

**Southern Middle Local Workforce Area
WIOA Local Plan Modifications
Program Years 2022 –2024**

The Local Workforce Development Area serving Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, and Wayne County



The Southern Middle Local Plan Modifications will be open for Public Comment April 5-19, 2022
and will be available at any American Job Center or online at:
www.sctdd.org/notices/

Please submit comments or questions to: info@sctdd.org

**A Virtual Public Listening Session will be held on
April 5th , 2022, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Microsoft Teams Meeting Link:
<https://bit.ly/3wXKBre>**

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

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Operating Systems and Strategies

1. Provide information regarding service strategies implemented both in the physical AJC's, as well as virtually, to include a description of:

As listed in the MOU, the coordination of services between partners includes a customer flow chart based on customer needs, an agreed upon referral system for each partner, how customer information and data will be shared for co-enrollments and the planning of the MOU. To enhance a seamless coordination of services among staff and partners, the One Stop Operator (OSO) holds quarterly meetings and trainings both in person and virtually for all American Job Center (AJC) staff and partners to communicate service or training needs, hiring events, and upcoming outreach opportunities. This also allows the Southern Middle partners time to cross train and build relationships with their peers.

A. How the one-stop system is implementing and transitioning to more integrated, technology-focused operations to improve outreach to job seekers and employers, provide intake, and enhance case management for programs carried out under all partners included in the workforce.

The one-stop delivery system provides an integrated service delivery by aligning staff and partners by functional teams and also providing cross-training on all programs and services offered by the various American Job Center partners. Those programs include:

- Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Title III - Wagner Peyser
- TAA/TRA
- UI
- SNAP Employment & Training
- TANF
- JVSG Veterans Program
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

The Southern Middle AJC staff and partners collaborate to ensure that participants have immediate access to AJC services and resources, especially those participants in the at-risk and distressed counties. The Board through its network of 13 American Job Centers (3 Comprehensive and 10 Specialized Centers) utilize the state web based Jobs4TN/Virtual One Stop (VOS) system for comprehensive information gathering and reporting. Jobs4TN is accessible twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week. Each center is set with a VOS Greeter to track the numbers of clients visiting the AJC system. The One Stop Operator then conducts monthly analysis of traffic flow and services rendered via staff, and other means to leverage internal office resources to meet needs of current and future customers. The OSO then develops a dashboard based on VOS data and reports monthly with Quarterly reporting to the Board for center traffic reports and activities. The dashboard based on VOS reporting also tracks Performance measures, Partner

referrals/co-enrollments, Business Services updates, and Reconnect numbers. The VOS system is currently expanding and adding additional partners. All centers are electronically linked with data and reports that are run via VOS. The Mobile Career Coach, when utilized, also shares data of services rendered into VOS for tracking and resource placement and tracked on dashboard report.

Additionally, clients can access Premier Virtual Job Fairs and TN Virtual AJCs from Southern Middle centers or remotely. With the development of the Virtual American Job Center (VAJC), the AJC system has been able to transition to more integrated, technology-focused operations. The VAJC allows jobseekers to connect to services through an online needs assessment, which can be completed prior to their appointment. This website guides users to not only the employment assistance available to them but also other services offered by multiple state agencies. The VAJC extends the reach of Tennessee's American Job Center network providing the users in Southern Middle's 13 county area with information of available services. Programs provided by the VAJC are, but not limited to: job planning, education services, skills sharpening and training, work-life support, and youth services. This tool will allow staff at the AJCs to provide faster and more efficient service to their customers.

All AJC customers have access to on-demand services in person and via technology at or through the AJC in compliance with WIOA's "direct linkage" requirement and definition of "access". All services are available on demand through a direct connection with the AJC within a reasonable time, either through onsite staff or via technology in real time consistent with the "direct linkage" requirement.

The Southern Middle AJCs also has assistive technology and adaptive equipment, and staff can make reasonable accommodations when requested for individuals to access career services. All other required services are available on-demand through use of phone or computer access consistent with WIOA requirements. AJC system partners continue to work to promote the cross-training of staff members. Each program or activity is made available to individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to meet their unique needs. All program services, not just those through vocational rehabilitation, are made available to individuals with disabilities. AJC Staff collaborate with the customers to develop individual employment plans encompassing all program services appropriate to meet the individuals' needs and goals.

Also, all AJCs have access to the AVAZA Language Line that is HIPAA, ADA and Title VI compliant; a great solution for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Community; has trained interpreters available for on demand access.

Case management and reporting has been increased during the on-set of the pandemic to allow the intake process to be conducted virtually. Customers have the ability to digitally

complete and sign AJC program documents, schedule appointments, and have video conferences with Career Advisors. Adult Education and other partner services have also become available via virtual connections and digital platforms.

B. Provide a description of the initiatives the LWDB (including all partners) are implementing to ensure accessibility to programmatic services.

The mission of the Southern Middle TN Local Workforce Development Board (SMTLWDB) and its partners is to empower employers, individuals, and communities to prosper and grow the region's economy through a workforce development system that is inherently customer focused, seamless, efficient, transparent and financially accountable. The board delivers this through the AJC system providing high quality customer service to employers and job seekers. The SMTLWDB aligns its focus and vision with the Governor's goals:

Jobs and Economic Development Goal:

- Identify, assess, and certify skills for successful careers
- Promote economic development by connecting workforce development with job creation and growth
- Increase employer engagement with the workforce development system
- Expand programs of study that bring together a sequence of career-focused courses that start in high school and extend through college
- Increase work-integrated learning

Education & Workforce Development Goal:

- Leverage resources, including WIOA statewide, local funding, other non-WIOA funds, and partnerships across departments and programs to aid in developing more seamless paths from training into the workforce
- Work with providers to implement credentials and certificates into high demand programs that teach skills to participants

Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal:

- Eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to existing job seekers and the emerging workforce
- Improve job search and placement services for those unemployed and underemployed workers
- Establish cost-effective co-investment models, across government funding streams and other funding streams

The AJC has access to programmatic services by having a brick and mortar presence in all thirteen (13) counties located in the Southern Middle Region. In those AJCs where not all partners are physically located, services are still available to all participants by using technology. All staff are equipped with a laptop to ensure that virtual services are readily available. The use of Zoom, Premier Virtual, or Microsoft Teams provides interaction between staff, partners, job seekers and employers just like if they were meeting face to

face. Jobs4TN is also available to both employers, staff, and job seekers and can be accessed for services such as Labor Market Information, Unemployment Insurance Services, hiring events, and job postings.

C. How will technology continue to improve the connection to partners across the workforce system? Include the advances made during, as well as those to continue post-COVID.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought on a lot of unexpected challenges for the local area which forced the local board to do business differently. Virtual services became a must in order to keep moving forward with services. Halting services was never an option for the Southern Middle Region and found that the staff were better equipped than other local areas to move everything into a virtual space. Most AJC staff and partners were already equipped with laptops, wi-fi cards, call forwarding, and voicemail rollover services so they could do business anywhere but had never needed to until now. Southern Middle also increased the social media footprint during this time. Local Workforce Board Meetings were moved to Zoom meetings. Every service that could be provided in person at an AJC was now available on a virtual platform in which the Southern Middle Region is continuing to use to this day. This push into the virtual space caused by the pandemic has made Southern Middle to be more productive and efficient.

Ways that Southern Middle has shifted services and embraced the change to a virtual presence is:

- Premier Virtual is one tool that was introduced during the pandemic and utilized by the Southern Middle area, and it is used to host virtual career fairs and online hiring events
- The Southern Middle Region has also added the Signature Capture feature to further expand the opportunity to utilize a technology-based intake system. Signature Captures are electronic signatures that were implemented to attach a customer's signature electronically to eliminate personal contact during the Covid pandemic. We are continuing to use this technology as part of our intake and enrollment process
- Southern Middle AJCs are providing job services and programs virtually to participants by utilizing the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (TDLWD) Virtual American Job Center (VAJC) at TNVirtualAJC.com. This program provides vital services to employers and job seekers, but is not limited to:
 - Fully customized hiring rooms
 - Live reporting during events
 - Video interviews

- Candidate matching per experience
- Registration set up wizard
- Webinar hosting

As a local area, Southern Middle will continue to search for creative technology options that would enhance our services to both job seekers and employers.

2. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategy identified in the TN Combined State Plan and work with entities carrying our core programs, including a description of:

A. Expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.

The Local Board supports the strategies under the Governor’s Drive to 55 Initiative. Activities will align education and training with the needs of business and industry by assisting individuals in accessing training opportunities. The SMTLWDB is working towards achieving the initiative’s goal of 55% of Tennesseans earning a postsecondary credential by 2025. Strategies to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry recognized, thereby prepare workers for in-demand industry sectors and occupations include:

- Approving in-demand training opportunities to be included on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as WIOA fundable programs
- Encouraging all job seekers to consider these programs as career options by offering assessments, opportunities, and materials noting local employment opportunities
- Partnering with employers and high schools on career pathway opportunities in employer driven training programs
- Considering options to partner with training providers and neighboring local workforce development areas to “buy” classes offered by training providers so that dislocated workers, adults, and disadvantaged youth have an opportunity to train in the high-demand occupation without a delay due to a waiting list
- Leveraging assets such as TN Promise, Pathways, and ReConnect in order to increase capacity and provide integrated services to increase skill development and educational attainment of area residents

Education and training services offered include:

- Needs-based scholarships for post-secondary training
- Transportation stipends for postsecondary training and work experience
- On-the-job training and Incumbent Worker Training grants
- Apprenticeship programs

Needs-based scholarships issued through Individual Training Account (ITA) for postsecondary training, are managed in the AJCs by members of the Career Development Services Team. A thorough assessment and verification is completed to ensure the training plan will lead to employability in an in-demand occupation. Staff then obligates funds which is documented in Jobs4TN to allow fiscal staff and the SMTLWDB to have a clearer picture of funds available and projected expenditures for the program year. A priority of service policy is in place to ensure the most in need receive services first.

While brick-and-mortar AJCs are valued for cost effectiveness, availability of resources to customers, and visibility in the community, Southern Middle also recognizes the need to bring the services to the customers who may not be able to visit the established AJC given the large service area and transportation barriers. In order to bring the services to the people, the TDLWD's Mobile AJC is utilized to serve remote areas and individuals who are unable to commute to one of the AJCs in the region. A Title I staff member has been assigned to coordinate with the Mobile AJC staff to ensure staff from the Title I partner attend Mobile AJC events, providing customers with access to all AJC services. Jobs4TN also allows jobseekers and employer customers to remotely access secure, web-based AJC services such as labor market information, unemployment insurance, and mediated labor exchange.

In order to maximize services to populations with barriers, agencies serving these populations are targeted for outreach efforts such as distribution of marketing materials, participation in events, such as those involving "street teams" or the Mobile AJC, and invitations to participate in AJC events and strategy meetings. Such agencies may include Adult Education, Department of Human Services, Health Department, Housing Authorities, Head Start programs, and Boys & Girls clubs. The AJC displays marketing materials for core and community partners and provides materials to be displayed at the partners' sites. Social media accounts are also used to connect with customers and other agencies and inform them of the services available through the AJC. The Business Services Team conducts rapid response meetings to serve workers dislocated through closures or layoffs. Outreach to unemployment claimants regarding AJC services is also conducted via email when contact information is available. A standing committee of the board provides guidance for reaching and serving such populations.

Credential attainment can assist youth and adults in leveraging new skills to obtain employment, increase earnings, and compete in the labor market. Industry recognized credentials include apprenticeships. A credential is considered stackable when it is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially high paying jobs.

The WIOA Plan focuses on four key elements:

- Improving skills and credential attainment by expanding career and technical education services along with workforce development programs
- Supporting regional and rural economic development strategies
- Enhancing services and opportunities for justice involved citizens
- Streamlining the delivery of support services in workforce development by collaborating with key agencies and organizations

The Local Workforce Board is committed to working with WIOA core program partners to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services. Expansion strategies will include, but are not limited to:

- Improving our outreach and awareness efforts to the community, particularly with regard to populations with barriers to employment
- Promoting the creation of additional effective electronic linkages while maintaining electronic service delivery systems that are user-friendly, effective, and accessible to individuals who reside in remote parts of our area
- Maintaining efforts to identify individuals with barriers to employment during intake
- Making sure that the participants of all core partners are made aware of the full scope of services that are available to them through the AJC system

The local board supports the alignment of education and training with the needs of business and industry by assisting individuals in accessing training opportunities. Strategies to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, academic or industry recognized, thereby prepare workers for in demand industry sectors and occupations.

B. Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs and improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

The Southern Middle Workforce partners include our WIOA Core partners Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation. These partners provide numerous educational and training activities through their programs to engage those populations with barriers to employment. WIOA partners provide co-located and coordinated services across our 13 county region. We have already established partnerships with local school districts and Career and Technical Education Directors throughout our region that helps develop and implement in-demand career pathways.

The Career Service Provider South Central TN Human Resource Agency (SCHRA) provides incentives to youth who earn their High School Equivalency Diploma through the AE

program as a motivational tool. A solid educational footing allows youth to become self-sufficient and opens the options for further education and training opportunities. The board has Vocational Rehabilitation as a primary partner located in the AJC as well as a Ticket to Work Representative that can leverage funding and options to alleviate barriers to employment and education targeting those youth with disabilities.

School districts in our local area offers some form of Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Career Pathway courses and the local AJC's provide support for these programs as needed. Dual enrollment courses are available in all high schools so students can receive high school and college credit simultaneously. The TN Pathway program also provides valuable assistance for school districts and their students to increase opportunities and guidance for students as they complete secondary schooling and transition to post-secondary school or job training. Paid work experience opportunities are also available to at-risk in-school youth to teach them soft skills.

The Department of Education continues to have an industry certification policy for high school students that promote certifications, vetted by Tennessee industries; the student should be able to attain these certifications after the completion of a program of study in one of the 16 career clusters. The approach taken to align industry certification is designed to ensure that students are presented with viable seamless learning pathways. The industry certifications promoted by the Department have been vetted by respective career cluster advisory councils (composed of Tennessee industry representatives).

Industry certifications can be stackable credentials such as Microsoft Office Suite certifications (as identified with the Office Management program of study), or they can be the capstone, meaning they represent the culmination of acquired skills through the completion of a particular program of study. The Southern Middle Region will continue to work to improve access to postsecondary credentials by focusing on high school diploma or equivalency attainment. This will be accomplished by ensuring that participants who lack a high school diploma are referred to Adult Basic Education (ABE) for services. This will enable many participants to be introduced or reconnected to the education system and improve their access to postsecondary credentials. In addition, Tennessee will utilize a demand-driven system to identify which training programs lead to credentials that are essential to business' needs.

3. Describe the employer engagement strategy to better connect business with well-trained and qualified applicants.

Employers, both locally and regionally, are the primary customer of the workforce system in Southern Middle and the local area will continue to build strong relationships with the employers in the local communities. The main strategy is to continue to engage employers and keep coordinating with all of the workforce and economic partners which includes the Regional Planning Council, TN ECD, Business Service Team Coordinators, Chambers of

Commerce, South Central TN Development District, Faith and Community Based Organization, and Small Business Centers. Each quarter, the Southern Middle Regional TN Economic and Community Development Director hosts luncheons with all workforce partners invited to share information regarding partner strategies and services. The goal in Southern Middle is to continue to increase the awareness of the local employers needs with the Business Services Team and meet their needs through AJC services such as training services, hiring events, job postings, apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship opportunities, career exploration opportunities, etc.

A. Provide a description of how the LWDB will implement initiatives such as apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy.

The Southern Middle Region will continue to strengthen partnerships with the Career and Technical Education Directors, TCAT's, Adult Education providers and Post-Secondary Institutions to help foster an environment that can create more awareness for career pathway development. Southern Middle will work to build more access to career training through On-The-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, customized training programs, apprenticeship programs and career pathway programs while ensuring that education programs align with in-demand industry sectors. Partners will work to strengthen existing pathways in the in-demand sectors by exploring modular, shorter-term training and stackable credentials in order to develop and deploy training more quickly and responsively. The local board along with the Business Service Teams will use labor market information (LMI) to connect training programs with job opportunities that are in-demand for local employers. The local board ensures that all training programs approved lead to employment in high growth and in-demand occupations that provide self-sustainable wages.

Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing continue to be two of the in-demand industry sectors in Southern Middle to be highly affected by labor shortages. The local area is continuing to focus efforts on building a talent pipeline of quality workers by working with Charlene Russell, the Middle TN Apprenticeship Director, to establish new apprenticeship opportunities within the region and Work Based Learning opportunities to participants that will match them with employers to build skills, gain work experience, and mentorship to fill those in-demand job openings.

Listed are some of the strategies that the local board will focus on to meet the needs of employers whether it be through incumbent worker programs; on-the-job and customized

training programs; industry and sector strategies; apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeships; career pathway initiatives; effective business intermediaries:

- Work with business service teams to develop new and/or promote existing work-based learning initiative to employers
- Support sector strategies by evaluating and adjusting the current career pathways and the current talent pipelines
- Develop strategies that reduce program silos to promote employer services
- Partners in the local area will provide cross training all programs and services that touch employers. Cross trainings will be conducted during quarterly AJC staff meetings to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable regarding all WIOA programs and services
- Work closely with the Middle TN Apprenticeship Director to establish new apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship opportunities for the local area and outreach to employers through one-on-one meetings, social media, and webinars
- Develop consistent messaging and marketing of business services using business services team
- Promote entrepreneurial skills training by connecting interested individuals with the local Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and Small Business Development Centers

B. How will you measure the effectiveness of the strategy outside of mandated business performance measures?

The Southern Middle Region will measure the effectiveness of strategies by continuing to work with the Middle TN Regional Planning Council Business and Career Services sub-committees to ensure that at the local level, are monitoring the enrollment levels on all WIOA programs and that input, and feedback is gathered from our stakeholders for improvements. Southern Middle will be expanding outreach to employers and job seekers to include more of the targeted populations along with monitoring the attendance that staff are getting at job fairs (in-person and virtual) and the placements from hiring events. Southern Middle also conducts satisfaction surveys that go out to participants and employers who utilize the AJC services. Results are then monitored and used to make decisions and improvements to ensure that the local area has effective business service strategies and high employer engagement strategies.

C. Include information to support the increase of Labor Force Participation Rates.

The Governor's Rural Task Force was tasked with the Labor Force Participation Rate Project (LFPR) back in the later months of 2020. This is a three (3) year project that is set to increase the labor force participation rate of Tennessee by 2% by June 30th, 2023. The project has been rolled out in two phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2. At this time, Southern Middle is in the later part of Phase 1 with Phase 2 beginning in the late spring or early

summer of 2022. The LFPR Team consisted of local elected officials, Chamber of Commerce Directors, local employers, School District and CTE Directors, Local Workforce Board Directors, and partners from these State Agencies: Labor, Tourism, Economic Development, Insurance and Commerce, Human Services, and Agriculture. During Phase 1, Southern Middle had two (2) counties selected to participate in the LFPR project, Perry and Wayne County. Perry County at the start of the project (June 2021) had a LFPR of 46.1% and Wayne County had a rate of 52.5%. With the overall goal of the LFPR Team being to increase the LFPR rates 2% by June 2023, the local area set to work. The first meeting was held with the County Mayors and their team to increase the awareness surrounding the labor force participation rate and introduce them to the LFPR Project. Those meeting were conducted in late Spring 2021 with a second round of meetings with the two counties scheduled for late Summer 2021. During those second meetings, each County Mayor was tasked to gather their community stakeholders and employers at the table to discuss the LFPR Project and how it affected their respective counties and to get feedback on the barriers that could prevent them moving the needle 2%. During these meetings each partner gave details on their partner agency and how it could be of benefit to each community. At this stage of the process, the LFPR Team is introducing the Stakeholder Alignment Tool and it will be used to gauge whether a community is aligned to meet the 2% labor force participation rate increase. The team is in the very early stages of introducing that tool and making the necessary adjustments as the project moves forward. As of December 2021, Perry County sits at 46% and Wayne County at 51.9%. There is still more work to do to increase their labor force participation rates and the Southern Middle Region will continue to support this project.

4. In relation to the Governor's key priorities, provide an overview of current and/or new strategies being implemented by your Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to ensure workforce partners collaborate on -

- **The implementation of programs to best serve the rural communities, including economically distressed and at-risk counties**

Southern Middle now has a presence in all thirteen counties with Specialized Centers located in those rural, at-risk, and distressed counties. In collaboration with Governor Lee's Rural Initiative Project, Southern Middle is heavily involved with the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) project which is led by the Rural Commissioners Group along with local community partners, Chambers of Commerce, and other state agencies that include: Human Services, Economic Development, Commerce and Insurance, Agriculture, and Adult Education. This project is aimed at implementing best practices and innovations to improve the labor force participation rate in the distressed and at-risk counties by 2% by June 2023 thus increasing its economic growth to ensure its citizens are able to improve their economic outlook.

- **Criminal Justice Reform**

- Southern Middle is working to improve the local re-entry program by utilizing the Justice Involved Individual Grant funding to assist in returning justice involved individuals into the workforce by reducing barriers to successful re-entry. This will reduce recidivism by helping individuals return to productive lives and compete for workforce opportunities. This grant will help justice involved individuals in transitioning back into their respective communities and gain sustainable employment within the local 13 county area which includes the distressed and at-risk counties of Wayne, Perry, and Lewis.
- Southern Middle committed a portion of their Justice Involved grant funding opportunity to training on Second Chance employment through the Dave's Killer Bread Foundation (DKBF). This grant will focus on training AJC staff and partners on ways to enhance a successful re-entry participant back into their community and the workforce. Once the training with DKBF is completed, Southern Middle along with Upper Cumberland and Northern Middle will host job fairs specifically intended for those employers who are interested in hiring the justice involved.
- Another tool that will be used to enhance the knowledge of Southern Middle's re-entry efforts is our Menu-of-Service, which details the services, will be distributed throughout the thirteen (13) county area including all county jails and TDOC facilities. These brochures will explain the AJC and partner services that are offered and all the contact information to assist our Justice Involved Individuals located in the Southern Middle region.
- The Southern Middle TN region has been working with justice involved programs where multiple barriers await a justice involved individual as he/she tries to transition back into the workplace and keep their life on track. Through current efforts, the SMTLWDB has found the timing of release to be a real issue. Most jails will not release them unless they have a "plan" for housing and a job. Generally, the faith-based and community-based organizations work with them on housing for a very short period of time. Title I can provide transportation for schooling and work experience, but only for an approved period of time. Referrals are made to TANF for childcare. Title I can also provide tools and uniforms and other work-related expenses. SMTLWDB's local plan based on contract with TDOC

plans to refer to South Central Area Transit Services (SCATS) to provide transit services to the formerly-incarcerated population selected by TDOC for the following purposes:

- Attending job interviews or to go to their set employment location
 - Attending substance abuse treatment or programming sessions that are required as part of their supervision conditions established by either TDOC or the Courts
 - Attending education courses (high school equivalency classes)
 - Under certain circumstances, the formerly-incarcerated population requiring emergency medical or regularly scheduled medical treatment appointments at the discretion of the TDOC
- Outreach and recruitment of participants from local parole and probation partners are referred to the AJCs to receive services. Southern Middle also works with County Mayors, Sheriff's Offices, Business Service Teams, AJC Partner staff, and training providers to continue to develop services that meet the needs of the formerly-incarcerated population.
- Case Managers work closely with all applicants to obtain current information about the education and training they have received. The SMTLWDB acknowledges that those who haven't received education and training during incarceration often have a more difficult time providing information to help build the best employment plan possible. Case Managers will assist the justice involved individual by reaching out to Probation and Parole or directly to the facility or training provider to gather the information, such as transcripts of credentials.

- **Vocational and Workforce Development; and**

The Workforce Development Board along with the Career Service Provider addresses the needs of individuals with multiple barriers to employment, specifically low-income individuals, basic skills deficient individuals, and veterans. Even though these population groups have been identified for targeted services, a coordinated response will be developed for other groups that often face multiple barriers to employment such as dropouts and migrant and seasonal farm workers to assure their personal and professional goals are met.

Basic skills deficiencies are determined by an objective, valid and reliable assessment such as the Test of Basic Education or Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems. If the priority of service will also be based on basic skills deficient criteria, then the participants file must contain academic tests. As stated in TEG 19-16, individuals who are English language learners meet the criteria for “basic skills deficient” and must be included in the priority populations for Title I Adult program. When participants are basic skills deficient as determined by an assessment or assessments, the staff will refer the participant for learning support in order to achieve the appropriate level basic skills for postsecondary training. Career Service staff utilize the Self-Sufficiency Eligibility Worksheet to calculate the individual’s earnings during eligibility of the individual.

Recipient of Public Assistance includes individuals who receive, or in the past six months have received or are a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months received, assistance through one or more of the following: SNAP, TANF, SSI, or state or local income based public assistance.

Training services for priority populations are used to connect participants to in-demand occupations that need to be filled by employers within the Southern Middle area. Southern Middle’s goal is to collect customer data and continuously look at ways to assist those with barriers to employment in order for them to become self-sufficient while continuing to meet Key Performance Indicators. Co-enrolling with partners will ensure the needs of each participant will be met.

- **Other individuals in Priority Populations**

The Southern Middle Board will continue to focus on serving priority populations including those participants with barriers to employment and ensure that they have access to high quality services. Targeted populations represent the workforce systems most in-need customers and the concentrated support will guarantee that individuals in these target groups will be able to access the AJC services that are necessary for them to enter the workforce. The local board is continuously evaluating the local workforce strategies to strengthen services to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, those who are basic skills deficient.

5. Describe any partnerships, new collaborations, or innovative practices you would like to share that include connections with non-profit or other community organizations.

Justice Involved Individuals are a targeted population for AJC services and is also supported by other community organizations through Second Chance Grant funding. Second Chance partnerships have been formed with South Central TN Workforce Alliance (SCTWA) and Christine Hopkins, who is the Franklin County Jail Re-Entry Coordinator. Southern Middle

also partners with Probation & Parole Offices as well as the Day Reporting Centers to offer jobseeker services and referrals.

The local area continues to have strong partnerships with high school guidance counselors and CTE Directors which provide access to students for enrollment services. AJC staff have been meeting with middle and high school students to discuss career pathways and planning work based learning opportunities.

a. How is the local area leveraging these valuable partnerships?

Partnerships are essential and AJC staff continuously work to retain those already established alliances and leverage new partnerships throughout the local area. The Southern Middle Board along with the direct assistance of the Title I-IV partners as well as other community and faith based organizations have developed a linked American Job Center system that is focused on solid business principles, professional staff and building effective partnerships that ensure businesses and job seekers receive high quality services and solutions to their growing business needs. These types of resources can range from in-kind services, education services, program knowledge, funding dollars, staff time, building space, referrals or technical assistance.

b. In addition, has your area applied for and received any grants which have provided additional funding and programmatic resources?

National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) funds are being utilized to:

- Work with government officials to place participants in Covid-19 related positions including cleanup and recovery efforts in courthouses, schools, health departments, and other government buildings
- Provide employment and training services to eligible dislocated workers
- Provide a paid work experience for displaced workers which assists both businesses and residents in the Southern Middle thirteen (13) county area

Rapid Response Layoff Aversion Grant will be utilized to:

- Reduce layoffs or the duration of layoffs due to plant closures, lack of work or another workforce need
- Improve employment outcomes of impacted unemployment of participants
- Assist employers and participants through the Work Experience (WE) program or Work Based Learning
- Assist employers in training participants utilizing Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and supplies
- Assist employers and participants utilizing On the Job Training (OJT) to help fill job openings that are currently difficult for employers to fill while participants are learning valuable skills

- Utilize funds for short term classes in areas that are in great demand such as truck driving or other training through providers earning participants a credential
- c. Has the LWDB considered utilizing fee for services to employers as revenue opportunities to further support WIOA allowable activities? If so, provide details of these opportunities.**

Although at this time the Southern Middle Workforce Board does not utilize fee for service to employers, it is something that would be a best practice in the future that could help offset local area costs. The local board will continue to look for opportunities to implement a fee for services as a revenue source.

Performance Goals and Evaluation

1. How will your LWDB increase physical and programmatic access for each of the fourteen (14) significant barriers to employment (SBE) groups as outlined within Workforce Services Policy – Key Performance Indicators Section 1(B)?

The Southern Middle Region is charged with serving those participants with the most significant barriers to employment. The AJC staff and partners develop and improve the AJC workforce system to ensure that the needs of the local employers, workers, and job seekers are met including those participants with significant barriers to employment. Through the local MOU, partners agree that they will comply fully with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of: (1) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 188, (2) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq), (3) Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991, (4) Civil Rights of 1964 Title VI (as amended), (5) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 (as amended), (6) Age Discrimination Act of 1967 (as amended), and (7) Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX (as amended). Reasonable accommodations, made according to the individual's need, are provided for all aspects of a customer's experience in the AJCs, such as during application/registration for, and provision of, aid, benefits, services, and training to ensure that participants receive equal benefits from the program or activity, will be able to compete fairly in educational work settings, and in general, to have an equal opportunity. AJC staff ensure that individuals with disabilities along with participants who have significant barriers to employment are provided services that lead them competitive employment outcomes and provides them with self-sustaining wages.

- a. Utilizing the Key performance Indicator (KPI) form, provide the name of the lead organization (community-based organization, nonprofit, a state agency, etc.), a brief narrative strategy, a list of primary**

supportive services catered to the SBE's specific needs, and the monitoring methodology/frequency for each SBE group.

In the chart below, you will find that the Southern Middle Region works with many partners and agencies to ensure physical and programmatic access to services. This is where the local area will leverage and braid funding in order to provide the best resources and services to the participants. The referral and tracking process is managed by the OSO (See Table 1 in Appendix).

Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) group	Lead Organization	Narrative Strategy	Primary supportive services catered to the SBE's specific needs	Monitoring Methodology/Frequency
Displaced Homemakers	Career Service Provider (CSP)	<p>Career and training services provided by core WIOA partners at the AJCs and virtually by cross-trained Career Advisors serving Adults, Dislocated Workers, including Displaced Homemakers, and Youth</p> <p>Veterans Representatives help identify potential displaced homemakers for referral to Title I</p>	<p>Information to community services including legal aid and healthcare services.</p> <p>Assistance with transportation, childcare and dependent care, and housing</p> <p>Assistance with educational testing, books, fees, school supplies, certifications and other necessary items for students enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education classes</p> <p>Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>Outreach activities, enrollments, and services data are reported to the OSO monthly. The OSO submits reports to the Board monthly</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>
Low-income individuals/recipients of income-based public assistance	Career Service Provider (CSP), SNAP E&T, and TANF	Coordinated services from AJC partners with referrals to other partners/agencies when needed. Serving Adult, DW,	Linkages to community services including legal aid and healthcare services	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>Outreach activities, enrollments, and services data</p>

		<p>Youth, Displaced Homemakers</p> <p>Outreach through social media outlets and to other organizations serving the target population including SNAP</p> <p>Priority for WIOA services given to low-income individuals / recipients of public assistance, as well as individuals who are basic skills deficient (BSD). This also includes individuals with disabilities and English Language learners, so that all populations mentioned receive Individualized Career and Training Services</p>	<p>Assistance with transportation, childcare and dependent care, and housing</p> <p>Assistance with educational testing, books, fees, school supplies, certifications, and other necessary items for students enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education classes</p> <p>Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear</p>	<p>are reported to the OSO monthly. The OSO submits reports to the Board monthly</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>
Native Americans	Native American Indian Association (NAIA) of Tennessee	<p>NAIA offers individuals who are Native American Indian (or a descendant), Native Hawaiian, or an Alaska Native AND unemployed or underemployed, services that can help them get the skills needed to enter a rewarding career in one of today's high-growth, in-demand fields. Individuals receive one-on-one career counseling and needs assessment to determine any additional services NAIA may provide.</p>	<p>NAIA offers classroom training assistance to help cover the cost of tuition, books, supplies, and fees</p>	<p>Outreach activities, enrollments, and services data are reported to the OSO monthly. The OSO submits reports to the Board monthly</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>

		Upon completion of training, NAIA also provides job search and placement assistance		
Individuals with mental or physical disabilities, including the recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance	Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Intellectual Developmental Disabilities	<p>Referrals are made to the AJCs for eligibility determination and coordination with Title I Career Advisors to help identify unmet need(s). A full range of services available at the American Job Center(s) for all one stop customers regardless of disability or cultural background</p> <p>Documentation of the disability such as a written statement from Vocational Rehabilitation reflecting current services, verification showing current receipt of SSI or SSD for the individual from the Social Security Administration, or a letter from a local education entity stating the individual is M-Teamed based on a disability</p>	The Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides a variety of services like job placements and accommodations to eligible individuals with disabilities based on the rehabilitation needs of the individual in accordance with their aptitudes, abilities, capabilities and interests and as identified on an Individualized Plan for Employment to prepare for or advance in competitive integrated employment. VR collaborates with AJC partners, community rehab service providers, educational institutions and employers. VR services are directly accessible through co-location at AJCs and from local VR offices	<p>Outreach activities, enrollments, target population report, and services data are reported to the OSO monthly and then reported to the Board</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>
Those age 55 and older	Senior Community Service Employment Program	<p>Services provided by South Central Human Resource Agency and are available in-person, phone or email</p> <p>SCSEP provides low-income individuals 55 and older who</p>	SCSEP aids with accessing health, dental, and vision care as well as assistance with attaining appropriate work attire	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>

		<p>have poor employment prospects with subsidized, part-time, community service work-based training. Participants train an average of 20 hours per week in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including the AJC. SCSEP also assists its customers in utilizing AJC services such as computer classes, interview classes, and resume assistance</p> <p>Marketing materials are made available at all AJCs</p>		
Justice-Involved Individuals	<p>Probation & Parole Offices, Day Reporting Offices, Local Jails, TN Office of Re-Entry, Career Service Provider (CSP), AJC Re-Entry Specialists</p>	<p>The Southern Middle area supports and works with multiple target populations which includes justice-involved individuals to prepare them for successful reentry into their community</p> <p>All released JIIs can access services at the American Job Centers (AJCs). Staff in the AJCs are trained to serve individuals who are justice-involved and to connect them to the necessary partners for services and co-enrollments</p>	<p>Assistance with transportation, childcare and dependent care, and housing, when needed</p> <p>Assistance with training opportunities to help them gain a credential to lead to a job and self-sufficient wage</p> <p>Educational testing, books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students who chooses to enroll in secondary or postsecondary education classes</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>Outreach activities, enrollments, and services data are reported to the OSO monthly. The OSO submits reports to the Board monthly</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>

			<p>Southern Middle has committed a portion of their Justice Involved grant funding opportunity to training on Second Chance employment through the Dave's Killer Bread Foundation (DKBF). This training has also been completed by the State of TN Human Resource Agency</p> <p>The Office of Reentry has trained staff to provide TA to the Local Workforce Development Areas on other ways to serve justice involved individuals</p>	
Individuals experiencing or have experienced homelessness	CSP, AJC Partners and other community agencies	<p>Coordinated services WIOA Core partners with referrals to other partner services as needed</p> <p>Outreach and workshops are conducted at Local Housing Authorities to promote AJC services</p>	WIOA Supportive Services and TANF services that may include childcare, housing, food, transportation, utilities and employment needs	<p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p> <p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p>
Youth in or have aged out of the foster care system	Department of Children's Services, CSP	The Independent Living Services division and the Extension of Foster Care program strive for youth and young adults to achieve lifelong success. Case management and Life Skills Instruction provided	<p>TennCare</p> <p>Housing Support</p> <p>Education and Training Voucher and state-funded Bright Futures scholarship for youth ages 16 to 19 attending a postsecondary program</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>

		<p>along with wraparound services</p> <p>Coordinated services from AJC partners with referrals to other partners/agencies when needed</p> <p>Serving Adult, DW, Youth, Displaced Homemakers</p>	<p>Foster Care Placement Services for young adults who wish to stay in a foster home OR an Independent Living Allowance for young adults who wish to live independently</p>	
<p>Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, individuals facing substantial cultural barriers</p>	<p>Adult Education</p>	<p>Basic Skills and Secondary skills related to Improving Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Science</p> <p>Language Acquisition Related to Improving Communication Skills, Reading, Writing the English Language, and Employability Skills</p> <p>Classes available in all 95 Counties and classes available at some employer sites</p>	<p>Test fee stipends for Hi-Set</p> <p>Title I provide incentives to Youth participants</p>	<p>Outreach activities, enrollments, and services data are reported to the OSO monthly. The OSO submits reports to the Board monthly</p> <p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p>
<p>Eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers</p>	<p>Tennessee Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development, Tennessee Opportunities Program</p>	<p>The program's main objective is to conduct outreach to and assessment of low-income farmworkers in order to assist those who qualify with job training and placement service. Services provided onsite at the AJCs and virtually</p>	<p>TOPs provides Core Services, Work Experience, Classroom Training, Career Counseling, Job Search Assistance, Job Placement, Related Assistance, Intensive Services</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>
<p>Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility</p>	<p>Workforce Essentials (TANF Provider)</p>	<p>WorkForce Essentials, Inc. provides Employment and Case Management</p>	<p>Cash assistance, transportation, childcare assistance, educational supports, job training,</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p>

		Services with a focus on empowering families eligible for TANF on a course to achieve economic stability based on the four (4) core component activities of the Two-Generation Approach, which focuses on the holistic success of the children and adults: (1) education, (2) economic supports, (3) health and well-being, and (4) social capital	employment activities, and other support services	The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate
Single parents, including pregnant women	Workforce Essentials (TANF Provider)	See above	See above	See above
Long-term unemployed (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks)	Career Service Provider (CSP)	<p>Career and training services provided onsite at the AJCs and virtually by cross-trained Career Advisors serving Adults, Dislocated Workers, including Displaced Homemakers, and Youth</p> <p>Outreach conducted via social media and to organizations serving the target population including SNAP</p>	<p>Linkages to community services including legal aid and healthcare services</p> <p>Assistance with transportation, childcare and dependent care, and housing</p> <p>Assistance with educational testing, books, fees, school supplies, certifications and other necessary items for students enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education classes</p> <p>Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items</p>	<p>KPIs monitored quarterly by the local area and reported to the Regional Planning Council and local board</p> <p>The OSO is made aware of all referrals and the results of each referral to ensure services are offered when appropriate</p>

			as eyeglasses and protective eye gear	
Other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment	N / A - will be determined if the Governor determines additional populations to be served. If applicable, coordinated AJC services with referrals to other partners services when necessary.			

Technical Requirements and Assurances

- 1. Provide a detailed budget that lists the sources and uses of Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) pass-through funds and all Non-Federal matching funds by completing a provided budget toolkit (424A) (See Table 2 in Appendix)**

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs						
SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY						
		Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
	Grant Program	Federal	Non-Federal	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
1.	Funds through TDLWD - Workforce Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ -	\$ 2,103,634.60
2.	Funds through other resources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
3.	Funds through other State Agencies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
4.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
5.	Totals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ -	\$ 2,103,634.60
SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES						
6.	Object Class Categories	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Total
	a. Personnel	\$ 258,360.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 258,360.00
	b. Fringe Benefits	\$ 100,760.40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,760.40
	c. Travel	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00
	d. Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	e. Supplies	\$ 23,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,000.00
	f. Contractual	\$ 1,336,589.80	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,336,589.80
	g. Construction	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	h. Other	\$ 285,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 285,000.00
	i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	\$ 2,028,710.20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,028,710.20
	j. Indirect Charges	\$ 74,924.40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 74,924.40
	k TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6 j)	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,103,634.60
7.	Program Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES						
(a) Grant Program		(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS	
8.	Local 501(c)(3)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
9.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
10.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
11.		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
12.	TOTAL (sum of lines 8 - 11)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS						
(a) Grant Program		Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13.	Funds through TDLWD - Workforce Services	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65
14.	Funds through other resources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
15.	Funds through other State Agencies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
16.						
17.	TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65	\$ 525,908.65
SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR FEDERAL FUNDS FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT						
(a) Grant Program		(b) First Year	(c) Second Year	(d) Third Year	(e) Fourth Year	
18.	Funds through TDLWD - Workforce Services	\$ 2,103,634.60				
19.	Funds through other resources	\$ -				
20.	Funds through other State Agencies	\$ -				
21.		\$ -	\$ -			
22.	TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	\$ 2,103,634.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION						
23.	Direct Charges	\$ 2,028,710.20	24. Indirect Charges	\$ 74,924.40		
See Budget Narrative						
25. Remarks						
See Budget Narrative						

**Budget Narrative listed in Appendix

2. Describe any local partnerships, new collaborations, or innovative practices you would like to share.

See answer in question 5

a. As WIOA Title 1 formula allocations continue to decline, how does your LWDB leverage partner resources (funding, other) to help further sustain WIOA programs and services to job seekers and employers?

The Southern Middle Region tries to leverage funding and resources and avoid duplication of services in order to make the most of WIOA allocations and to provide more opportunities to customers. Southern Middle will continue to leverage resources by:

- Utilize RESEA funding in order for Title I to be able to administer both programs which in turn supports staffing costs, reduces duplication and streamlines services by letting participants receive several WIOA services at one location
- Taken advantage of special funding opportunities such as CARES Act funds, Summer Youth funding, Lay-Off Aversion funding, Justice Involved Individual funding, Rural Initiative funding in distressed and at-risk counties, and National Dislocated Worker Grants. The local area will continue to utilize different funding streams to serve the Southern Middle Region.
- Co-location of Core WIOA partners in the AJC's which includes Title I Adult, DW, and Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF which saves on operating costs
- Co-location of Non-WIOA Core partners in the AJC's to help offset operating costs such as employers renting space within an AJC to recruit for their hiring needs

b. Is your LWDB considering a request for statewide or rapid response funds to support innovative initiatives? If so, what activities will your LWDB plan to support utilizing statewide or rapid response funds?

- In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Middle TN Region requested, and was awarded, CARES act funding for the development and distribution of the 2021 Wage & Benefits survey through the Middle Tennessee Industrial Association in partnership with Middle TN State University and the local Development Districts. Southern Middle along with the Upper Cumberland and Northern Middle Regions will be requesting funding for this survey again when that time comes. The survey is conducted every two (2) years with the next one being in 2023.

c. Has your local area applied for and/or received any other grants which have provided additional resources? If not, does your local area plan to apply for additional resources to support regional activities?

- Southern Middle as noted in the Middle TN Regional plan, did apply for the EDA Good Jobs Challenge Grant that would provide additional funding to leverage workforce development within the region
- Southern Middle, along with Northern Middle and Upper Cumberland is collectively pursuing and discussing funding opportunities for the new TN Department of Education Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship to address the statewide teacher shortage



2022 LOCAL PLAN MODIFICATION REVIEW

Southern Middle Local Workforce Development Board	
2022 Plan Modification Recommendation	Approval

The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Division of Workforce Services, has completed the review of the Southern Middle Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Local Plan Modification submitted during the 2022 Local Plan Modification Process. The 2022 Local Plan Modification Process required the LWDB to respond to questions and update the 2020 Local Plan regarding labor market and economic conditions, service delivery and employer engagement strategies, workforce partners’ collaborative efforts, innovative practices, as well as local area budget information.

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

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

COMMENDATIONS

- Specific focus on serving justice-involved individuals was consistent throughout the plan and demonstrated through multiple initiatives to support reentry across the local area
- Prioritization of service delivery in rural and economically at-risk or distressed counties, through multiple specialized centers and other participant engagement strategies
- Strong partnerships across core WIOA partners to provide quarterly cross training across programs and service connecting with employers to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to connect with employers and job seekers

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

OBSERVATIONS

- While the partnerships to support justice-involved individuals are to be commended, the LWDB is encouraged to leverage the Department’s Office of Reentry for additional technical assistance and training regarding implementation and alignment with state-level reentry strategies
- Additional information will be requested and/or technical assistance may be necessary to:
 - Identify specific strategies to engage employers and connect a broader range of employers with business services
 - provide the local budget narrative for subsequent Program Years 2022-24 and strategies to utilize funding to serve individuals with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) and support other priority populations, such as individuals with disabilities
 - develop career pathways, such as training and employment pathway, for individual expressing interests in respective occupations and industries