

TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGY (TCAT) – DICKSON

RHCPE GRANT – SCRUBS TO SUCCESS

TCAT DICKSON IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Dickson County Schools, Hickman County Schools, Houston County Schools

Dickson Medical Associates, Three Rivers Community Health Group, TriStar Horizon,
Williamson Health

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\$2,000,000



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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Section 1: Program Narrative	1
Section 2: Demonstration of Need	2
Localized Data	2
Linkage Between Grant Activities and Regional Needs	3
Expansion of Academic Programs, WBL Opportunities, and Equipment.....	7
Section 3: Program Plan	9
Summary of the Program	9
Timeline and Key Objectives	11
Governance and Accountability Plan	12
Section 4: Strength of Partnership	12
Section 5: Budget Plan	13
Section 6: Sustainability	14
Equipment Maintenance and Longevity	14
Sustaining Work-Based Learning and Clinical Partnerships	15
Program Financial Sustainability	15
Long-Term Engagement with Secondary Education Partners	15
Appendix A: Grant Budget	16
Appendix B: Grant Budget Line – Item Detail	17
Appendix C: Grocery Card Process	26
Appendix D: Articulation Emails	27
Appendix E: Letter from the Local Workforce Board	29
Appendix F: Timeline and Key Objectives Table	30
Appendix G: Memorandum of Understanding	33

Abstract

The demand for skilled healthcare professionals in rural Tennessee continues to grow, yet many communities face significant workforce shortages. To address these critical gaps, TCAT Dickson proposes the Scrubs to Success initiative, a multi-faceted program designed to expand access to healthcare education in rural communities and strengthen the regional rural talent pipeline.

This initiative will establish a new Practical Nursing (PN) program in Houston County and a new Surgical Technology program in Dickson, both strategically designed to meet the immediate and long-term workforce needs of rural healthcare providers. These programs will provide students with industry-aligned training, hands-on clinical experiences, and pathways to high-wage, in-demand careers. TCAT Dickson will partner with local rural school systems to train and certify secondary students in Basic Life Support and expose secondary students to health career opportunities.

In addition to expanding healthcare training opportunities, the initiative will address barriers to student success through grocery card grants, ensuring that economically disadvantaged students can focus on their education without the burden of food insecurity. This support mechanism will directly impact student retention and completion rates, leading to a stronger and more sustainable rural healthcare workforce.

The grant will fund essential faculty positions, equipment, and student support services necessary to establish these programs and ensure their long-term sustainability. By partnering with local healthcare employers and secondary education institutions, TCAT Dickson will create seamless career pathways, increase access to quality training, and enhance healthcare services in Houston, Dickson, Humphreys, and Hickman counties.

This initiative represents a transformative investment in Tennessee's rural healthcare workforce, fostering economic growth and improving access to high-quality care in communities that need it most.

Section 1: Program Narrative

A new Practical Nursing (PN) program will be established in Houston County, an area currently underserved in healthcare education, providing residents with local access to high-demand training (strategy1). Similarly, a Surgical Technology program will be launched in Dickson County, responding to documented workforce needs and building a skilled talent pipeline for healthcare facilities in the region (strategy 1). These programs align with the grant strategy to develop career pathways for Tennesseans in rural areas.

The project also incorporates an outreach program targeting secondary students to increase awareness of health careers (strategy 3). Approximately 2,000 high school students in the four rural counties will earn Basic Life Support (BLS) and CPR certifications. This initiative will introduce students to healthcare careers early, laying the foundation for future academic and professional success while addressing immediate community needs for emergency response training. This outreach program is targeted towards recruiting Tennesseans into rural healthcare jobs.

To address economic barriers, the project will distribute grocery cards to students in the LPN and Surgical Technology programs. These stipends, part of the grant's completion grant strategy (strategy 4), will alleviate food insecurity and reduce financial stress, enabling students to focus on their studies and persist to completion. By addressing critical financial needs, this initiative is expected to increase retention and graduation rates in these programs.

The outcomes of this project include establishing clear educational pathways for students to earn healthcare credentials, expanding the healthcare workforce in rural areas, and improving access to quality healthcare services. Over ten years, the project has the potential to produce 400 additional healthcare professionals for the rural counties served, significantly benefiting local economies and communities.

Section 2: Demonstration of Need

Localized Data

Houston County is classified as a distressed county by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD), with average per capita income ranging between \$30,000 and \$34,999 (THEC). Licensed Practical Nurses provide essential support in healthcare settings, and data demonstrates a pronounced need for these professionals in rural areas. According to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report, LPN roles are in high demand statewide, in all nine regions, with an entry-level salary of \$47,280 and median earnings of \$47,280.

In 2024, Tennessee graduated 1,107 LPNs, with 77 percent remaining in the state, yet the workforce remains insufficient to meet current demand. Jobs4TN data shows 1,054 LPN job openings statewide as of January 2025. As of January 30, 2025 there are 21 employers with LPN job openings near Houston County (indeed.com). Many of the employers are offering more than \$30 an hour (indeed.com). This disparity equates to a staggering 0.03 candidates per opening, illustrating the critical need for additional training programs (Jobs4TN). The demand is not limited to urban centers; rural areas such as Houston County and its surrounding regions show steady job growth, with an annual projected increase of 1.81 percent (Jobs4TN).

Additionally, the healthcare landscape in Houston County reflects the broader national trend of growing demand for mid-level technical practitioners. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a national growth rate of 3 percent for LPN roles, while Tennessee's demand is fueled by high exit rates in the profession and the expansion of rural healthcare clinics. Houston County and its neighboring counties account for a moderate number of jobs, but with the lack of a practical nursing program geographically convenient to the community, there is a large need for a training program (Jobs4TN). By establishing a new Practical Nursing program in Houston County, TCAT Dickson can

directly address these shortages, providing local residents with access to education and sustainable employment while strengthening the regional healthcare workforce.

Healthcare professions dominate the list of top in-demand jobs in the county (THEC), with Surgical Technologists ranking prominently among allied health roles. Tennessee graduated only 95 Surgical Technologists in 2024, and 73 percent of those graduates stayed in the state (THEC). However, the demand far outpaces supply, with 357 statewide job openings and 176 in Northern Middle Tennessee, there are only 0.01 candidates per position as of January 2025, according to Jobs4TN. According to Indeed.com, there are over 75 open Surgical Technology positions within 35 miles of Dickson, TN as of January 30, 2025.

Neighboring counties contribute to the sustained demand for Surgical Technologists, with Dickson County strategically positioned to support this need (Jobs4TN). Entry-level salaries for Surgical Technologists begin at \$40,456, with median first-year earnings estimated at \$48,405, surpassing the wages associated with an associate degree in the field (THEC). These roles also offer a promising career trajectory, with national job growth projected at 6 percent, which is faster than the average for all occupations (O*NET).

Together, the proposed Licensed Practical Nursing program in Houston County and the Surgical Technology program in Dickson County will address the documented workforce shortages in these high-demand healthcare fields, ensuring that local residents can access both educational opportunities and sustainable career pathways while meeting the growing needs of employers across the region. Appendix E contains industry-specific data from the local workforce board.

Linkage Between Grant Activities and Regional Needs

Currently, healthcare providers in Houston County struggle to recruit and retain Licensed Practical Nurses as evidenced by the signed MOU. Despite the presence of some healthcare training programs within the broader Northern Middle Tennessee region, there are no LPN programs within Houston County itself. This absence contributes to a lack of local workforce pipeline development, TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

hindering the ability of clinics, nursing homes, and hospitals to fill critical roles. According to Jobs4TN data, LPNs are a high-demand occupation in Tennessee, with over 1,000 job openings statewide and an extremely low candidate-to-opening ratio of 0.03. Houston County's status as a distressed county further compounds these challenges, as residents often face barriers to accessing educational opportunities in neighboring areas because of the rural nature of the county.

The creation of an LPN program in Houston County will meet this demand by providing residents with accessible, high-quality training aligned with industry needs. Graduates of the program will not only be equipped to fill local positions but will also have the flexibility to commute to neighboring counties, such as Montgomery, Dickson, and Humphreys, which also experience high demand for LPNs. This strategic approach ensures that the program will have a broad impact on the regional healthcare workforce while addressing the specific needs of an underserved area. There are LPN programs in Montgomery County and Henry County. However, these locations do not meet the need to the Houston county residents because of the great geographic distance, so the need persists.

Similarly, the proposed Surgical Technology program in Dickson County responds to a glaring need for skilled allied health professionals in the region. Dickson County is home to several healthcare facilities, yet none currently offer surgical technology training. This deficit is reflected in the data: Tennessee graduated only 95 Surgical Technologists in 2024, with 73 percent staying in-state, leaving hundreds of positions unfilled. As of January 2025, there are 357 job openings for Surgical Technologists statewide, with a candidate-to-opening ratio of just 0.01, underscoring the urgent need for workforce expansion.

Neighboring counties, including Davidson, Williamson, and Montgomery, contribute to the consistent demand for Surgical Technologists. These positions offer entry-level salaries of \$40,456 and median first-year wages of \$48,405, providing sustainable and attractive career options for local residents. Furthermore, national job growth for Surgical Technologists is projected at 6 percent, faster than the average for all occupations, highlighting the long-term viability of this profession. The only TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

Surgical Technology certificate program in the area is in Lewis County. This program does not serve the needs of the communities in Dickson, Humphreys, Williamson, Montgomery, Cheatham, Houston, or Montgomery counties. There is a large need for a Surgical Technology program in our geographic region.

The inclusion of Basic Life Support (BLS) and CPR training for approximately 2,000 rural high school students in the TCAT Dickson service area as part of this grant proposal is strategically aligned with the goal of enhancing healthcare workforce readiness and addressing regional health needs. By equipping students with life-saving skills at an early stage, the program supports critical workforce development objectives and fosters career exploration in health-related fields.

Studies consistently demonstrate the value of early career development and skill-building programs in shaping long-term career outcomes. For instance, according to Dr. Patrick Akos in *"Starting Early: Career Development in the Early Grades,"* students who participated in early career development programs showed a 15% increase in academic engagement and a 20% rise in aspirations for higher education compared to their peers. The BLS/CPR training initiative mirrors this principle, exposing students to healthcare skills that could inspire future careers in medicine, nursing, or allied health professions and help them succeed in other career paths as adults.

Further, research highlights the lasting benefits of hands-on training and work-based learning. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's report, *"The Benefits of Workforce Exposure and Career Programming for Youth and Young Adults,"* found that participants in such programs, particularly those from low-income or underserved backgrounds, experienced a 10% increase in annual earnings by age 30. Offering BLS/CPR training to 2,000 students, many from rural areas such as Houston and Dickson counties, will not only provide essential life-saving skills but also build confidence and interest in pursuing health-related career pathways.

The potential workforce benefits are substantial. According to *"The Potential Power of Internships and The Impact on Career Preparation"* by Drs. Diane Galbraith and Sunita Mondal, TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

students who engaged in skill-building activities during high school were 25% more likely to secure full-time employment within six months of graduation. By integrating BLS/CPR training into early education, the program creates a pipeline of students with foundational skills that are valued across healthcare and other industries, improving their employability and readiness for further technical training or education.

In rural areas like Dickson, Hickman, Humphreys, Stewart, and Houston (distressed county, TNECD) counties, students often face significant financial barriers that can impact their academic success and retention. Studies have shown that financial stress is one of the leading causes of decreased academic performance and higher dropout rates, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities. Providing grocery cards to students enrolled in the Practical Nursing (PN) in Houston County and Surgical Technology programs at TCAT Dickson is an effective strategy to mitigate financial pressures, enhance retention, and improve student outcomes.

Research highlights the positive impact of financial assistance on student retention. According to studies, an increase in financial support improves the likelihood that students will return for their sophomore year. For example, institutional financial aid has been shown to increase retention rates by up to 12% (Tinto, 1993). Furthermore, financial wellness programs, such as those implemented at the University of Pennsylvania, have demonstrated that addressing financial challenges can reduce stress and improve academic outcomes, with students experiencing an average 7% increase in GPA after receiving financial support for basic needs like food (Dervarics, 2016).

In a survey of rural community college students, 56% reported experiencing food insecurity, with 45% of students stating that it negatively affected their academic performance (Broton & Weaver, 2018). For students enrolled in TCAT Dickson's PN and Surgical Technology programs, the provision of grocery cards will directly address this issue. By alleviating the stress of food insecurity, students will be better able to focus on their studies, leading to improved retention rates and higher completion rates for these programs.

Expansion of Academic Programs, WBL Opportunities, and Equipment

The Practical Nursing (PN) program is a well-established component of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and higher education system in Tennessee. Robust pathways already exist to guide students from secondary to post-secondary education. High schools provide foundational coursework, such as biology and chemistry, essential for success in Practical Nursing programs. Additionally, the statewide articulation agreement facilitates seamless transfer from Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) programs to community college Associate of Nursing (RN) programs and four-year programs, streamlining the transition from an LPN certificate to an RN credential. There are other well established pathways from the community colleges or TCATs directly to four year institutions for those pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. The Practical Nursing program aligns with CIP code 51.3999 and SOC codes 29-206 and 31-1131, ensuring consistency with workforce classifications.

This grant aims to expand the existing pathway by increasing exposure to health careers for secondary students and establishing a new PN program in a healthcare education desert. This strategic expansion will address the critical need for accessible healthcare education in rural areas, empowering students to pursue careers in nursing while bolstering the local healthcare workforce.

The Surgical Technology program is a well-established offering within the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) system. TCAT Dickson is at the forefront of efforts to revitalize a previously expired (2024) statewide articulation agreement, which would allow students to transfer up to 33 credit hours from TCAT programs to community colleges. This initiative will be pursued in collaboration with TBR and Nashville State Community College, ensuring streamlined pathways for Surgical Technology graduates to advance their education.

High schools continue to play a critical role in providing foundational knowledge for health careers, introducing students to key concepts that support their transition into post-secondary

TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

programs. The Surgical Technology program aligns with CIP code 51.0909 and SOC codes 25-1071, 29-2055, and 29-9093, maintaining alignment with recognized industry standards.

Through targeted outreach to secondary schools, this program expansion will not only strengthen existing pathways but also educate students about the diverse career opportunities available in healthcare, fostering greater awareness and interest in this high-demand field.

The clinical components of the proposed Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology programs are integral to the curriculum and fulfill the work-based learning requirements. These clinical experiences provide students with hands-on training in real-world healthcare settings, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge under the supervision of experienced professionals.

For the Practical Nursing program, clinical rotations take place in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and community health organizations, giving students exposure to diverse patient populations and medical scenarios. Similarly, Surgical Technology students gain critical experience in operating rooms and surgical centers, assisting in procedures and developing essential skills for their future roles.

These immersive experiences are designed to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and professional practice. By working directly with patients and healthcare teams, students build confidence, competence, and a deep understanding of their chosen fields. The structured clinical hours ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet workforce demands while fulfilling state and programmatic accreditation requirements for work-based learning.

To address the demonstrated workforce needs in healthcare, this grant will equip the PN and Surgical Technology programs with state-of-the-art simulation technology, ensuring students gain hands-on experience in patient care. This equipment will bridge the gap between education and practice, producing highly skilled graduates ready to meet the pressing healthcare needs in rural communities. The Budget is located in Appendix A and the Budget Line Item Detail is located in Appendix B.

Section 3: Program Plan

Summary of the Program

This proposal outlines four primary grant activities designed to address rural healthcare workforce shortages, align with workforce data, and create seamless pathways to postsecondary credentials: opening a Practical Nursing program in Houston County, opening a Surgical Technology program in Dickson, providing BLS/CPR certifications for secondary students at participating school systems, and providing food assistance to students in qualifying health career programs.

Practical Nursing Program in Houston County

The Practical Nursing program in Houston County addresses the severe shortage of licensed practical nurses in Houston County and surrounding rural areas. According to Jobs4TN, the current candidate-to-opening ratio for Practical Nurses is 0.03, showing a dire need for qualified candidates. The program will prepare students for in-demand careers, supported by data showing 1,054 job openings for LPNs statewide as of January 2025 and a 1.81% annual job growth in rural regions (Jobs4TN). Furthermore, LPN credentials serve as a foundation for higher nursing qualifications.

Surgical Technology Program

The proposed Surgical Technology program addresses critical workforce needs by expanding access to high-demand surgical technology training in the Dickson area. According to Jobs4TN, the current candidate-to-opening ratio for Surgical Technologists is 0.01, showing a dire need for qualified candidates. The program directly meets the needs of employers seeking certified surgical technologists. Currently, Tennessee reports 357 online job openings for surgical technologists, with a projected 0.93% annual job growth in the region and 6% growth nationally (Jobs4TN, O*NET). TCAT Dickson will also collaborate with Nashville State Community College to reestablish an expired articulation agreement, allowing students to transfer up to 33 credits toward an associate's degree in Surgical Technology, creating a stackable credential pathway.

CPR/BLS Certifications for Secondary Students

Secondary students in Dickson, Humphreys, Hickman, and Houston counties will gain exposure to healthcare careers through BLS/CPR training. This initiative addresses the workforce pipeline by introducing students to foundational skills required in healthcare and increasing their engagement with health career pathways. Research shows that students exposed to early career development are 30% more likely to pursue aligned higher education majors (Kosine & Lewis). By certifying secondary educators as BLS/CPR instructors, this activity ensures sustainability beyond the grant period. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 rural secondary students over the time period of this grant will participate in this program and many post funding period due to the robust sustainability plan.

Grocery Cards for Qualifying Students in Eligible Programs

Grocery cards will support students enrolled in the Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology programs, addressing food insecurity, and improving retention. Research from the University of Pennsylvania demonstrates that alleviating financial stress can improve academic performance and retention rates (University of Pennsylvania). This initiative is particularly critical in rural areas such as Houston County, a distressed county, where the average per capita income ranges from \$30,000 to \$34,999 (TNECD). A fully developed plan for application, award, payment, and monitoring processes is included in Appendix C.

Pathway to Stackable Credentials

The grant supports a comprehensive pathway from secondary education to advanced healthcare credentials. Secondary students will gain BLS/CPR certification, progressing to health career programs at TCAT Dickson, such as Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology. The Practical Nursing program at TCAT Dickson has stackable credentials built in. In the first term of the PN program, the students earn a Nurse Aide certificate. The stackable credential structure allows students to advance from certificates and diplomas at TCAT to associates and articulation agreements allow TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

TCAT students to directly enroll at select four-year institutions. The Surgical Technology program had an articulation agreement to articulate up to 33 credit hours to a community college. Nashville State Community College, TBR, and TCAT Dickson are working to reenergize this agreement that expired in 2024. Appendix D includes emails between Nashville State Community College and TCAT Dickson planning a new articulation agreement. It is important to note that TCAT Dickson's Surgical Technology program will be housed in a shared facility with Nashville State Community College offering students the unique opportunity to attend two institutions but one facility. Our students can continue their education to associate and bachelor's degrees through articulation agreements, ensuring opportunities for lifelong learning and career growth.

Increasing the Number of Qualified Healthcare Professionals

This project is projected to produce 40 additional healthcare professionals annually, resulting in 400 trained professionals over the next decade. By locating programs and clinical training in rural areas, the initiative ensures that graduates remain embedded in their communities, addressing the healthcare workforce gaps. Additionally, the BLS/CPR initiative will expose ~2,000 secondary students to healthcare careers during the grant period, creating a robust talent pipeline for the future.

Producing Credentialed Job Candidates Matching Employers Needs

Through rigorous clinical experiences, aligned curricula, credentialing opportunities, occupational advisory committees, and pre and concurrent grant conversations with employers, the proposed programs will produce healthcare professionals equipped with the skills and certifications required by employers. The LPN and Surgical Technology programs' emphasis on clinical training ensures that graduates meet state and industry standards, while stackable credentials provide pathways for long-term professional development.

Timeline and Key Objectives of the Project

The Timeline and Key Objectives Tables are located in Appendix F. TCAT Dickson will conduct quarterly meetings with key stakeholders and the steering committee composed of TCAT TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

Dickson, the Employer Partners, and the Education Partners in January, April, August, and November of each year of grant funding.

Governance and Accountability Plan

Stephanie Murphy, Director of Health Careers at TCAT Dickson, will serve as the project implementation director and co-director with Dr. Levi Mayer, Vice President of Academics, and Laura Travis, TCAT Dickson President, overseeing internal operations. Cynthia Zwingle, Vice President of Fiscal Services, will manage fiscal responsibilities. Key objective completion and measurement will be conducted by TCAT Dickson.

A project steering committee, including TCAT faculty and administration, employer partners, and secondary school representatives, will provide strategic oversight and guidance. Quarterly meetings will review progress, address challenges, and adjust activities to align with workforce needs. Documentation and regular reporting will ensure transparency and accountability, supporting the project's goals and long-term success.

Section 4: Strength of Partnership

Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Dickson, as the higher education partner, will serve as the fiscal agent for the Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion (RHCPE) grant. TCAT Dickson will coordinate dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities with educational partners, deliver health career educational programs to students and employees, and facilitate the work-based learning opportunities required by employer partners to prepare students for employment.

Employer partners will play a crucial role in supporting the RHCPE mission by alerting TCAT Dickson to job openings, fostering youth interest in health careers, and hosting annual tours for program participants. They will participate in school career exploration events, consider graduates for employment, and serve on occupational advisory boards as needed. By attending requested meetings, these partners will ensure alignment between workforce needs and program outcomes. Employer partners recognize the critical need for these programs in their rural communities due to

TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

the lack of qualified health care candidates and anticipate benefits including an increased pipeline of skilled professionals and enhanced health care access in their regions. Employer partners include Three Rivers Community Health Group, Williamson Health, Dickson Medical Associates, and TriStar Horizon. More employers have agreed to participate in the grant but were unable to join the collaborative by the due date of the grant. The MOU is written so TCAT Dickson may include more employers post grant implementation.

Education partners will be responsible for recruiting students into health career pathways and providing work-based learning opportunities that engage both students and employers in meaningful activities. They will manage dual enrollment and dual credit programs with TCAT Dickson, enabling students to earn industry-recognized credentials. Education partners will prioritize access for underrepresented groups, including economically disadvantaged students, those with disabilities, students in foster care, children of armed forces personnel, and non-traditional students. Additionally, they will monitor employer partner engagement to maintain program effectiveness. Education partners recognize the need for increased awareness and access to health careers in rural communities and anticipate significant benefits, including higher employment rates, improved incomes, and enhanced health care access. Education partners include Hickman County Schools, Houston County Schools, and Dickson County Schools. Humpherys County Schools verbally agreed to be part of the collaborative, but were unable to sign the MOU by the due date of the grant. The MOU is written so that TCAT Dickson may include more employers post grant implementation.

Counties directly served are: Dickson and Houston. Surrounding rural counties that will benefit from this project: Stewart, Benton, Humphreys, Hickman, Perry, Cheatham. An MOU solidifying the collaborative is attached.

Section 5: Budget Plan

The budget for this proposal is strategically designed to support the core objectives of the Rural Healthcare Pathways Expansion (RHCPE) grant by directly addressing regional workforce TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

shortages in healthcare. Each line item reflects a necessary investment in personnel, equipment, and student support services that will strengthen healthcare education pathways and expand training capacity in rural communities.

All equipment purchases included in this budget (Appendix A) align with the demonstrated local and regional labor market needs by providing students with hands-on training using industry-standard technology. These purchases are essential for preparing students to earn postsecondary credentials and industry certifications, ensuring they are workforce-ready upon completion.

A detailed description and justification for all requested equipment, including its role in instruction and workforce preparation, is included in Appendix B: Grant Budget Line-Item Detail. This section outlines how each piece of equipment enhances skill development, supports program outcomes, and meets employer expectations in clinical and surgical settings.

The budget also includes necessary salaries and wages for instructional personnel, ensuring that the Practical Nursing (PN) and Surgical Technology programs are fully staffed to deliver high-quality education.

Indirect costs are included in the budget because of the large scope of this project. The indirect costs are 8% of the total budget and will ensure the grant funds are used efficiently while covering essential administrative and implementation expenses.

Section 6: Sustainability

Equipment Maintenance and Longevity

All equipment purchased through this grant will be maintained and repaired using TCAT Dickson's dedicated replacement and renewal funds, ensuring continued functionality without reliance on additional grant funding. TCAT Dickson follows a structured equipment maintenance and replacement plan for all programs, guaranteeing the longevity of instructional resources.

Furthermore, all equipment will be housed in facilities owned or leased by the State of Tennessee, providing secure, long-term locations for instructional use.

TCAT Dickson – RHCPE – Scrubs to Success

Sustaining Work-Based Learning and Clinical Partnerships

TCAT Dickson anticipates that all work-based learning (WBL) and clinical sites established through this grant will continue beyond the funding period. The official clinical agreements executed with employer partners will solidify long-term commitments, ensuring students have consistent access to real-world training opportunities. Additionally, the relationships built through this initiative are expected to grow as employer partners recognize the value of an expanded, well-trained healthcare workforce.

Program Financial Sustainability

By the end of the grant period, both the Practical Nursing (PN) program in Houston County and the Surgical Technology program in Dickson will be fully self-sustaining through a combination of tuition revenue and state appropriations. Enrollment demand, coupled with Tennessee's continued investment in healthcare workforce development, will provide ongoing financial support without the need for external grant funding.

Long-Term Engagement with Secondary Education Partners

The relationships built with secondary schools will remain intact beyond the grant period due to the value-added benefits provided by TCAT Dickson. Schools will continue to include TCAT Dickson in career exploration activities, ensuring that students are aware of healthcare career pathways. To sustain Basic Life Support (BLS)/CPR training in secondary schools, funding is allocated in FY29 to train high school employees as certified BLS instructors, allowing them to continue training students at their respective schools after the grant has ended.

APPENDIX A: GRANT BUDGET

GRANT BUDGET: Scrubs to Success – TCAT Dickson			
Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant			
Period Begin: July 2025		Period End: August 2029	
EXPENSE LINE	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE PARTICIPATION	TOTAL PROJECT
Salaries, Benefits and Taxes	\$856,600		\$856,600
Professional Fee, Grant & Award			
Supplies	\$150,051.85		\$150,051.85
Travel	\$6,000		\$6,000
Interest			
Insurance			
Specific Assistance to Individuals	\$40,000		\$40,000
Depreciation			
Other Non-Personnel	\$44,500		\$44,500
Capital Purchase	\$754,700		\$754,700
Indirect Cost (8%)	\$148,148.15		\$148,148.15
In-Kind Expense			
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,000,000		\$2,000,000

APPENDIX B: GRANT BUDGET LINE – ITEM DETAIL

Line 1: Salaries and Wages

Surgical Technology Instructor Salary

Surgical Technology Instructor salary for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. The salary will be based off the current TBR salary schedule. It is budgeted for \$30,000 for FY26, \$62,000 for FY27, \$64,000 for FY28, and \$66,000 for FY29 for a total of \$222,000. This position will be eligible for the THEC Rural Health Career Faculty Stipend to supplement the base salary.

The Surgical Technology Instructor salary is included in this grant to ensure the successful launch of the program. As a new program, it does not yet have an established revenue stream from tuition or state appropriations to support faculty salaries. Grant funding allows the institution to hire a qualified instructor from the outset, ensuring the program meets accreditation requirements, secures clinical partnerships, and provides high-quality training from day one.

Without grant support, the costs associated with this position would strain existing institutional budgets and could delay or limit program implementation. By funding the instructor's salary during the initial years, the program will have time to build enrollment, establish financial sustainability, and transition to self-sufficiency through tuition revenue and state funding, ensuring long-term success without impacting TCAT Dickson's general funds.

Practical Nursing Instructor Salary

Practical Nursing Instructor salary for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. The salary will be based off the current TBR salary schedule. It is budgeted for \$33,000 for FY26, \$65,000 for FY27, \$67,000 for FY28, and \$68,000 for FY29 for a total of \$233,000. This position will be eligible for the THEC Rural Health Career Faculty Stipend to supplement the base salary.

The Practical Nursing Instructor salary is included in this grant to ensure the successful launch of the program. As a new program, it does not yet have an established revenue stream from tuition or state appropriations to support faculty salaries. Grant funding allows the institution to hire a qualified instructor from the outset, ensuring the program meets accreditation requirements, secures clinical partnerships, and provides high-quality training from day one.

Without grant support, the costs associated with this position would strain existing institutional budgets and could delay or limit program implementation. By funding the instructor's salary during the initial years, the program will have time to build enrollment, establish financial sustainability, and transition to self-sufficiency through tuition revenue and state funding, ensuring long-term success without impacting TCAT Dickson's general funds.

Health Careers Academic Associate 3

Health Careers Academic Associate 3 salary for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. The salary will be based off the current TBR salary schedule. It is budgeted for \$15,000 for FY26, \$32,000 for FY27, \$33,000 for FY28, and \$34,000 for FY29 for a total of \$114,000.

The Health Careers Academic Associate 3 position is included in this grant to provide essential administrative and coordination support for the successful implementation of the proposed healthcare programs and other grant related initiatives. As a new role created specifically for this initiative, it is not currently funded within TCAT Dickson's general budget. This position will play a critical role in managing grant activities, including assisting with student recruitment, coordinating clinical partnerships, tracking program outcomes, and ensuring compliance with grant reporting requirements.

Without grant funding, the additional workload required to launch and sustain the new Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology programs with the addition of the other initiatives, would have to be absorbed by existing staff, potentially impacting efficiency and program success. Other departments and personnel already employed at TCAT Dickson will receive an increased workload. By supporting this position through the grant, TCAT Dickson can ensure a smooth rollout, proper oversight, and long-term sustainability of these programs without diverting institutional funds from existing initiatives.

Part-Time CPR/BLS Instructor

Part-time CPR/BLS Instructor hourly wage compensation based on TCAT Dickson salary schedules. \$15,000 is budgeted for FY26, 27, 28, and 29 for a total of \$60,000.

The Part-Time CPR/BLS Instructor position is included in this grant to expand access to Basic Life Support (BLS) and CPR certification for secondary students and healthcare program participants. These certifications are critical workforce requirements for many entry-level healthcare positions, essential for ensuring that students are well-prepared for clinical training, and provide an amazing opportunity for career exploration via hands-on training.

Currently, TCAT Dickson does not have dedicated funding for a CPR/BLS instructor to provide these certifications at the scale required to meet this project's needs. Without grant support, the cost of instruction would either need to be passed on to students—creating a financial barrier—or absorbed by the institution, which would strain existing resources. By funding this position through the grant, TCAT Dickson can increase certification opportunities, strengthen healthcare pathways for rural students, and establish a self-sustaining training model that will continue beyond the grant period.

Total salary and wages are \$629,000. If the salaries exceed the total amount, TCAT Dickson will pay the remainder.

Line 2: Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes

Full-time employee benefit costs are calculated at 40% of the salary. Part-time employee benefits are calculated at 7% of the salary. All position justifications are located in Line 1: Salaries and Wages.

Surgical Technology Instructor benefits for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. It is budgeted for \$12,000 for FY26, \$24,800 for FY27, \$25,600 for FY28, and \$26,400 for FY29 for a total of \$88,800.

Practical Nursing Instructor benefits for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. It is budgeted for \$13,200 for FY26, \$26,000 for FY27, \$26,800 for FY28, and \$27,200 for FY29 for a total of \$93,200.

Health Careers Academic Associate 3 benefits for half of FY26, all of FY27, 28, and 29. It is budgeted for \$6,000 for FY26, \$12,800 for FY27, \$13,200 for FY28, and \$13,600 for FY29 for a total of \$45,600.

Part-time CPR instructor benefits are budgeted at \$1,050 for FY26, 27, 28, and 29 for a total of \$4,200.

Total benefits and taxes are \$227,600. If the benefit costs exceed the total amount, TCAT Dickson will pay the remainder.

Line 4: Professional Fees

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 5: Supplies

Surgical Technology Supplies

Surgical Technology start up supplies include an infusion pump (2), crash cart (2), rolling exam light (3), bair hugger, and surgical generator (2). The consumable supplies are budgeted at \$13,000 for FY26 and \$4,000 for FY27, 28, and 29. The total supply cost for the Surgical Technology program is \$58,700.

The inclusion of Surgical Technology startup supplies in the grant budget is essential to the successful launch and operation of the program. These supplies are necessary to equip students with the hands-on experience required to meet industry standards and employer expectations in surgical settings.

The startup items (not capital equipment), including infusion pumps (2), crash carts (2), rolling exam lights (3), a Bair Hugger, and surgical generators (2), is critical for simulating real-world operating room environments. These items will allow students to develop the technical skills needed to operate essential surgical items and perform tasks safely and effectively. Without these resources, the program would be unable to provide the level of training required for graduates to seamlessly transition into the workforce.

Additionally, consumable supplies are budgeted at \$13,000 for FY26 to accommodate the initial program launch and \$4,000 annually for FY27, FY28, and FY29 to ensure ongoing operation. These consumables are necessary for hands-on training in sterile techniques, instrumentation, and surgical procedures, ensuring students gain competency in a controlled learning environment.

This investment is necessary to establish a sustainable program that meets employer demands and prepares students for immediate employment in the healthcare sector. By including these expenses in the grant, TCAT Dickson can allocate its general funds toward sustaining the program beyond the grant period rather than absorbing the significant upfront costs associated with its implementation.

Practical Nursing Supplies

Practical Nursing start up supplies include a Hilldrop VersaCare Bed (2), Exam Table, Alaris Medley Pump Combo 4, Hillrom Birthing Bed, Headwall (3), and Stryker Stretcher. Consumable supplies are budgeted at \$6,531.85 for FY26 (due to start-up costs), and \$3,000 for FY27, 28, and 29. The total supply cost for the PN program is budgeted at \$46,531.85.

The inclusion of Practical Nursing startup supplies in the grant budget is essential to the successful launch and operation of the program. These supplies are necessary to equip students with the hands-on experience required to meet industry standards and employer expectations in surgical settings.

The startup items (not capital equipment), is critical for simulating real-world healthcare provider. These items will allow students to develop the technical skills needed to operate essential medical equipment and perform tasks safely and effectively. Without these resources, the program would be unable to provide the level of training required for graduates to seamlessly transition into the workforce.

Additionally, consumable supplies are budgeted at \$6,531.85 for FY26 to accommodate the initial program launch and \$3,000 annually for FY27, FY28, and FY29 to ensure ongoing operation. These consumables are necessary for hands-on training in sterile techniques, instrumentation, and surgical procedures, ensuring students gain competency in a controlled learning environment.

This investment is necessary to establish a sustainable program that meets employer demands and prepares students for immediate employment in the healthcare sector. By including these expenses in the grant, TCAT Dickson can allocate its general funds toward sustaining the program beyond the grant period rather than absorbing the significant upfront costs associated with its implementation.

CPR/BLS Supplies

CPR/BLS supplies include CPR Adult Manikin Kits, student workbooks, instructor manuals, and completion cards. Consumable supplies are budgeted at \$2,000 for FY26, 27, 28, and 29. The total supply cost for the CPR/BLS classes is budgeted at \$44,820.

he CPR/BLS supplies are essential to the success of the training program, ensuring that students gain the necessary skills to meet healthcare industry standards and for proper career exploration. The CPR Adult Manikin Kits are critical for simulating real-life CPR scenarios, allowing students to practice and perfect their life-saving techniques in a controlled environment. This hands-on experience is vital for building the confidence and muscle memory needed for effective emergency response and an accurate career exploration experience. The student workbooks provide essential learning materials, supporting theory instruction and serving as a reference for students throughout the course. Additionally, instructor manuals are necessary to ensure a standardized approach to teaching, giving instructors the tools to deliver the curriculum effectively and assess student performance consistently. Completion cards are required to certify students upon successful course completion, providing proof of their qualifications, which is essential for healthcare employment.

Consumable supplies, budgeted at \$2,000 annually, are necessary for the program's ongoing operation. These items, including gloves, cleaning materials, and instructional aids, are used on a per-student or per-class basis, ensuring smooth training sessions and proper sanitation of equipment.

Total supply costs are \$150,051.85. If the supply costs exceed the total amount, TCAT Dickson will pay the remainder.

Line 6: Telephone

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 7: Postage and Shipping

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 9: Equipment Rental and Maintenance

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 10: Printing and Publications

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 11: Travel

\$1500 is budgeted for FY26, 27, 28, and 29. This line is included to help cover travel expenses to conferences or travel expenses to clinical sites.

The total budget for travel is \$6,000. If the travel costs exceed the total amount, TCAT Dickson will pay the remainder.

Line 12: Conferences and Meetings

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 15: Grants and Awards

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 18: Other Non-personnel Expenses*Advertising*

Advertising is budgeted at \$5,000 for FY26 and \$1,500 for FY27, 28, and 29. The total advertising budget is \$9,500.

The inclusion of \$5,000 for advertising in FY26 and \$1,500 for FY27, FY28, and FY29 is vital to the successful launch and sustainability of the new Practical Nursing (PN) and Surgical Technology programs. This advertising budget will ensure that the communities in the surrounding areas are well-informed about these new offerings, driving enrollment and fostering long-term program success. A targeted media blitz will be conducted prior to the first cohort of both programs, utilizing various media platforms to reach a broad audience and generate interest. In addition, TCAT Dickson is considering community-focused initiatives to fully embed the programs within the local area, such as sponsoring a youth baseball team in rural communities. These efforts will strengthen the connection between the programs and the community, increasing awareness and solidifying TCAT Dickson's role as a key contributor to local workforce development. By raising awareness early and engaging with the community, we can

attract potential students, ensure strong enrollment numbers, and support the programs' ongoing sustainability.

Signage

Signage (interior and exterior) at the new facility in Houston county (COE requirement) is budgeted at \$25,000 in FY26.

The inclusion of \$25,000 for signage in FY26 is essential for the new Practical Nursing (PN) program facility in Houston County. As TCAT Dickson does not currently have a physical presence in Houston County, exterior signage is critical for establishing visibility and ensuring that the community can easily locate the new facility. This signage will help raise awareness of the program and reinforce TCAT Dickson's commitment to serving the local population. Additionally, clear signage on both the exterior and interior of the facility is a requirement for accreditation by the Council on Occupational Education (COE), ensuring that the program meets accreditation standards. The signage budget will cover both the exterior and the interior requirements for maintaining program accreditation, ultimately supporting the successful launch and ongoing operation of the PN program in Houston County.

BLS Instructor Training

Certifications to train CPR/BLS instructors in FY26 is budgeted at \$5,000 and an additional \$5,000 in FY29. The total CPR/BLS instructor training budget is \$10,000.

The inclusion of \$5,000 for CPR/BLS instructor certification in FY26 and an additional \$5,000 in FY29 is a critical component of the program's sustainability plan. By certifying post-secondary and secondary instructors to teach CPR/BLS, we aim to establish a long-term presence in rural counties, particularly within secondary schools. This investment ensures that after the grant period has ended, these schools can continue offering BLS training and health career exploration opportunities to students. The goal is to leave a lasting legacy in the community by training local instructors who work at the secondary institutions, contributing to the development of a skilled healthcare workforce in rural areas. This certification budget supports both the initial training and the continued growth of healthcare education in the region.

The total Other Non-personnel Expenses budget is \$44,500.

Line 19: Capital Purchases

Surgical Technology

Capital purchases planned for the Surgical Technology program are an Anesthesia Machine (\$35,000), an Anesthesia Cart (\$10,000), three Surgical Lights (\$11,000 each), three Case Carts (\$6,400 each), two Sterilizers (\$10,500 each), a Warmer (\$11,000), a Surgical Generator

(\$9,000), three Operating Room Tables (\$17,000 each), a C Arm Machine (\$150,000), and three Sinks (\$7,000 each). The total capital equipment budget for the Surgical Technology program is \$360,200.

Anesthesia Machine (\$35,000): The Anesthesia Machine is essential for teaching students how to safely administer anesthesia and manage patient care during surgical procedures. This equipment allows students to gain hands-on experience with the same technology they will encounter in real-world healthcare settings, ensuring they are well-prepared for their roles as surgical technologists.

Anesthesia Cart (\$10,000): The Anesthesia Cart is necessary for organizing and storing anesthesia supplies and medications. It ensures that all necessary items are readily accessible during surgical procedures, which is crucial for maintaining efficiency and patient safety in the operating room.

Surgical Lights (\$11,000 each): The three Surgical Lights provide the necessary illumination for precise surgical operations. Proper lighting is critical for surgeons to see clearly and perform delicate procedures accurately, which directly impacts patient outcomes. Each Operating Room Table will require a light.

Case Carts (\$6,400 each): The three Case Carts are used to organize and transport surgical instruments and supplies efficiently. These carts help streamline the workflow in the operating room, ensuring that all necessary tools are available and properly sterilized for each procedure. Each Operating Room Table will require a Case Cart.

Sterilizers (\$10,500 each): The two Sterilizers are vital for maintaining a sterile environment in the surgical suite. They ensure that all surgical instruments are properly sanitized, preventing infections and ensuring patient safety.

Warmer (\$11,000): The Warmer is used to maintain the temperature of fluids and blankets, which is crucial for patient care during surgery. Keeping patients warm helps prevent hypothermia and promotes better recovery outcomes.

Surgical Generator (\$9,000): The Surgical Generator provides the necessary power for various surgical instruments. Reliable power is essential for ensuring that all equipment functions properly during procedures, which is critical for patient safety and the success of the surgery.

Operating Room Tables (\$17,000 each): The three Operating Room Tables are essential for positioning patients correctly and providing a stable surface for surgical operations. These tables are designed to accommodate a wide range of surgical procedures, ensuring versatility and functionality in the operating room. Three tables are needed for a cohort of 20 students (the maximum the program can accommodate).

C Arm Machine (\$150,000): The C Arm Machine is a critical imaging device that allows for real-time visualization of the surgical area. This technology enhances the precision and safety of surgical procedures by providing clear images of the patient's anatomy during the operation.

Sinks (\$7,000 each): The three Sinks are necessary for maintaining hygiene in the surgical suite. Proper handwashing facilities are essential for preventing infections and ensuring that surgical staff can perform their duties in a clean and safe environment.

Practical Nursing

Capital purchases for the Practical Nursing program are a Nursing Ann Simulator (\$48,000), MamaAnne Simulator (\$110,000), SimJunior (\$47,000), JUNO Manikin Simulator Package (\$30,000), two Vital Signs Monitor Packages (\$6,000 each), SimCartRx Elite (\$41,500), and an Anatomage Table (\$106,000). The total capital equipment budget for Practical Nursing is \$394,500.

Nursing Ann Simulator (\$48,000): The high-fidelity Nursing Ann Simulator is essential for providing realistic, hands-on training in various nursing procedures. This advanced simulator allows students to practice and refine their skills in a controlled environment, ensuring students are well-prepared for real-world clinical settings.

MamaAnne Simulator (\$110,000): The MamaAnne Simulator is crucial for teaching obstetric and gynecological procedures. It provides realistic simulations of childbirth and prenatal care, enabling students to gain confidence and competence in managing maternal and neonatal health.

SimJunior (\$47,000): SimJunior is designed to simulate pediatric patients, allowing students to practice pediatric care and emergency scenarios. This simulator helps students develop the skills needed to provide high-quality care to children, a critical aspect of nursing.

JUNO Manikin Simulator Package (\$30,000): The JUNO Manikin Simulator Package offers a versatile training tool for various nursing procedures. It supports a wide range of simulations, from basic nursing skills to advanced clinical scenarios, enhancing students' learning experiences.

Vital Signs Monitor Packages (\$6,000 each): The two Vital Signs Monitor Packages are essential for teaching students how to accurately measure and interpret vital signs. These monitors provide real-time data, helping students develop critical assessment skills necessary for patient care.

SimCartRx Elite (\$41,500): The SimCartRx Elite is a medication administration cart that simulates real-world medication management. It allows students to practice safe medication administration, including dosage calculations and proper documentation, which are vital skills for nursing practice.

Anatmage Table (\$106,000): The Anatmage Table is an advanced visualization tool that provides detailed, interactive 3D anatomy models. It enhances students' understanding of human anatomy and physiology, supporting their learning and improving their ability to diagnose and treat patients effectively.

These capital purchases are crucial for creating a realistic and effective training environment, preparing students to meet the demands of the healthcare industry and ensuring they are well-equipped to provide high-quality patient care.

Line 22: Indirect Costs

The inclusion of indirect costs in the budget is essential due to the large scope of this project. Indirect costs, which total \$148,148.15, represent 8% of the total budget and are crucial for ensuring that the grant funds are used efficiently while covering essential administrative and implementation expenses. This amount is intended to cover costs associated with administrative functions, including providing the required project reports, financial information, and information to support project evaluation.

Indirect costs encompass a variety of necessary expenses that support the overall management and execution of the project. These include administrative support, facilities maintenance, utilities, and other overhead costs that are not directly tied to specific project activities but are vital for the smooth operation of the program. By allocating funds for indirect costs, we can ensure that all aspects of the project are adequately supported, from administrative tasks to maintaining the physical infrastructure required for the new programs.

Additionally, indirect costs help cover the expenses associated with compliance and reporting requirements, ensuring that the project adheres to all regulatory and grant guidelines. This includes financial management, auditing, and other oversight activities that are essential for maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the project duration.

By including indirect costs in the budget, we can ensure that the project is managed effectively and that all necessary resources are available to support the successful implementation and sustainability of the new Practical Nursing and Surgical Technology programs. This investment in indirect costs is critical for the overall success and long-term impact of the project, ensuring that it meets its goals and delivers high-quality education and training to students.

Line 24: In-Kind Expenses

No funds are allotted to this line.

Line 25: Total Expenses

Total Expenses: \$2,000,000.

APPENDIX C: GROCERY CARD PROCESS

To support students facing financial hardships, TCAT Dickson has implemented a comprehensive process for administering gas cards upon request. This initiative aims to provide essential assistance to full-time students enrolled in the Houston County PN program or the Dickson Surgical Technology Program. The process includes a confidential application, a fair and effective award system, secure payment methods, and diligent monitoring to ensure transparency and accountability. By incorporating this program into health career information sessions and orientation, we strive to ensure that all eligible students are aware of the available support, helping them to continue their education without undue financial stress.

Application: Students will use a paper application to request gas cards, stating that they have a financial hardship. This application must be filled out and submitted to the TCAT Dickson business office. Students can apply each term they are enrolled in the Houston County PN program or the Dickson Surgical Technology Program. To be eligible, students must be full-time and have attended at least one complete day of the term for which they are applying for assistance. All applications will be kept confidential to protect students' privacy.

Award: To ensure the maximum effectiveness of the funds, students who have not reached the maximum amount of assistance they are eligible for during the term will be considered. Each student is limited to \$200 per term for grocery assistance. This ensures that the funds are distributed fairly and reach those in need.

Payment: Payment will be made directly to the student in the form of grocery cards. These gift cards are purchased ahead of time and securely stored in a locked device in the business office. This method ensures that students receive the assistance promptly and can use it for their immediate needs.

Monitoring: The TCAT Dickson Business Office staff will monitor this process, with oversight by Vice President of Fiscal Services, Cynthia Zwingle. The grocery card program will be reconciled weekly, and a ledger will be maintained for grant reporting and monitoring purposes. This ensures transparency and accountability in the distribution of funds, allowing for accurate tracking and reporting.

Communication: The grocery card program will be included in the health career information sessions and orientation. This ensures that all eligible students are aware of the assistance available to them from the start of their program.

APPENDIX D: ARTICULATION EMAILS



Re: [EXTERNAL] TCAT to Community College Surgical Technology Articulation Agreement

From Williams, Johannah <Johannah.Williams@nscc.edu>

Date Fri 1/17/2025 3:22 PM

To Levi Mayer <levi.mayer@tcatdickson.edu>

Cc Shanna Jackson <shanna.jackson@nscc.edu>; Laura Travis <Laura.travis@tcatdickson.edu>

CAUTION!! This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dr. Mayer,

Thank you for reaching out. I was not aware that that agreement had expired. I would welcome the chance to explore the opportunity to collaborate on this. I mentioned it to our Health Science dean and director of our surg tech program, and they would both like to join the discussion. Our surg tech director, Van Bates, has some insight that I think will be helpful. I'll follow up this email with details for scheduling a meeting.

Thank you!

Dr. Johannah B. Williams

Vice President

Academic Affairs and Workforce Development

Nashville State Community College

johannah.williams@nscc.edu

Nashville State
Community College



From: Levi Mayer <levi.mayer@tcatdickson.edu>

Sent: Friday, January 17, 2025 12:00 PM

To: Williams, Johannah <johannah.williams@nscc.edu>

Cc: Jackson, Shanna <shanna.jackson@nscc.edu>; laura.travis <Laura.travis@tcatdickson.edu>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] TCAT to Community College Surgical Technology Articulation Agreement

You don't often get email from levi.mayer@tcatdickson.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside Nashville State Community College. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Williams,

I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out regarding a Surgical Technology articulation agreement between TCAT Dickson and Nashville State Community College. The state-wide Surgical Technology articulation agreement expired in 2024. I would like to explore the opportunity to collaborate with you on creating a new agreement between our institutions. If possible, I would also like our institutions to assist in any efforts by the Tennessee Board of Regents to create or renew a statewide agreement that could benefit both of our institutions and others in the system. These agreements are essential to support students' continuing education efforts in our community, especially rural communities.

Please let me know if you are available to discuss this further and if you are supportive of this collaborative effort. I am happy to coordinate a meeting at your convenience. I have also included the Presidents of our institutions in this email.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working with you to strengthen the connection between our colleges.

Levi Mayer, Ph.D.

Vice President of Academics and Compliance

e: Levi.Mayer@tcatdickson.edu

p: 615.551.8908



APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD

January 14, 2025

TN Higher Education Commission
312 Rosa Parks Ave, 9th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-3605

Dear Rural Health Care Expansion Grant Review Committee:

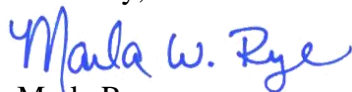
On behalf of the Northern Middle Workforce Board, we are pleased to provide this letter of support for TCAT Dickson's application for the Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant. As the Executive Director of the Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board, I recognize the critical need to address shortages in the healthcare workforce and support expanding access to healthcare credentials and training in our rural communities.

TCAT Dickson's plan to establish strong, defined healthcare career pathway programs will yield significant benefits to our communities and align with our shared mission to support workforce development, particularly in underserved areas. Key components of TCAT Dickson's proposal include creating a Surgical Technology program in Dickson, LPN program in Houston, providing BLS/CPR training to approximately 2,000 secondary students in Dickson, Humphreys, Hickman, and Houston counties, professional development for those instructors, and providing supportive services for healthcare students. This addresses the pressing needs these underserved areas and ensuring the sustainability of the programs beyond the grant period. While the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry experienced a 12.02% growth between 2018 and 2023, they are approximately 6.73% behind the national average for individuals employed. In comparison, the 18 counties listed as ineligible for application are only approximately 2.83% behind the national average. LPN's and Surgical Technologists are in high demand in the region and have first year wages from \$47,000-\$49,000.

We are confident that this initiative will make a meaningful impact on healthcare workforce development in our region, addressing current shortages and creating sustainable career pathways for residents in rural Tennessee.

Please feel free to contact me at (931)905-3500 if you require additional information or support.

Sincerely,



Marla Rye
Executive Director

APPENDIX F: TIMELINE AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Timeline

Year	PN Program	Surgical Technology Program	K-12 Outreach	Grocery Cards
2025	Curriculum planning Partnership and clinical placement planning	Curriculum planning Partnership and clinical placement planning	Hire a BLS/CPR Instructor Begin BLS/CPR outreach to schools	Grocery cards purchased
2026	January: Advertise for an instructor February: Hire a PN Instructor March-June: Recruit for upcoming cohort; equip lab with capital purchases and supplies July: Hold information session for prospective students September: Admit first cohort	January: Advertise for an instructor February: Hire a Surgical Technology Instructor March-June: Recruit for upcoming cohort; equip lab with capital purchases and supplies July: Hold information session for prospective students September: Admit first cohort	May: Certified 300 students	September: Inform students regarding the grocery card program
2027	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students August: Graduate cohort with 10 graduates September: Admit new cohort	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students August: Graduate cohort with 10 graduates September: Admit new cohort	May: Certified 700 students	August: Distribute grocery cards to 15 students
2028	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students August: Graduate cohort with 15 graduates September: Admit new cohort	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students August: Graduate cohort with 15 graduates September: Admit new cohort	May: Certified 1,000 students	August: Distribute grocery cards to 40 students
2029	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students	March-June: Recruit for new cohort July: Hold information session for prospective students	May: Certified 1,500 students	August: Distribute grocery cards to 65 students

	August: Graduate cohort with 15 graduates September: Admit new cohort	August: Graduate cohort with 15 graduates September: Admit new cohort	May: Trained at least 4 instructors to teach BLS/CPR at High Schools	
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*Note: Key objectives are listed in **bold**.

Recurring activities:

Quarterly meeting to review activities, timeline, and general project progress (January, April, August, November): TCAT Dickson, Employer partners, and Education partners.

Key Objectives and Metrics

Timeline	Objective	Metric
May 2026	Certify 300 students in BLS/CPR during the grant period	Number of secondary students receiving their BLS/CPR certification
June 2026	Fully equip PN lab with equipment and supplies	Percent of equipment ordered, received, and installed and supplies available
June 2026	Fully equip Surgical Technology lab with equipment and supplies	Percent of equipment ordered, received, and installed and supplies available
September 2026	Inform students regarding the grocery card program	Percent of students enrolled in eligible programs aware of the grocery card program
September 2026	Admit first PN cohort	Number of students admitted to the PN Cohort
September 2026	Admit first Surgical Technology cohort	Number of students admitted to the Surgical Technology cohort
May 2027	Certify 700 students in BLS/CPR during the grant period	Number of secondary students receiving their BLS/CPR certification
August 2027	Graduate 10 students from the PN program	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards
August 2027	Graduate 10 students from the Surgical Technology cohort	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards
August 2027	Distribute grocery cards to 15 students during the grant period	Number of students who received grocery cards
May 2028	Certify 1,000 students in BLS/CPR during the grant period	Number of secondary students receiving their BLS/CPR certification
August 2028	Graduate 15 students from the PN program	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards
August 2028	Graduate 15 students from the Surgical Technology cohort	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards

August 2028	Distribute grocery cards to 40 students during the grant period	Number of students who received grocery cards
May 2029	Certify 1,500 students in BLS/CPR during the grant period	Number of secondary students receiving their BLS/CPR certification
May 2029	Certify 4 secondary teachers to issue BLS/CPR certifications	Number of secondary teachers certified
August 2029	Graduate 15 students from the PN program	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards
August 2029	Graduate 15 students from the Surgical Technology cohort	Measure the completion, placement, and licensure data and compare to COE standards
August 2029	Distribute grocery cards to 60 students during the grant period	Number of students who received grocery cards

AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson
AND
EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS
AND
EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

This Agreement entered into this 31 day of January, 2025 by and between Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson (hereinafter referred to as the “College”) and Dickson County Health Department, Three Rivers Community Health Group, Williamson Health, TriStar Horizon, Dickson Medical Associates, Tennova Healthcare Clarksville, and Shamrock Health, (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Employer Participants”) and Hickman County Schools, Houston County Schools, Humpherys County Schools, and Dickson County Schools (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Educational Participants”), is for the purpose of implementing the Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant (RHCPE) Proposal, as further defined below.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each party as they relate to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission’s (THEC) Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant (RHCPE) proposal to implement the RHCPE program in the College’s rural service areas. In particular, the Agreement is intended to establish expectations between the designated employer participants and the education participants to provide youth the opportunity to gain valuable vocational skills to address the labor shortage and skill deficits in the rural health care sector.

I. ROLES

1. COLLEGE ROLE:

The College agrees to the following responsibilities:

- Serve as the fiscal agent of the grant
- Coordinate dual enrollment and/or dual credit with identified Educational Participants
- Deliver health career educational opportunities to employees and students of the Educational Participants
- Coordinate work-based learning opportunities required by employers for students to work for Employer Participants upon completion of the respective program
- Create a Practical Nursing program in a rural county
- Create a Surgical Technology program in a rural county
- Lead the initiative to create a new state-wide articulation agreement for Surgical Technology

2. EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS:

The Employer Participants are responsible for supporting the mission of the RHCPE. Employer participants agree to the following responsibilities:

- Alerting the College of job openings
- Development of youth interest in health careers
- Host tours for youth and adult program participants (no more than one per year per participant)
- Participate in school career exploration events (no more than one per year per participant)
- Consider graduates for employment
- Serve on occupational advisory boards upon request, and attend requested meetings

The Employer Participants agree that there is a need for these programs in their rural communities because of a lack of qualified candidates in health careers in their local geographic area. The benefits include an increased skilled pipeline to their organization and an overall benefit to the rural communities they serve by providing increased access to quality health care.

3. EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS:

Education Participants agree to the following responsibilities:

- Recruiting students to enroll in Health Career Pathways
- Providing students with WBL (Work-Based Learning) opportunities by engaging students and employers in meaningful activities
- Managing dual enrollment/dual credit with the College
- Providing students the opportunity to obtain industry credentials, including underrepresented groups of students (economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, students in foster care; and students with parents that are in the armed forces or on active duty) as well as non-traditional
- Monitor Employer Participant engagement

The Education Participants agree that there is a need for these programs in their rural communities because of a lack of overall awareness and access in secondary students regarding health careers in their local geographic

area. The benefits include a potentially increased employment rate and income for the rural communities they serve and providing increased access to quality health care.

II. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Modification of roles/responsibilities and the sustainability of the program are collectively decided by the parties.
2. An Employer Participant or Educational Participant may terminate its relationship with the program at the end of an academic term with a 30-day written notice to the College.
3. Employer Participants and Educational Participants and may be added through written Amendment to this Agreement.
4. Term. The term of this Agreement shall be July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2029.
5. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which together shall be deemed to be original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument. In the event that any signature is delivered by facsimile transmission or by e-mail delivery of a ".pdf" format data file, such signature shall create a valid and binding obligation of the party executing (or on whose behalf such signature is executed) with the same force and effect as if such a facsimile or ".pdf" signature page was an original thereof.

SIGNATURE PAGE TWO RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Raune Shaw

Signature

Laura Travis President

Name and Title

1/24/2025

Date

EMPLOYER PARTICIPANT:

Three Rivers Community Health Group

Phillip Tatum CEO

Signature

Phillip Tatum CEO

Name and Title

01/24/2025

Date

SIGNATURE PAGE THREE RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Rama Snow
Signature

Laura Travis President
Name and Title

1/24/2025
Date

EMPLOYER PARTICIPANT:

Williamson Health


Signature

Jim Hughes, Director of Organizational Development
Name and Title

1/24/25
Date

SIGNATURE PAGE SIX RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson


Rauna Travis
Signature

Laura Travis, President
Name and Title

1/23/2025
Date

EMPLOYER PARTICIPANT:

Dickson Medical Associates


Signature

Sarah Kerr, Director of Clinical Services
Name and Title

1/23/25
Date

SIGNATURE PAGE SEVEN RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Raune Davis

Signature

Laura Travis, President

Name and Title

1/23/2025

Date

EMPLOYER PARTICIPANT:

TriStar Horizon

CBergmeier

Signature

Cindy Bergmeier, CEO

Name and Title

1/23/25

Date

SIGNATURE PAGE EIGHT RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Rameshwar

Signature

Laura Travis, President

Name and Title

1/27/2025

Date

EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPANT:

Hickman County Schools

John Mullins

Signature

John Mullins - Director of Schools

Name and Title

1-27-24

Date

SIGNATURE PAGE NINE RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Raine Snow

Signature

Laura Travis President

Name and Title

1/28/2025

Date

EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPANT:

Houston County Schools

Scott Moore

Signature

Scott Moore Director of Schools
Name and Title

1/28/25

Date

SIGNATURE PAGE ELEVEN RHCPE 2025

COLLEGE:

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson

Raine Travis
Signature

Laura Travis President
Name and Title

1/23/2025
Date

EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPANT:

Dickson County Schools

Ray Lecomte
Signature

Ray Lecomte CTE Director
Name and Title

23 January 2025
Date