Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board Inc.

Innovations Committee
November 4, 2026
2:00 P.M.
Click here for Zoom Link
Meeting ID: 892 0109 0774
Passcode: 396188
One tap mobile: +16465588656,,89201090774# US

Agenda

Welcome

Call the Meeting to Order

Approval of Minutes

Business Reports:

1. American Job Center Operations
    a. Federal Performance
    b. CSP Report
2. Eligible Training Provider
    a. Request for Approval
3. Innovation & Partnerships
    a. Rapid Response
    b. Association of Builders & Contractors
    c. PROWD-Slim & Huskey Apprenticeship
    d. Rural Healthcare Transformation Grant
    e. TnWorks Talent Accelerator
4. Regional Transition Update

Adjourn

Members:

Seth Thurman (Chair)

Anne Fugate

Tony Adams

Billy Givens

Selittia Johnson

Jim Hughes

Kaitlin Salyer

Complete zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89201090774?pwd=bb4D5apedNcAn31cNNgbtTyCF5an5U.1

Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board Inc.

Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board
Innovations Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2026, via Zoom at 3:00 p.m.

Members Attending	Members Absent	Staff & Guests Attending
Jim Hughes	Seth Thurman	Marla Rye
Kaitlin Salyer	Billy Givens	Andrea Dillard
Selittia Johnson	Anne Fugate	Meagan Dobbins
Kristi Spurgeon		Alyssa Spaulding
Nestor Reyes		Ginger Fussell
Tony Adams		

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board Innovations Committee met via Zoom on August 4, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. With a quorum confirmed and Seth Thurman unable to attend, Kaitlin Salyer presided and requested a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Nestor Reyes made the motion, and Kaitlin seconded. The committee proceeded to business reports. Marla welcomed new board members Jim Hughes of Williamson Health and Nestor of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. She asked staff to summarize routine reports to allow time to discuss federal waivers and proposed workforce governance changes.

Federal Performance

Andrea Dillard reported that Q4 federal performance met or exceeded all measures. Dislocated Worker Measurable Skill Gains, which had been below target when presented at the prior meeting, improved to passing before third-quarter results were finalized. Performance standards for the next two years had been negotiated, with six increased, six decreased, and three unchanged. Marla explained that performance at 100% or higher of the negotiated target was shown in green, while results of at least 90% were shown in yellow and also considered passing. As an example, the second-quarter employment-after-exit measure had an 85% target, a 76.5% passing threshold, and an actual result of 79.4%.

CSP Report

Meagan Dobbins reported that Q4 enrollment and closure activity improved significantly following a cautious start to in-house operations because of budget reductions. Annual enrollments totaled 1,079 against the state's goal of 1,108, achieving 97%. Staff completed 991 case closures, nearly matching new enrollments and supporting more manageable caseloads. Placement wages exceeded goals. Marla confirmed average hourly placement wages of $25.57 for Dislocated Workers, $16.73 for Youth, and $19.19 for Adults.

AJC Closure Update

Andrea reviewed service delivery following the board's decision to close eight designated AJCs in Cheatham, Houston, Humphreys, Robertson, Stewart, Trousdale, Wilson, and Williamson counties. Workforce Essentials-owned facilities in Cheatham, Robertson, and Williamson remained open as Workforce Essentials offices, with services continuing but overhead no longer supported by WIOA funds. The other five offices closed, and services moved to partner locations. Houston County provided space in the county 911 building in partnership with TCAT Dickson and its planned LPN class. Humphreys County services relocated to Nashville State Community College, Trousdale County provided courthouse space, Stewart County services used a senior citizens facility, and Wilson County partnered with TCAT in Lebanon. Andrea emphasized that services remained available in every county, including virtual options for customers unable to visit a location.

Youth Employment Program

Andrea reported that the Youth Employment Program served 302 participants against a goal of 272. A separate vocational rehabilitation allocation received around October served 28 participants against a goal of 32. The later award date and participants' ability to work fewer weekly hours contributed to unspent vocational rehabilitation funds. Both funding sources were renewed beginning July 1, with participants already enrolled.

Andrea highlighted CTE partnerships in Cheatham, Montgomery, Humphreys, Rutherford, and Stewart counties, including patient care and early teacher training opportunities. Meagan supported the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System's new CDL program through paid work experience for high school seniors and arranged paid internships for TCAT dental assisting students. Vocational rehabilitation partnerships included Project SEARCH hospital rotations in Clarksville, Lipscomb's IDEAL program, and Vanderbilt's Next Steps program, providing work experiences for students with disabilities. Staff planned to continue those partnerships.

Eligible Training Provider Requests

Andrea presented 11 new programs from existing approved providers: six from TCAT Murfreesboro, three from TCAT Hartsville, one from Nashville State Community College, and one from Austin Peay State University. All were offered by public institutions, led to credentials, and met Bright Outlook criteria. Most were 12 months or less, with one lasting 16 months. Marla explained that Austin Peay's Digital Court Reporting with Legal Transcription program had been added that week after a prospective participant contacted board members and staff worked with the school to obtain the submission.

Andrea also requested reinstatement of five TCAT Murfreesboro programs that had been removed after missing subsequent review deadlines. The lapse occurred during a vacancy in the position responsible for ETPL management, rather than because of poor performance. With a new staff member in place, the school requested that the programs return to the list. Kaitlin expressed support for restoring the Rutherford County programs. Andrea then added a late request from Excel Barber and Style College in Nashville after the provider completed its submission shortly before the meeting. The one-year barber training program cost $6K, led to a credential, and met national Bright Outlook criteria. Andrea explained that when training costs exceed the amount WIOA can provide, staff confirm a plan for the participant to cover the balance before enrollment. Jim made a motion to recommend approval of the 11 new programs, reinstatement of the five TCAT Murfreesboro programs, and addition of Excel Barber and Style College for final board consideration. Tony motioned and Nestor seconded. Jim asked where he could view the complete provider list. Marla said approved programs are available on the state ETPL and offered to send him the link. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Employer Services

Marla reported an increase in Rapid Response activity. Natalie McLimore was assisting approximately 116 Stanley Black & Decker workers in Sumner County that day. Recent activity also involved an employer in Wilson County, and Shiloh in Dickson. Staff were working with affected individuals to support their return to employment. Materials included newly initiated incumbent worker training grants and SAEF-funded apprenticeship activity beginning in the new program year.

Marla reviewed the new Rural Healthcare grant supporting advancement to paramedic credentials. The initiative would expand from the prior Volunteer State partnership to include Austin Peay's new paramedic training program. Montgomery County EMS had established a paramedic apprenticeship program. Marla identified these efforts as a focus for the coming 12 months.

USDOL Waivers and Future of AJCs

Marla reviewed Tennessee's 13 federal WIOA waiver requests submitted in late April and the July 27 federal response. She highlighted flexibility in the requirement to spend 75% of Youth funding on out-of-school youth, supportive services for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants after exit, and employer-requested career readiness assessments without individual WIOA eligibility determinations. Other requests addressed statewide One-Stop Operator designation and the requirement for a comprehensive AJC in each local workforce area. Marla explained that some requests were approved, some involved authority already available under existing law, and a SNAP-related request could not be approved. She focused on the approved waiver allowing regional planning councils to perform local workforce board functions.

Marla explained that the proposed Workforce System Governance Framework would be considered by the State Workforce Development Board August 28 and, if approved, would have a September 1 effective date. The state board would establish governance standards and provide oversight, with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development administering the changes. Three regional workforce boards for East, Middle, and West Tennessee would assume local board responsibilities. The nine local workforce areas would remain. Northern Middle, Southern Middle, and Upper Cumberland would form a 40-county Middle Tennessee region governed by one regional board.

County mayors would continue interlocal agreements and appoint regional board members. Marla described eight members from each existing board as her expectation, not a finalized arrangement. She had been told rural counties would receive dedicated representation. Each local area would select a CLEO, and the three CLEOs would form a regional council responsible for designating the fiscal agent. Local advisory councils, potentially including groups such as Rutherford Works or TCAT advisory councils, would provide local input.

The regional board would select a lead administrative organization. Marla explained that the state recommended using the same organization as administrative entity and fiscal agent to reduce duplication and strengthen accountability. Although the policy would take effect in September if approved, she had been advised that operational changes were expected July 1, 2027. A possible single service provider for the region would require procurement beginning around January. She anticipated that current field operations would continue through June 30, with additional planning responsibilities during the transition. Marla noted that implementation procedures and timelines remained to be developed and that a new governor or changes in state board membership could affect the direction.

Jim asked whether the proposal was comparable to structures used in other states. Marla said some states had consolidated into a single workforce area and described Tennessee's proposal as an effort to reduce the number of providers and improve consistency in service delivery. She noted that Tennessee's size limited its ability to use a single statewide area under the existing framework.

Marla said she would distribute the proposed policy that afternoon while it remained open for public comment. She reminded members that the August 12 full board meeting would be held at Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville, with Commissioner Deniece Thomas scheduled to discuss the state's vision for the workforce system.

Adjourn

With no further business, a Kaitlin Salyer made a motion to adjourn and Nestor seconded. Kaitlin concluded the meeting.

WIOA Federal Reporting Score Card
NORTHERN MIDDLE WORKFORCE BOARD

PY26 WIOA Core Performance Measures	Targets 100%	Targets 90%	Q1 PY 26	Q2 PY 26	Q3 PY 26
Adult Measures					
Exiters					
Participants Served					
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	85.6%	77.04%	79.5%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	84.9%	76.41%	74.8%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit	8,600	$ 7,740	$ 9,021		
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	74.0%	66.60%	68.1%		
Measurable Skills Gains	73.4%	66.06%	66.7%		
Dislocated Worker					
Exiters					
Participants Served					
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	87.0%	78.30%	84.5%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	86.0%	77.40%	86.4%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit	10,600	$ 9,540	$ 12,070		
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	74.0%	66.60%	73.8%		
Measurable Skills Gains	83.0%	74.70%	67.0%		
Youth					
Exiters					
Participants Served					
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	84.3%	75.87%	79.9%		
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	83.0%	74.70%	80.2%		
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after exit	5,600	$ 5,040	$ 6,234		
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	78.0%	70.20%	75.7%		
Measurable Skills Gains	68.0%	61.20%	64.1%		
GREEN-Passing at 100% of Goal					
YELLOW-Passing at 90% of goal					
Red-Failing at less than 90% of goal					

WFE PY 26-27 Quarterly Benchmarks

Matrix:		2026		
		Sep 30 (QTR 1)		
		Goal	Actual	%
Enrollments	Adult	200	241	120.50%
	DW	42	74	176.19%
	In-School	37	24	64.86%
	Out-School	39	73	187.18%
	Total	318	412	129.56%
*Exits (80% of enrollments)	Adult	160	197	123.13%
	DW	34	78	232.14%
	Youth	61	95	156.25%
		Goal	**Actual**	**Percent**
Positive Exits # (85% of Exits)	Adult	136	172	126.47%
	DW	29	68	238.10%
	Youth	52	83	160.60%
		Exits	**Positive**	**Percent**
**Actual Positive Exit Rate	Adult	197	172	87.31%
	DW	78	68	87.18%
	Youth	95	83	87.37%
		Goal	**Actual**	**Percent**
Placement Wage	Adult	$ 16.50	$ 20.02	121.33%
	DW	$ 16.50	$ 23.60	143.03%
	Youth	$ 13.00	$ 16.94	130.31%

New Providers Requiring Board Approval for addition to the ETPL									
Provider Name	**Provider Main Address**	**Approval Agency**	**Approval Documented**	**Sector Strategy**	**Years in Business**				**Notes**
Defining Textures Natural Hair Academy	841 Wren Road, Suite 5 Goodlettsville, TN 37072	THEC	THEC Exemption	Personal Care	Less than 1				
New Programs Requiring Board Approval for addition to the ETPL									
Provider Name	**Provider Main Address**	**Program ID**	**Program Name**	**Total Cost**	**Program Length**	**Credential Earned**	**Job Outlook**	**Sector Strategy**	**Notes**
Defining Textures Natural Hair Academy	841 Wren Road, Suite 5 Goodlettsville, TN 37072	1013768	Natural Hair Stylist Program	$3,550.00	300 Hours	Licensed Natural Hair Stylist	Bright Outlook Locally	Personal Care	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Hartsville	716 McMurry Blvd Hartsville, TN 37074	1013624	Dental Assisting	$4,264.00	8 Months	Registered Dental Assistant	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Healthcare	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Hartsville	716 McMurry Blvd Hartsville, TN 37074	1013623	Cosmetology	$6,964.00	15 Months	Licensed Cosmetologist	Bright Outlook Locally	Personal Care	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Hartsville	716 McMurry Blvd Hartsville, TN 37074	1013622	Aesthetics Technology	$3,922.00	6 Months	Aesthetician	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Personal Care	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Hartsville	716 McMurry Blvd Hartsville, TN 37074	1013620	Diesel Powered Equipment Technology	$6,864.00	20 Months	Diploma	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Construction	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Hartsville	716 McMurry Blvd Hartsville, TN 37074	1013619	Building Construction Technology	$6,982.00	20 Months	Diploma	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Construction	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Dickson	740 Highway 46 Dickson, TN 37055	1013720	Surgical Technology	$5,917.08	44 Weeks	TS-C (Tech in Surgery-Certified)	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Healthcare	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Dickson	740 Highway 46 Dickson, TN 37055	1013719	Pharmacy Technology	$6,236.37	44 Weeks	CPhT	Bright Outlook Locally	Healthcare	
Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Dickson	740 Highway 46 Dickson, TN 37055	1013718	Medical Assisting Technology	$4,598.59	30 Weeks	NHA Certifications	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Healthcare	
Fortis Institute - Nashville	3354 Perimeter Hill Drive Nashville, TN 37211	1013772	Practical Nursing	$28,645.00	60 Weeks	Licensed Practical Nurse	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Healthcare	
Nashville State Community College	120 White Bridge Road Nashville, TN 37209	1013798	Registered Behavior Technician Training and Practice Competency Assessment (GES1124)	$1,494.00	12 Weeks	RBT	Bright Outlook Nationally	Healthcare	
Former Programs Requiring Board Approval for ETPL Addition									
Provider Name	**Provider Main Address**	**Program ID**	**Program Name**	**Total Cost**	**Program Length**	**Credential Earned**	**Job Outlook**	**Sector Strategy**	**Notes**
Nashville State Community College	120 White Bridge Road Nashville, TN 37209	1009443	Associate Professional in Human Resources (aPHR) (PTBUS3055)	$1,599.00	135 Hours (self-paced)	aPHR	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Professional	Cost increase from $1,124 to $1,599.00
Nashville State Community College	120 White Bridge Road Nashville, TN 37209	96015	Cisco CCNA Certification Training (Voucher Included) (Online) (GES3109)	$2,915.00	1 year	Certified Networking Associate	Bright Outlook Locally & Nationally	Information Technology	Missed subsequent review 12/2025
Nashville State Community College	120 White Bridge Road Nashville, TN 37209	96388	Pharmacy Technician (Voucher Included) (Online) (GES117)	$3,398.00	1 year	CPT	Bright Outlook Locally	Healthcare	Missed subsequent review 12/2025. Negative performance report for PY25

1. Purpose and Intermediary Designation

ABC Greater Tennessee will serve as a performance-based construction apprenticeship intermediary for TDLWD. Grant funds are proposed specifically to create a welding training laboratory that will expand access to structured construction apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways. The project includes building out of the lab space, ventilation and air systems, welding booths and equipment, curriculum, testing, and participant supplies.

The Department will evaluate ABC Greater Tennessee based on timely delivery of an operational, safe, and apprenticeship-ready welding laboratory; responsible use of grant funds; measurable access for apprentices and pre-apprentices; employer engagement; and the project's capacity to support sustainable welding and masonry training pathways.

2. Minimum Performance Expectations

ABC Greater Tennessee will be expected to meet or exceed the following negotiated outcomes during the grant period:

Performance Measure	Minimum Expectation
Welding laboratory	Complete and operational
Ventilation and air system	Installed and operational
Welding lab booths	10 equipped booths
Welding capacity	20/night; up to 80/week
Masonry capacity	Up to 80/week when launched
ABC employer engagement	At least 3 initial members
Priority-population participation	At least 50% served
Apprenticeship convenings	2 substantive each quarter

Capacity measures reflect the laboratory's maximum instructional capacity and are not an enrollment guarantee. Actual enrollment, participation, retention, completion, and transition outcomes will be tracked against the approved Performance Schedule.

3. Funding and Project Parameters

The applicant estimates the total cost to create the welding laboratory at approximately $100,000, with the majority of the investment expected to support the ventilation and air system. Final funding, scope, and approved line items will be established through negotiation and the executed grant agreement.

Grant funds may support the approved laboratory buildout and apprenticeship-related costs, including:

- Ventilation, air, and other approved laboratory infrastructure costs
- Welding booths, equipment, tools, supplies, and safety-related materials
- Curriculum and required testing, estimated by the applicant at approximately $150 per student
- Instructional materials and consumable supplies required for participant training
- Other reasonable, necessary, and approved costs directly related to establishing and operating the lab

ABC Greater Tennessee reports that participants will not be required to purchase supplies because required supplies will be included as part of the program's tuition and member-supported training model.

4. Grant Administration and Reimbursement Responsibilities

As the primary grant recipient, ABC Greater Tennessee will be responsible for administering grant funds and reimbursing approved costs incurred in accordance with the executed grant agreement. The Intermediary must establish appropriate fiscal controls and reimbursement procedures to:

- Verify recipient, vendor, and participant eligibility, as applicable
- Confirm that costs are allowable, reasonable, documented, and incurred within the grant period
- Review and validate invoices, receipts, payroll records, and other supporting documentation before reimbursement
- Maintain records sufficient to substantiate all expenditures and reimbursement requests
- Monitor any subrecipient or partner expenditures, performance, and compliance
- Ensure that equipment and supplies purchased with grant funds are tracked, safeguarded, and used for approved apprenticeship purposes

5. Budget Requirements

- Administrative Costs: No more than 10% of the total grant budget may be used for allowable administrative costs.
- Participant and Project Costs: At least 90% of the total grant budget must support approved direct participant, laboratory, training, equipment, supplies, curriculum, testing, and program-delivery costs.

All expenditures are subject to applicable State and federal requirements and the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

6. Reporting Requirements

ABC Greater Tennessee must comply with all reporting requirements established by TDLWD and all applicable laws, regulations, grant terms, and State instructions. Required reporting may include financial, programmatic, participant, laboratory-development, and performance information sufficient to:

- Account for grant funds received, obligated, expended, and remaining
- Document laboratory buildout milestones, procurement, installation, and readiness for instruction
- Track participant enrollment, services, priority-population participation, and outcomes
- Track employer engagement, apprenticeship development, and partner activity
- Demonstrate compliance with the approved budget and asset-management requirements
- Support TDLWD monitoring, site visits, and grant oversight

Reports must be complete, accurate, properly documented, and submitted within established deadlines.

7. Intermediary Roles and Responsibilities

ABC Greater Tennessee will retain responsibility for the overall management, coordination, compliance, and successful execution of the funded laboratory and apprenticeship initiative. Responsibilities include:

- Serving as the official point of contact for TDLWD
- Managing and overseeing all grant-funded activities, including activities performed by subrecipients and partners
- Ensuring compliance with applicable State and federal laws, regulations, grant requirements, and Department guidance
- Submitting required financial, performance, and programmatic reports accurately and on time
- Maintaining fiscal accountability and ensuring the appropriate use, safeguarding, and inventory control of grant-funded equipment
- Coordinating employers, apprenticeship sponsors, training providers, and workforce partners
- Managing performance toward established laboratory, enrollment, retention, completion, and employment outcomes
- Leading sustainability efforts beyond the grant period

8. Eligible Participants

To participate in grant-funded apprenticeship activities, an individual must be at least 16 years of age, legally authorized to work in the United States, and meet the entry requirements of the applicable apprenticeship occupation, as established by the employer or program sponsor. Eligible participants may include new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers, incumbent workers seeking to upskill or advance, and individuals transitioning from education or training into employment.

9. Welding Laboratory and Construction Training Expectations

The grant-funded project is intended to create instructional capacity that does not currently exist. ABC Greater Tennessee must deliver a safe, functional welding laboratory capable of supporting welding instruction for up to 20 students per evening, with ten welding booths and an anticipated maximum capacity of up to 80 students per week when operated four evenings per week.

The laboratory development must include ventilation and air systems appropriate to the proposed training environment and all equipment necessary for approved instruction. ABC Greater Tennessee must provide TDLWD with documentation supporting procurement, installation, safety, equipment inventory, and readiness for use before the laboratory is treated as complete.

10. Welding and Masonry Pathway Development

ABC Greater Tennessee reports that the proposed welding laboratory will also enable access to lease-authorized space for a masonry training program. The masonry pathway is expected to create additional capacity of up to 80 students per week when launched. The Department will evaluate whether ABC Greater Tennessee converts this capacity into sustainable apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, rather than measuring success solely by facility completion.

11. Priority Populations and Equitable Access

ABC Greater Tennessee must intentionally recruit, serve, and support individuals who have historically faced barriers to employment, training, and career advancement. Priority populations include low-income individuals; individuals residing in rural or underserved communities; veterans; justice-involved individuals; individuals with disabilities; individuals with limited work experience or educational attainment; and youth and young adults disconnected from school or employment.

ABC Greater Tennessee must achieve at least 50% priority-population participation, consistent with the negotiated performance expectations. The Intermediary must describe recruitment, supportive-service coordination, retention, and transition strategies that support equitable access and participant success.

12. Participant Expectations

Participants must be enrolled in a structured apprenticeship or State-Certified Pre-Apprenticeship Program and participate in required work-based learning and related technical instruction, as applicable. During the apprenticeship portion of the program, participants must be employed as W-2 employees; 1099 or independent-contractor employment is not permitted.

13. Sustainability Expectations

The laboratory, employer partnerships, and construction training pathways must be designed to continue beyond the grant period. Grant funds are intended to establish durable training capacity, employer engagement, and apprenticeship infrastructure rather than a short-term activity dependent solely on continued State funding.

14. Performance Accountability and Monitoring

ABC Greater Tennessee will be responsible for achieving the performance measures established in the approved Scope of Work and Performance Schedule. TDLWD will conduct ongoing monitoring, with formal performance reviews occurring quarterly. Monitoring may include review of:

- Laboratory development, procurement, installation, and operational readiness
- Equipment inventory, safeguarding, use, and maintenance
- Employer engagement and apprenticeship sponsorship
- Participant enrollment, priority-population participation, retention, completion, credential attainment, and employment outcomes
- Geographic reach, including rural and underserved communities
- Required intermediary convenings
- Grant expenditures, expenditure rate, and progress toward approved project goals

Performance below established benchmarks may result in a corrective action plan, modification of deliverables, adjustment of funding, or other remedies permitted under the grant agreement.

15. Recapture and Reallocation of Funds

TDLWD reserves the right to recapture and reallocate awarded funds during the period of performance based on project performance, expenditure rates, demonstrated need, and progress toward approved outcomes. TDLWD may reduce an award or recapture all or a portion of unobligated funds when a recipient fails to expend funds at an acceptable rate, fails to meet established performance expectations, significantly delays laboratory completion, demonstrates insufficient progress toward approved goals, or indicates that awarded funds will not be fully utilized during the grant period.

Recaptured funds may be reallocated to grant recipients that demonstrate capacity to meet or exceed performance expectations and serve additional eligible participants. TDLWD retains sole discretion to determine when recapture or reallocation is appropriate.

16. Capital Asset and Closeout Requirements

All grant-funded equipment, tools, and other capital assets must be inventoried, safeguarded, maintained, and used solely for approved grant purposes. ABC Greater Tennessee must comply with all grant-agreement requirements concerning asset records, monitoring access, disposition, and closeout. TDLWD may require an equipment inventory, final performance report, final expenditure report, and documentation of laboratory operation as conditions of closeout.

17. Departmental Performance Standard

TDLWD's evaluation of ABC Greater Tennessee will extend beyond completion of grant-funded construction and equipment purchases. Successful performance will require demonstrated delivery of a safe, operational laboratory and measurable progress toward sustainable construction apprenticeship outcomes.

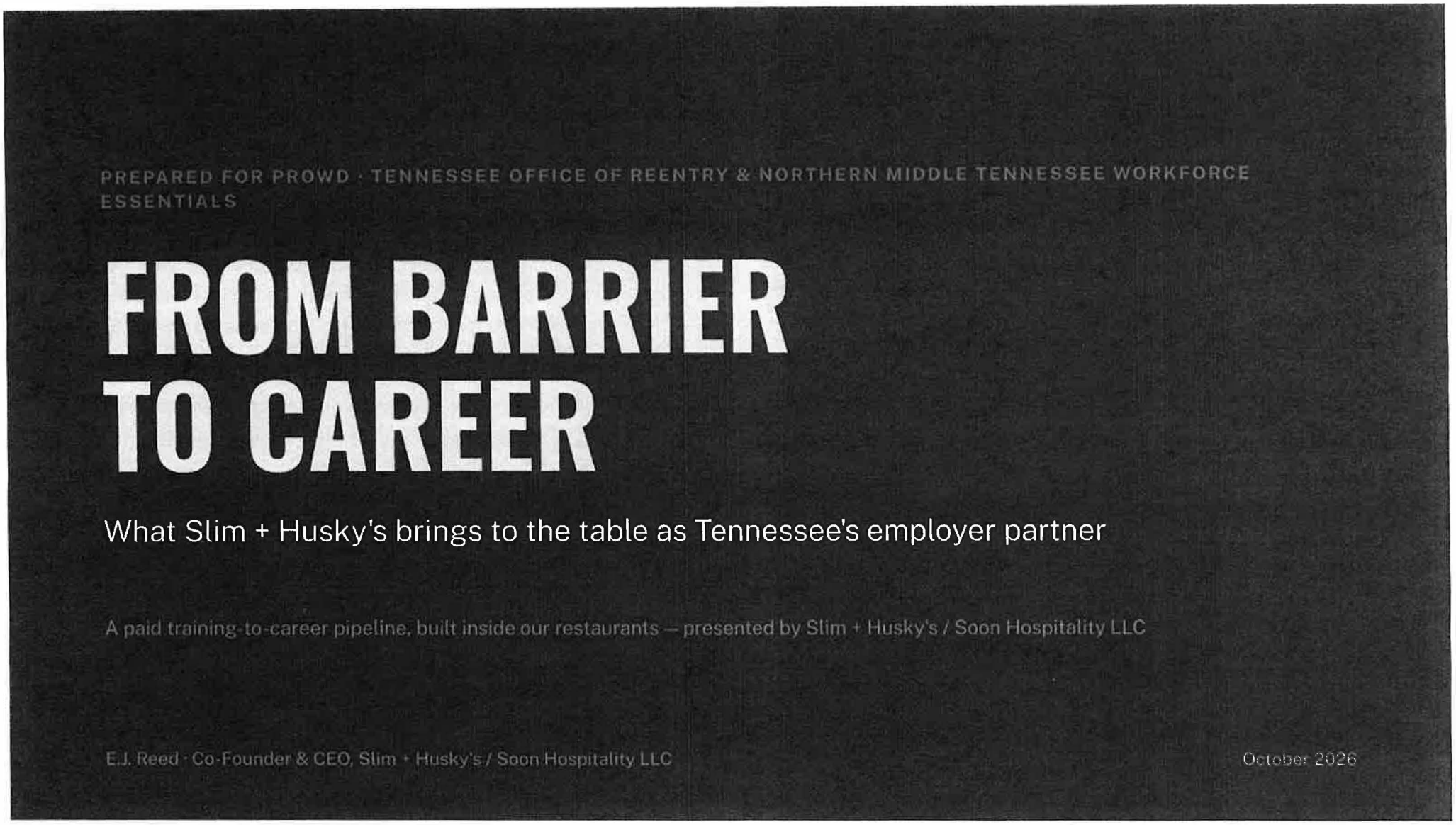
- Completion and operational readiness of the welding laboratory
- Installation of ventilation, air, safety, and other approved laboratory systems
- Ten equipped welding booths available for instruction
- Documented instructional capacity of up to 20 students per night and up to 80 students per week across four evenings
- Development or expansion of welding and masonry apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship pathways
- Engagement of at least three initial ABC member employers and continued construction-sector outreach
- At least 50% participation by priority populations
- Documented participant enrollment, retention, completion, credential, and employment outcomes
- Responsible and timely expenditure of grant funds
- Completion of two substantive apprenticeship-specific intermediary convenings each quarter
- Sustained use of the laboratory and related pathways beyond the grant period

Achievement of negotiated laboratory-delivery milestones, fiscal stewardship, timely expenditures, accurate reporting, employer engagement, participant access, and measurable construction workforce outcomes will serve as the foundation for TDLWD's assessment of ABC Greater Tennessee's intermediary performance.

Negotiation Note

The $100,000 estimated laboratory cost, participant capacity estimates, and identified funding uses are based on the applicant's proposal and are subject to final budget review, allowability determinations, and the executed grant agreement.

Scope of Service



WHO WE ARE

BUILT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, GROWN ACROSS THE SOUTH

Slim + Husky's Pizza Beeria was founded in North Nashville in 2017 by three childhood friends and former college athletes — built on the belief that a brand from the neighborhood should create opportunity in the neighborhood.

Today we operate across Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi — including HBCU and university campus partnerships (Morehouse, Belmont, University of Memphis) and airport licensing — with more units in development.

2017
founded in North Nashville by three co-founders — equal partners in every venture

11+
locations across three states, plus campus and airport units

James Beard
Award semifinalist recognition for the brand's culinary work

EY Finalist
Entrepreneur of the Year finalist (Southeast) — operators who teach what they practice

THE WORKFORCE PATHWAY

A CONTINUUM, NOT A SINGLE TRAINING PROGRAM

01 · PROWD

Recruitment & Assessment

Referrals, eligibility screening and intake

02 · PERSEVERE

Digital Hospitality

ServSafe, OSHA 10 and customer-service hospitality credentials

03 · SLIM + HUSKY'S

Pre-Apprenticeship

12 weeks inside our restaurants, paid from day one

04 · SLIM + HUSKY'S

Paid Work-Based Learning

240 flo $15/hour

05 · SLIM + HUSKY'S

Employment / Apprentice-Ready Track

Hired at our units; every graduate earns a guaranteed apprenticeship interview; OSHA 30

06 · SLIM + HUSKY'S · APPRENTICESHIP TN

Registered Restaurant Manager Apprenticeship

Salaried management track, journeyworker-supervised

07 · THE DESTINATION

Management & Leadership

GM, multi-unit leadership — or ownership

Each stage is a separate step with its own entry and completion requirements — finishing one prepares a participant for the next. Participants can enter through different doors; the pathway never changes.

One employer pathway · multiple populations · multiple workforce resources · one career strategy

07

THE PROGRAM

TWELVE WEEKS, PAID FROM DAY ONE

276
total program hours per participant

$15/hr
wage across every hour — work and classroom alike

240
hours of paid work-based learning on the floor

36
paid instructional hours — the classes on the next slide

How it runs

- 25 participants at launch, in small rolling cohorts — recruit, train, place, evaluate, adjust, repeat
- Rotations through every restaurant function: dough and sauce production, line, service, front of house, closing operations
- Every rotation mapped to the competencies of our Tennessee Registered Apprenticeship
- Graduates move into employment and the apprentice-ready track at our units

A real paycheck in a real restaurant — training that is already a job

ADVANCEMENT

ENTRY IS THE FIRST RUNG — AND EVERY RUNG PAYS

Role	Timing	Pay
Pre-apprentice	12 weeks	$15/hour, every hour
Team member → shift lead (apprentice-ready track)	3–9 months	$17–$20/hour
Registered Apprentice, Restaurant Manager	Entry	$65,000
After two competencies	Target month 6	**$70,000**
After five competencies	Target month 12	$75,000
Restaurant Manager (journeyworker)	About month 24	$75k+
GM, multi-unit leadership — or ownership	Years 3 and beyond	Management scale or equity

Aimed at Tennessee's two biggest demand areas: the state projects Food Preparation & Serving to add **8,456 jobs** through 2027 — the most of any occupational group — and Management to add **6,966 more**. Restaurant Business 101 and food truck operations open a third door: ownership.

Sources: Soon Hospitality Registered Apprenticeship wage schedule · TN Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development, LMR Feb 2026

ADDENDUM A · BUDGET AT $15/HOUR

DIRECT COST PER PARTICIPANT

Wages & payroll — paid by the program

Work-based learning — 240 hrs × $15	$3,600
Paid instruction — 36 hrs × $15	$540
Payroll taxes & workers' comp (11%)	$455
Wages subtotal	$4,595

Supports, gear & training

Transportation (annual transit pass)	$50
Emergency assistance cap	$400
Kitchen equipment, tools & uniform	$450
Background check	$40
Training manual, supplies & materials	$85
Certifications	$210
Software subscriptions	$35
Professional development & customer-service training	$100
Supports subtotal	$1,370

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RURAL WORKS

$2 MILLION
TOTAL FUNDING

A targeted investment to help rural businesses turn workforce challenges into workforce solutions.

Program Purposes

The Rural Works initiative supports businesses in rural Tennessee as they expand training, strengthen their workforce, and prepare employees for the opportunities ahead. The initiative is designed to help employers build practical, industry-aligned talent solutions across multiple sectors.

Goals

- Expand access to high-quality training and work-based learning
- Upskill current employees and strengthen staff capabilities
- Increase access to industry-aligned credentials and career pathways
- Assist employers in responding to changing workforce needs with customized solutions
- Advance workforce outcomes in rural communities

General Allowable Activities

Funding may support employer-led activities that directly address documented workforce needs, including:

- Customized training designed around an employer's specific needs
- Employee upskilling, reskilling, boot camps, and incumbent-worker training
- Training that leads to industry-recognized credentials or certifications
- Expansion of employer training capacity
- Other allowable activities that improve access to employment and advancement opportunities

The Opportunity Ahead

Rural Works put state funding into action for Tennessee's rural communities. It allows Tennesseans across the state to gain skills, it helps businesses grow, and rural communities build a stronger workforce for the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT **TNWORKS.COM**

The TNWorks Talent Accelerator offers a central hub where employers can share their workforce needs, connect with training providers, and begin the enrollment process for grant-supported training opportunities.

The Talent Accelerator currently includes the following programs:

- **TN Talent**: TN Talent enables Tennessee-based employers to tap into $5 million in workforce funding through the U.S. Department of Labor's Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund to expand employer-driven workforce training programs in nuclear energy, AI infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing. Employers can apply to offset the cost of incumbent worker training in these high-demand fields, for both new hires and incumbent workers.
- **Rural Works**: The Rural Works initiative supports businesses in rural Tennessee as they expand training, strengthen their workforce, and prepare employees for the opportunities ahead. This $2 million investment is designed to help employers in rural communities build practical, industry-aligned talent solutions across multiple sectors.

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
220 French Landing Drive
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-6642

Bill Lee
GOVERNOR

Deniece Thomas
COMMISSIONER

September 21, 2026

Dear Mayors, Local Workforce Development Board Chairs, and Local Workforce Development Board Directors,

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to strengthening Tennessee's workforce system. Your leadership at the local and regional levels remains essential to ensuring that Tennesseans have access to high-quality workforce development services and that employers have the talent they need to thrive.

On August 28, 2026, the State Workforce Development Board voted to establish a regional workforce board governance structure. That decision remains in place; however, after careful review, the Department has determined that additional time is needed to ensure a smooth and effective operational rollout.

While the Board's decision stands, we are actively refining and strengthening the operational components of the regional model. This work is underway, but more time is needed to address outstanding structural, administrative, and procedural considerations prior to full implementation. We are committed to building a regional structure that supports local needs, enhances service delivery, and aligns with statewide workforce priorities—and doing so requires thoughtful sequencing, clear guidance, and thorough coordination.

Importantly, as we continue refining the operational elements of the regional governance model, **our commitment to preserving a strong local voice remains unwavering**. Local elected officials, Local Workforce Development Boards, and community partners play a vital role in shaping workforce priorities, and that role will not be minimized under any updated governance structure. We also recognize **the distinct needs of Tennessee's rural communities, and any operational adjustments will be thoughtfully designed to ensure that rural counties are fully supported and well-represented throughout this transition.**

Accordingly, we will be **delaying the operational rollout of the regional workforce boards**. During this period, existing local workforce development board governance structures will remain in place, and we will continue working closely with all partners to design a transition plan that is practical, collaborative, and fully informed by stakeholder input.

In the coming weeks, the Department will provide updated timelines, implementation guidance, and engagement opportunities to ensure that all partners—state, regional, and local—have the clarity and support needed for a successful transition.

Thank you again for your leadership and for your continued dedication to Tennessee's workforce system. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Deniece Thomas
Commissioner