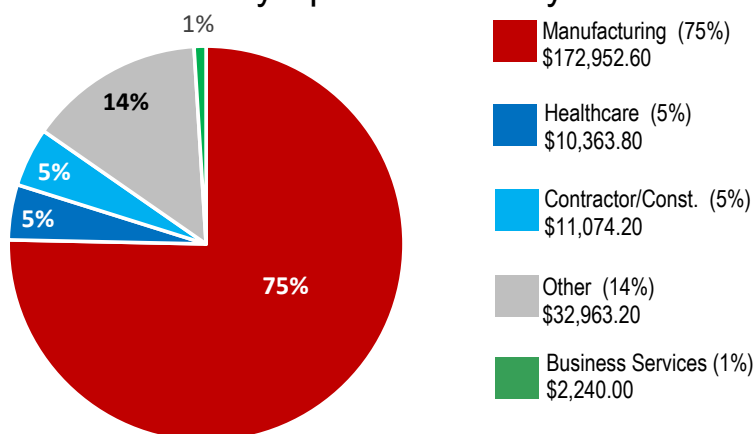
## Employer Participation by County

County	#OJT	#IWT
Benton	1	0
Carroll	3	2
Crockett	1	0
Dyer	7	8
Gibson	3	1
Henry	2	5
Lake	0	0
Obion	4	7
Weakley	3	1

## On-the-Job Training

Companies in Northwest TN have received **\$229,593.80** in wage reimbursements 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 Services staff with the American Job Center developed contracts with **33** companies, and referred eligible job applicants to fill **161** positions. The majority of On-the-job Training is focused on the **Advanced Manufacturing Sector**. Other target sectors primarily train through postsecondary opportunities.

### Money Spent on OJT by Sector



## Virtually Speaking Webinars 2021-2022

- #WorkLife: How Employers Benefit through a Partnership to Build a Young Talent Workforce in NW TN
- 2022 Recruitment and Retention Trends
- EEOC Updates and Hot Topics with Guest Speaker Debra Finney, EEOC Education and Outreach Coordinator
- Utilizing Labor Market Information to Build Your Hiring Strategy

All webinars are recorded, and may be found on our website at <https://nwtjobs.org/employers/virtually-speaking>



## Incumbent Worker Training

Additional statewide funding was made available to employers to provide training for their current workforce to improve processes and upgrade skills. Over \$398,000 was awarded to 27 companies to train 664 workers, with 627 employees completing training and over \$364,000 paid to participating employers. The majority of expenditures, 58%, were made in the Manufacturing sector, followed by Business Services at 23%, Construction/Contractor at 12%, Healthcare at 6%, and Other at 2%.



Some participants are eligible to receive additional supportive services while in training. This year, 48 participants received over \$8,600 for other supportive services, such as work attire, tools, or equipment, to participate in work-based training, such as work experience, transitional jobs, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships.



# BUSINESS SERVICES

## *Commissioner Holds Town Hall to Discuss Talent Pipelines*



On July 28, 2021, TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development Commissioner Jeff McCord met with nearly 100 workforce and economic development professionals, educators, and employers from across Northwest TN to discuss workforce strategies to address worker shortages and other challenges. Talent pipeline strategies discussed included work-based learning for youth and young adults, re-entry populations, adult education classes for individuals without a high school diploma, and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

In addition to discussing these strategies and services available through the American Job Centers, Commissioner McCord also heard questions and comments from the audience. "We appreciate the Commissioner and his team taking the time to visit Northwest TN and hear firsthand from our employers about the challenges they are facing," said Jennifer Bane, Executive Director of the Northwest TN Workforce Board. "We're looking forward to assisting employers with implementing workforce strategies that best fit their unique needs," added Bane.

## *Success Story-Dyersburg Fire Department*

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, Apprenticeship TN Office, Dyersburg State Community College, and the Dyersburg Fire Department (DFD) have joined forces to initiate the first Firefighter Paramedic Apprenticeship Program through the State of Tennessee. The apprenticeship program was specifically designed for a group of recently hired, full-time employees of the DFD. This competency-based apprenticeship program includes approximately 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 723 related instruction hours. It will supply the Dyersburg Fire Department with nine firefighter paramedics at the end of this apprenticeship. Along the way, the City of Dyersburg and its citizens will benefit all of the rewards of developing medical and fire suppression personnel. These apprentices will begin their fire training immediately, and will be enrolled as EMT Basics with DSCC for the Fall semester. The students will progress into the Advanced EMT program in the Spring of 2023, and will continue on to the Paramedic Program in Fall 2023.

In the state of Tennessee, an apprenticeship is a proven training program that is used as a talent development strategy for recruiting, training, and retaining world-class talent and has been used in the industry for decades. Apprenticeships are registered and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprenticeships are a work-based learning model where students have a full-time position with an employer with supervised

on-the-job training, and job-related education, all while earning a wage that increases during the progression of the program.

Deputy Director for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, Ginger Powell, helped spearhead this effort along with the help of West Tennessee Regional Apprenticeship Director Shalondria Shaw, Fire Chief Brett Sipes, Dr. Amanda Walker, Vice President of Advancement and External Affairs at Dyersburg State, and DFD Training Officer Randall Beaver. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board financially supported the nine apprentices' on-the-job learning with an On-the-Job Training (OJT) grant. Funded through a State Apprenticeship Grant, the OJT grant provided over \$16,500 in wage reimbursements to the City of Dyersburg.



## **Rapid Response for Dislocated Workers**

When layoffs occur, companies can choose to hold mass employee meetings or distribute materials from the American Job Centers (AJCs) about services available for dislocated workers, such as Unemployment Insurance, Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment services, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Title I Dislocated Worker training services. Rapid Response Teams often provide onsite services including resume assistance, career fairs, and other customized partner services.

This year, Rapid Response services were offered to approximately 62 individuals affected by the closure of Tecumseh LLC in Henry County in July 2021.

## **Local Industry Announcements**

### Columbiad Fabrication & Aviation

- Henry County
- 144 jobs
- \$4.8 million investment

### Sinova Global

- Lake County
- 140 jobs
- \$150 million investment

### Alfresco Pasta

- Crockett County
- 35 jobs
- \$4 million investment

### VP Racing Fuels

- Carroll County
- 150 jobs
- \$14.2 million investment

### Ford Motor Company/SK Innovation

- Blue Oval City, West TN
- 5,800 jobs
- \$5.6 million investment
- Project is anticipated to generate more than 27,000 new jobs, both directly and indirectly, to support the site's operations

# YOUTH SERVICES

#WORKLIFE

The Work Opportunities for Rural Kids (WORK) program, branded as #WORKlife, allows participants to work up to 37.5 hours for up to six months. In addition to gaining valuable hands-on experience and learning general work skills (i.e. soft-skills), such as attendance, punctuality, professional communication, teamwork, etc., participants earn the higher of \$8.00 per hour or the typical wage paid for the position.

In order to promote the program, the Northwest area partners with secondary schools to promote local career opportunities through promotional / hiring events highlighting career pathways and opportunities available within the area. Through hiring events, employers are able to market summer, part-time, and full-time positions to graduating seniors, and other young adults, with a focus on those up to 24 years old. This initiative aligns with the West Tennessee regional plan strategy of focusing on special populations such as unemployed youth. Unemployment rates among youth (ages 16 to 24 years old) are higher in the West Region at 18.45%, more than five times the overall state rate.

Throughout the year, 64 youth were served in work experience – 38 In-School Youth and 26 Out-of-School Youth, plus 14 youth in OJTs – and \$226,661.01 was expended on WE/OJTs. New participants were placed in nearly 40 different worksites across nine different sectors, with Education, Government, and Social Services as the top three sectors for work experience participants.



## The Amteck Registered Electrical Apprenticeship Preparation (REAP)

program is a ten-week pre-apprenticeship program consisting of two weeks of classroom training to learn the fundamentals of basic electricity and construction applications, followed by eight weeks of paid work experience at Amteck's Dyersburg facility. Through participation in the program students have the opportunity to obtain employment at the Amteck Dyersburg facility upon successful completion. If hired, participants are entered into the Registered Apprenticeship program which prepares them to take the exam to become a Journeyman/Licensed Electrician and earn an estimated \$70,000 annually.

In June 2022, the REAP program hosted its fifth class, consisting of four students, with three students completing the two-week classroom training and two continuing into paid work experience at Amteck. Since the pilot project offered at Lake County High School in 2018, a total of 32 students have participated in the program with 21, or 66%, completing the classroom training, and 26, or 93%, securing employment, including 12 who are employed with Amteck.



## Success Story



Breanna Lay was enrolled as an In-School Youth (ISY) participating in Work Experience at the One Stop Center at Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC). After being accepted into the nursing program, Breanna received supportive services, such as a gas card and clothing. Breanna feels the office job has really helped build her work experience and has allowed her to work around classes. Previous jobs in the food industry and at the YMCA childcare center at night made it difficult to take classes. Since the

Work Experience program seeks to place participants in jobs that work around their class schedules, working at DSCC has been a huge help. As a bonus, Breanna is now earning more money than she was before. Breanna hopes to continue working at DSCC so that she can gain more experience while taking nursing classes.

## Success Story



Dakota Hassell, a 2021 Dyer County High School graduate and former participant of the Upward Bound program at Dyersburg State, was interested in math, science, and technology, but didn't really have a specific career

plan. Dakota enrolled at UT Martin for computer science and coding, but it wasn't until he was placed in a paid internship at Tencom Services in Dyersburg through the Northwest TN Workforce Board/American Job Center's Work Experience program that he realized he wanted to do more IT and hands-on work. As a result, he switched his major to Management of Information Systems with a minor in Cyber Security.

"The IT industry allows me to explore one of my passions which is problem solving," states Dakota. "Every day there is a new problem with a ton of different solutions that could fix the issue, but the final feeling after solving the issue is an exhilarating feeling that cannot be put into words. The feeling of being able to help people brings me great joy." Working at Tencom has allowed Dakota to gain experience, as well as earn several certifications such as Certified Technician, Dispatcher, and CBT Nuggets. Dakota says this experience has also greatly improved his communication skills by requiring him to answer the phones and speak to customers.

In January 2022 Dakota was hired at Tencom and participated in an On-the-Job Training (OJT) grant which reimbursed Tencom for 50% of his wages during a specified training period. In June 2022, Dakota was also enrolled in Tencom's new Computer User Support Specialists Registered Apprenticeship program. Through a State Apprenticeship grant, Tencom received \$4,000 to offset costs of the related technical instruction (RTI) portion of the apprenticeship program. Michael Beavers, Senior Network Technician at Tencom said, "Dakota is an outstanding young man and a hard worker."

## Youth Incentives

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's Incentive Policy rewards Youth participants for reaching certain academic or occupational milestones, during and after participation in the program.

**This year, 43 Youth participants received nearly \$8,700 in incentives** for their achievements during program participation and continued success after exiting the program."



# YOUTH SERVICES

## *Lake County High School Students Explore Healthcare Careers*



On April 22, 2022, Lake County High School (LCHS) hosted a joint healthcare event involving local healthcare employers and Dyersburg State Community College (DSCC). First, five senior level students engaged in healthcare curriculum at the high school participated in mock interviews. Zebian Sanders of Signature Healthcare in Ridgely and Jennifer Bentley of Lake County Primary Care served as the interviewers, enabling the students to prepare for the employment interview in healthcare careers, as well as post-secondary healthcare programs which require interviews as part of the application process. "We are very thankful for our local healthcare employers that came to do mock interviews with our CNA class," said LCHS instructor, Crystal Prince. "The students were able to experience what it was like to be at a real job interview. Being able to hear questions that are asked in a job interview will prepare them for a real job interview once they enter the workforce."

Meanwhile, DSCC staff brought their ambulance simulator to expose students to careers as an EMT, Paramedic, Nurse, and Flight Nurse. Every single student in the high school (grades 9-12) toured the simulator in groups of 10-12, practicing CPR and intubating on a patient simulator, as well as feeling the simulation of traveling at 80 mph. The staff talked to the students about the day-to-day activities of being an EMT/Paramedic and how they can pursue an education and career in the medical field. DSCC staff also took the opportunity to talk to students about Fire Fighters being required to be EMTs, explaining the diversity of careers for EMTs. Since most of the students had never been inside an ambulance, it was a great learning experience for them. Many were shocked they could earn their EMT basic in just one semester of college. DSCC EMS Director Baker McCool oversees the program, which includes EMT Basic (a one-semester course) followed by EMT Advanced (one additional semester).

LCHS Principal Mike Moore added, "I would like to thank the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and DSCC for their continued support to Lake County High School. Every student in our building had the opportunity to go through the simulator and talk to healthcare professionals. This was a great opportunity for them to see what it is really like working in these jobs, and hopefully the event sparked interest in the healthcare fields for our students. We look forward to hosting it again in the future."

## *Virtual Reality Headsets Offer Career Exploration for Lake County High School*

Utilizing Rural Initiative Grant funding, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board purchased five virtual reality career exploration headsets from TRANSFR VR for Lake County High School. The TRANSFRVR software, a virtual reality-based education and training workforce development platform, helps students and job seekers get on a path to middle skills employment. TRANSFRVR helps educators, workforce development professionals, economic development organizations, and employers provide simulations that allow students and job seekers to explore career pathways including Manufacturing, Automotive, Public Safety, Skilled Trades, Warehousing & Storage, and Hospitality & Tourism. New modules will be added as they become available, including Healthcare in 2022.



## *Success Story*

During her senior year in 2021, **Holly Lamb** was introduced to the WIOA Youth Work Experience Program through a school presentation at Lake County High School. Upon graduation from Lake County High School in May 2021, she sought to secure her "first real job" as well as further her post-secondary education with on-line classes at Unity College. Career Advisors Rob Brown and Alyssa Roberts were able to help Holly secure and maintain employment at the Reelfoot Lake State Park gift shop beginning in June 2021, as well as maintaining contact with her on a regular basis throughout the Work Experience Program until its end on December 2021.



Holly remained at Reelfoot Lake State Park working part-time as a Gift Shop Clerk and filling in throughout the park when necessary. "This employment opportunity has provided me the means to work with other departments within the state park, such as the wildlife division, learning about various wildlife like fish, birds, and reptiles. I can say through this opportunity I have gained so much animal health & behavior knowledge that it has helped me with being successful in my post-secondary education course studies."

Holly recommends the WIOA Youth Work Experience Program to anyone looking to further their educational and employment needs. "This program has taught me valuable information related to time management, organizational, and problem-solving skills, as well communication skills with management and the general public. It has taught me the value of working hard and good customer service skills."

Holly plans to continue working at Reelfoot Lake State Park while pursuing an Animal Health & Behavior degree. She is currently on schedule to begin her sophomore year in the fall of 2022.

# NORTHWEST TENNESSEE AMERICAN JOB CENTER LOCATIONS

## Benton County Specialized Center

Benton County Community Resource Center  
145 Hospital Drive  
Camden, TN 38320  
(731) 584-1711

## Carroll County Comprehensive Center

470 Mustang Drive  
Huntingdon, TN 38344  
(731) 352-8898

## Crockett County Specialized Center

335 South Bells Street  
Alamo, TN 38001  
(731) 882-4874

## Dyer County Comprehensive Center

313 West Cedar Street  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(731) 501-1109

## Gibson County Affiliate Center

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

## Henry County Specialized Center

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

## Lake County Specialized Center

Lake County Courthouse  
229 Church Street  
Tiptonville, TN 38079  
(731) 253-8171

## Obion County Affiliate Center

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

## Weakley County Specialized Center

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

## Mobile American Job Center

On-site recruitment & assessment.  
Self book by emailing:  
CareerCoach.Info@tn.gov

## Virtual American Job Center

24/7 Online Access to AJC Information  
Tnvirtualajc.com

## Northwest TN Workforce Board

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

## 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.*

On-site programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Labor Exchange, Families First, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Basic Education.



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## 2021-2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

8,630

Individual American Job Center  
Jobseeker Visits



15,386

American Job Center Services  
Provided

2,301

Individual Employers  
Served



4,212

Employer Services  
Provided

161

New Hires Placed in On-the-Job  
Training Positions  
with **33** Employers



627

Incumbent Workers Trained  
with **27** Employers

NW

NORTHWEST TENNESSEE WORKFORCE BOARD

This project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request. EOE. TDD Dial 7-1-1. Oct 2022