Workforce Connections

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May 14, 2013

Commissioner Burns Phillips
Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
220 French Landing Drive
Nashville, TN 37243-1002

Dear Commissioner Phillips:

Workforce Connections, a division of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC), and administrative entity for the Workforce Investment Board for Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) 3, submits the attached Five-Year Local Workforce Plan. This is an updated version of our previously approved plan with minor modifications to reflect current conditions and circumstances.

In accordance with state plans to modify the workforce planning process during the 2013-2014 program year, LWIA 3 requests an extension of the current Five-Year Local Workforce Investment Plan (including minor updates) through June 30, 2014. Workforce Connections and LWIA 3 commit to working with the State Workforce Investment Board and Department of Labor and Workforce Development staff to include any adjustments needed in the current plan and to develop a Five-Year Plan for the period beginning July 1, 2014 in accordance with guidelines that may be promulgated by TDLWD during the coming months.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vaughn Smith
Director

2247 Western Avenue • L.T. Ross Building
E-mail: wforce@knxcac.org
An Equal Opportunity Employer

and
the Workforce Investment Board for

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA 3
KNOX COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN
2013 – 2014

UPDATED NARRATIVE

May, 2013

(Note: Items in blue font are updates to plan. Words/sections that are stricken-through represent items included in previous plans but deleted from current version)

INTRODUCTION

This document is an update of the currently approved workforce development plan for Local Workforce Investment Area 3 in Knox County, Tennessee. As such, it contains information that has been included during the previous five years of planning activity. New information has been added for the 2013-2014 program year; however, changes are limited as LWIA 3 anticipates a more in-depth planning process for the subsequent program year.

I. Leadership

Workforce Connections, a division of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) serves as the fiscal agent and administrative entity for Local Workforce Investment Area 3 (LWIA 3). Workforce Connections has worked extensively with multiple partner organizations in developing and implementing workforce plans for LWIA 3. Through this planning process, local partners have consistently cited one of the strengths for the area as visionary leadership. A focus among senior leadership with both Workforce Connections and other partnering organizations has been to increasingly expand partnerships to better serve the community's workforce needs, to build consensus among partners through workforce planning, and to identify and implement programmatic approaches that will have broad community impact.

The local planning group has examined our weaknesses and environmental threats, and has looked at how we can capitalize on those to address some of these issues. In our workforce planning, the group developed goals that build on strengths and address weaknesses identified in this process. Goals outlined below were developed to address specific weaknesses or threats identified in the ongoing planning process.

A. *Develop additional flexible resources*
We recognize that we cannot control the structured funding streams within which we function, however, we can work to identify additional resources that provide more flexibility for providing services to our customer base.

- Engage in the development of a funding collaborative in cooperation with the Knoxville Chamber and United Way. SKILL UP! in Innovation Valley has secured additional funding to use sector strategies to address workforce efforts in the region .
- Coordinate with Pellissippi State Technical Community College and the Tennessee Technology Center at Knoxville as well as the Higher Education Forum to identify and create other training options in the region.
- Coordinate with adjacent workforce areas and multiple partners to see additional resources that may be brought to the region – WIRED and STEM grants, for example.
- Promote the use of workforce sector strategies to build capacity and develop resources to address regional skills gaps / shortages.

The development of additional flexible resources continues to be an important focus for the area. As the recession unfolded in the region, United Way and other philanthropic groups felt the economic pinch, and the funding collaborative SKILL UP! described

above did not receive national funding as originally anticipated. However, resource development efforts identified above are being addressed through a consortium called Innovation Valley Plus (or IV+). This is a group of regional partners including Local Workforce Areas 2, 3, & 4, as well as the Knoxville Chamber, Pellissippi State Community College, and other partners. The group is focused on identifying regional needs and seeking resources in addition to existing regional assets to address those needs. The group has a series of activities planned during the coming year that will involve regional employers in this process.

During 2012-2013, LWIA 3 has been an active participate in a regional planning effort entitled PlanET. This encompasses Knox and four surrounding counties. LWIA 3 has coordinated with LWIA 2, Pellissippi State Community College, and the PlanET staff to explore ways to build capacity to address skills gaps in the region. The development of sector strategies for this purpose will include identifying and leveraging additional resources to address skills gaps and shortages in the region.

B. *Expand Youth Program Options*
We recognize that we have had an absence of effective program models for Youth within our area. Expanding program options that have worked as well as seeking new partners can help us in this arena. Previous program focuses included increasing linkages between youth and the Career Center system as well as expanding school system relationships. Goals are established for these areas each program year.

- A goal completed during the 2010-2011 program year included resource mapping to expand partnerships and identify additional community service options for serving youth.

- LWIA 3 and Workforce Connections continue to see a need for services for high-barrier out of school youth and went through anRFP process during the 2011-2012 program year to identify service delivery options in this arena. In 2012 LWIA 3 awarded contracts to two youth providers, SEEED and UT WAVE, who serve the out–of–school youth, high school dropout population. They will continue serving these youth by helping them attain their GED and employment throughout the 2013-2014 program year.

- LWIA 3 recognized the weakness in the Youth Council and utilized the resource mapping process to re-energize existing members, add new members (including youth), and support more frequent and regular meeting times. The Youth Council will assist in 2013-2014 with the development of new RFPs and selecting subcontractors.

C. *Expand Employer Marketing & Improve General Branding and Public Awareness*

- Utilize the Business Services Component to increase outreach to employers. Business Services staff are working closely with the Knoxville Chamber, Existing Industries Council, and PSTCC Business & Industry Group to increase awareness of

workforce development and Career Center services among employers and to promote apprenticeship, Incumbent Worker Training, and On the Job Training options.
- Promote Career Readiness Certificate options with area employers.

2010-2011 partner planning and SWOT analysis identified a continued need for improved branding and public awareness of the workforce development / Career Center system. Partners also discussed concerns of balancing marketing and outreach with capacity, noting that increased awareness typically drives increased service levels and a need for additional resources, making item A above an important element for successfully addressing this goal. The group noted that CRC usage has expanded significantly, but there is still opportunity for increased employer usage.

D. *Engage or Participate in Existing Systems Efforts to Promote Increased Education and Workforce Development*

We recognize that an undereducated workforce can pose a significant economic threat to our region. Workforce Connections and its partners are working with multiple systems to begin addressing these big picture issues.
- Participate in Workforce & Education Summit. In early 2008, this summit convened employers, educators, workforce development staff, elected officials, and citizens to begin discussion and action planning in this arena. Increased linkages between workforce development efforts and education are growing as a result of these efforts.
- Build interest in apprenticeships and other educational opportunities, as well as area wide efforts to better fund post-secondary education options for students exiting from high school.

The 2010-2011 planning group noted that improvements have been detected in the above area. Goals listed above which have been accomplished along with other area initiatives have resulted in demonstrated increased awareness and knowledge of skill needs and opportunities. The group identified a continued need for emphasis on increased education and skill development, but in its analysis, moved this item from a threat to an opportunity.

E. *Engage in Systems Efforts to Address Underemployment*
This also poses a threat to economic security for individual families and to our overall region.

Unemployment and Underemployment were cited as an ongoing issue during the most recent planning process. The group acknowledged that the unemployment rate for LWIA 3 appears to be stable (versus rising), but is still a high unemployment rate for the area. The planning group recognized that the impact of unemployment in particular industries (especially housing & construction-related fields) and for particular population groups (older adults, youth, persons with disabilities) is not easily alleviated.

II. Strategic Planning

As mentioned above, Workforce Connections has moved to a much more comprehensive and strategic approach

in planning for the area, involving a significant number of partners. Using this process has resulted in developing strategies and goals that capitalize on strengths and opportunities, address weaknesses and threats, and take a big-picture, long-term approach to workforce development for the region. This involves convening numerous partners, reviewing information about the area, reviewing and evaluating prior goals and their implementation, and making adjustments along the way, incorporating new information as it becomes available.

Like our colleagues across the state, we are anxious to ensure that our local workforce is prepared to meet the needs in our region. Our goal is for employers to have the employees they need and for employees to have the skills they need to be effective and to obtain jobs that pay family sustaining wages.

First, our workforce planning partners have worked to identify and find ways to work effectively with strong sectors in our community. Coordinating with the Chamber, industry sector committees of the WIB, and area employers, we are working to identify and develop best opportunities for job seekers in our area. We are collaborating with the local Chamber and Innovation Valley's Economic Development efforts to recruit high-growth industries into the region.

We also use information available through Jobs4TN, TCIDS, EMSI info (available from TVA and through the Chamber) to gain knowledge of the high-skill, high growth jobs in our community.

Health Care continues to be a significant growth industry and offers opportunities for workers. Construction and building trades also continue to be big; we have a need for skilled crafts workers and have been working with organizations to implement apprenticeship programs.

Secondly, we work with training providers to ensure options for people to prepare for jobs in these sectors.

- Coordination with PSTCC and TTC-K and other area providers to address training needs of employers and ensure that individuals receiving training are gaining skills necessary to prepare them for growth industries.
- Implementation of Career Readiness Certificates to assist in job preparation.

Thirdly, we coordinate with partners to attract other good opportunities to our area

- Coordination with Chamber, Higher Education Forum, employers, and neighboring LWIAs to form a consortium to address Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) needs in our area.
- Submission of proposal to USDOL.
- Opportunities in advanced manufacturing, energy, and technology companies.

Deployment of strategies includes implementing identified programs, continuing to work with partners to evaluate our implementation efforts, and making adjustments as they are warranted.

High growth industries in LWIA 3 are anticipated in the professional, scientific and technical services, health care services, and administrative and support

services. According to Jobs4TN, the job outlook for carpenters, electricians, machinists, welders, and HVAC technicians continues to be strong. Jobs in construction and building trades and related services are also projected to be in demand. These projections have certainly been affected by recent economic factors, especially construction and building trades jobs. However, demand for welders and HVAC positions have continued to be steady, and LWIA 3 used Recovery Act funds to help prepare dislocated workers and others for jobs in these fields.

The Career Center promotes apprenticeship programs by disseminating information concerning the nature of the apprenticeship program, requirements for admission, availability of opportunities, and sources of applications. To help alleviate shortages, the LWIA focuses on technical training and makes a concerted effort to expand opportunities in programs designed to train welders, electricians, machinists, and other high demand occupations.

LWIA 3 and the Career Center will focus on assisting apprenticeship programs with identifying applicants that meet entrance criteria. Career Readiness Certificate testing and profiling will be offered to apprenticeship programs.

Health care workers, particularly direct patient care professionals, are still in demand. LWIA 3 works closely with Tennessee Wesleyan College, TTCK, Roane State, and other training providers to address this issue. The LWIA is also looking at emerging renewable energy industries – green jobs. A green job can be anything that helps put America on the path to a cleaner, more energy efficient future. That means jobs in the public transit sector, jobs in green building, or jobs in energy efficiency.

Effects of Economic Change

Job losses and the down-turn in the economy continue to touch individuals at all education and skill levels and affect diverse industries. The number of dislocations has put a strain on systems serving as resources to aid people in developing the skills demanded by technological change and to overcome barriers to employment. Job loss is not restricted to production workers. Firm closures have also affected white-collar management. Although these workers tend to be more highly educated and earn higher incomes than production workers, their adjustment to economic dislocation is difficult. Limited job opportunities have caused significant disruptions to individuals and to their families.

There is an increase in the demand for reemployment and retraining services, as well as support services to meet basic human needs. The number of individuals needing assistance with resumes, job search techniques, unemployment compensation applications, TAA assistance, etc. has increased significantly since October 2008. The decrease in manufacturing jobs means workers must make a break from one industry to an entirely new one.

The resource room concept based on a computer-assisted self-service model is ineffective in these times. Many

individuals who are experiencing job loss have never used a computer or have very limited computer skills; they have not had to do a job search in many years, and are struggling financially and emotionally. This requires an increase in staff time and more one-on-one case management.

Specific populations of the unemployed are struggling even more. Youth unemployment is at historically high levels; individuals with negative backgrounds cannot find work; returning service men and women are finding a very difficult job market. Minorities and low-income youth are even more affected by the economic downturn.

WIA staff are reaching out to community and faith-based groups, service providers, food pantries, shelters, medical professionals, and training institutions to find a holistic approach to assisting the unemployed and low-wage earners.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Members of the LWIA 3 planning team defined regional economic development partnerships as those positive working relationships within and between the workforce and economic development systems (and the numerous entities that are part of those systems in both Knox and the surrounding counties) that

1) recognize that Knox County frequently functions as a hub of activity in surrounding counties that both affects and is affected by development and growth in the surrounding counties,
2) promote collaboration in the region which strengthens the region's competitive position for recruiting business
3) combine efforts to develop a skilled workforce in the region, further creating a competitive edge for the region's economic development.

A number of important partnerships contribute positively to regional economic development in LWIA 3 and its surrounding workforce areas. There is a history of collaboration and strong working relationships between local workforce development staffs in LWIAs 2, 3, and 4. These three areas have worked across their defined boundaries and collaborated on multiple projects to address specific job seeker and employer needs, jointly train staff and promote professional development, and to improve overall workforce development efforts within the region. The Workforce Development Boards and staffs in the region work closely with economic development entities and chamber partnerships. The development of Innovation Valley, a partnership of chambers and economic development agencies within the region, has been a strong contributor to regional efforts to attract business and grow jobs within the region.

Strong relationships between workforce development boards & staffs and training providers/education entities within the region contribute greatly to efforts to further develop a skilled workforce in the region. Efforts by local chamber organizations and the LWIAs to convene and build additional relationships between training providers and education entities to address

specific workforce development issues also serve to build partnerships that contribute positively to economic growth for the region.

Other significant partnerships include those between municipalities, local workforce boards & staffs, and chambers / economic development groups. Increased efforts in this arena in LWIA 3 during recent years are showing positive benefits.
Areas where the planning team identified that additional efforts could be directed include further capitalizing on the "brain power" of the region. Given that the region includes the University of Tennessee, Oak Ridge National Labs, and multiple department of energy projects, additional efforts could be focused on not just acknowledging the brain power in the region, but further supporting and maintaining this strength and make it a developing asset that contributes even more strongly to regional economic development.

As noted in section I, the regional IV+ consortium has convened a number of the partners outlined above to identify resource options and opportunities for developing assets that will help operationalize strategic plans for the region.

III. Customer and Market Focus

The following includes information regarding industry and sector targets as well as goals that have been established in this arena over the course of the last five planning cycles. These goals are evaluated and refined based on the acquisition of new information as well as experience working with the targeted sectors. Goals may be undergo additional modification as our area continues to grapple with unemployment and layoffs in the region. Some slowing in almost all sectors was observed during late 2008 and early 2009. Large layoffs seemed to curtail somewhat after the first 2 quarters of 2009; however, the national economic perspective of slow job growth and higher unemployment continues to be reflected in the local economy in LWIA 3. Job loss in the area has also contributed to larger applicant pools for employers, changing the dynamics of the local workforce environment.

Industries identified as significant in the workforce planning process in LWIA 3 during 2006 -2009 included health care, construction & building trades, manufacturing, and service & technology.

Health Care continues to be important in the region. It maintains a significant industry presence in LWIA 3. Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities in Knox County employ almost 20,000 people. An additional 5,000+ employees work with physician groups located in the county. Hospitals and skilled nursing facilities account for employment of at least 6,000 individuals in surrounding counties. These numbers do not include a wide range of medical service providers and ancillary organizations. While growth in some health care areas has slowed during the recession, the industry continues to demonstrate needs. Increasing use of technology and innovation in the health care environment highlight existing skills shortages and create challenges to meet ongoing demand for appropriately skilled workers.

Anticipated areas of growth continue to be occupations involving direct patient care. The hiring of nurses has slowed somewhat, but continues to be an area of strong need. Certified Nursing Assistants continue to be in demand, and emerging patient technician jobs may present new opportunities in the health care realm. Recent health care reform carries the expectation of growth in the health care information industry. While these occupational opportunities are less clearly defined in our region, it is an area where growth is expected and is selected as one of the industry targets for LWIA 3. While this industry's employment needs and increased use of technology offers challenges in terms of providing adequately trained employees in sufficient numbers, it is also an industry whose jobs are more likely to remain in the area and where ongoing opportunities exist for individuals looking for employment.

Preparing individuals for work in the healthcare field has been a focus in LWIA 3 for numerous years. Goals established in previous plans included the expansion of a health care consortium with regional involvement of health care providers. This group provided an opportunity for regional collaboration as well as information gathering activities to inform workforce development planning activities throughout the region. Information collected through this group in addition to standard labor market information shape support of specific health related training programs and use of WIA funds in the region.

Building and Construction Trades has been an industry target for LWIA 3. Prior to the recession, this industry experienced worker shortages and was also impacted by immigrant populations, particularly Latino workers. Larger general, electrical, and HVAC/plumbing contractors account for employment of more than 4000 individuals in Knox County. This does not include numerous smaller construction groups and specialty sub-contractors. The economic downturn resulted in considerable slowing in the construction arena, although commercial construction did not suffer to the extent that residential construction was impacted.

While neither the manufacturing or construction / building trades sectors are as dominant in the local area as service based jobs (particularly government and education services), these are still important sectors for the local workforce area and the region. LWIA 3 is focusing on the development of "green" and energy connected jobs, particularly as they relate to the manufacturing and building trades sectors.

Employer needs for greener and more advanced techniques in industrial maintenance (the emergence of "mechatronics") offer opportunities for good jobs within the manufacturing sector. Growth of locally owned but nationally and internationally active transfer and logistics companies mean opportunities for individuals with manufacturing skill sets and construction trade skill sets. Companies have demonstrated continued need for welders and HVAC technicians, especially those who have knowledge applicable to the nuclear industry and or greener building maintenance options. Home and

commercial building weatherization & energy utilization improvement as well as a small but burgeoning solar energy industry seem poised to present many future opportunities in the region. Therefore, LWIA 3 continues to focus on emerging renewable energy industries – green jobs – opportunities focused on alternative and more efficient energy usage. These opportunities may include jobs in the public transit sector, jobs in green building, or jobs in energy efficiency. This arena is identified as an important developing and future industry for LWIA 3. Opportunities in this arena have developed more slowly during the recession than originally hoped, but LWIA 3 continues to include this as an important focus area.

As outlined in section II, LWIA 3 has focused on promoting apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades arenas and supporting technical training in high-demand occupations that will contribute positively to both the construction and manufacturing industries. LWIA 3 has continued to market the use of Career Readiness Certificates to employers in the construction and manufacturing industries.

Use of the CRCs have been popular with both employers and apprenticeship programs. However, with decreased funding/capacity for CRCs, LWIA 3 is exploring with employer groups ways to support the ongoing use of this valuable tool. Overall usage of the CRC decreased somewhat during 2012-2013, but it continues to be seen as valuable by employers and individual job seekers. Therefore, LWIA 3 is continuing to to offer the CRC with the support of WIA funding.

Manufacturing suffered during the economic downturn; a number of jobs were lost with significant manufacturers both in the county and in neighboring workforce areas, also affecting LWIA 3 residents. We continue to see this as in important industry for our region. However, for both manufacturing and the construction and trade industries, the ongoing economic challenges will have impact on the approaches utilized for further workforce development efforts in these sectors. During 2012-2013, manufacturing jobs were lost as Sea Ray, Rock Tenn, and Hostess all closed operations in LWIA 3.

Efforts focused on advanced manufacturing are demonstrating results in the region, despite the loss of general manufacturing jobs. Innovation Valley includes advanced manufacturing as one of its target clusters. In building on this regional effort, LWIA 3 is working with partners to seek resources to develop employer sector groups in specialty foods and medical devices / life sciences. These are emerging areas of growth, with multiple employers already hiring and expansions announced for the near future. Both of these industries are growth targets in the advanced manufacturing cluster for the Innovation Valley region.

Previously identified sector focuses, as outlined below, continue to be important considerations in targeting training dollars and aiding individuals in the formation of training and employment plans. LWIA 3 will continue to monitor activities in these sectors as we observe economic improvement to observe which areas continue to merit strong attention.

Prior to economic slowdown, Hospitality and Tourism had been a growing industry in the Knoxville area and has particular impact on the regional area. This industry was also affected by efforts at revitalization of the downtown Knoxville area. Other service industries cited in previous workforce planning groups as significant in the local workforce area included call center operations and media production. Knoxville and Knox County are home to a significant number of call centers that employ more than 8,000 people in the area. The infrastructure of the area, particularly with regard to fiber optics strength has been a very positive factor in call centers locating and establishing in the area. The Knoxville Chamber and economic development efforts have selectively focused on recruiting call center employers that offer good wages and benefits for employees. The Career Center system has been actively involved in assisting with these recruitment efforts. Based on the strong infrastructure, success of existing call center operations, and efforts of the Chamber Partnership, it is anticipated that LWIA 3 will see continued growth in the Call Center industry. LWIA 3 has also noted that television and media production is a growing industry sector in the area. The presence of Scripps Networks has fueled a significant level of media production in the area. In October, 2010 Scripps Networks announced the following: *Scripps Network Interactive Inc., one of America's leading creators of lifestyle content for television, the Internet and the growing array of mobile media platforms, is establishing its global headquarters in Knoxville where a majority of the company's operations are based.* Scripps operations in Knoxville already included headquarters for the Home and Garden Television Network, the DIY (Do It Yourself) Network, and the Cooking Channel. Scripps is also a significant shareholder of the Food Network, which hosts some operations in the Knoxville area.

In addition to Scripps Networks, Knoxville is home to Rivr Media Productions, Jupiter Entertainment, and a host of other production companies. The East Tennessee Film Commission (ETFC) provides information on seventeen production companies in the Knoxville area and another fourteen companies located in the Knoxville vicinity. In addition to these companies, ETFC lists an additional ten Internet/interactive media production companies as well as a number of animation, duplication & editing, and post-production facilities in the region. The Knoxville Chamber, ETFC, and a recent issue of Knoxville magazine estimate that Knoxville ranks fourth or fifth nationally as the largest producer of media behind New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Pellissippi State Technical Community College has recently developed a new center focused on media arts. At a Dec, 2009 chamber event, Michael Strickland, president of internationally acclaimed Bandit Lites, noted that the third most significant production area in the country was a "swath" extending from Nashville to Asheville, NC with Knoxville right in the middle.

Factors in determining significant sectors include items such as numbers of employers and employees in the fields, growing and emerging fields, location quotients, and overall economic impact of the sectors in the region.

Goals for these areas were identified in a general sense and are outlined below. These goals do not include specific target numbers for training or job placement for a particular industry or occupation. LWIA 3 recognizes that the total number of individuals served and trained through WIA funds may contribute in only a small way to addressing the needs of a specific workforce sector. However, the completion of training and entrance into employment in one of the targeted industries represents significant impact for both the individual that is served and the sector employer hiring the WIA participant. Individualized training plans for WIA participants are developed within the context of recognized workforce needs and sector priorities established in the area.

Workforce Connections and the LWIA 3 WIB continue to coordinate with the Knoxville Chamber, neighboring workforce areas, community organizations, and area employers to identify and address industry needs in the region. Working collaboratively with these partners offers the opportunity to forge workforce partnerships that can address skills gaps and workforce shortages, identify and create career ladders and lattices, improve education and industry connections, and increase sector pipelines far beyond the reach of what can be accomplished through the basic distribution of WIA training dollars in the region. The IV+ resource consortium is particularly focusing on sector-based workforce efforts in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors. These sectors, in addition to alternative energy and "green jobs" efforts constitute the primary industry targets for LWIA 3.

General goals for the identified sectors include supporting ongoing industry growth and development and promoting capacity development for targeted sectors by:

- Promoting the use of Career Center services to companies to aid in recruiting and retention (job listings, Career Readiness Certificate usage, etc.)
- Promoting skills development of the existing workforce through the use of Incumbent Worker Training grant options, CRC remediation; and links with adult education;
- Linking with the Chamber and ECD and their economic development efforts to aid companies in identifying other resources that could provide support;
- Coordinating with the Chamber and ECD to support recruitment of companies into the region;
- Identifying demand occupations and skill training needs and ensuring that WIA funded training is consistent with these demands;
- Coordinating with training providers (including apprenticeship programs) to link employers & develop or expand needed training options;
- Connecting with education and youth programs to develop internships & future workforce efforts.

In addition to specific industry focuses, the Career Center and WIA staff have undertaken several initiatives focusing on services to special populations.

People with Disabilities: LWIA 3 staff continue to work with local service providers to coordinate activities and services with the Knoxville Area

Employment Consortium, National Association of Mental Illness, Disability Resource Center, Youth Transition Council, TN Dept. of Mental Health, TN School for the Deaf, and many more. In conjunction with Vocational Rehabilitation, the Career Center hosts periodic job clubs for students from TN School for the Deaf and for other Vocational Rehabilitation clients. LWIA3 and Vocational Rehab have also conducted joint in-service training sessions for VR and WIA staff.

In 2010, Workforce Connections partnered with over 40 other Knox County organizations to form the Ktown Youth Empowerment Network. This network, consisting of local agencies, faith-based organizations, government, business, youth leaders and families, provides a system of care for youth ages 14-21 with serious emotional and behavioral challenges and their families. Workforce Connections and the Career Center are playing a key role in education about and linking youth with employment and training options.

LWIA 3 was selected as one of the local workforce regions to participate in Tennessee's Disability Employment Initiative. This will impact service delivery and hopefully broaden service options for people with disabilities in the 2012 – 2013 program year. LWIA 3 anticipates that the local Career Center will become an Employment Network for people with disabilities as a part of this effort. LWIA 3 became an Employment Network this past year through the efforts of the Disability Employment Initiative and hired a Disability Resource Coordinator to promote the use of Career Center services to people with disabilities. During the 2013-2014 program year the Disability Resource Coordinator will provide training to existing Career Center staff on how to best serve people with disabilities by utilizing Integrated Resource Teams, partnerships and collaborations, as well as asset development strategies. LWIA 3 also signed a letter of understanding with Vocational Rehabilitation to provide some customized employment services to a small number of people with significant disabilities.

Through membership with the Knox Area Employment Consortium, Workforce Connections is partnering with Walgreen's to pilot the REDI (Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative) training program in 5 Knox Area Walgreen's stores. Individuals will be trained at the worksite for 4 weeks, learning retail skills such as stocking, customer service and working a cash register. The certificate they earn will enhance their employability and open up many employment options for people with significant barriers.

Aging Americans: The Career Center/WIA staff work closely with the Office on Aging Employment Specialist and with the SCCEP program. The Career Center participates in the Office on Aging job fairs and work together on cross-referrals.

Ex-Offenders: The Career Center/WIA convened several local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, probation and parole offices, service providers, and faith based organizations to identify resources and shortages for working with ex-offenders. Career Center is partnering with many of the agencies to investigate compiling a resource handbook for reintegration.

The WIA point-of-contact provides job leads, support service information, and community contact information for offenders. The Career Center hosted an in-service for probation and parole employees and in return, attended an in-service at their local offices. WIA staff have conducted a re-entry workshops for federal and state parolees. Staff also work closely with the Knox County Detention Center, offering occasional employment workshops and providing resources for offenders.

Skilled Trades: Career Center/WIA staff work closely with several of the building trades: publicize apprenticeship training opportunities, take applications for training, and host building trades' job fair.

Veterans: In anticipation of an increase in the number of veterans returning home, LWIA 3 plans to conduct *Outreach Activities* to target potential participants as well as employers. Program participants include veterans, their spouses, and children. LWIA staff is already collaborating with community groups providing services to homeless veterans and those who were previously incarcerated. An increased emphasis to employers will focus on skill sets of veterans.

During 2010, LWIA 3 staff worked with the Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership, the Army Reserve Center, the National Guard, and local businesses to provide a series of job search activities to men and women of the 844th Engineering Battalion and the 1/100 Engineers in making the transition from active duty in Iraq to employment in the civilian sector. LWIA 3 Career Center staff routinely work with the Chamber Partnership, a Veterans Owned Business Group, local military leaders, the Vet Center, and TDLWD veterans representatives to identify and address the needs of those who are currently or who have previously provided military service.

Services that enable veterans to attain, retain, or advance in demand occupations may include special orientation sessions, training information sessions, assessment, individual career planning, and job search workshops. During *Intake and Registration,* staff will identify veteran status to ensure that all services are immediately available. During GCDF training, LWIA Career Specialists learned how to identify transferable skills that veterans obtained while serving in the military. These skills will be identified, evaluated, and highlighted to enhance their employment opportunities in the area. Referrals to DVOPS and LVERS will also be a priority of the LWIA staff as will integration and collaboration with other programs/services in the Career Centers and off-site. The LWIA may establish priority of service goals that are veteran-specific.

Other Populations: Career Center/WIA staff serve on several committees addressing Knoxville's Ten Year Plan to end homelessness. Staff also work with several area homeless and transition shelters, providing employment and training related information, resources, and other supports. WIA staff worked very closely with the Chamber of Commerce at a 2008 Workforce Summit. Staff participated in a session entitled "Engaging the Underutilized Workforce" which provided information to

employers, teachers, and community members about older workers, ex-offenders, veterans, under-employed, and people with disabilities.

Layoffs and Dislocations

During 2007-2008, LWIA 3 was fortunate to have no major layoffs or closures; smaller layoffs that occurred during that timeframe included:Sea Ray Boats (128)Kimberly Clark (49)Travel and Transportation (19)General Shale (88)Knoxville Milling (White Lily) (anticipated 72) in June 2008 . Sea Ray had always been an employer of choice and a great employment opportunity for some of the lower skilled laborers in our area. The downsizing meant fewer available opportunities for lower skilled workers. The Kimberly Clark closure had a ripple effect on suppliers and other companies that provided support businesses, such as Travel and Transportation. The loss of those jobs to the community meant lost wages, benefits, and property taxes.

Beginning in July 2008, like many areas in both the state and the country, LWIA began to experience an increasing number of layoffs. In the relatively short timeframe between July and December 2008, the following layoffs occurred:

Procynet	100
ARC	121
Capital Insurance	7
Panasonic	60
Sports Belle	20
Kmart	77
Corporate Quarters	3
KCDC	40
Knoxville News Sentinel	50

In addition to these layoffs, Sea Ray manufacturing announced a furlough of employees effective October 27 – December, with employees returning sometime in January. This affected 1800 employees in Local Workforce Areas 3 and 4.

January and February 2009 brought additional layoffs to the area with Sea Ray actually eliminating 300 jobs. Goodys, the retail distributor, closed and eliminated 500 jobs at its corporate headquarters and distribution center; an additional 300 layoffs occurred once all retail operations were shuttered in the region. ImagePoint closed, affecting another 450 employees. Alcoa, located in nearby Blount County and employing many Knoxville residents, also announced a reduction in force of 450 employees. Luxotica reduced its workforce by 75 positions, and Anderson News closed, laying off 124 employees. These reductions present challenges in the area for employees who have lost their jobs as well as a tightened labor market for individuals who were already seeking employment.

The 2009-2010 program year, fortunately had fewer layoffs, although the impact of any layoff is still significant for those affected. The following layoffs and closures during the 09-10 program year and into 2010 continued to increase the numbers of dislocated workers looking for employment, as well as reducing the number of options available to job seekers:

Smurfit Stone	23
Semperian	290
IdleAire	57
Sea Ray Boats	18
Panasonic	88

TTC (Transmission Technologies Corporation)	54
Bechtel Power	343
PBR	222
American Book	250

Layoffs during the 2010 – 2011 program year include the following:

Panasonic	88
PBR	222
Sea Ray Boats	18
Transmission Technologies	54
Traveler's Indemnity Co	40
Xanodyne Pharmaceuticals	9
TMSI Logistics /G.E. Distribution	194
Semperian LLC	165
American Book Company	250
Bechtel Power	343
Regas Restaurant	65

Layoffs during the 2011-2012 program year include the following:

Travelers Insurance	49
TMSI - GE Distribution Center	194
Child Care Resource & Referral	9
Sea Ray Boats	17
TN Dept of Econ & Comm Development	9
Patrick Sullivan's Steakhouse & Saloon	38
Kingsdown, Inc.	26
Sea Ray Boats	24
Food Lion	30
Earthgrains Baking Companies	60
Teton Transportation	331
Lakeshore Mental Hospital	300
Briggs Plumbing	90
Other	127

Beginning in the 2013-2014 program year, LWIA 3 will assume responsibility for providing Rapid Response services to dislocated workers in the local area. LWIA 3 is committed to important principles promoted by USDOL for Rapid Response including timeliness, convenience, customer choice, consistent & accurate information, seamless service, and partnerships. LWIA 3 staff have actively participated with previous Rapid Response coordinators to aid dislocated workers and will organize activities designed to ensure that laid-off employees quickly receive critical information and access to services designed to help them attain re-employment. LWIA 3 staff will also work closely with TDLWD's Dislocated Worker Unit to ensure the best delivery of services to companies going through downsizing and their affected employees.

Youth Programming

As noted in Category I, LWIA 3 has previously struggled with maintaining effective youth programming, but has engaged in a process to better define and re-focus Youth Programs. The development of a Career Specialist position at the Career Center focused on services for out-of-school youth has resulted in positive impact for a number of youth. During 2008, LWIA 3 also experienced positive results with an expansion of services to in-school youth, prompting plans for further expansion during the 2008-2009 program year. Also noted in Category I, LWIA 3 used an RFP process to recruit providers for serving drop-out youth. Consequently, the LWIA 3 youth program is now divided into three parts, an in-school component, an out-of-school post-secondary component, and an out of school drop-out services

component. These components are organized as outlined below.

The in-school component is operated by Workforce Connections. Youth Career Specialists / Case managers are assigned to local schools where they work with school staff to identify and recruit at-risk youth. These case managers determine and certify program eligibility, coordinate with students and school guidance counselors in the formation of individualized plans for each student, deliver or make provision for needed support services and an incentive program, and link the students to other needed services through a system of referrals. Program activities also include career exploration activities such as college visits as well as paid summer work experiences for the students. Additionally, Workforce Connections staff provide follow-up services for the youth.

The out of school post secondary component is delivered through the Tennessee Career Center at University Avenue. A Career Specialist works with youth who have exited high school to determine their program eligibility and refer youth for occupational training or other needed services, as determined by the participant's individual plan. Training is provided by providers included on the approved training provider list. The Career Specialist may arrange support services for participating youth and also provides follow-up services.
A Request for Proposals was issued in October 2011 to select subcontractors for the out-of-school drop-out component, designed to serve youth with significant barriers to employment. The Youth Council and WIB approved two subcontractors which began serving participants in early 2012. Elements of this component include Case Management, support services, adult basic education, leadership activities, and other activities depending on the individual services plan.

LWIA 3 conducted a youth resource mapping in early 2011to gather information about the range of youth services and youth service providers available in the community. Information gathered during this process was used to further refine the procurement process for securing youth services in the community as well as expanding the referral options available for youth program participants. The LWIA 3 youth program was refined based on the results of this resource mapping process. LWIA 3 now has partnership agreements in place with 11 different community agencies. These agencies have agreed to accept appropriate referrals from the WIA youth program for services the youth may need based on their individual plan.

ARRA - Funded Youth Programming

Local Workforce Investment Area 3 provided summer work experience for economically disadvantaged youth during the summer of 2009. These services were funded by both WIA Youth Formula funds and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. LWIA 3 focused on a work experience model that provided youth with the opportunity gain on-the-job skills and earn wages during the summer program.

Given rising unemployment rates and competition for jobs in the local area, there was great interest in the summer employment program and the work opportunities it afforded for youth. More than 600 youth were enrolled in the ARRA program, and an additional 170 youth were served with WIA youth formula funding. Following an orientation which included a short assessment of career interests, youth were assigned to one of more than 200 worksites in the local area. Jobs included work in a number of areas including recreation, child care, senior assistance, landscaping, office and clerical assistance, healthcare, and custodial /maintenance.

Worksites were primarily non-profit organizations or public agencies, although a small number of private employers also participated in the program. Program participants ranged from 14 to 24 years of age; they worked from 20 – 40 hours per week, depending on the need of the worksite. The program operated from June 1 through September 18.

ARRA funds allocated to LWIA 3 for summer youth services were all utilized during this project. Given economic circumstances in the community, LWIA 3 focused on serving a large number of eligible youth, and getting money into the hands of the youth (and the local economy) as quickly as possible. The program was very successful in accomplishing these goals.

Because all ARRA youth funds were expended during 2009, no additional ARRA programming was offered to youth during 2010. WIA formula funds were used to offer a very small work experience and life-skills program for 45 youth. A comparable size group of youth from the in-school youth program was again offered work experience during the summer of 2011. During 2012, summer work experience was again provided to a group of in-school youth participants as well as participants in the out of school youth programs.

Building Partnerships

Through its collaborative and common vision efforts, Workforce Connections has successfully built many effective partnerships and working relationships with Career Center partners and workforce focused organizations in the area. LWIA 3 has also demonstrated effective customer relationships through the repeat customer usage of the Career Center system. WIA customer satisfaction measures also show positive feedback in this arena. Information outlined below shows efforts designed to build ongoing positive relationships with employers in the area.

In prior year planning, LWIA 3 established and implemented a goal to add an On-the-Job Training (OJT) Specialist to the WIA Career Center staff in 2007. The specialist was responsible for marketing OJTs to employers, increasing the numbers of OJT contracts, and offering technical assistance to employers regarding OJT forms and contracts. The goal was also for the coordinator to work closely with Career Center staff to identify job seekers who may be eligible and would benefit from training on the job rather than in a more formalized educational setting. An OJT Specialist was employed but left in early 2008. At that

point LWIA 3 chose not to refill the position. Rather OJT was considered part of the Business Services unit and is promoted generally through outreach to employers by Business Services staff. During 2008-2009, a tight training budget rendered OJT options very minimal, although LWIA 3 carried out several OJTs with a new employer made available through a Fast Track funding arrangement.

LWIA 3 has placed an increased emphasis on OJT and is linking individuals with a number of employers in the community through on the job training arrangements. Additionally, LWIA 3 is delivering OJT services through the statewide National Emergency Grant (NEG) funding.

A National Emergency Grant for disaster relief also provided opportunities to link with multiple community partners and serve dislocated workers during fall, 2011. Individuals who had been laid off from their jobs were able to get several weeks of paid work experience assisting with storm clean-up in the area.

LWIA 3 continues to promote Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants by working closely with the Knoxville Chamber, Pellissippi State Technical Community College, and other partners in the area.

IV. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Workforce Connections and LWIA 3 utilize WIA Performance Measures and federal Common Measures to observe performance against established state and federal standards. The local workforce planning committee also reviews performance against specific goals outlined in the workforce plan and determines need for improvement or the need for new goals because previously established goals have been met. Workforce Connections staff is also looking at participating in a national benchmarking program to compare local performance against other employment related programs throughout the country. Workforce Connections is working on the establishment of additional indicators of success in addition to those in the established performance measures.

Workforce Connections and LWIA 3 worked to increase enrollments during program year 2008-2009. A number of these individuals will continue during Program Year 2009 - 2010; however, Workforce Connections anticipates the following exits from WIA activities during Program Year 2009-2010.

Adults	150
Dislocated Workers	140
Youth	110

These are exits projected with formula funding; additional exits are anticipated for stimulus funding.

Actual exits from formula funding for the 2009-2010 program year exceeded anticipated exits for both adults (155) and youth (194). Dislocated worker exits were 96. Twenty-two of the youth exits were co-enrolled as adults, so also including those individuals in the adult count increases adult exits to 177.

During program year 2010-2011, LWIA 3 saw an additional increase in program

participation. Adult exits from the formula program during the year were 267. 301 dislocated workers exited formula programs. These numbers do not include individuals in non-formula specialized programs such as National Emergency Grants, etc.

V. Workforce Focus

The original Career Center location was 3929 Western Avenue in the West Haven shopping center. The career center planning committee selected this location based on criteria such as access to public transportation, visibility, demographics of the area, and others. The center, however, was a pilot project of three LWIAs and the facility was not large enough to house all of the staff of each partner.

The partners selected a new site and a building was constructed to house all Career Center partnering staff. The new location is 1610 University Avenue, approximately two miles from the original site. The original criteria for site selection were applied to the new site. In addition to other Career Center partners, all Knox County employees of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Job Service and Unemployment Insurance divisions are housed in this facility
A satellite Career Center was located at 1610 Magnolia Avenue on the campus of Pellissippi State Technical and Community College (PSTCC). This site was selected by the administrative entity for the Empowerment Zone funds that support the Center. Infrastructure costs were paid by PSTCC, the host entity, and partners provided staff to the center. As budgets tightened and Pellissippi State had to examine their funding priorities, the Heart of Knoxville satellite center was closed in June, 2011. This has resulted in some increased traffic in the primary Career Center at University Avenue.

The planning committee discussed a number of options to be explored should additional funding be made available to the center. Ideas included:

- Establishing a youth center within the Career Center,
- Developing kiosks for service in other locations,
- Purchasing a smart card system for services and participant tracking,
- Developing a web-based service connection to libraries,
- Exploring services needed in underserved areas or economic segments, and
- Increasing staff training directed towards improved customer service.

Since there is only one center substantially supported by WIA funds, closing centers in the event of a reduction in funding is not feasible. Reducing staffing and hours of operation and other services in the existing center would be required should funding be reduced.

VI. Process Management

LWIA 3 maintains a focus on effective and efficient customer service and capitalizing on partnership strengths to shape the development, evaluation, and ongoing adjustment of work processes and overall service delivery. Initial work of the consortium for the one-stop Career Center focused on creating a center where individual job seekers and

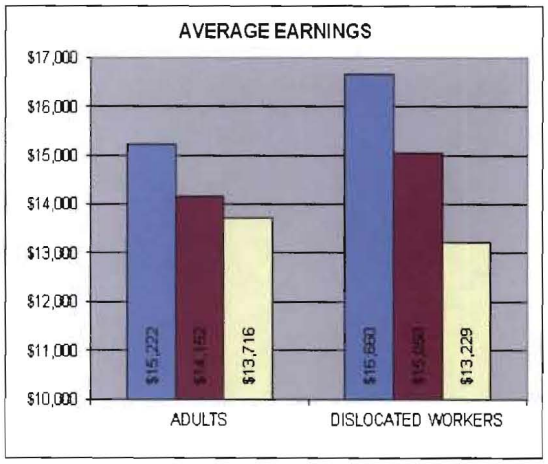
employers could readily access services they needed and where service was provided in a customer friendly manner. Partner staff working in the Career Center spent time examining customer flow, use of core and intensive services, and referrals to specialized services to create a customer friendly environment with easy access to services.

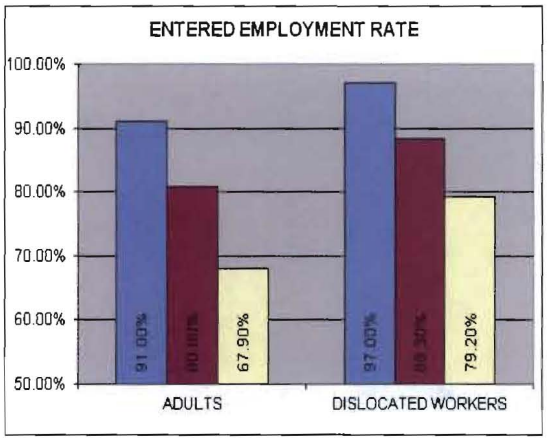
Utilizing partnership strengths continues to shape service delivery through the Career Center system. While partners in the system recognize issues of differing employing agencies, funding constraints, and varied requirements for program eligibility and service access, collaboration between the partners aids in continual refinement of service delivery. Processes affecting customer flow, information sharing, and service referrals are reviewed by management and frontline staff representing the partners to determine ways to best implement new services and programs as well as revise existing processes as needed. A staff position jointly funded by primary operating partners in the Career Center contributes to effective front-end service delivery and customer routing.

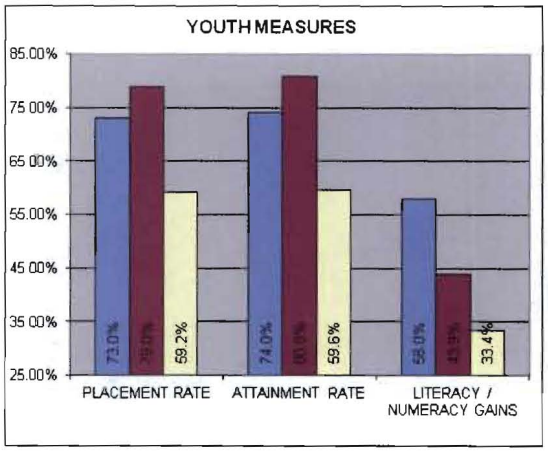
During 2012-2013, partners and staff working in the Career Center in LWIA 3 began exploring ways to better functionally align the services delivered through the Career Center system. Staff held a series of meetings and discussions focused on improved customer service, staff structure, and service flow mapping. LWIA 3 anticipates implementing a team approach to service delivery that includes Welcome, Skills & Career Development, and Business Service teams in the Career Center. Ongoing activities will include staff work to clarify team roles and duties, mapping service delivery, and training staff for team implementation.

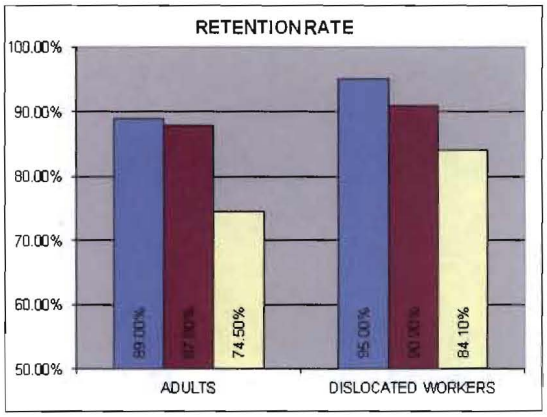
VII. Results

Local Workforce Investment Area 3 consistently demonstrates success in meeting Workforce Investment Act performance measures. The following charts outline LWIA 3's performance as compared to statewide performance and established standards for LWIA 3 for the nine common measures currently in use for the most recently published performance year. As evidenced in the charts, LWIA 3 has demonstrated strong performance, exceeding the established standard in all of the nine performance areas (and exceeding statewide performance in seven of the nine areas).









Legend for Charts
LWIA 3 Performance
Statewide Performance
LWIA 3 Goal

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA 3
KNOX COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN

SWOT ANALYSIS
2012 – 2013

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
Local Workforce System in LWIA 3

INTERNAL

POSITIVE

Strengths

- Strong partnerships
  - With elected officials & chamber of commerce
  - With area training providers
  - With regional workforce system
  - With United Way and other community partners
  - Apprenticeship development
  - Between training providers & accrediting agencies
- Visionary leadership
- One-Stop Career Center System
- Teamwork between staff, partners, & WIB
- Credentialed, dedicated, & flexible staff
- Community infrastructure
- Rapid response by education providers to training needs identified in community
  - By job seekers
  - By employers
  - Access to Key Train for high schools
- System flexibility & agility – quick response to needs
- Development of IV+ Regional Consortium
- Improved partnership with ECD
  - Understanding of roles
  - Potential for regional success
- Career Coach Implementation
- Expanded involvement with Knox Area Employment Consortium & improvement of opportunities for people with disabilities

Weaknesses

- Limited resources, including training resources / capacity
- Employer marketing and general branding / marketing / public awareness
- Technological challenges
- Additional private sector involvement with WIB
- Workforce system capacity is stretched and tested by the number of users
- Absence of effective program models for older drop-out youth
- Youth Council needs additional development
- Ongoing demand for CRCs outstripping available resources
- Staffing at Career Center; current hiring freeze renders job service unable to fill vacant positions

NEGATIVE

Opportunities

- Increased career education & collaboration options
- Developing employer relations – Increased business services to coordinate with chamber existing industry program & assist with layoff aversion
- Networking to expand services
- Tapping underutilized worker pools
- Expanding partnerships beyond traditional workforce development & education arena

Threats

- Continued High unemployment rate
  - challenges for employers
  - impacting community resources
  - continued job loss & slow job creation
  - increased competition for jobs
  - Impact of auto industry in the state
  - Impact of housing, real-estate, & construction industry lay-offs/reductions
- Impact of recession & unemployment on specific population groups (older workers, youth, persons with disabilities and veterans)

POSITIVE

Opportunities	Threats
• Options for retraining and increasing skills □ Quick skill upgrades with providers □ Adult ed capacity for basic skills • Rising technologically savvy workforce • Adapting to changing workforce • Healthcare reform & related opportunity • Emerging technologies – in healthcare and in green industries / occupations • Lowest urban unemployment rate in state • Emphasis on continued skill improvement / development • Innovation Valley + efforts to identify and procure new resources • Involve WIB members in addressing technology challenges • Partnering with groups to assist returning veterans / service people • Aid community / customers in making better decisions with improved data/information re training providers' performance, costs, and related job opportunities (training in demand?) • Continued interest in CRCs • Governor's emphasis on Jobs in Tennessee • Increased STEM emphasis in the community • Further developed relationship with ECD • Connecting the number of returning veterans with jobs • Emphasis on Complete College Act • Use of OJT & other services for job creation and retention • Increased collaboration with UT • New UI system will offer Career Center opportunity for re-focus on career & business services • Technological changes (in The Source) offer options for outreach to younger & more tech savvy customers as well as additional control options for employers	• Undereducated Workforce • Lack of living wage jobs with benefits • Underemployed population • Inadequate resources • Regulatory / legislative impact on funding / training / worker issues & employment □ State budget issues & likely trickle down □ Expiration of UI legislation • Inadequate public transportation • Substance abuse and mental health issues • Management of changing workforce – generational workforce issues • Globalization, relocation, & outsourcing • Technological changes for workforce & Rate of change in the workforce (tech & other) • Affordable child care & health care • Likely increased recidivism for ex offenders • Increased competition for training slots • Retirees & relocating job seekers entering workforce – increased competition • Fewer philanthropic $$ • Structural unemployment • Student recruitment process employed by some proprietary training programs • Congressional inactivity and uncertainty of federal legislation, budgets, & budgeting process • State uncertainty regarding budgets • General environment of funding uncertainty and resulting inability to plan

NEGATIVE

EXTERNAL