



Special Populations Committee

April 30, 2026

11:00 A.M.

[Click here for Zoom link](#)

Meeting ID: 830 2665 8607

Passcode: 894650

One tap mobile: +13126266799,,83026658607# US

Agenda

Welcome

Call the Meeting to Order

Approval of Minutes

Business Reports:

1. WIOA Report
 - a. Career Service Provider
 - b. AJC Closure Update
2. Employer Grants
 - a. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)
 - b. Apprenticeship
 - c. Healthcare IWT
3. Target Populations
 - a. Community Reentry Reinvestment Grant (CRRG)
4. New Grant Opportunities
 - a. Rural Healthcare
 - b. Youth Employment Program (YEP)
5. 26-27 WIOA Plan Modification
6. WorkSource Summit May 12-13, 2026

Adjourn

Members:

Corey Johns
Freda Herndon (Chair)
George "Bo" Callis
Mary Lear
Nathan Garrett
Jordan Osborne

Complete zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83026658607?pwd=OHFxoEqHnaFUniQyJhjs2yRyqnQu6a.1>



**DRAFT UNTIL
APPROVED**

**Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board
 Special Populations Committee
 Meeting Minutes
 February 5, 2026, via Zoom at 11:00 a.m.**

Members Attending	Members Absent	Staff & Guests Attending
Corey Johns	Jordan Osborne	Marla Rye
Freda Herndon		Andrea Dillard
George “Bo” Callis		Ginger Fussell
Mary Lear		Kim Rye
Nathan Garrett		Alyssa Spaulding
Brandon Phinx		Meagan Dobbins
Kristi Spurgeon		

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Special Populations Committee met via Zoom on February 5, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. With a quorum confirmed, Freda Herndon called the meeting to order. Bo Callis moved to approve the minutes, and Mary Lear seconded. With no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

CSP Performace

Andrea Dillard reviewed career service provider performance Q2 goals, noting that while enrollment activity was strong in Q1, with adult enrollments exceeding expectations, but has since slowed during the second quarter. She explained that some fluctuation is typical during this time of year due to reduced traffic in the career centers over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday period. She also noted recent office closures and ongoing road conditions have likely impacted activity over the past two weeks, which staff will work to recover moving forward.

To strengthen enrollment activity, staff are implementing several strategies. Efforts are underway to increase coordination with training vendors, particularly short-term training providers, to generate more direct referrals into the program. Andrea also emphasized the importance of maintaining strong expenditure levels alongside enrollments, noting the need to support participant cost rates. To assist with this, the allowable training investment per participant has been increased from \$2,500 to \$4,000, with additional supportive services available as needed. Megan and Natalie are monitoring enrollment activity on a weekly basis to track progress and provide support to staff in areas where additional focus is needed. This approach is intended to strengthen consistency across service delivery and ensure progress

toward upcoming quarterly targets. Andrea reported that overall performance remains strong, with exits, placements, and wage outcomes all meeting benchmarks and continuing on track.

Marla Rye added that Natalie will present a corrective action plan at the next meeting outlining strategies to further support enrollment growth. She noted that encouraging participation in training can be more complex given the availability of Pell-funded programs in Tennessee, particularly with the anticipated expansion of Pell eligibility to short-term training, and staff are working to position services effectively within that environment. Andrea then provided a brief update on federal performance, noting that one measure is below target, related to second quarter youth median earnings after exit. She clarified that performance standards presented at the previous meeting reflected first-year targets and had not yet been updated to the higher second-year negotiated levels. The current standards are more rigorous, with the youth earnings target set at approximately \$6,200 compared to the state target of \$5,548. While the measure is currently below target, staff are reviewing supplemental data that may be submitted prior to finalization. She noted that final numbers will be confirmed in the coming weeks and may still reflect a slight shortfall. Preliminary third quarter data was also noted but is not yet complete and is expected to change as additional data is received. Freda Herndon asked how local standards compare to other workforce areas across the state. Andrea confirmed that in most cases, NM's performance standards are higher than the state benchmarks, with only a small number of measures aligned or lower.

Employer Grants, New Grant Opportunities

Andrea then transitioned to an overview of employer-focused grants and workforce initiatives currently in progress. She began with incumbent worker training, noting that the board allocated \$300K, representing 20% of WIOA funds, to support employer training needs. To date, the majority of those funds have been obligated, with approximately \$73K remaining, supporting an estimated 10 to 12 employers. She reviewed the state apprenticeship grant totaling \$480K, with nearly all funds obligated and only a minimal balance remaining. Both the incumbent worker and apprenticeship grants must be fully expended by the end of June.

Andrea introduced a new healthcare-focused incumbent worker training grant received in mid-December in partnership with the Tennessee Hospital Association. The grant is being administered on a broader scale, supporting healthcare entities across the state. Eight employers have submitted applications, with contracts currently in development, the majority of which are located within the Northern Middle region. Marla added that this initiative directly followed discussions at the November board meeting regarding the need to strengthen relationships between workforce boards and hospitals. In response, staff pursued a statewide opportunity, coordinating with the Department of Labor and engaging hospital partners through the Tennessee Hospital Association. She noted that the effort has already resulted in strong engagement and will include outreach to connect participating hospitals with their respective local workforce boards.

Andrea continued with an update on the Community Reentry Reinvestment Grant, which supports justice-involved individuals. Activities are currently underway in Humphreys County in

partnership with TCAT Dickson, local government, and economic development partners. A forklift training program has already been completed successfully, and additional training in flooring installation, including carpet, tile, and vinyl, is scheduled to begin soon. A second component of the grant is being implemented in Rutherford County in partnership with TCAT Murfreesboro and Nissan. This initiative focuses on work readiness and advanced manufacturing training for justice-involved individuals, with instruction taking place on the Nissan campus. The program is expected to begin in late February or early March. She also provided an update on the PROWD grant, which serves individuals transitioning from the federal prison system in Davidson County. The program is on track to serve 60 participants by September 2027, with 26 individuals currently enrolled. Services include training, work readiness, and supportive services to assist with successful reentry into the workforce. She concluded with an update on a pending federal apprenticeship grant application under the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula program. Awards are expected to be announced soon, with funding anticipated to support employer-based apprenticeship programs in targeted sectors such as IT, advanced manufacturing, construction, and transportation. If awarded, funding will be available through June 2027.

Andrea noted that, in addition to regular annual funding streams, the organization is currently managing multiple employer-focused initiatives simultaneously, reflecting a significant level of activity across workforce programs. Current participation includes 13 local employers engaged in incumbent worker training and 10 employers participating in apprenticeship programs. Marla highlighted the success of the healthcare partnership initiative, noting that funding was fully obligated within approximately one and a half weeks and includes participation from major healthcare systems such as Vanderbilt and Ascension Saint Thomas. She also shared updates on program implementation, including completion of a 20-participant forklift training cohort through the reentry program, upcoming launch of the flooring training initiative, and the start of the Nissan work readiness program scheduled for early March. Marla acknowledged the volume of activity currently underway and expressed confidence that these efforts will contribute to improved performance outcomes moving forward. She also noted that recent office closures due to weather impacted normal operations, although staff continued working remotely to maintain case management and administrative functions. She reiterated that staff remain focused on increasing enrollment and performance metrics in the coming weeks.

Freda Herndon asked for an update on staffing across the American Job Centers. Marla confirmed that the centers are now fully staffed, with only one remaining vacancy. She noted that a broader discussion on facility strategy and service delivery will take place at the next meeting, including potential recommendations regarding the American Job Center footprint beginning in July. Marla also shared that the state is undergoing organizational changes that will require American Job Center staff to reapply for positions, with a shift toward a regional staffing model that includes travel across multiple counties. She noted that this approach aligns with the direction local operations may take moving forward.

Bo Callis asked about the effectiveness of pilot outreach efforts. Marla clarified that outreach activities conducted at community partner locations, including libraries, TCAT campuses, and

community centers, have been productive and are reaching individuals who may not otherwise access services through traditional American Job Center locations. Bo then asked about the performance of centers previously operated by the state. Marla reported that the Sumner County center has experienced challenges and remains an area of focus for improvement during the third quarter. She noted that the state is no longer serving in a management role for Title I programs at that location and currently has limited staff presence. While the center remains designated as a comprehensive site, continued operation will depend on improved performance outcomes.

Freda asked about the outlook for program funding for Program Year 2026–2027. Marla reported that current expectations are for level funding, which she noted would be a positive outcome given prior reductions. She highlighted continued state investment in key initiatives, including the Tennessee Youth Employment Program, which has been funded at \$8M, as well as additional support for reentry programming. Marla expressed confidence in the state’s efforts to supplement federal funding with state resources and indicated that overall funding stability is anticipated across programs, including apprenticeship initiatives.

Adjourn

Marla reiterated that staff remain focused on improving performance outcomes and encouraged board members to attend the upcoming meeting in Clarksville, scheduled for 11:30 a.m., which will include a presentation from the Department of Labor on the Tennessee Works initiative. With no further questions, the meeting adjourned.

**WIOA Federal Reporting Score Card
NORTHERN MIDDLE WORKFORCE BOARD**

PY25 WIOA Core Performance Measures	Targets 100%	Targets 90%	Q1	Q2	Q3
			PY 25	PY 25	PY 25
Adult Measures			PASS	PASS	EST
Exiters			861	869	
Participants Served			2274	2241	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	85.0%	76.50%	81.7%	78.4%	79.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	84.5%	76.05%	83.8%	83.6%	80.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after exit	8,600	\$ 7,740	\$ 10,156	\$ 9,363	\$ 9,739
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	75.0%	67.50%	77.0%	76.7%	67.9%
Measurable Skills Gains	73.5%	66.15%	67.9%	73.5%	66.8%
Dislocated Worker			PASS	PASS	EST
Exiters			499	412	
Participants Served			713	664	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	87.0%	78.30%	89.2%	89.3%	87.6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	86.5%	77.85%	87.7%	85.8%	87.6%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after exit	10,600	\$ 9,540	\$ 12,164	\$ 11,967	\$ 12,037
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	69.6%	62.64%	74.8%	75.9%	75.6%
Measurable Skills Gains	74.4%	66.96%	88.4%	86.3%	66.6%
Youth			FAIL	FAIL	EST
Exiters			508	451	
Participants Served			937	904	
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit	88.0%	79.20%	81.4%	83.0%	84.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after exit	85.8%	77.22%	82.1%	83.2%	82.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after exit	6,200	\$ 5,580	\$ 5,577	\$ 5,351	\$ 5,711
Credential Attainment w/in 4 Quarters after exit	75.8%	68.22%	79.3%	78.0%	76.7%
Measurable Skills Gains	62.0%	55.80%	66.9%	70.5%	63.7%
GREEN-Passing at 100% of Goal					
YELLOW-Passing at 90% of goal					
Red-Failing at less than 90% of goal					

WFE PY 25-26 Quarterly Benchmarks

Matrix:		2025						2026					
		Sep 30 (QTR 1)			Dec. 30 (QTR 2)			Mar. 31 (QTR 3)			Cumulative June 30		
		Goal	Actual	%	Goal	Actual	%	Goal	Actual	%	Goal	Actual	%
Enrollments	Adult	131	169	129.01%	137	94	68.61%	135	190	140.74%	540	454	84.1%
	DW	69	33	47.83%	78	34	43.59%	73	52	71.23%	298	119	39.9%
	In-School	22	17	77.27%	23	7	30.43%	23	27	117.39%	91	50	54.9%
	Out-School	42	48	114.29%	43	32	74.42%	43	48	111.63%	179	129	72.1%
	Total	264	267	101.14%	281	167	59.43%	274	317	115.69%	1108	752	67.9%
*Exits (80% of enrollments)	Adult	105	111	105.92%	110	150	136.86%	108	92	85.19%	432	374	86.6%
	DW	55	27	48.91%	62	67	107.37%	58	39	66.78%	238	139	58.4%
	Youth	51	95	185.55%	53	54	102.27%	53	38	71.97%	210	193	92.1%
		Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent
Positive Exits # (85% of Exits)	Adult	89	96	107.77%	93	131	140.6%	92	81	88.2%	367	314	85.5%
	DW	47	24	51.15%	53	59	111.2%	50	35	70.5%	202	118	58.3%
	Youth	44	83	190.72%	45	49	109.2%	45	34	75.8%	178	169	94.9%
		Exits	Positive	Percent	Exits	Positive	Percent	Exits	Actual	Percent	Exits	Positive	Percent
**Actual Positive Exit Rate	Adult	111	96	86.49%	150	131	87.3%	92	81	88.0%	374	314	84.0%
	DW	27	24	88.89%	67	59	88.1%	39	35	89.7%	139	118	84.9%
	Youth	95	83	87.37%	54	49	90.7%	38	34	89.5%	193	169	87.6%
		Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent	Goal	Actual	Percent
Placement Wage	Adult	\$ 16.50	\$ 20.10	121.82%	\$ 16.50	\$ 18.40	111.5%	\$ 16.50	\$ 18.80	113.9%	\$ 16.50	\$ 19.08	115.6%
	DW	\$ 16.50	\$ 26.15	158.48%	\$ 16.50	\$ 29.29	177.5%	\$ 16.50	\$ 23.01	139.5%	\$ 16.50	\$ 26.15	158.5%
	Youth	\$ 13.00	\$ 18.15	139.62%	\$ 13.00	\$ 15.85	121.9%	\$ 13.00	\$ 15.56	119.7%	\$ 13.00	\$ 16.71	128.5%



**Northern Middle Tennessee
Workforce Board Inc.**

March 9, 2026

Mr. Jason Cecil, Assistant Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Services
220 French Landing Dr.
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Commissioner Cecil:

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board met on February 11, 2026. At this meeting, the Board voted to close the following American Job Centers as of 6/30/2026:

1. Cheatham County AJC
384 South Main Street
Ashland City, TN 37015
2. Houston County AJC
155 West Front Street
Erin, TN 37061
3. Humphreys County AJC
711 Holly Lane
Waverly, TN 37185
4. Robertson County AJC
299 10th Avenue East
Springfield, TN 37172
5. Stewart County AJC
1356 Donelson Parkway
Dover, TN 3758
6. Trousdale County AJC
204 McMurry Blvd
Hartsville, TN 37074



**Northern Middle Tennessee
Workforce Board Inc.**

7. Williamson County AJC
118 Seaboard Lane
Franklin, TN 37064

8. Wilson County AJC
415 Tennessee Blvd
Lebanon, TN 37087

The Board has been studying the effectiveness of the AJCs in terms of cost, activities and service delivery for close to a year. We did not make these decisions lightly or without sound justification. We will be maintaining five centers in Northern Middle. The four comprehensive centers in Davison, Montgomery, Rutherford and Sumner, along with an affiliate in Dickson County will remain open.

We will work with your communication office, as well as the local elected officials, to provide clear instructions on how to receive services in the impacted counties. I appreciate your guidance as we work through any issues that arise. Please note in some of the counties, Workforce Essentials may keep an office open, however, it will not be an American Job Center. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 931.905.3500 or 931.206.3783.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marla W. Rye". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Marla W. Rye

Northern Middle Program Year July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grants (07.01.2025 - 06.30.2026)

	County Location	Employer	UEI		Employees Trained	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Amount	Amount Expended
1	Rutherford	Wearwell LLC	WK45GXBXGEQ5		21	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	\$24,810.08
2	Sumner	Food Warming Equipment Company	G96NQNEWP5B7		7	07.15.2025	08.31.2026	\$6,695.00	
3	Davidson	Coca-Cola Consolidated Inc	EVMRM7AZGAC6		5	08.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$7,008.00	
4	Williamson	Williamson Health	XBK7VSR1Q6W4		5	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$24,750.00	\$24,750.00
5	Williamson	Lifepoint Health, Inc	F8LV4N1GMX6		4	07.15.2025	05.31.2026	\$10,000.00	
6	Davidson	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	GYLH9UXHDX5		10	08.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	
7	Rutherford	RAWSO Constructors	XVYDUN2CH641		8	09.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$20,000.00	
8	Davidson	NomNomNow Inc.	WQDGMCMZK15		12	09.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$23,298.50	
9	Montgomery	LG Electronics	NNXTP28MF8T5		50	10.20.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	
10	Davidson	Nashville Boss	X4XMG5ECRVY5	contract modified 3/26/26	4	10.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	\$8,000.00
11	Cheatham	A.O. Smith	S4HBBQ7GTAW5		7	10.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$14,560.00	
12	Wilson	Lochinvar, Inc	K5M7EBRAGJG7		46	10.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$12,000.00	
13	Davidson	Interior Design Associates, Inc.	WJTVJJBCLBA8		17	12.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	
14	Davidson	Military Systems Group	SBYBHNZL5UJ1		3	03.02.2026	05.31.2026	\$5,045.00	
15	Montgomery	Rockwood Homes	QWN2RDSN5Q83		2	03.02.2026	05.31.2026	\$14,420.00	
16	Montgomery	Travis Electrical Service, LLC	MH4TZRQNL5D1		4	10.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	
17	Rutherford	Schwan Cosmetics USA, Inc.	W6DTG8ZMBH93		3	03.09.2026	05.31./2026	\$750.00	
18	Rutherford	Fessler & Bowman	NYPLTSQU9BB5		15	04.16.2026	05.31.2026	\$10,000.00	
					223			\$298,526.50	\$57,560.08

Board designated funds available: \$ 300,000.00

LWNMF261APSWA26 Apprenticeship Training Grants (07.01.2025 - 06.30.2026)

	County Location	Employer	UEI	Training	Employees Trained	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Amount	Amount Expended
1	Davidson	Pye Barker Fire & Safety	GMQ3MCMJANN1	Fire Alarm Inspection Test Maintenance Technician	7	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$17,500.00	\$17,500.00
2	Williamson	Trade In Demand d/b/a Skilled Workforce	CV4FKX1HHQX3	Pre-App Construction Careers	20	08.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$20,000.00	
3	Montgomery	Clarksville Montgomery Co School System (CMCSS)	QM24BH3KM7W7	Teacher	8	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
4	Rutherford	Rutherford County Schools	JTUXFTXDMWY6	Teacher	8	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
5	Davidson	A Action Air HVAC	N7AJA7EHAHC4	Project Manager	5	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$12,500.00	\$12,500.00
6	Robertson	Robertson County Schools	L54YG2NQ33U9	Teacher	8	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
7	Davidson	UpRise Nashville	DSUQCZEV4MV3	Office Administrator	5	07.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$12,500.00	
8	Rutherford	Cultivation Network, Inc.	X7B4WU2WPA59	Project Manager	2	11.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$5,000.00	\$2,500.00
9	Davidson	Nashville Electrical JATC	Q4EYWAB65B45	Journeyman Electrician	40	01.02.2026	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	
10	Montgomery	Travis Electrical Service, LLC	MH4TZRQNL5D1	Electrician	10	09.01.2025	05.31.2026	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
11	Williamson	Williamson Health	XBK7VSR1Q6W4	Pharmacy Tech	1	01.01.2026	95.31.2026	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
12									
					114			\$180,000.00	

State Apprenticeship Grant Amount Available: \$180,000.00

Healthcare Incumbent Worker Training Grant (12/15/2025 - 06.30.2026)

	County Location	Employer	UEI	Employees Trained	Employment Sector	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Amount	Amount Expended	Approval Required
1	Obion	Baptist Memorial Hospital	ZLU6LSLAJJ83	50	Healthcare			\$12,300.80		
2	Blount	Prisma Health Blount Memorial Hospital	UJ7ZFUKDH4M8	10	Healthcare			\$25,300.00		x
3	Williamson	Greystone Foster Care	RVYEQMCN9QL6	30	Healthcare/Foster Care			\$25,785.00		x
4	Hamilton	Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation	EEX9ZTU8KGN7	74	Healthcare/Rehabilitation			\$53,829.08		x
5	Davidson	Vanderbilt University Medical Center	GYLUH9UXHDX5	10	Healthcare			\$25,000.00		
6	Williamson	Williamson Health	XBK7VSR1Q6W4	5	Healthcare			\$24,750.00		
7	Davidson	Ascension St. Thomas Medical Partners	SB2KGYHQV4V5	25	Healthcare			\$25,000.00		
8	Davidson	Ascension St. Thomas Midtown	E6VYCNAGHK55	20	Healthcare			\$52,748.12		x
9	Williamson	HCA Health Services - Tristar Health	MLUNB46R9JM8	5	Healthcare			\$15,945.00		
10	Knox	Covenant Health	KD4NWRYYU68	6	Healthcare			\$50,000.00		x
11										
12										
TOTAL				235				\$310,658.00		
<i>Healthcare IWT Funds Available: \$244,713.00</i>										



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

March 16, 2026

Marla Rye
Northern Middle Tennessee
Workforce Board
523 Madison Street Suite A
Clarksville, TN 37040

Subject: Congratulations on Your RHWDI Application Submission - Award FOA-TN-RHCI-26-01

Dear Ms. Rye,

Congratulations! After careful review and consideration, we are pleased to inform you that your application for the Rural Healthcare Workforce Development Initiatives (RHWDI) has been conditionally approved for funding. This award is subject to negotiations as well as the terms and conditions of the fully executed contract. We are excited to support your efforts to expand healthcare training access in rural areas and we believe your proposal will have a meaningful impact. Based upon the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Rural Healthcare Workforce Initiatives funding allocations, Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board has been awarded the following:

Grant Funding Amount for Program Year - July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027: \$250,000.00

There are a few items in your application that require clarification. Additionally, we will need an updated cover page and updated budget to move forward with the funding process. We would like the opportunity to discuss these matters in more detail and guide you through the next steps. This virtual discussion will be held via Teams. The program director, fiscal director, and/or agency official with decision-making authority should be on the call (e.g., your executive leader, contracts signatory, etc.). See your scheduled time below:

Assigned Time: Monday, March 30, 2026, 11:00 AM-11:30 AM CST [Join HERE](#)

RHWDI plays a vital role in addressing the unique challenges faced by rural communities. We are confident that your initiative will strengthen the healthcare workforce in these areas. Please continue to pursue innovative solutions to improve the healthcare workforce.

Thank you once again for your interest in the Rural Healthcare Workforce Development Initiatives funding opportunity. Best wishes as you continue your efforts, and we are excited to be part of your journey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Rural Workforce Initiatives team at Rural.Workforce@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deniece Thomas - BCFT". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deniece Thomas
Commissioner, TDLWD
DT/ts

Middle Tennessee Regional & Northern Middle Local WIOA Plans Program Years 2026-2027 Modifications

The Local Workforce Development Areas of Middle TN, **Northern Middle** serving Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphrey, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson, **Southern Middle** serving Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne, and **Upper Cumberland** serving Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, and White Counties have completed the **modifications** for the Regional and Local Workforce Plans for the 2026-2027 program years.



The Middle TN Regional Plan and the Northern Middle Local Plan will be open for Public Comment April 10 to April 25, 2026, and will be available at any American Job Center in Middle TN on request or online at:

- Upper Cumberland Area: <https://www.ucwork.org/localregional-plan>
- Southern Middle Area: www.sctdd.org/notices/
- Northern Middle Area: <https://nm-wb.com/board/public-notices> or →



Please submit comments or questions to: Selina.Moore@tn.gov

A Virtual Public Listening Session for Middle Tennessee's Regional and Local WIOA Plans, including Northern Middle, will be held on

April 20, 2026, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM, CST

To attend the virtual meeting, click on the link or scan the QR Code below:

<https://bit.ly/4rXJZuh>



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



Northern Middle Workforce Board Plan Modifications (PY 2026–2027)

The Northern Middle (NM) Workforce WIOA Plan Modifications for PY 2026–2027 update the local strategy to align with the Tennessee State WIOA Plan modifications, the Middle Tennessee Regional Plan, and federal workforce priorities outlined in *America’s Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age*.

The plan advances a coordinated, employer-driven workforce system focused on increasing labor force participation, closing skill gaps, and supporting sustained economic growth.

Economic Context & Sector Alignment

Middle Tennessee continues to serve as a primary economic driver for the state, with growth concentrated in both metropolitan and surrounding counties. Consistent with the State WIOA Plan, the NM plan prioritizes Tennessee’s six targeted sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Logistics (Transportation & Distribution)
- Technology
- Construction
- Energy

These sectors reflect both current labor demand and long-term economic priorities at the state and federal levels. Additionally, tourism and hospitality remains a key driver in Northern Middle.

Key Workforce Challenges

Despite economic growth, the region faces persistent workforce challenges:

- Labor force participation gaps, particularly in rural areas
- Skill shortages in high-demand industries
- Barriers to employment (disability, justice involvement, youth disconnection, limited English proficiency)
- Uneven access to training and career pathways

These challenges align with federal findings that the workforce system must better connect workers to high-wage careers, expand participation, and improve system navigation and outcomes.

Strategic Priorities

The NM plan advances four core strategies aligned with state, regional, and federal priorities:

1. Increase Labor Force Participation (LFPR)

Focused outreach and service delivery target underrepresented populations, supported by expanded access, supportive services, and work-based learning. This aligns with federal priorities to bring more individuals into the labor force and improve worker mobility.

2. Strengthen Employer-Led Workforce System

The plan adopts a sector-based, employer-driven model consistent with both the Tennessee Business Engagement framework and federal emphasis on industry-driven workforce strategies that build reliable talent pipelines.

3. Align Training with Industry Demand

Investments prioritize industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships, and career pathways aligned with the six priority sectors. This reflects federal guidance to expand work-based learning and align training directly with employer needs.

4. Expand Worker Mobility

The plan increases access to services through mobile delivery, community partnerships, and targeted support for populations with barriers, consistent with federal priorities to improve workforce system access and outcomes. In addition, focus is prioritized to for worker mobility to include career guidance aimed at the benefits cliff and stranded and stalled workers through incumbent worker training.

Regional, State, and Federal Alignment

The NM Plan Modifications are fully aligned with:

- Middle Tennessee Regional Plan Modifications (PY 2026–2027) through shared sector strategies and coordinated service delivery
- Tennessee State WIOA Plan modifications, particularly in LFPR growth, employer engagement, and performance accountability
- Federal workforce strategy (“America’s Talent Strategy”), including its five pillars:
 - Industry-driven workforce systems
 - Worker mobility and participation
 - Integrated service delivery
 - Performance accountability
 - Innovation and system flexibility



Performance & Accountability

The plan strengthens accountability through:

- Defined performance targets (LFPR growth, credential attainment, employment outcomes)
- Quarterly performance reviews and dashboard tracking
- Alignment with state benchmarks and regional tracking systems

This approach reflects federal emphasis on linking workforce investments to measurable outcomes and improving system accountability. Per TDLWD request, an outcome tracker will be developed after State Workforce Board approves the local plans.

Conclusion

The NM Plan Modifications position the region to deliver a modern, integrated, and employer-led workforce system. By aligning with state priorities, regional strategies, and federal workforce guidance, the plan supports increased labor force participation, stronger talent pipelines, and sustained economic growth across Middle Tennessee. The NM Workforce Area stands ready to innovate and implement state proposed waivers upon USDOL approval.



About Event

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development invites you to the **inaugural WorkSource Summit**, a new statewide gathering of the leaders shaping Tennessee's workforce and economy.

This **no-cost to register, two-day conference** brings together employers, educators, workforce professionals, policymakers, and economic development leaders around a shared goal: strengthening a talent ecosystem that meets industry needs. Attendees will gain insights into **apprenticeships, micro-credentials, Workforce Pell, and innovative work-based learning opportunities** advancing across Tennessee, along with proven strategies that keep our state nationally competitive.