

**2012 - 2013 Local Strategic Plan**  
Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board  
Tennessee Career Center *partner*  
Local Workforce Investment Area 12

**Open for Public Comment Thursday, January 26—Monday, February 27, 2011**

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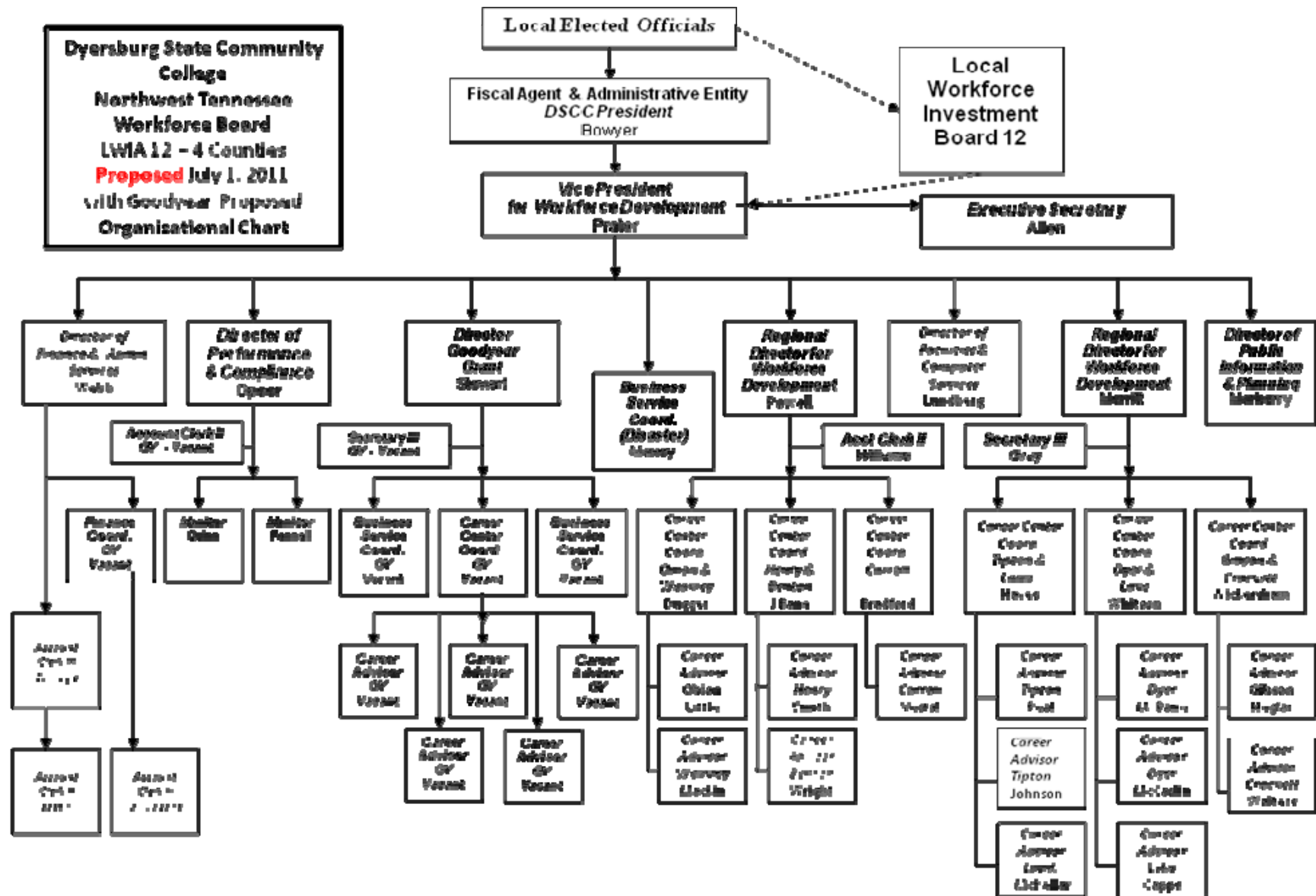
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Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board Organizational Chart



## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

### A

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#### **Adult**

An individual who is age 18 or older

#### **AE**

Adult Education

### C

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#### **CRC / Career Readiness Certificate**

A portable skills credential based upon the WorkKeys® assessments

#### **Case Management**

The provision of a client-centered approach in the delivery of services designed to prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services and to provide job and career counseling during program participation and after job placement

#### **Community-based Organization**

A private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community that has demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in the field of workforce development

#### **Customized Training**

Training that is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer; that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual on successful completion of the training; and for which the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the training.

### D

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#### **Discoverer**

Software program that creates customized reports in eCMATS by applying user-specific formatting options and by defining sort, condition, and parameters

#### **Dislocated Worker**

An individual who has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment; or was self-employed but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters; or is a displaced homemaker.

#### **Displaced Homemaker**

An individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home who has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment

#### **DPN**

Disability Program Navigator

#### **DSCC**

Dyersburg State Community College

### E

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#### **eCMATS**

Electronic Case Management and Activity Tracking System

#### **Economic Development Agency**

Includes local planning and zoning commissions or boards, community development agencies, and other local agencies and institutions responsible for regulating, promoting, or assisting in local economic development

#### **Eligible Youth**

An individual who is not less than age 14 and not more than age 21; is low-income; is one or more of the following: deficient in basic literacy skills, a school dropout, homeless, runaway, foster child, pregnant or a parent, an offender, or an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

#### **EOO**

Equal Opportunity Officer

#### **Exiter**

An individual that has received services through the Workforce Investment Act program and completed; the individual's activities are tracked for an additional 3-4 quarters after exit

### G

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#### **GEDNext**

Designed to target eligible youth ages 18-21; the program pays \$500 for attaining a General Educational Development (GED) Diploma; an additional \$500 is available to the eligible youth based on employment and retention goals

**I**  
**Individual with a Disability**  
An individual with any disability as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990

**IWT / Incumbent Worker Training Grant**  
Provides grant funds for customized training for existing for profit businesses to effectively retrain and keep businesses competitive through upgrade skill training for existing full-time employees

**ISS / Individual Service Strategy**  
An individual plan for a participant, which shall include employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant based on the objective assessment(s) conducted

**J**  
**Job Order**  
Occurs when an employer places a job listing with the Tennessee Career Center System, the details of the position are entered into eCMATS and the largest job applicant pool in Tennessee is screened for compatibility for referral to the employer.

**L**  
**Labor Market Area/Information**  
An economically integrated geographic area within which individuals a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence; information regarding wages, unemployment, commute patterns, etc is gathered based on geographic area

**LWIA**  
Local Workforce Investment Area

**LWIB**  
Local Workforce Investment Board

**LVER**  
Local Veterans Employment Representative

**O**  
**Older Worker/Individual**  
An individual age 55 or older

**OJT / On-the-Job Training**  
Training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that provides knowledge or skills essential to the adequate performance of the job; provides

reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant; is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained

**Out-of-School Youth**  
An eligible youth who is a school dropout; or has received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but is basic skills deficient, unemployed or underemployed

**P**  
**Participant / Client**  
An individual who has been determined eligible to participate in and who is receiving services under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

**Peer Tutoring Work Experience Program**  
A sub-contracted program that provides paid work experience, leadership development, adult mentoring, tutoring and study skills training, and comprehensive guidance and counseling to eligible youth in secondary educational institutions to explore teaching as a career while tutoring their peers who are struggling academically in a variety of subjects

**Priority of Service**  
Service strategy that is enacted when WIA Adult Formula funds become limited, whereas priority for intensive and training services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income adults; also applies to all veterans.

**R**  
**Rapid Response**  
An activity provided in the case of a permanent closure or mass layoff at a plant, facility, or enterprise in order to assist dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible

**Rescission**  
US Department of Labor withdrawal of program funds previously allocated to State Department's of Labor and Local Workforce Investment Areas across the country; applied to Workforce Investment Act program year 2006

**Resource Room**  
Area available at the Tennessee Career Center that provides a wealth of job search information in one central location including, resume building literature, basic computer instruction, state of the

art computers and internet availability for job search, labor market information, and in-demand occupations and forecasts

**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**The Source**

Database managed by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development that maintains Tennessee state and local labor market information accessible to the public

**Tennessee Career Center**

Where people and jobs connect

**V** \_\_\_\_\_

**Veteran**

An individual who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from such service under conditions other than dishonorable

**W** \_\_\_\_\_

**WIA**

Workforce Investment Act of 1998

**WorkKeys®**

A job skills assessment system measuring real-world skills

## **Preface: Organizational Profile**

### **P.1 Organizational Description**

#### **P.1a Organizational Environment**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board delivers Workforce Investment Act of 1998 services to jobseekers, workers, and employers throughout an eleven county service area in Northwest Tennessee which includes Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Tipton, and Weakley Counties.

Services provided include job search assistance, training funds / financial assistance for Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) approved programs in which WIA eligible youth, adults, and dislocated workers are enrolled, youth development / credential attainment, case management, career counseling, business / industry workforce development grants for new hires and incumbent workers, and many additional services targeted toward jobseekers, workers, and employers.

Organizational culture plays a vital role in the field of workforce development, especially when implementing organization-wide change, whether that change is in an internal policy or a change on the national stage. The organizational culture is the personality of the company, and it is not something that can be explained as well as it can be sensed once a person has become a part of the organization or observed it for a period of time. The culture is a type of system composed of inputs (or feedback from society) and outputs are organizational behavior.

Researcher Jeffery Sonnenfeld identified four different types of culture and divided the cultures into categories that include: Academy, Baseball Team, Club, and Fortress Cultures. When reviewing the various identified cultures, it was apparent that the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and the Tennessee Career Centers in northwest Tennessee fit the Academy culture defined as: employees are highly skilled and tend to stay in the organization, while working their way up the ranks. The organization provides a stable environment in which employees can develop and exercise their skills. Examples are universities, hospitals, and large corporations.

The governing structure of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board truly establishes the culture on the local level. The Workforce Board

staff members are employees of Dyersburg State Community College. The consortium of county mayors is directly responsible for the Workforce Investment Act funds, but the consortium petitions the governor's office each program year for a waiver enabling the grant to be supervised and managed by the local community college. The College reports to the Tennessee Board of Regents and the human resources policies practiced by the Tennessee Board of Regents and Dyersburg State Community College are also employed by the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff is directed by a Board of Directors which is comprised of a majority (at least 51%) private business leadership for the eleven-county service area. Business representation consists of business owners, chief executives, operating officers, and other business executives with optimum policymaking and hiring authority. The Board also maintains representation of labor organizations, educational entities, community based organizations, and economic development agencies.

The individuals and governing bodies that influence the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff members are individuals who embrace change, encourage progress, invest in life-long learning, and are goal-oriented. This passion trickles down the organizational pipeline from the President and Board to the Executive Director, Directors, Career Center Coordinators and Career Advisors directly to the clients.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has as its Mission: To increase the employment opportunities, job retention, occupational skills attainment and earnings of eligible individuals, and as a result, improve the quality of the local and area wide workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the LWIA. The Vision: To deliver a workforce development system that generates opportunities, to illustrate to the private sector the value added through partnerships, and to promote Tennessee as a place where people choose to live and work.

The workforce of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is diverse in nature and exceeds affirmative action goals for the department. With a total of 33 staff members, the staff holds 2 high school diplomas, 5 Associate degrees, 24 Bachelor

degrees, and 2 Master degrees. Positions include Executive Director, Regional Directors for Workforce Development (2), Director of Finance and Administrative Services, Director of Facilities and Computer Services, Director of Performance and Compliance, Monitor, Career Center Coordinators (6), Career Advisors (13), Executive Aide, Secretary III, Account Clerk III, Account Clerk II (2) and Grant Directors (2).

Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff members occupy space in all eleven counties that receive services in Local Workforce Investment Area 12. The Board leases space for the administrative office in Dyersburg. The building is occupied by the Executive Director, Directors, Executive Aide, Monitors, Account Clerk III, Account Clerk II, and Secretary III. The leased building also offers a large conference room / meeting room and a small training room. Each staff member housed in the administrative office building also has an office equipped with a computer and telephone. Fax machine, scanner, and copy machine are also available in the office building. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board rents a building in Tiptonville, Lake County; Alamo, Crockett County; and Camden, Benton County to offer Workforce Investment Act services in those counties where there is not a Tennessee Career Center site. Each of these offices houses a Career Advisor, small resource room, computer / internet access and access to a fax machine. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board leases space within the Tennessee Career Centers in the remaining eight counties which includes: Carroll, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lauderdale, Obion, Tipton, and Weakley. The Tennessee Career Centers have resource rooms, computer / internet access for jobseekers, fax machines, copy machines, and scanners for career development uses. Services for individuals with disabilities include: The Comprehensive Career Center at Dyersburg offers accommodations for individuals with disabilities which includes Zoom Text software, automatic opening doors, adjustable computer desks, and much more. The other centers also offer accommodations, but the comprehensive center has the greatest amount of assistive technology. The other centers are gaining new technology as budgets permit.

The regulatory environment consists predominantly of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 created the statewide Tennessee Career Center

System. Federal Workforce Investment Act appropriated funds stream from Washington D.C. to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development then distributes the funds among the 13 Local Workforce Investment Areas through the use of a formula, hence the term, WIA formula funds. The formula funds are sent to Local Workforce Investment Area 12 to the grant recipient and administrative entity, Dyersburg State Community College (selected by the Consortium of County Mayors and approved by a waiver from the Governor's office considered and issued each program year).

In addition to following the regulations set forth in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is also held to the policies of Dyersburg State Community College, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

#### **P.1b Organizational Relationships**

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development distributes Workforce Investment Act funds of 1998 to the Consortium of County Mayors that comprise the 11-county service area in northwest Tennessee. The Consortium of County Mayor grants those funds to the administrative entity and grant recipient (by waiver from the Governor) Dyersburg State Community College. Dyersburg State Community College employs the staff of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board to fulfill the obligation to serve jobseekers, workers, and employers under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff receives guidance and policymaking from the Board of Directors or Workforce Board that consists of a majority private business representation and the remainder is representatives from education, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is also a partner in the Tennessee Career Center System which includes partnering agencies governed by a Memorandum of Understanding.

A Career Center Consortium exists and meets quarterly. The consortium consists of the following mandated partner programs: Vocational

Rehabilitation, Veterans, Wagner Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Investment Act, Adult Education, Senior Community Services, Human Services, and Post Secondary Vocational / Carl Perkins. The consortium establishes policies and provides guidance for the Tennessee Career Center System in northwest Tennessee.

The in-house partners work together under the leadership of a Career Center Coordinator who reports Career Center activities to the consortium and the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board at the regularly held quarterly meetings. All partner staff is directly supervised by their respective employing organization.

In-house partners share all non-program specific cost of the Career Center operation based on the number of staff housed in the center. Non in-house partners provide information and materials about their services and how to apply for services.

Although the structure is weaved together with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Consortium of County Mayors, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, Dyersburg State Community College, and the Tennessee Career Center System, the staff looks to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for direction, policy, and the word of the law. The Act itself is the governance for the staff of the Workforce Board.

Customer groups are identified through the Workforce Investment Act and include Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and Employers. Additional customer groups include underserved or underrepresented populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, older workers, and displaced homemakers.

A stakeholder is a person or group with a direct interest, involvement, or investment in something. In the case of Workforce Investment Act services, every tax payer in the United States has a direct investment, and therefore, is a stakeholder.

Thankfully, the customer group and the stakeholders desire the same result for satisfaction. Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth seek Workforce Investment Act services mostly for financial assistance for short-term training in in-demand occupations. Employers seek services in the way of financial assistance for

incumbent worker training, customized training, and on-the-job training. Both jobseekers / training seekers and employers ultimately desire long-term, sustainable wage employment / employees. The customer group is satisfied because they receive the training necessary to gain meaningful employment and support themselves and their families. Employers are satisfied because they have a qualified workforce and adequate labor pool to draw from to meet employment demands. Stakeholders are satisfied because unemployment drops, fewer individuals are receiving government assistance, and more people are paying taxes into the system to assist others during hard times.

Due to the nature of the publically funded workforce development sector, the organization's most important suppliers, partners, and collaborators are the partner programs and the most important "supply" is that of information sharing - whether that be through meetings with the Tennessee Department of Labor staff, other Workforce Investment Areas across the state and nation, Career Center partners, or even the electronic sharing of information about clients and client services through eCMATS.

## **P.2 Organizational Situation**

### **P.2a Competitive Environment**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is a government-funded, not-for-profit organization providing training funds to eligible training seekers and training grants to employers. Few competitors, if any, exist in the area due to the nature of the services offered. The Workforce Investment Act program is a sole source provider of training funds (excluding other federal and state funded programs such as Pell Grants. Government programs / grants coordinate rather than compete).

In the workforce development arena, the biggest challenge to overcome are societal issues such as, low educational attainment, teen pregnancy, generations of poverty, poor work ethic, stereotypes, lack of motivation, and lack of positive role models. Although many of the adults and dislocated workers that seek services are simply "down on their luck", others need career counseling and case management, to know someone cares about their success. The societal issues can be very challenging when assisting youth ages 14-21.

Although the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board does not face physical, brick-n-mortar competitors, the societal challenges are far more difficult to beat. However, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has an experienced, caring staff that makes the program successful. The Career Advisors have numerous years of experience and have grown and developed with the ever-changing abstract, societal issues and barriers to employment success.

For issues that require a greater level of expertise, such as adult basic education or crisis counseling, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board utilizes a referral system.

To quantitatively measure success, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board employs the eCMATS system. eCMATS enables the Board to track local progress and compare that progress to the progress of other Local Workforce Investment Areas throughout the state and country. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board also participates in a state-wide information sharing session each April to gather best-practices and identify innovative projects that could be duplicated in northwest Tennessee.

Outside sources of data directly related to competition are not available due to competition being limited. However, labor market information from the Department of Labor is very useful to the Board in examining supply versus demand in northwest Tennessee. Census data relating to educational attainment is also a useful tool for strategic planning purposes.

### **P.2b Strategic Context**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board faces numerous challenges noted throughout the following pages. However, two specifically are mentionable including (1) rapidly changing technology results in rapidly changing in-demand occupations and the creation of high demand fields not yet known, and (2) the instability of funding.

As technology continues to evolve at a speedy pace, jobs will evolve and be created at an equally brisk pace. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board invests taxpayer dollars into workforce development and expects for those dollars to generate additional taxes in the future; a positive rate of return on the investment. In order for the planned cycle to come to fruition, the training

must have skill sets that translate into occupations wherein jobseekers can find employment. The challenge is training for jobs that may not exist yet. The Workforce Board utilizes The Source for occupational projections and forecasts. In addition, the Board focuses on specific industries that are projected to grow rapidly over the next 3 to 5 years. Another focus is on transferable skills in areas of growth such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Sustainability is a target for every organization whether it is a private, for-profit company or a government or non-profit organization. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has witnessed the instability of funding from one program year to the next and thus, has begun a diversification project. The Workforce Board staff is currently seeking grants that help diversify funding and continue the mission and vision of workforce development. The Board has been successful in securing grants from the US Department of Transportation, Tennessee Secretary of State, and AT&T Foundation. The Workforce Board will continue to seek outside grant funds to supplement Workforce Investment Act formula funds.

### **P.2c Performance Improvement System**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has established performance goals. These goals are determined by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the US Department of Labor. Local area goals are negotiated by the Workforce Board and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development to reflect local issues and achievements.

Each quarter, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board reviews progress on each target and makes the necessary adjustments to meet the predetermined goals. The Workforce Board has developed a strong set of policies and directives to reach performance goals. Performance incentives are also awarded by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development to Local Workforce Investment Areas that are performing at a high level. Hence, the Workforce Investment Act programs throughout the state of Tennessee are driven toward achieving goals for further funding.

As part of the learning process, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board believes in life-long

learning and development and continuous growth of the Workforce Board and staff. Therefore, the Workforce Board staff participates in information sharing sessions between Local Workforce Investment Areas, and keeps an open line of communication between northwest Tennessee and other areas across the state. Staff also communicates with Workforce Investment Boards from across the county sharing ideas and best practices. Workforce Board members and staff attend the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) meetings each year. The workshops feature the best and brightest in new

innovative ideas and programs that are replicable. In addition, staff members are encouraged to join local workforce development groups and other economic development organizations in order to become more knowledgeable of the local labor force and employer needs.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is a growing, ever evolving organization that is encouraged by the administrative entity and the Board to continue to change. The culture is one of success and embracing change.

## 1: Leadership

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board of Local Workforce Investment Area 12 is a department of Dyersburg State Community College who serves as the grant recipient and fiscal agent for Local Workforce Investment Area 12 WIA funds. Dyersburg State Community College is a Tennessee Board of Regents Institution.

### 1.1 Senior Leadership

Our senior leaders include the local WIA Board of Directors, Dyersburg State Community College President and administrative staff, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board administrative staff, area Career Center Managers, Consortium of elected officials, and partner program managers.

#### 1.1a Vision, Values, and Mission

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Tennessee Career Center partners joined together in 1998 to develop the original plan for the Workforce Investment Act program for northwest Tennessee. At that time, all partners collaborating agreed on the Mission and Vision established and written in the WIA Local Strategic Plan. Since the inception, all newly hired staff members go through orientation with an eye on the Mission and Vision of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. The Mission and Vision are department-wide, partner-wide initiatives that began with Senior Leadership and has since become a goal for all staff. WIA Executive Director and Career Center Managers believe in leading by example and exhibit commitment to the mission in their daily tasks.

(WIA) MISSION: To increase the employment opportunities, job retention, occupational skills attainment and earnings of eligible individuals, and as a result, improve the quality of the local and area wide workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the LWIA (Career Center): To provide quality employment and training services in a professional and courteous manner to all customers.

(WIA) VISION: To deliver a Workforce Development System that generates opportunities, to illustrate to the private sector the value added through partnerships, and to promote Tennessee as a place where people choose to live and work. (Career Center): To be

the Career Center where customers know that their employment and training needs will be met.

Guiding Principles were developed and include:

- Workforce Development = Economic Opportunity
- Private Sector Driven
- Responsible, Competitive, Integrated System, Seamless, and Cost Effective
- Utilization of Career Center
- Demand Driven

The local area encourages the betterment of staff through education and training opportunities. Dyersburg State Community College, WIA grant recipient and fiscal agent, naturally fosters a learning environment and encourages staff continuing education through education tuition stipends. The workforce system in northwest Tennessee develops future leaders through on-the-job training and mentoring as well as formal education programs made available to all staff.

Legal and ethical behavior is standard practice among staff of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. It is woven in the culture of the organization and reinforced by senior leaders on a regular basis. The Equal Opportunity Officer is encouraged to attend various trainings each program year. The EO Officer is also given a platform to train staff on the latest equal opportunity topics each year at Fall and Spring Conference as a workshop for staff. Topics cover discrimination based on gender, age, race, religion, and disabilities. Senior leadership takes an active role in identifying conflicts of interest and applying policies to those cases. The Board signs conflict of interest statements and members refrain from voting in gray areas. The Board, President of Dyersburg State Community College, Consortium of Mayors, and the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board Executive Director, all take great pride in operating a "clean" program. Yearly audits are also an area of pride for the staff. As a federally funded program, all funds spent through the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board are transparent to the public. Anyone can request information on spending and the Board will provide it. Financial reports are shared with the Board on a quarterly basis and all new programs or support services that incur costs must be voted on by the Board. In addition to a culture that promotes ethical behavior and transparent spending, the Northwest Tennessee

Workforce Board staff is charged with taking personal responsibility for ones actions.

The administration gains buy-in of staff for formal evaluations. Management develops individual short-term and long-term goals and objectives through coordination with staff. Goals are based on the mission and values of the organization: just, specific, measurable, and attainable. Once the goals and objectives are determined, management provides guidance and direction to assist staff in reaching their goals. At the end of the performance period, a formal review is conducted with staff rating their self and management also rating staff. A negotiation may take place where management listens to their staff members and decides on an accurate rating. This process creates buy-in and confidence in the system.

Each employee is tied to Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Performance Standards for the Workforce Investment Act program noted in Figure 1.1-1. Therefore, every staff member is responsible, either directly or indirectly, for meeting and exceeding the goals.

### **1.1b Communication and Organizational Performance**

Communication is the key. Simply put, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board Executive Director and staff maintain an “open door” policy at all times. Top management believes that communication is the key to happy employees and

satisfied customers. In addition to maintaining an “open door” policy, the staff and board hold regularly scheduled meetings including: bi-monthly WIA administrative staff meetings, bi-monthly field staff meetings, quarterly Board of Directors meetings, quarterly Career Center Consortium meetings, and even an occasional staff retreat where all staff (field, administrative, Career Center, contractor, etc) have the opportunity to come together and work on team building activities and continue to build working relationships. All meeting minutes are posted electronically so employees not directly involved in the meeting have access to the minutes. This increases transparency, and information sharing helps all employees be more knowledgeable and valuable to the organization.

Positive organizational performance is also driven by open communication. Local Workforce Investment Area 12 is always working to better partner relationships, enhance communication, encourage innovative thinking, and increase customer service and satisfaction on all levels ranging from jobseekers to employers. In our analysis of how our senior leaders lead, Local Workforce Investment Area 12 prepared a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis looking for indicators of problem areas that need attention and corrective action plans. Below is the SWOT Analysis:

**Figure 1.1-1 SWOT Analysis of Organizational Performance**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Comprehensive Career Center, Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board (WIA), and Adult Education continue to follow the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence criteria, resulting in better programs and customer service.</li> <li>2. The TN Career Centers in northwest TN have convenient locations and knowledgeable staff members.</li> <li>3. There is some level of co-location in all eleven (11) TN Career Centers.</li> <li>4. The regional website <a href="http://www.northwestnccareercenter.org">www.northwestnccareercenter.org</a> is updated regularly to include pertinent information related to Career Center and partner services.</li> <li>5. Overflow Call Center assisting claimants with unemployment issues in a timely manner.</li> <li>6. Implementation of debit card and direct deposit for unemployment claims is saving staff time and money.</li> <li>7. Career Center partners engaging in joint teamwork / customer satisfaction training – improving skills and building stronger relationships.</li> <li>8. WIA staff continues to partner with the Career Coach in getting information out to clients.</li> <li>9. LWIA 12 is a partner in the Northwest Tennessee Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerator, which will assist aspiring entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses.</li> <li>10. An Advanced Manufacturing Sector Analysis</li> <li>11. WIA out-of-school youth with little job knowledge are being placed in Career Centers in a Paid Work Experience program, relieving overload for staff and offering job training skills in a mentoring environment.</li> <li>12. LWIA 12 received recognition by the National Association for Workforce Professionals for the Peer Tutor Work Experience program highlighting best practices in WIA Youth enrollment and community partnerships. WIA eligible high school juniors and seniors who are excelling in coursework are selected and paid to assist their peers who are struggling to master the material. The work experience opportunity allows the tutors to explore a career in teaching, a demand occupation in our area.</li> <li>13. Youth enrollment in dual enrollment/ dual credit courses has increased in the Technology Centers, Community Colleges and Universities with the coordination of Lottery scholarship, Perkins grants, and WIA funding.</li> <li>14. Dyer County Promise Scholarships are now available to recent GED recipients and high school graduates.</li> <li>15. The Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) College Access Program is active in four LWIA 12 counties, assisting any student that desires to attend a community college or technology center, opportunities for “last dollar” scholarships.</li> <li>16. Post-secondary institutions are available to citizens in all eleven counties with Tennessee Technology Centers accessible within a 30-mile radius. In addition, there are Community Colleges and 6 four-year Universities within a</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Electronic Case Management Activity Tracking (eCMATS) system is complicated and experiences technical operational problems, which discourages staff and jobseekers from taking full advantage of its capabilities.</li> <li>• Lack of a public transportation system in a very rural area coupled with high gas prices adversely affects jobseekers and students in training programs.</li> <li>• The population of northwest Tennessee continues to deal with low educational attainment rates. Over 75% of high school graduates that enroll in post-secondary training test into at least one remedial course resulting in high post-secondary dropout rates and lengthens the time it takes to earn a credential.</li> <li>• Lack of active apprenticeship programs.</li> <li>• Language barriers play a role in matching employers and jobseekers in northwest TN</li> <li>• Adult Education does not have a representative housed in the Comprehensive Career Center.</li> <li>• Continued low levels of Adult Education funding limits the types of services available and the number of people that can be served.</li> <li>• Unemployment call center does not accept claims for Tipton and Lauderdale Counties.</li> </ul>

<p>60-mile radius, each offering online classes and distance learning opportunities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. <i>On-Track for College</i> (DSCC) combined with a new articulation website, dual admission agreements, and TN Career Pathways are providing guidance to area residents regarding educational achievement.</li> <li>18. Various partner programs offer travel stipends to clients to relieve the burden of high gas prices in traveling to pursue educational programs.</li> <li>19. Post-secondary enrollments are increasing across the board indicating a change in societal attitude – a greater appreciation for educational opportunities.</li> <li>20. Articulated programs have been developed and implemented among the Technology Centers, Community Colleges, and 4-year Universities</li> <li>21. WIA policy allowing students to attend summer school part-time (versus fulltime) allows clients greater flexibility and continuance of service.</li> <li>22. Dislocated Worker eligibility occurring as soon as notification of layoff or closure allows for quicker reentry into the workforce or entry into re-training.</li> <li>23. Adult Education partners are co-located in post-secondary institutions in the counties of Dyer, Lauderdale, and Crockett and in TN Career Centers in Huntingdon and Uion City.</li> <li>24. Adult Education has implemented a Fast-Track program enabling GED seekers to earn a GED in as little as 12 hours.</li> <li>25. Career Center staff and Rehabilitation partners continue to work with community agencies to review accessibility materials and accommodations to enhance services.</li> <li>26. A monthly newsletter titled “Disability Tidbits” is emailed to partners highlighting topics of interest for the service of clients with disabilities.</li> <li>27. Vocational Rehabilitation Representative becoming fulltime in the Comprehensive Career Center has assisted in seamless service.</li> <li>28. A growing number of employers in LWIA 12 have adopted the practice of “preferring” a National Career Readiness Certificate as a prerequisite for open positions, resulting in a pool of over 5,500 jobseekers with a National Career Readiness Certificate in northwest Tennessee</li> <li>29. WIA assessment tools for enrollment help clients choose appropriate training/career field, resulting in positive placement rates.</li> <li>30. On-the-Job-Training assessments completed by employers indicate specific training needs of customers, increasing likelihood of success.</li> </ol>	
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surplus of jobseekers presents good economic conditions to change the attitude toward education in northwest Tennessee.</li> <li>2. Beginning January 2012, Jobseeker Workshops will be offered in all Career Centers providing information specific to reemployment opportunities and strategies.</li> <li>3. Partnering with the Career Coach could enhance partner services by offering a mobile lab and other jobseeker services on location.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reductions in force have left the Comprehensive Career Center Resource Room mostly unstaffed.</li> <li>2. Continued unemployment of over 20,000 workers in LWIA 12 and reduction in Federal &amp; State funding threatens the consistency of customer service levels for all partners.</li> <li>3. Extended unemployment benefits could discourage some of the unemployed from taking jobs right away, thus inflating unemployment rates and causing a strain on Career Center resources.</li> </ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Implementation of a newly developed online customer satisfaction survey should identify areas needing improvement.</li> <li>5. Training Career Center staff (partners) in inter-active customer service training will be shaped by the results of the online customer satisfaction survey.</li> <li>6. The Advanced Manufacturing Sector Analysis, Career Pathways and accompanying video will be used in civic and school presentations in conjunction with partners of the West TN Advanced Manufacturing Council to market employment in these demand occupations.</li> <li>7. Continued outreach and implementation of the National Career Readiness Certification has increased traffic flow (Employer and Jobseeker) and Job Orders in the Career Centers.</li> <li>8. Introduction of industry-driven programs at the Technology Center has created more value-added credentials.</li> <li>9. Continuing to update the regional website to include as much information as possible regarding all partner programs will allow employers and jobseekers to access the Career Centers during off-hours.</li> <li>10. Utilizing flat screen televisions located in Career Centers as information portals would provide a visual information tool.</li> <li>11. Incorporating Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook has positively affected customer communications for higher education partners, which shows that this type of media could be good tools for other partners.</li> <li>12. Investing in Spanish training for staff and creating Spanish language materials will continue as the Hispanic population continues to grow.</li> <li>13. Development of a Training Provider Report Card has assisted clients interested in training with making good decisions about educational opportunities.</li> <li>14. Having an Adult Education Representative in the Comprehensive Career Center would increase the ease of service for clients needing assistance from several partners.</li> <li>15. There is positive potential for Job Growth / Economic Development resulting from the Megasite in Haywood County and the Port at Cates Landing in Lake County.</li> <li>16. Increased focus on business services has led to more positive relationships with employers and more opportunities for clients seeking On-the-Job Training.</li> <li>17. New, enthusiastic private sector Board membership has re-energized Workforce Board policies and activities.</li> <li>18. The establishment of a charter for a non-profit business, Career Training Network, will allow the Workforce Board to apply for foundation grants not open to higher education institutions or government entities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Slow economic recovery has resulted in a surplus of jobseekers whose skills do not match open positions or education levels.</li> <li>5. National Career Readiness Certificate allotment for 2011-2012 was exhausted by the first of October 2011 and future funding is uncertain. Continued service is being supported by WIA Adult &amp; Dislocated Formula funding, with record levels of participants registering to take the test and ever increasing requests from employers for this certification.</li> <li>6. Escalating fuel costs negatively affects rural areas due to the distance traveled for services, training, and jobs.</li> <li>7. Increasing high school curriculum requirements to include higher level of math and science may increase the dropout rates in an already low educational attainment area.</li> <li>8. Growing percentage of students require remedial coursework which can increase the time it takes to matriculate. This delay could affect Federal Funding due to the requirements of the Tennessee College Completion Act.</li> <li>9. Training providers at all levels are running at full capacity and turning students away or causing delays in enrollment into education.</li> </ol>
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In addition to noting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the local area workforce system, all partners together created a corrective action plan to address weaknesses listed.

Weakness 1— The Electronic Case Management Activity Tracking (eCMATS) system is complicated and experiences technical operational problems,

which discourages staff and jobseekers from taking full advantage of its capabilities.

Workforce Board staff use eCMATS as their primary mode of data gathering and tracking. Partner programs are starting to utilize eCMATS on a more consistent basis. Jobseekers and participants finishing training are encouraged by Career Advisors to look up jobs online through the Self-Service portal. The launching of the “The Source” database program should assist with data entry, as the information the jobseekers input into this new job search tool will be automatically transferred into the eCMATS system.

Weakness 2— Lack of a public transportation system in a very rural area coupled with high gas prices adversely affects jobseekers and students in training programs.

The Career Center staff refers customers to the Northwest Tennessee Human Resource Agency-Rural Public Transportation (Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley Counties) or Delta Human Resource Agency-Rural Public Transportation (Lauderdale and Tipton Counties) for transportation services. Being in a rural area, traditional public transportation (bus/subway) is not available. Qualifying Workforce Investment Act (WIA) participants (Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth) are provided transportation stipends to assist with travel costs to and from their respective training provider.

Weakness 3—The population of northwest Tennessee continues to deal with low educational attainment rates.

LWIA 12 is working on the stated weakness in a number of ways. First, LWIA 12 is educating the public on the importance of an education in a variety of ways such as, speaking at civic clubs, via booths at job fairs and chamber events, and through the media. Secondly, LWIA 12 is working to reduce the dropout rate through the Peer Tutor Work Experience program to help students who are falling behind. Third, LWIA 12 will assist with GED test fees to encourage WIA eligible Youth dropouts, Adults, and Dislocated Workers to increase their educational goals and attain a GED. The Workforce Investment Act program also provides funding for post-secondary/technical training for eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Other initiatives embraced by higher

education partners include increasing opportunities for dual enrollment/dual credit coursework; College Express, a Dyersburg State Community College program that shortens the time to complete a degree program; and the Tennessee College Completion Act which aims to improve retention, ease transfer among institutions and implements data-based strategies to identify retention and dropout challenges.

Weakness 4—LWIA 12 is experiencing a lack of active apprenticeship programs. Currently, in northwest Tennessee very few active apprenticeships exist; there are several electrical apprenticeships registered, but are not active.

Two active apprenticeships include one at the Northwest Correctional Complex in Tiptonville, Tennessee and a newly developed (2010) program at Marvin Windows and Doors in Ripley, Tennessee. A number of approved apprenticeship program have operated over the years. However, the employers have not expressed an interest in continuing the program. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board sees the opportunity for On-the-Job Training contracts and is exploring these opportunities with the companies who previously utilized apprentices. The recently developed apprenticeship program is part of the Apprenticeship Assistance plan offered through the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

## 1.2: Governance and Social Responsibilities

### 1.2a Organizational Governance

Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board of Local Workforce Investment Area 12 is uniquely structured to have a number of governing bodies beginning with the Board of Directors who are nominated by the County Mayors. The County Mayors have been assigned the grant recipient and governing body of the Workforce Investment Act Grant funds for LWIA 12 and therefore have the ultimate responsibility. The County Mayors have decided through a formal agreement to grant Dyersburg State Community College the administrative functions of the WIA grant. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board follows the policies and procedures set forth by Dyersburg State Community College, the Tennessee Board of Regents (governing body for Dyersburg State Community College), the regulations established by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce

Development, and the Board of Directors who are selected by the County Mayors. The structure is clear cut. The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development directs the County Mayors, who directs the College, Board of Directors, and the administrative staff for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. The administrative staff of the Workforce Board follows the formal policies, procedures, and guidelines established by the Tennessee Department of Labor, Dyersburg State Community College, and Tennessee Board of Regents.

Top management, such as the Executive Director, is held accountable to the President of Dyersburg State Community College, the County Mayors, the Board of Directors and the Administrator of Workforce Development. Top management undergoes a yearly performance review conducted by the President of Dyersburg State Community College. Top management is also held accountable to the County Mayors, Board of Directors, and the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development through the attainment of negotiated program performance measures.

Fiscal Accountability is monitored in a number of ways. First, fiscal accountability is monitored within by the WIA Monitors housed in the administrative office for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. It is the Monitors' responsibility to review all subcontractors on an ongoing basis in addition to the contract officer's review. The PAR (Program Accountability Review) team of the Tennessee Department of Labor performs an extensive review of fiscal each year to assure accuracy and accountability. In addition, the Tennessee State Comptroller's Office audits all WIA financials every two years.

Board Members are nominated by the County Mayors who have ultimate oversight and responsibility of WIA grant funds. The County Mayors nominate individuals based on their roles within the workforce ranging from educators, to Career Center partner programs, to employers. Once a Board Member is selected he/she must complete a Conflict of Interest Statement. The Board of Directors is also maintained at no less than 51 percent private industry to keep control in the hands of employers in the private sector.

#### 1.2b Legal and Ethical Behavior

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board does not produce a "product", rather a service to adults,

dislocated workers, disadvantaged youth, and employers. However, services can also present risks and have an impact on society. Risks that the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board faces include (1) training for occupations that are declining or (2) funding shortages. Although the Workforce Board faces many challenges and risks that could impact society negatively (as a company or nonprofit organization), the Workforce Board staff work closely to monitor and forecast for the future. To address demand occupations, the administrative staff is responsible for researching in-demand occupations via The Source and other reliable resources for occupational trends. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board also funds studies to reveal the employment trends in the 11-county rural service area. It is a top priority of management to make certain that participants (our customers) are training in high demand occupations. Secondly, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board faces the reality that funding is shrinking and applicant pools are growing due to the ailing economic conditions. The fiscal staff for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board routinely monitors obligations and forecasts obligations for the fiscal / program year. Adjustments are made to ensure funding availability for current obligations.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is an ethical organization. The Workforce Board follows the Tennessee Board of Regents Methods of Administration for Compliance with Office of Civil Rights Guidelines, Title VI, Title IX, and section 504. The Workforce Board also prepares and updates a 4-Factor Analysis and Plan for Limited English Proficient individuals. The Workforce Board has an expert on disability issues on staff to assist individuals with disabilities and an Equal Opportunity Officer to assist any participant (customer) who feels he/she has been discriminated against. The Workforce Board follows written grievance procedures for discrimination complaints and forwards the complaints to the Tennessee Department of Labor for review.

#### 1.2c Societal Responsibilities and Support of Key Communities

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's entire premise is improving societal well-being and benefit. The Board is to provide workforce development services to jobseekers, workers, and employers. Society and the communities that

constitute northwest Tennessee are directly impacted through the services provided by the Workforce Investment Act through the Workforce Board and Tennessee Career Centers. A cycle exists on a micro level where a person is positively impacted by improving his/her educational attainment level. The improvement results in a job or a better job, which results in higher income, which statistics show results in better health / healthcare, and the cycle continues. On the macro level, as the workforce in northwest Tennessee improves skill levels and educational attainment levels, incomes increase, economic development grows quickly, new, higher wage jobs come into the area, retail development begins to appear, tourism starts, new parks and recreation areas are built, new schools and hospitals are built to accommodate the growing and prospering economy, and the cycle continues. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is providing services at the very beginning of the cycle with a better quality of life as the ultimate goal.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board helps to strengthen key communities directly through mission-related activities of the organization. In addition to core / mandated services to clients, the Workforce Board structures programs to impact the most at the smallest cost and also seeks out additional grant funds to expand services. Extra activities to support key communities includes Workforce Board staff participation in Relay for Life; Walk Across Tennessee; Leadership programs offered through area Chambers of Commerce; P-16 Council representation; co-hosting Older Worker Week Open Houses and Hire Veterans First Open Houses; and representation at College fairs, Career fairs, and Business Expos.

## **2: Strategic Planning**

### **2.1a Strategic Development Process**

Strategic Planning is a Career Center system-wide initiative conducted yearly. Representatives for all Career Center partners are welcomed to the table to cooperatively plan for future services. The meetings are structured and planned in advance to accommodate all partners. Each partner maintains a budget and performance levels relating to program goals. Therefore, the planning session remains strategic in nature and encompasses overarching goals and objectives for the Career Center as a whole. A strategic plan structure is developed by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development

and shared at the local level with all partners prior to the meeting and is intended to be used as a guide for the meeting. All partners attend the meeting prepared with ideas and strategies to improve services or service flow. An initial five-year plan was developed. Then, due to funding allocations, the strategic plan modifications address a two-year timeframe in which short-term (1 to 2 years) and long-term goals (3 to 5 years) are established in the five-year plan completed each five-year period.

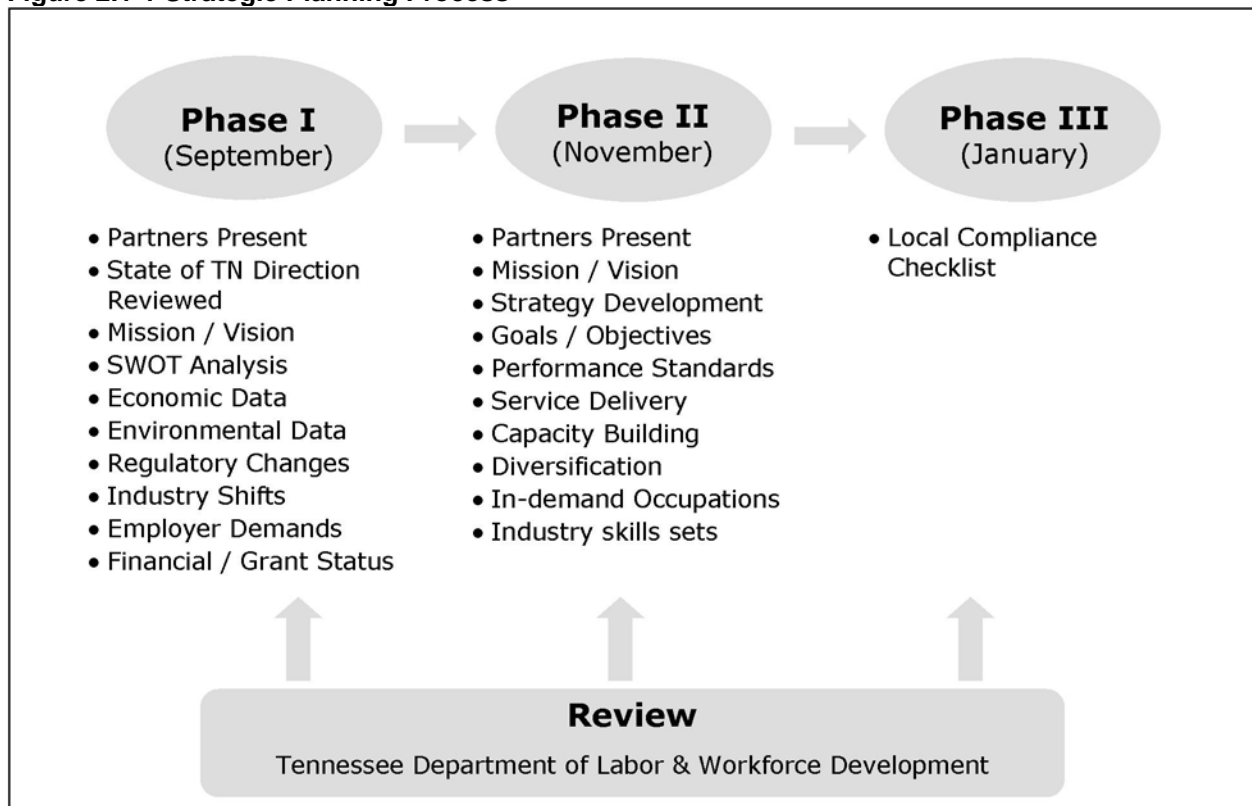
The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board analyzes Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats through a SWOT Analysis each year during the planning process. The SWOT Analysis is the first phase of the planning process and enables all partners to visually review how the organization can grow and improve. The most recent SWOT Analysis [Figure can be viewed in section 1—1.1 (b).] The Career Center is involved in the Education and Training field which can be affected by shifts in technology and customer preferences. Therefore, during the planning process, as a strategy, the Career Center determines what jobs/occupations fit into the high-growth, high-skill category and then focuses training initiatives on those predetermined categories. The Career Center utilizes data found on The Source and through locally funded research studies to pinpoint high-skill, high-growth jobs followed up by: (1) encouraging adults, dislocated workers, and disadvantaged youth (all jobseekers) to consider the noted fields as career options; (2) adding training programs to increase the availability of classes for jobseekers; and (3) partnering with other local workforce investment areas to “buy” classes offered by training providers so that dislocated workers, adults, and disadvantaged youth have an opportunity to train in the high-demand occupation without a delay due to a waiting list.

Long-term organizational sustainability is an issue that is very difficult to plan for when the organization is fully dependant on federally funded grant dollars. However, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is addressing sustainability in an innovative manner. Although grant funds are “soft money,” the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is answering sustainability questions through diversification. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board with its partners is applying for additional grants to supplement Workforce Investment Act grant

funds. The grants being sought match the mission and vision of the Workforce Board and Career Center and offset administrative costs, facility costs, and staff costs. Additional grant funds from outside sources allow the Workforce Board and Career Center to serve more jobseekers, workers, and employers due to lesser charges to the WIA funds.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Career Center are able to execute the Strategic Plan each year due to the plan being realistic and partner driven. All parties are involved in the development of the plan and therefore have buy-in and a desire to achieve.

**Figure 2.1-1 Strategic Planning Process**



**2.1b Strategic Objectives**

The overarching most important goal that all partners within the workforce development system are consistently striving to meet is a 100% participant employment rate. Employment is our number one goal. However, there are a number of goals that must be met prior to employment and following employment which we also strive to achieve. Just a few of the many goals all partners work toward daily include:

- A seamless delivery of services and referrals to customers.
- Partner competence in their program of employment and knowledge of partner services for proper referral.
- Prepare clients to enter the workforce through a variety of means such as: soft skills training,

resume writing, interviewing skills, job search, accommodations, job coaching, computer skills training, skill enhancement through post-secondary education, GED attainment, Career Readiness Certificates, and much more.

- Enhance the educational attainment level of at-risk youth through tutoring for grade level advancement, tutoring for the Gateway test, GED preparation, assist with GED testing fees, provide job shadowing, work experience, resume writing, interviewing skills, job search skills, soft skills training, assistance with dual-enrollment funding, post-secondary education, credential attainment, Career Readiness Certificates, and more.
- LWIA 12 strives to provide veterans with a smooth transition from military work to civilian employment and we strive to provide any

person with a disability with every tool to become employable from accommodation in the career center to accommodation in the workplace. The staff of LWIA 12 understands the importance of all partner programs and assists all customers in a timely, professional manner.

- Meet employer demands through customized training, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, Career Readiness Certificate WorkKeys assessments and job profiles, and via sponsoring the proper post-secondary training programs.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board along with partner programs have put measures in place to move in the direction of reaching the established goals aforementioned. For instance, all partner programs are co-located in the One-

Stop Career Centers throughout northwest Tennessee, a seamless service delivery system has been created and implemented, and the Workforce Investment Act funds have been used in a targeted fashion to ensure employers' workforce demands will be met.

In addition to system-wide goals and objectives, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board, as the provider of Workforce Investment Act grant services, has performance goals to meet each year. These performance standards are established by the US Department of Labor, pushed down to the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development and then pushed down to the thirteen local areas of which the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board represents Local Workforce Investment Area 12 in northwest Tennessee. The measures/standards include:

**Figure 2.1-2 Common Performance Standards**

<b>(Common) Performance Standard</b>	<b>Tennessee Department of Labor &amp; Workforce Development</b>	<b>Local Workforce Investment Area 12</b>
<b>Adult</b>		
Entered Employment	84.0%	84.0%
Employment Retention	84.0%	85.5%
Average Earning	\$12,800	\$12,800
<b>Dislocated Worker</b>		
Entered Employment	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Retention	90.0%	93.0%
Average Earning	\$13,300	\$13,300
<b>Youth</b>		
Placement	68.0%	68.0%
Attainment	69.0%	69.0%
Literacy/Numeracy	25.0%	25.0%

**2.2 Strategy Deployment**  
**2.2a Action Plan Development and Deployment**

The Career Center system as a whole maintains system goals that can change and require reforming as goals and objectives change at the Federal or State level. The Career Center system-wide goals were stated in section 2.1b and for the most part originate and are modified during quarterly Career Center Consortium meetings where all Career Center partners are present.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) strategies are two-fold focusing on reaching the overarching goals of the Career Center System and also meeting performance standards established by the US Department of Labor passed on to the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development and then passed on to the local levels including the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. From a State and Federal standpoint, the Workforce Board's performance is clearly reflected in the attainment of Performance Standards—very much like private industry's

performance is based on stock values and profits each year.

Hence, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's Performance Standards for the 2009-2010 program year are stated in Figure 2.1-2

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board sets its strategic direction during quarterly Workforce Board meetings. Once the Board has set the direction for administrative staff, that message is delivered to all staff during bi-monthly administrative staff meetings and bi-monthly field staff meetings.

In addition to overarching goals and objectives which set the tone for the strategic plan, the Board considers current factors or unforeseen and unpredictable dynamics that may alter the plan somewhat. For instance, the Workforce Board makes policy changes when necessary such as, making a travel stipend available to clients traveling in excess of twenty miles for training due to rising gas prices. Just such an event took place during a recent Workforce Board meeting due to the slowing economy and rising gas prices.

Other adjustments have also been made due to the poor economic conditions of the country and state. The Workforce Board staff is mailing a packet of information to every person in northwest Tennessee who is receiving unemployment insurance benefits. The packet informs the individual about the services available through the Tennessee Career Center and also highlights specific programs such as the National Career Readiness Certificate program. The Workforce Board is experiencing an increase in Mass Meetings due to layoffs and/or plant closures. The Tennessee Career Centers are receiving many more requests for employment than job orders. The slowing economy has also resulted in growth of the dual enrollment program for high school youth as more are qualifying as eligible.

Most importantly, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board makes policy changes as necessary to help individuals be successful. The expansion of the transportation stipend program is an excellent example. The Board was fearful that current clients who were enrolled in training would have to drop-out or fail due to low attendance, all a direct result of skyrocketing gas prices. The Board elected to make the gas stipend

available and expanded the program to include not only youth, but also adults and dislocated workers that qualify for the Workforce Investment Act program. The mileage amount is based on budget availability.

The Workforce Board employs a fiscal staff for the purpose of financial grant management. Grant expenditures are forecast in the future by quarter and program year to allow the Board to monitor expenditure levels. In addition to forecasting expenditures, field staff obligate funds through the eCMATS (electronic Case Management Activity Tracking System) developed by the State of Tennessee for the electronic management of numerous publically funded programs. The obligating of funds allows fiscal staff and the Board to see a clearer picture of funds available and projected expenditures for the program year. The Workforce Board also has a policy in place for times when funds become sparse. It is a "priority of service" policy in which the most in need (economically disadvantaged) receive services first. It is a type of waiting list where applicants are ranked based on need, the most in need receive priority.

In addition to the management of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant funds, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board works to diversify funds through the acquisition of additional grants. The Board has secured additional grants from the US Department of Transportation, Tennessee Secretary of State—Community Enhancement Grant Program, and AT&T Aspire. Additional grants are continually being sought to continue the diversification of funds.

As mentioned in Figure 2.1-2, the short-term goals of the Workforce Investment Act program are to achieve performance standards previously established. Although other overarching goals exist, the main focus of the board and the measurement tool to determine success is the achievement of Performance Standards.

The Workforce Board does not intend to change the product/service offering to clients in the future aside from offering additional support services when necessary based on economic factors. As economic factors change and barriers arise, the Board will call a sub-committee to consider additional support services at that time. Although infrequent, a sub-committee policy is in place to make adjustments to the product offering.

Human capital is extremely important to the success of the Workforce Investment Act program. Lean budgets have forced the administration to identify individual talent and assign duties and projects based on the unique talents of staff members. The Workforce Board is truly following the idea of *Do More with Less*. The program has remained successful through a reduction in force by a concentrated focus on having the right staff in the right positions, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of staff, and reassignment of duties to properly match staff duties with staff strengths and interests. The Board is also relying on partners more by identifying and diminishing duplication of services. The waste is disappearing and staff is becoming more empowered.

The Board measures progress of goals on many levels beginning with staff evaluations. Staff goals are tied to organizational goals and objectives, then Performance Standards are formally reviewed each quarter via a Quarterly Performance Report issued by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, and finally the Board utilizes customer satisfaction scores to determine the progress in reaching the overarching goals of the Career Center System.

### **2.2b Performance Projection**

Management of Performance Standards / indicators has not always been a strength for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. Overall, the Board has fared pretty well over the long term. It has only been in recent years the Board has grasped the full scope of performance management. A staff member is dedicated to monitoring performance through the eCMATS system and through the use of Discoverer and Dolce Vita (software programs) reports and quarterly reports. By fully utilizing the technology available, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is able to make clearer, more accurate projections regarding performance and also affect performance simply by being able to identify problem populations within the system.

## **3: Customer Focus**

### **3.1a Customer Engagement**

The Federal Workforce Investment Act was written with a focus on customer need and wellbeing. On August 7, 1998, the Act was written “to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States.”

The Workforce Investment Act legislation identifies two customer groups: jobseekers and employers. Jobseekers vary among several populations including unemployed, underemployed and dislocated workers. Employers are somewhat self explanatory including any entity that employs workers ranging from employing one to thousands.

The Workforce Investment Act services are delivered through the Tennessee Career Center system in northwest Tennessee. Being a not-for-profit government organization, WIA services are greatly sought by customers throughout the service area. However, prior to launching an outreach campaign, WIA services were not well known to potential clients and funds and programs were underutilized.

The Tennessee Career Centers were not reaching full potential because the public impression of the Tennessee Career Center was the “Unemployment Office.” Although the Career Center had a new name and logo, the public still associated the center solely with unemployment services.

Hence, the products were excellent and highly prized by those who received assistance. The problem was awareness not the offering! Recruitment became the key to success.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Tennessee Career Centers worked hand-in-hand to create an outreach campaign to inform the public and industry base about the Workforce Investment Act and services available through the local Tennessee Career Center offices. Brochures, newsletters, newspaper articles, and speaking engagements have become standard practice.

Demand for Workforce Investment Act services has increased and foot-traffic to the Career Centers has also picked up since the beginning of the outreach campaign.

The increase in awareness has resulted in a demand greater than available funding can support. However, the Workforce Board is pleased that more local residents are aware of the programs available and are utilizing the resources.

Although the Federal Workforce Investment Act dictates many of the specifics of the programs and services, some of the strategic decisions are left to

the local Board to make. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board hosts innovative, out-of-the-box thinkers who help mold and shape programs to reach out to the most at-risk populations who are historically hard to serve and engage.

The at-risk populations include the economically disadvantaged, long-term unemployed, low educational attainment, foster children, youth pregnant or parenting, runaways and homeless, dropouts, offenders, etc. These populations have become a focus for the WIA programs in northwest Tennessee.

An excellent example is the SummerWorks program. The Workforce Board received funding through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to implement a summer youth work experience program for economically disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24. The Board developed specialized outreach strategies and recruited and enrolled pregnant and parenting youth, offenders, dropouts, youth with disabilities, and foster children.

Letters were mailed to all the veterans in northwest Tennessee who ranged in age between 18-24 years old. Letters were also mailed to vocational rehabilitation offices, foster care providers, and Adult Education centers. Mass mailing went to churches, county and city mayors, chambers of commerce, high schools, and newspapers throughout northwest Tennessee.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board enrolled nearly 700 economically disadvantaged young adults into the first Summer Works program. The youth brushed up on interviewing skills, resume writing, dressing for success, and basic employment skill sets in reading, math, and locating information. The youth were placed on jobsites established by the Workforce Board staff for 5 weeks and then returned to the classroom for a one-week wrap-up session where numerous youth earned a National Career Readiness Certificate.

The innovative program not only successfully brought hard to serve populations into the program, but also introduced many to their first real-world work experience and enabled them to earn a wage while improving their skills and marketability in the workplace. Some were hired fulltime by their worksite, others returned to high

school or post-secondary training, and others enrolled in adult education program to pursue a GED.

Upon completion of the SummerWorks program, some ARRA funds were still available for youth work experience. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board extended the SummerWorks program to a Youth Work Experience program running through the Fall of 2009 and Spring of 2010. The highest achieving SummerWorks youth were invited to participate in the extended work experience program. The high achievers had to have a high school diploma or GED, earned a CRC, received good evaluations throughout the SummerWorks program, and attended work at a minimum of 85 percent. Fifty-one high achievers were placed in worksite for the extended Youth Work Experience program.

In the spirit of the ARRA funded SummerWorks program, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board elected to continue the work experience program on a smaller scale. The Workforce Board issued Requests for Proposals to contract with Youth training providers. A number of schools participated with various programs.

Some of the high schools proposed to continue with their Peer Tutor Work Experience program over the summer months while others had completely new tasks throughout the school such as janitorial, painting and renovations while other selected a traditional work experience program placing students at worksites throughout the county.

Key access mechanisms for the Workforce Investment Act services include the Brick-and-Mortar buildings throughout northwest Tennessee known as Tennessee Career Centers, via the newly designed and updated website, or phone. The majority of initial services are sought in person at a Career Center due to sensitive information disclosure and eligibility requirement call for obtaining copies of critical documents such as driver's license and Social Security cards. After the initial enrollment and consultation, communication can occur through telephone, email, or in person.

Additional accommodations have been made to ensure proper access and communications for individuals with disabilities and language barriers. The majority of LWIA 12 Tennessee Career

Centers have a TTD machine for telephone communication with the deaf, readers and ZOOM technology for individuals with vision impairments, wheelchair accessible facilities, translated documents and applications for Spanish speaking jobseekers, and language line to translate hundreds of languages as requested.

The Workforce Board is trying to move customers and prospective customers to seek information via the Tennessee Career Center website. In 2008, the Board launched a new and improved website encompassing all of the services available in the Career Center. However, a large percentage of the population in northwest Tennessee does not have internet access or a computer within their home therefore slowing the jobseekers conversion slightly. However, employers have adapted quickly to the use of the website and prefer it as their primary source of information. The Workforce Board also maintains a website for staff to find resources necessary to their daily functions.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is fortunate in that Board members are removed from the daily operations and have the opportunity to serve as a policy making and idea generating body. Their removal from the daily grind, allows members to see client needs from a different perspective than staff and can often offer suggestions and propose ideas that are different due to the perspective. Board members are also actively involved in their communities and the local economy giving them a unique viewpoint and so much of client need revolves around the state of the economy.

For instance, Tennessee, like all other states across the country, was experiencing extremely high gas prices in 2008. As the prices at the pump continued to rise, WIA students began having trouble paying for gas to travel to and from training providers. Although the Workforce Board was providing funding for training, students were struggling to attend class. The Board took an innovative approach and voted to provide travel stipends. The Workforce Board wanted to ensure students did not dropout or fall too far behind due to absenteeism. The stipend is proving to be successful. Students are grateful for the assistance and it allows them to focus on their studies and not the price at the gas pump.

### **3.1b Building a Customer Culture**

Career Center and Workforce Board customers vary from Jobseekers (Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and underserved populations) to Employers.

In addressing Jobseekers, the Workforce Board builds the foundation of strong, stable relations during the development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The Individual Service Strategy is an agreement between the Career Advisor/Field Staff Representative and the client prior to the client enrolling in a training program funded in part or fully through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program.

The Career Advisor reviews the short-term and long-term goals of the client with the client. The client completes the Test of Adult Basic Education, a series of assessments that includes the National Career Readiness Certificate assessment and career interest inventories. During the assessment process, the Career Advisor is displaying genuine concern and care for the client and the client is learning about him/herself together with the Career Advisor.

It is a learning experience and the Career Advisor and client form a bond. The next step of the Individual Service Strategy is to develop a Plan of Action of the client. During this stage, the Career Advisor and client map out a path of goals and objectives that lead to employment success. At the end of the session, the Career Advisor and client both sign the Individual Service Strategy and it serves as a "contract" between them. The Career Advisor also contacts the client monthly while enrolled in training and quarterly after graduation and employment. It is the Career Advisor's dedication and support that builds customer relationships with Jobseekers.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board also tracks Jobseekers' Satisfaction through a tracking system provided by the University of Memphis. The surveys are provided by a third party (University of Memphis) to ensure objectiveness. To date, jobseeker satisfaction rates have been at or above goals established by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Employers are the second group of customers. Employer's needs are being met through a variety of employer-driven initiatives including Incumbent Worker Training Grants, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, WorkKeys Job

Profiling, and through the Apprenticeship Assistance program.

As employer services are a top priority, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board is proactive in informing employers about the services available.

The Workforce Board takes a four-fold approach to inform local industry and businesses about employer services available. First, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board publishes a quarterly newsletter entitled *Your Workforce Connection* that contains pertinent information about On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training, and Customized Training. The newsletter is mailed/mailed to over 1,700 employers throughout rural northwest Tennessee.

Secondly, the Workforce Board utilizes the Media Releases developed by the Communications Office of the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development highlighting the awards granted to companies in our area. The Media Releases are saved from the website and forwarded to local media outlets. The press releases reach numerous employers in the form of their local newspaper.

Thirdly, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board develops 'success stories' on clients or companies who have completed Incumbent Worker Training, On-the-Job Training, or a Customized Training Program. The success stories are sent to local newspapers.

Finally, Local Workforce Investment Area 12 takes advantage of every opportunity to speak to local civic groups regarding WIA services and especially employer services. The Workforce Board makes presentations to local Rotary, Kiwanis, and Exchange Clubs in addition to industrial boards and any other organization that offers presentations at their meetings. The Workforce Board is always eager to go before the public and discuss the services available.

During the 2006 program year over \$187,000 was awarded to upgrade the skill sets of 1,918 employees via Incumbent Worker training grants and \$78,700 was awarded to hire and train 61 employees through On-the-Job training grants. The 2007 program year proved similar with \$186,500 coming to the area in the form of Incumbent Worker Training Grant to assist 493

employees. The demand for and awareness of the Incumbent Worker Training program has grown each program year with demand exceeding funding in 2010. Five companies in northwest Tennessee are participating in the Incumbent Worker Training Grant program in 2010 receiving funds totaling just over \$104,000. Additional proposals were not awarded due to limited funds. The employer services provided in Local Workforce Investment Area 12 make a tremendous difference for both the employer and employee and the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board plans to continue serving and recruiting industries to the employer services available.

Employer satisfaction is also tracked through a survey method provided by the University of Memphis. The Workforce Board has continually met employer satisfaction goals established by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

In creating a truly customer centered environment, the Workforce Board acknowledges that the customers seeking assistance through the Workforce Investment Act also have other barriers and could use assistance in other areas that WIA is not designed to provide. Also, employers may need assistance with issues that WIA funds can not cover. Therefore, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and the Tennessee Career Center System maintains strategic partnerships with area organizations for referrals.

The Tennessee Career Center offers an abundance of programs through the Workforce Investment Act, Job Service, Veterans Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, etc. However, strategic partnerships increase services tremendously. Some of the partnerships include: Southwest Tennessee Education Pathways (STEP), Port Authority—Cates Landing, I-69, Tennessee Scholars Program, Dual Enrollment, GED*Next*, Crockett County Higher Education Center, Humboldt Higher Education Center, Tipton County Public Library at the Jimmy Naifeh Center, WIA-AE Youth GED Prep contract, training providers, Chambers of Commerce, Boys and Girls Clubs, Union Missions, Children & Family Services, West Tennessee Industrial Association, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and so many more. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board depends on strategic partnerships for

assisting clients with needs and also assisting employers with services beyond the scope of WIA.

To maintain and develop new customer relationships and keep the culture centered around client success and satisfaction, the Workforce Board continues to lead by example. The Board is focused on staff success and this culture transfers in to the way staff provides services to clients. The Workforce Board approach is people first. The only real change in approaches is the infusion of ever-changing technology into daily processes.

### **3.2 Voice of the Customer**

#### **3.2a Customer Listening**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board goes well beyond many of its competitors in outreach to customers and encouraging customer feedback in regards to customer needs and desires. Every customer has a voice in the workforce development arena and the Workforce Board provides platforms for customer feedback.

The Workforce Board hosts county-wide and northwest Tennessee workforce summits for communities to voice their opinions, needs, wants, desires, and concerns regarding the state of the workforce and workforce development system. The most recent summits included a focus on the workforce of the South and one solely on youth and youth development.

The summits are open to all people of the community and attendance is encouraged through newspaper announcements, mail-outs, and partner program announcements. The summits are open forums for discussions, brain storming, suggestions, and most importantly to inform the Workforce Board of the needs of the workforce on a first-hand, personal basis.

The sessions serve as a grass-roots effort where people of all walks of life come together and look to the future of the workforce. The Workforce Board staff develops strategies to address issues revealed through discussions. At times, the Workforce Board cannot answer the needs of the community, but instead, will call on partners from the Career Center System, the k-12 school system, post-secondary institutions and community and faith-based organizations to spearhead the efforts to meet the needs of the community. The summits have resulted in a team-oriented approach to solving problems.

Customer Satisfaction surveys are also employed to track satisfaction and make changes where necessary.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board performs outreach to all customer groups and listens to their needs. The Board attends and hosts summits, job fairs, college fairs, Society of Human Resource Managers meetings, Rotary and Kiwanis Club meetings, Industrial Board and Rapid Response Mass Meetings, and provides outreach through local area newspapers and the new Career Center website. The Board is continually looking for innovative solutions to workforce issues.

As the use of social media becomes more and more prevalent, the Workforce Board is planning an introduction of a Facebook page to represent the Tennessee Career Centers in northwest Tennessee. The Board expects a flurry of activity from the Youth and hopes to use social media as a means to disperse information regarding upcoming workshops and events. Career Advisors are currently using Facebook to track down clients they are having trouble reaching due to disconnected telephones and relocations. Thus far, clients have been very receptive to being contacted through social media.

In the spirit of keeping the customer and listening and learning methods current with business / industry needs, the Workforce Board began restructuring its Youth programs in 2005 starting with the development of a new In-School Youth program. Youth had become increasingly hard to serve and recruit and the Board took a proactive approach by electing to restructure prior to a performance shortfall.

The Board was seeking an innovative way to serve all students who are in need of assistance rather than focusing only on low-income students while many other non-income eligible students also need assistance. The Board developed the Peer Tutoring Work Experience Program. This innovative approach rewards low-income, academic achievers by paying those students to tutor and mentor their peers. Rather than hiring a tutor to assist only low-income students who need tutoring, the Peer Tutoring Work Experience program rewards academic success and provides tutoring to all academically challenged students regardless of income eligibility. The program

reaches the most and costs the least. It is truly an innovative model to be replicated across the state and nation.

Following the successful restructuring of the in-school youth program, in 2007 the Board shifted its focus to the out-of-school, older youth program which was also experiencing less than desirable recruiting results. The out-of-school, older youth program had looked to serve low-income young adults ages 19-21 who were looking to pursue post-secondary education. Although a very worthy group, the Workforce Investment Act seeks to serve a variety of youth, those lacking a high school diploma, those seeking employment, and so forth. The Board voted for an out-of-the-box approach of targeting low-income high school drop outs. The goal is to improve the quality of life of those young adults without high school diplomas and to also increase the education attainment levels throughout northwest Tennessee for economic development purposes.

Along the continuum of improvement and restructuring, the in-school program was resurfaced in 2005, the out-of-school program completely revamped in 2007. In 2008, the Board selected to continue polishing both Younger Youth and Older Youth. The Peer Tutoring Work Experience program is improving through the introduction of Career Clusters. The Career Clusters education track is aligning the Department of Education and the Department of Labor's goals of introducing students to various career tracks and the necessary education to succeed in those tracks whether going to post-secondary training or directly entering the workforce. The Board has begun issuing Request for Proposals to post-secondary training institutions and other interested organizations to offer Career Camps / Work Experience programs during the summer break. The Career Camps / Work Experience programs afford low-income high school students the opportunity to explore careers through hands-on experiences.

The first round of funded proposals were implemented in the Summer 2009. Youth contractors offered programs ranging from peer tutoring (teaching) work experiences, to technology camps and math labs, to traditional work experiences where youth were placed at worksites throughout the county. The traditional work experience programs evolved into a

business services by assisting employers during an economic crunch.

In addition to growing the in-school (high school) program, the out-of-school, older youth program is also evolving. Initially, the Workforce Investment Act programs offered older youth funding to pursue post-secondary training, and then the GEDNext opportunity was introduced.

Please reference 7.1 for performance outcomes from the restructuring of the Youth programs. As the economy and environment continues to change, so does the needs of our Youth clients. As the needs alter and conform, the Workforce Board will make adjustments to the services offered through the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Tennessee Career Centers in northwest Tennessee.

Customer complaints are handled quickly and professionally. Complaints are first grouped into one of two categories: (1) program or (2) discrimination.

Program complaints are managed by the Executive Director of the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and follow the WIA Nondiscriminatory Grievance and Complaint Procedures. Discrimination complaints are managed by the Equal Opportunity Officer for the Workforce Board and follow Part 37—Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

### **3.2b Determination of Customer Satisfaction and Engagement**

As a publicly funded program, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and Career Center System strives to operate efficiently and effectively. If any segment of the system is not operating to its potential, customers can voice their concerns and they will be heard.

If any person witnesses an agency director or employee engaging in any activity that is illegal, improper, or wasteful, that person may call the State Comptroller's toll free hotline. The notice regarding the State Comptroller's hotline is posted in highly trafficked areas within each Career Center and in the Workforce Board's lobby.

Beyond the hotline, the Workforce Board monitors customer satisfaction via customer satisfaction surveys. One set of surveys are

conducted through the University of Memphis. The University of Memphis selects a random sample of jobseekers who have received services through the Career Center System. They are called or mailed surveys to complete for an account for their satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The Workforce Board is not made aware of the individuals who participate, only the results of the survey. The same process takes place with employers who receive services. Every jobseeker and employer is informed upfront that he/she might be selected to participate in a customer satisfaction survey following services provided.

The University of Memphis customer satisfaction survey results allow the Workforce Board to determine how well it is serving its customers and also see where it falls on the continuum compared to other Workforce Boards across the State of Tennessee. Every Workforce Board in the State of Tennessee is accountable to the results from the University of Memphis customer satisfaction survey. Benchmarks are established and goals for the following year are set. Each area strives to improve scores and surpass the other local areas. It is a friendly competition that keeps all Workforce Boards motivated to serve customers to the best of their ability.

In addition to the standardized survey provided through the University of Memphis, the Workforce Board also distributes an in-house customer satisfaction survey. This allows any participant who would like to rate their satisfaction to do so. Surveys are available in the Career Center and on the website.

Customer satisfaction and customer engagement are positively correlated. If a client is not fully engaged in the services provided, the client will ultimately be dissatisfied. The Workforce Investment Act services require an element of engagement on the part of clients. For instance, clients are required to maintain monthly contact with their respective Career Advisor. The Career Advisor normally initiates contact either by phone or email, but clients are encouraged prior to enrollment in the program to make the extra

effort to keep in contact. Clients are also required to bring in grades each trimester or semester depending on the training program. The continuous contact with the Career Advisor helps build and strengthen the relationship that started prior to enrollment.

Even after a client graduates from a training program, the WIA Career Advisor continues to follow-up with the client each quarter to check on employment and any barriers to employment the client might be facing.

All contact with clients is entered in eCMATS (Electronic Case Management and Activity Tracking System) in the form of a case note. The data is available and can be pulled for analysis by staff members and staff of the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Ideally, and the way in which the Workforce Board staff utilize the tracking system, any person could read the case notes entered on any client and know that client's journey from when they first applied for assistance until 3 quarters after the person completed training and secured employment.

### **3.2c Analysis and Use of Customer Data**

Customer groups are identified through the Workforce Investment Act and include Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and Employers. Additional customer groups include underserved or underrepresented populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, older workers, and displaced homemakers. In contrast to most private industry, the Workforce Investment Act program is publicly funded and sought by the identified customer groups. However, underserved populations receive additional outreach due to being historically underserved. Positions such as Disability Program Navigators, Veterans Representatives, and Older Worker Representatives work to seek out the underserved and provide services. Figure 3.2-1 breaks out the customer groups, services provided to the various groups, and customer requirements or expectations.

**Figure 3.2-1 Customer Groups / Customer Expectations**

Customer Group	Services Provided	Customer Requirements of Services
<p>Jobseekers, Unemployed, Underemployed, Dislocated Workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource Room</li> <li>• <i>Soft Skills Training</i></li> <li>• <i>Basic Computer Skills workshops</i></li> <li>• <i>Resume Writing Workshops</i></li> <li>• <i>Job Search Workshops</i></li> <li>• <i>Interviewing Workshops</i></li> <li>• Access to Job Search databases</li> <li>• <i>Referral to partner programs</i></li> <li>• Referrals for open job orders</li> <li>• <i>Training funds for qualified participants</i></li> <li>• Access to fax machine and internet</li> <li>• <i>Case Management</i></li> <li>• GED Preparation if needed</li> <li>• <i>Career Readiness Certificate</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain necessary knowledge to fill out applications and develop resumes</li> <li>• Ability to perform basic functions on the computer (resume, cover letter, job search)</li> <li>• Gain interview and job search skills</li> <li>• Attain employment</li> <li>• Earn at or above self-sufficiency level</li> <li>• Gain a bronze, silver, or gold CRC recognized by the employer community.</li> </ul>
<p>Training Seekers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Case Management and Career counseling</i></li> <li>• <i>Funding for qualified applicants to approved programs</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide information about approved training providers and programs</i></li> <li>• <i>Job Search</i></li> <li>• <i>Assessments for career interest and employment / training barrier identification</i></li> <li>• <i>Information regarding in-demand occupations</i></li> <li>• <i>Transportation stipends</i></li> <li>• <i>Referral to partner programs</i></li> <li>• <i>Career development workshops (resume writing, interview, job search)</i></li> <li>• <i>Soft Skills training</i></li> <li>• GED Preparation</li> <li>• English as a Second Language assistance</li> <li>• <i>Career Readiness Certificate</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competent Career Advisors</li> <li>• Timely eligibility determination</li> <li>• Financial Assistance for unemployed / underemployed</li> <li>• Concise and correct information regarding training providers and eligible programs</li> <li>• Referral to any partner that could also provide services</li> <li>• Gain a bronze, silver, or gold CRC recognized by the employer community.</li> </ul>

Youth, In school and Out of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Peer Tutoring</i></li> <li>• <i>Work Experience</i></li> <li>• <i>Funding for eligible youth to earn post-secondary credits while attending high school</i></li> <li>• <i>Adult Mentoring and Leadership Development</i></li> <li>• <i>Individual Assessment</i></li> <li>• <i>Funding for eligible youth to attend post-secondary training</i></li> <li>• <i>GED Preparation</i></li> <li>• <i>GED testing fees assistance</i></li> <li>• <i>Employment referrals for job orders</i></li> <li>• <i>Soft skills training</i></li> <li>• <i>Resume writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques, etc</i></li> <li>• <i>English as a Second Language assistance</i></li> <li>• <i>Transportation stipends to qualifying participants</i></li> <li>• <i>Career Readiness Certificate</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance to next grade level with assistance from tutoring (in-school youth)</li> <li>• Pass Gateway testing with assistance from tutoring (in-school youth)</li> <li>• Financial assistance enabling students to earn post-secondary assistance while attending high school</li> <li>• Gain work skills to become more employable</li> <li>• Gain life skills reducing barriers to employability</li> <li>• Increase self-awareness of aptitudes and interests to better pursue a rewarding career</li> <li>• Gain knowledge about careers</li> <li>• Earn a GED (if applicable)</li> <li>• Earn a credential from a post-secondary approved training provider in a high demand occupational field</li> <li>• Find employment in a timely manner</li> <li>• Earn self-sufficient wages</li> <li>• Gain a bronze, silver, or gold CRC recognized by the employer community.</li> </ul>
Older Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Employment training</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase Older Workers skill levels</i></li> <li>• <i>Placement working 20 hours per week gaining on-the-job experience</i></li> <li>• <i>Placement in unsubsidized employment positions</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade marketable skills</li> <li>• Gain applicable work experience</li> <li>• Secure unsubsidized employment</li> </ul>
Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Job referrals</i></li> <li>• <i>Referrals to training</i></li> <li>• <i>Assurance of veterans preference</i></li> <li>• <i>Employment related testing</i></li> <li>• <i>Supply training information</i></li> <li>• <i>Skills assessments</i></li> <li>• <i>Referrals to partners</i></li> <li>• <i>Case Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Resume writing, job search, and interviewing skills assistance</i></li> <li>• <i>Access to resources: internet and fax machine</i></li> <li>• <i>Access to resource room</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Veterans Preference</i></li> <li>• <i>Job placement assistance</i></li> <li>• <i>Smooth transition from military work to the civilian workforce</i></li> </ul>
Physically and Mentally challenged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Outcome oriented employment opportunity</i></li> <li>• <i>Counseling and guidance</i></li> <li>• <i>On-the-job training</i></li> <li>• <i>Post-secondary education</i></li> <li>• <i>Job seeking skills</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Competent VR counselors that are attentive and assistive</i></li> <li>• <i>Marketable skills increase</i></li> <li>• <i>Meaningful employment</i></li> <li>• <i>Accessible facilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Handicap parking</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work adjustment</li> <li>• Situational assessment</li> <li>• Physical restoration</li> <li>• Job coaching</li> <li>• <i>Accommodations</i></li> </ul>	
Employers (Public and Private businesses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recruitment</i></li> <li>• <i>Skills Training</i></li> <li>• <i>Incumbent Worker Training</i></li> <li>• <i>On-the-Job Training</i></li> <li>• <i>Applicant pre-screening</i></li> <li>• Apprenticeship Assistance program</li> <li>• <i>Career Readiness Certificate / Job profiling</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available, qualified labor pool</li> <li>• Training funds</li> <li>• Pre-screened applicants</li> <li>• Utilize the CRC / Job profiling program to make better hires and reduce employee turnover.</li> </ul>

*Italicized font represents WIA specific services provided.*

Due to the current environmental conditions, returning veterans is a segment of the population that is growing not only in northwest Tennessee, but in Tennessee as a whole and throughout the nation.

All veterans who come into the Tennessee Career Center are and will be given priority of service. Veterans are registered in the e-CMATS database and receive priority in the interviewing process, access to job search tools such as the Internet and resume writing programs, case management, testing, counseling, referral to employment, an training opportunities and all other services offered as a matter of course in the daily operations of the public labor exchange.

These services are the responsibility of all local office staff members and are not limited to the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER).

Priorities of service for eligible veterans are as follows in order of precedence: 1. Special Disabled Veterans, 2. Disabled Veterans, 3. Transitioning and recently separated veterans, 4. Combat Era / Campaign Badge Veterans, 5. All other eligible veterans. Spouses are entitled to veterans preference only if the veteran died in combat or if he is a 100% Service Connected Veteran. Children are not currently eligible for veteran's preference, but are offered all services available at the Tennessee Career Center to assist in finding and securing gainful employment.

In addition to providing priority of service to veterans, a Local Veterans Employment Representative is also available in the Tennessee Career Centers at Covington, Dyersburg, Humboldt, and Huntingdon for referral, and in the other counties, representatives are available for referrals. While the position of Disability Program Navigator ended June 30, 2010, the knowledge gained will continue to serve a vital part in the navigation of the Tennessee Career Center as individuals with disabilities or veterans with disabilities turn to the Tennessee Career Center System for assistance in the employment process.

Identifying other populations for services and market segments to address, the Board utilizes a research method. The Workforce Board uses The Source for quality labor market information. From The Source, the Board is able to identify the in-demand and growing occupations in northwest Tennessee. Once the occupations are identified, the Board approves training for the stated occupations. The reason the Board connects training to in-demand occupations is to ensure that jobseekers receiving public funds to re-train in an occupation will be afforded the opportunity to easily find employment following the conclusion of the training program. The purpose is to train individuals in occupational areas that not only increase the value of the jobseeker, but also assists in meeting employer demands. Supply (Jobseekers) = Demand (Employers).

**Figure 3.2-2 In-Demand Occupations**

Occupation Title	2004 Employment	2014 Projected Employment	Projected Growth
Retail Salespersons	2,080	2,460	380
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,170	1,510	340
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	1,060	1,390	330
Teacher Assistants	940	1,180	240
Team Assemblers	5,530	5,750	220
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	1,230	1,410	180
General and Operations Managers	1,240	1,440	200
Helpers--Production Workers	1,240	1,440	200
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	1,100	1,290	190
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Vocation	790	970	180
Fire Fighters	480	670	190
Agricultural Equipment Operators	420	630	210
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	1,740	1,880	140
Registered Nurses	640	770	130
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	720	880	160
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	520	660	140
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	370	530	160
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,320	1,440	120
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	870	950	80
Packers and Packagers	680	750	70
Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters	760	840	80
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,020	1,130	110
Customer Service Representatives	630	730	100
Accountants and Auditors	380	460	80
Farm, Ranch, and Other Agricultural Managers	310	380	70

Source: TN Dept of Labor & Workforce Dev, Div Emp Sec, R&S  
<http://thesource.tnui.net/faqinfo.asp?session=faq&geo=4715000360&faq=3>

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board identified three sectors to target based on information derived from The Source (see Figure 3.2-2). Healthcare, Education, and Advanced Manufacturing positions are represented throughout the 25 in-demand occupations identified by The Source. In fact, 13 of the 25 listed in-demand jobs for northwest Tennessee are in the Healthcare, Education, or Advanced Manufacturing fields.

The Board charged staff to address the forecasted labor shortages in a creative, cost effective manner from youth to adults and dislocated

workers beginning with healthcare. The Board envisioned a sustainable plan that would encourage long-term growth in the field to meet the inevitable growing demand for healthcare professionals resulting from the aging baby-boomer generation.

The staff responded through the creation of the Healthcare Consortium. The Healthcare Consortium is a collaborative group of healthcare providers from across northwest Tennessee. Representatives on the consortium included various occupations such as, Dentists, Optometrists, General Practice Doctors, Health

Educators, Hospital Administrators, and others. By creating a consortium, the Board was able to gain buy-in and commitment without competition.

The consortium commissioned a Healthcare Sector Analysis authored by Middle Tennessee State University. The sector analysis enabled Workforce Board staff to see the demand broken down by occupations and projected out 10 years into the future. The information was shared with the consortium and their employers.

It was apparent that the demand for healthcare professionals would well outweigh the qualified labor force. The Board staff developed a two-fold approach beginning with an on-going outreach plan for youth beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and a dislocated worker healthcare occupation awareness/training plan. The demand for healthcare workers was/is growing faster than students are graduating from training programs. Thus, the healthcare industry greatly needs workers in the present. However, some of the positions that will come available in the area require intensive, lengthy study. Hence, the two-fold approach is designed to gain quick placements from dislocated workers interested in entering the healthcare field a longer-study position placements by generating interest in youth preparing for college.

Approach for youth—the Workforce Board and consortium members worked together to set up meetings at the middle schools throughout northwest Tennessee. The healthcare professional, member of the healthcare consortium, travels to the school and speaks to students about his/her job. The healthcare professional exposes students to the day-to-day duties of the job, the rewards, the hard work, and the education necessary to succeed. School teachers love the program because it allows the students to have access to real working professionals and to hear the importance of education from someone outside of the school system. It makes a greater impact on the students than reading about healthcare positions or hearing from their teacher how important their studies are for success. It puts a face on “doctor” and helps students to see it as a possibility for themselves. The healthcare study information is shared in brochure format along with a flyer entitled *Education and Training Pays*. The flyer displays in a bar graph the correlation to income and education level. The students can relate to

money and it sticks with them. They all express their desire to succeed and “make money” and the flyer substantiates the importance of education to earnings.

Approach for adults and dislocated workers—the Workforce Board understands the need of adults and dislocated workers to quickly reenter the workforce in fields that are stable. The Workforce Board offers qualifying adults and dislocated workers financial aid to enroll in training for in-demand occupations such as healthcare. A growing number of adults and dislocated workers are enrolling in Practical Nursing and Nursing programs at the Tennessee Technology Centers and local community colleges.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board coordinates a Special Skills Shortage Grant between the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Dyersburg State Community College which funds an entire Nursing program from tuition of students to the professor’s salary and equipment. The grant is currently funding the 5<sup>th</sup> LPN to RN Fast-Track graduating approximately 20 Registered Nurses each 18-month cycle. The additional Registered Nurses entering the rural, northwest Tennessee area reduces the shortage, but the supply still remains far short of the demand.

Education is the next sector the Board selected to work on. There is a shortage of qualified math and science teachers across the nation with northwest Tennessee being no exception. In fact, northwest Tennessee is experiencing a shortage of teachers in most all areas of study.

The introduction of the Peer Tutor Work Experience Program was a product of the youth restructuring with a mind to in-demand occupations. High school students who qualify for WIA and are also academic achievers ‘work’ as Peer Tutors and earn a wage for their services. Economically disadvantaged, academic achievers are rewarded for their academic achievement by participating in an education-related work experience where they hone their teaching skills. Students from 9<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> and economically disadvantaged juniors and seniors have the opportunity to participate in the work-experience program and therefore, be exposed to a career in teaching.

The final sector selected by the Workforce Board is Advanced Manufacturing. Low skill manufacturing jobs have been leaving the northwest Tennessee and US market over the course of 10 to 15 years and are slowly being replaced by high-skilled manufacturing positions that require more training and advanced skill levels by employees.

To make northwest Tennessee more competitive in the recruitment of advanced manufacturing companies, the Workforce Board charged the staff with determining what skill levels are needed and then focusing on achieving those levels through training. The Workforce Board organized the West Tennessee Advanced Manufacturing Council with members from all 19 counties of west Tennessee excluding Fayette and Shelby (Greater Memphis Region). The membership includes private industry, economic development, higher education, and workforce development.

The council worked together to develop a strong application for a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Grant offered by the US Department of Labor. The proposal was selected to advance to the second phase of the grant competition, but ultimately was not selected for funding. However, the proposal has a number of components of which the council feels very strongly about implementing.

The council elected the Workforce Board to commission or complete an advanced manufacturing sector analysis similar to the healthcare sector analysis to determine specific skill sets and to develop an advanced manufacturing career ladder linking career advancement to the required education/training and skills required. Workforce Board began pursuing alternate funding streams for the study. Once funds were secured in 2010 to complete the study, the Board issued a Request for Proposal.

Bids were received and Younger Associates, Marketing Research Firm located in Jackson and Memphis, Tennessee, were awarded the contract. Younger Associates are currently collecting survey results from advanced manufacturing companies in west Tennessee and preparing for focus group meeting in January. The Career Ladders will be developed directly from input from local advanced manufacturers and national data compiled by the US Department of Labor. The results of the study will be available in Spring 2011.

The Board will work with the members of the West Tennessee Advanced Manufacturing Council and Younger Associates to disseminate the information. The Workforce Board staff will follow a similar format to the healthcare information distribution except Younger Associates will prepare a video explaining the Career Ladders. This video will be used in middle and high schools, Career Centers, Tennessee Technology Centers and available to any group with an audience that can benefit.

The Workforce Board has also incorporated a skills credential as part of an effort toward developing the advanced manufacturing industry in Tennessee through the implementation of the National Career Readiness Certificate / WorkKeys system. The National Career Readiness Certificate / WorkKeys system is a two-part program that involves business and industry and jobseekers.

The Workforce Board is initially subsidizing the cost of Job Profiles for local industry. Once industries begin to reap the benefits, the Board will have secured the buy-in necessary for the profiles to be funded solely by the employer. Initially, the Board hires a WorkKeys Certified Job Profiler to profile entry-level or high turn-over jobs within local advanced manufacturing companies. The companies then require job applicants to earn the specific level on the National Career Readiness Certificate exam that the profiler recommended for the job. This is a win-win situation that creates a "best-fit" for both the employer and jobseeker.

The abundance of jobseekers earning a National Career Readiness Certificate also serves as an economic development tool for the local area and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Since National Career Readiness Certificates are being utilized in most states, prospective industries can compare one state to another with a standardized measurement tool. Tennessee plans to use the CRCs in Tennessee as a positive economic development tool in competing for jobs on a national stage.

To date, jobs have been profiled in various industries from food packaging to automotive steering systems to heating and air conditioning unit manufacturing. Job profiles have occurred in six of the seven original counties in Local Workforce Investment Area 12 service area and we plan to continue this program into the

additional four counties transitioned on July 1, 2011. The program is growing and more advanced manufacturing plants are seeking applicants with objectively measured skill sets and the ability to learn quickly. The CRC is gaining popularity and Human Resources Managers are selling the system through word of mouth.

#### **4: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

##### **4.1 Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance**

###### **4.1a Performance Measurement**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board and the Career Center System is fortunate to have eCMATS (electronic Case Management Activity Tracking System) database. eCMATS was developed through the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development as a state-wide, multi-program tracking system that allows for the integration of Career Center programs.

Through the data entered into eCMATS by Workforce Board staff members, the Board is able to track, forecast, and project performance.

eCMATS is a very complex system which results in a lengthy learning curve for new employees. Many other local areas do not fully utilize the tracking system due to its complexity. Due to other areas' lack of understanding of the system, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has a programmatic and fiscal advantage. Regardless, the Workforce Board does not view the other local areas as competitors, but as partners in achieving the overall goals of the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Thus, Workforce Board staff assist other areas as partners by being available to train their staff on how to best use eCMATS on an everyday basis.

eCMATS is the only database/tracking system needed to track performance if utilized fully and correctly.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board also incorporates comparative data from program year to program year to ensure our budget will meet our current and forecasted obligations to adequately provide client services.

One forecast method is to examine exiters by funding stream to check for consistency and cost per participant. The WIA eligible adult funding stream in particular is an excellent indicator for the consistency of the program. Ideally, the adult

stream should maintain a level number of clients per program year assuming level funding (excluding Incumbent Worker Training Grant adult participants, On-the-Job Training Grant adult participants, and Career Readiness Certificate adult participants—considering only WIA eligible adults).

Local Workforce Investment Area 12 has maintained steady WIA eligible adult exiters number for numerous program years. However, the number of adults slightly dropped in program year 2007-08 due to a dramatic decrease in operating funds. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board incurred a 20% reduction in operating costs resulting in an extended Priority of Service period lasting for over six months.

The Board took proper, swift action to cut costs and implemented a reduction of force to ensure services to clients did not waiver during the program year. Four positions were cut to alleviate the financial strain and to free up funds for clients. The Board worked diligently to stretch every dollar and reduced the cost per participant from \$1,306.95 in 2006-07 to just \$1,013.61 in 2007-08. Please see Figure 7.

###### **4.1b Performance Analysis and Review**

The Workforce Board staff utilizes the Discoverer software program that works in conjunction with eCMATS to pull reports regarding enrollments, exits that lead to placements, coded participants, financials, etc. The Workforce Board staff also analyzes quarterly performance reports from the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. At any specific time, the Workforce Board can view a snapshot of current performance standings through available technologies.

###### **4.1c Performance Analysis and Review**

Performance benchmarks are established each year throughout the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Thirteen Local Workforce Investment Areas across the State of Tennessee are competing to achieve the highest performance ratings. The friendly competition is driven by the possibility of earning incentive money to reinvest in the local area and through the avoidance of sanctions that are imposed on areas that do not achieve performance goals. Due to its diligent tracking of performance, LWIA 12 received an incentive bonus for the 2009-2010 Program Year.

In addition, the direct result of performance tracking has allowed the Board to implement a number of innovative changes to the Youth programs that address Youth/Jobseeker customers.

## **4.2 Management of Information, Knowledge, and Information Technology**

### **4.2a Data, Information, and Knowledge Management**

Organizational Data, Information, Knowledge – Accuracy, reliability, integrity, and security of data are imperative to the success of the Workforce Investment Act programs. All staff members understand the importance of accurate, reliable data and data entry. Due to the nature of the Workforce Investment Act program, eligibility information must be collected on applicants/customers which includes sensitive information such as Social Security numbers and income verification (pay stubs). If the data is entered into eCMATS incorrectly, it would have the potential to negatively affect performance.

To ensure data accuracy, staff members use Discoverer software to run reports which indicate significant outliers.

For security reasons, eCMATS is password protected with every staff member having a unique user id and password and varying levels of access. Each staff member's navigation of the program can be tracked at the State level to increase security.

The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development employs a Performance Accountability Review (PAR) Team which visits the Workforce Board and checks client files and eCMATS records for data validation purposes. Financial records are also checked for accuracy and proper procedures such as bidding for contracts, etc. Any errors noted are written in a formal report and the Workforce Board responds with a corrective action plan.

Paper files are protected by lock and key and maintained for a set period of time after client services are completed for monitoring purposes. At expiration the paper files are shredded to protect the confidential information within.

Workforce Data, Information, Knowledge— The Workforce Board works to continually improve the workforce through training

initiatives. That being said, the Workforce Board instills the same value for education and training to staff of the program. The Board has created a culture of sharing, continuous learning and growing professionally.

The Workforce Board staff utilizes an email distribution system that allows time-sensitive, new information to be shared quickly and easily at virtually no cost to the program. The Board also uses conference calls for emergency meetings or to distribute pertinent information quickly and efficiently. Administrative staff meets bi-monthly for dissemination of information and problem solving. Field Staff meets bi-monthly, Career Center Consortium members come together quarterly as does the Youth Council and Workforce Board.

Lastly, all staff members of the Workforce Board develop a yearly personal learning plan. The plan contains learning/education/training goals for the year and is approved by the Workforce Board Executive Director during evaluations.

### **4.2b Management of Information Resources and Technology**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board employs a Director of Facilities and Computer Services to set up, monitor, repair, and update all technology for the Workforce Board and Career Centers throughout northwest Tennessee.

Computers are available in all Career Centers in northwest Tennessee in a "resource room or area" for clients. The number of computers is dependent on space and population. All computers have internet access for job search and the Microsoft package to allow for resume writing. The resource areas require customers to sign in so the usage of the computers can be monitored for sufficiency. In addition to electronic resources, the Career Centers maintain printed versions of all job orders placed by employers and other books, directories, flyers, brochures, etc.

The Workforce Board is proactive in making sure all services are available to all people including individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficient individuals. For example, the Workforce Board has purchased ZoomText software for the Comprehensive Career Center. The software enlarges all websites, forms, email, etc. for individuals with vision disabilities. An adjustable desk is also available for individuals

that utilize a wheelchair to have access to a computer. Critical documents are available in Spanish as the Hispanic population continues to grow in northwest Tennessee.

## **5: Workforce Focus**

### **5.1 Workforce Engagement**

#### **5.1a Workforce Enrichment**

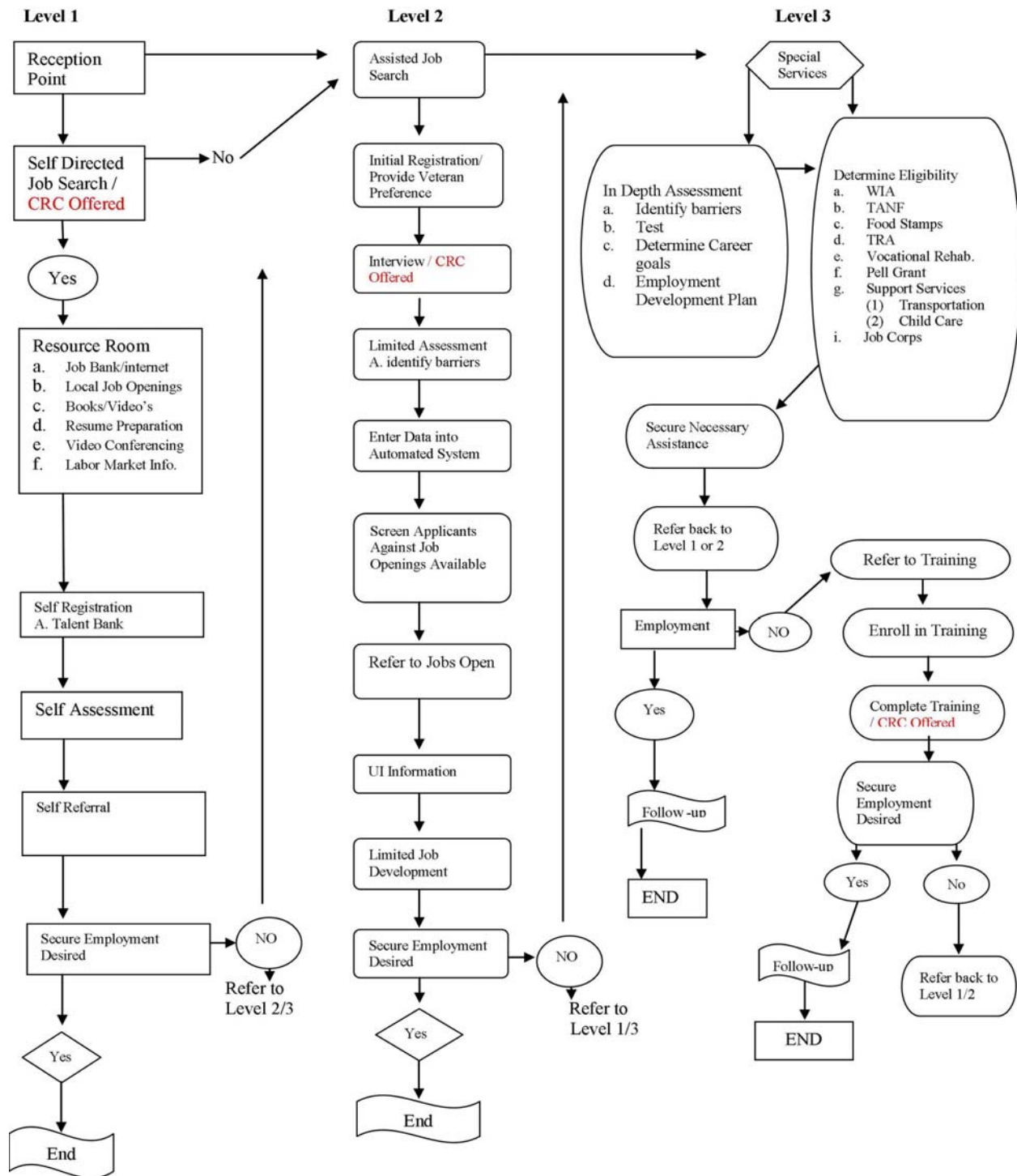
The Workforce Board and Career Center staff works toward the overall goal of improving the workforce regardless of individual positions and job duties. Management, from top down, creates a culture of hard work, teamwork, and dedication. The culture is a great motivator and is used as a motivator since monetary bonuses are not allowed by rule. Hence, money cannot be used to motivate staff members to achieve. That being the case, management looks to other effective motivators such as, cross-training, keeping the position challenging through the introduction of new tasks, and through recognition.

Another motivating factor is friendly competitions among field staff. For instance, challenging Career Advisors to have the highest

performing clients in their caseload. The majority of staff chooses to work for the publically funded Workforce Investment Act program for the internal rewards, the feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day, knowing that a difference was made; someone's life was affected for the better. These internal rewards are often more impactful than monetary gains in the social services field.

Effective communication and skill sharing is critical to the success of the Workforce Investment Act program. The Career Center System is a conglomeration of partner programs all providing specific services, but who also refer and assist many of the same clients to help those clients enter the workforce and earn a living wage. No one "program" or "partner" could achieve the goal alone. Partnership is absolutely necessary. Along with partnership comes communication and sharing of information. The Career Center has developed a flowchart that maps out the path of a client who enters the Career Center seeking services. See below:

**Figure 5.1-1 Career Center Flow Chart**



The flowchart visually displays how each program is interconnected and how each staff member must be knowledgeable about all the partner programs available within the Career Centers. Location is to real estate as communication is to Career Center.

To reinforce necessary communication and attainment of program-wide performance standards, each staff member is rated during an individual performance evaluation to be included in their personnel file. During the performance review, their management of their caseload is

reviewed for performance. Due to eCMATS and Discoverer, each staff member is tied directly to clients and their clients' performance. Clients' performance coupled with the monitoring of their files by the Performance Accountability Review team, and an internal monitor assist Career Advisors to review their success for the year with their supervisor.

### **5.1b Workforce and Leader Development**

Workforce and leadership development are strengths of the Workforce Board. Due to the nature of the workforce development field, the Board and management greatly encourage continuous, life-long learning for all staff.

All newly hired employees participate in new hire orientation which is a crash course covering the Workforce Investment Act, Career Center and all the partners and services, and the overarching goals of the Career Center System along with Workforce Investment Act Performance Standards for the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board. Very early in ones' career with the Workforce Board, the goals of the team are set in motion prior to individual, job-specific goals.

Educational opportunities become available to staff on day one, ranging from structured training programs to in-house sessions to college coursework. The majority of staff have completed Global Career Development Facilitator training and earned certification. A number of staff have participated in "Leadership" courses through various Chambers of Commerce and attend off-site training programs and in-house sessions at Fall and Spring Conferences held each year on campus. Each staff member's personal development will depend on the goals he/she has have submitted in his/her Personal Learning Plan. Although a Personal Learning Plan is not standard in many offices across the country, the Workforce Board understands the importance of maintaining an educated workforce and makes that clear through a culture of learning. The Board also offers fee waivers for staff to continue their education whether that is earning an Associate, Bachelor, or Master's degree.

As an example of the Board's commitment to learning, the Board sponsored a leadership / teamwork retreat for all staff and contractor staff to spend two days at a local state park and engage in leadership and teambuilding activities. It was a

time to learn from one another and to grow and foster relationships for the good of the program.

With the addition on new staff in 2010, the Tennessee Career Center staff in all areas participated in workshops designed with teambuilding and customer service as the top priority. It is essential for partner programs to rely on one another for success and fully understand each program and the goals of the program are essential to build trust and encourage teamwork. At the conclusion of the training session, each staff member was given a TN Career Center shirt to wear on Fridays. The shirt is symbolic of the cohesion within the Career Center. It is symbolic of all the various programs coming together under one roof and working in unison to provide the best, seamless delivery of services available to clients.

### **5.1c Assessment of Workforce Engagement**

The Workforce Board faces unique challenges in increasing workforce participation in activities and events due to staff located over an 11-county rural area. To counteract the geographic separation, management focuses on a "team" strategy in most areas of operation, including extracurricular activities.

One measure of workforce engagement that directly relates to performance management is the Career Advisors' ability to effectively manage their caseload. It is key that Career Advisors keep their clients engaged in the training process. The number of clients in the caseload along with the success of the clients in the caseload is considered when determining successful case management.

Another measurement of workforce engagement measures the training sessions attended vs. training sessions completed and/or resulting in a credential. Are staff members improving their knowledge and skill sets by attending training?

Although not a requirement of any position on staff, the Workforce Board encourages community involvement. The Workforce Board participates in Relay for Life and Walk Across Tennessee among other local community-specific events. The staff is encouraged to become engaged in their communities and volunteer for activities that impact their communities in a positive way. Career Advisors have been empowered and encouraged to attend events relating to workforce development in their areas. Career Advisors are

attending Chamber of Commerce events, Industrial Roundtables, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) meetings and Workforce Employer Outreach Committee (WEOC) meetings. The best way to inform the community is to be involved in community events and the Workforce Board staff is getting involved.

## **5.2 Workforce Environment**

### **5.2a Workforce Capability and Capacity**

During the last few program years, the Workforce Board has felt a lot of pressure from shrinking funds and less allocations followed with more requirements of staff, the *Do more with Less* theory. The Workforce Board operates with a very lean staff compared to competition.

Even with a lean staff, the capability of staff is exceptional with most staff members filling more than one role. Capacity is determined based on caseload and demand for services. Each of the 11 counties served by the Workforce Board sustains differing populations and demands vary from county to county based on economic factors. The Workforce Board opts to shift staff from one county to another to answer demand and increase capacity where needed. The increased demand during the recession has been too great to be absorbed by existing staff and additional staff have been hired to assist with the overflow.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board utilizes the Tennessee Board of Regents guidelines for hiring of new staff. The Board posts positions for two weeks to one month and assembles a search committee to review applications and conduct interviews. Many candidates for hire must participate in testing. The testing is objective and allows the search committee to see the candidates on an equal playing field and analyze results rather than subjective opinions. The Workforce Board follows affirmative action guidelines to ensure a diverse workforce.

Organizing the workforce to meet customer demand is imperative as alluded to earlier regarding matching staff to rising and falling capacity needs. Initially, Career Center locations were to be in only eight of the eleven counties the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board services. However, the Workforce Board is serving predominately low-income individuals who are without work and therefore, without income. The Board decided to open satellite offices in the three mostly rural counties whose populations could

not support a fully staffed Career Center. The three additional satellite centers have proven critical to the success of jobseekers in those counties. The satellite offices have a Workforce Investment Act Career Advisor on staff and a representative from the Families First program. All other partner services are provided through fax, conference call, email, or through referral when necessary.

The Workforce Board staff is very aware and prepared (as much as possible) for changing needs and funds. The Workforce Board has in place a Reduction in Force plan to address dismissal of staff as necessary in the event of declining demand or declining funds. The Board was forced to implement the plan during program year 2006. Funding was reduced drastically and cutting services to clients was not an acceptable option. The Workforce Board does not want to dislocate staff and tries to balance the need for staff with the possibility of a reduction in funds.

### **5.2b Workforce Climate**

Creating a healthy work environment is the fulfillment of a basic workplace need. The Workforce Board would not expect any employee to work efficiently or effectively in an environment that was unsafe or not conducive to a secure work environment.

A few safety and security measures currently in place include a building inspection, monitored security system, employee issued company cell phones, emergency drills, carbon monoxide detectors, under-mounted emergency desk alarm, and weather alarm/radio, among other items.

Additionally, the Workforce Board staff has Magellan Health Services available to provide counseling and help to staff struggling with issues in their personal or work life.

## **6: Process Management**

### **6.1 Work Systems Design**

#### **6.1a Work Systems Design**

Maintaining relationships and partnerships are the Core Competencies in which the Workforce Board staff are experts or areas that provide the Board with a competitive advantage. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board maintains relationships through the 11-county service area which brings a strategic advantage to the Board. These relationships include the Boards' individual relationships and ties to area industry and private

business community, Career Advisor relationships with their clients most of which can be tied to the Career Advisors community involvement, and the strength of the Youth Councils' relationships to the Youth in their respective counties and with the school systems in the area.

Staff knowledge of in-demand occupations and growth industries in the area proves to be a strength and assists in guiding individuals as they look to identify a career path. Expertise in eCMATS, Discoverer, WorkKeys, and KeyTrain is invaluable. This knowledge is the design of the Workforce Board's work systems. The Career Advisors are empowered through knowledge and training, allowing Career Advisors to make decisions, key information in the performance management database, and be directly responsible for performance ratings. And, most importantly, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board staff has a great understanding of the Workforce Investment Act and its regulations which enables the Board to run a clean and effective program throughout the service area.

Core competencies play a role in designing the work system which flows best in northwest Tennessee. Although Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services are available all across the State of Tennessee, each Workforce Board designs work systems differently to meet the unique needs of the area based on geography, the demand for various programs, and based on the talents of staff.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's work system is inherently dictated by the Board's interpretation of the Workforce Investment Act and has been molded to fit as needs have changed. The partners who are present in the Career Center System are dictated by the Workforce Investment Act and followed precisely. The flowchart of services can be viewed in Figure 5.1-1. The Workforce Investment Act also determines what services and tasks should be completed in-house by Workforce Board staff and which services should be contracted out to service providers.

For example, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board contracts with numerous training providers approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to provide training seekers with options. Training providers include community colleges, technology centers, universities, truck driving schools, and others. The Workforce Board

contracts with training providers because that is the most efficient way to provide training services to training seekers and it cuts down on the duplication of services.

The Workforce Investment Act also calls for Youth contracts to provide services to eligible low-income youth. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board issues a Request for Proposal each program year, receives proposals, reviews, and then awards competitive grants to youth service providers. Those services not provided by contractors are provided by community service organizations that have entered into a Letter of Agreement to be a referral partner.

In addition to prescribed work systems, the Workforce Board does design other systems not mandated by the Act. For example, the Career Readiness Certificate program launched in 2008 did not have a prescribed workflow. The Workforce Board elected to keep the critical reporting and data entry in-house to ensure accuracy and integrity of information and also for security of personal information. However, the Career Readiness Certificate assessment consumes approximately three hours of proctoring time. As indicated, staff is very lean and most fulfill multiple roles. Hence, the Board elected to hire proctors trained by Workforce Board staff to administer the assessment and free-up time for Board staff members. The decision was made based on least cost and greatest productivity. The odds are weighed and decisions are based on the evaluation of results.

### **6.1b Key Work Processes**

Key work processes add customer value and provide a competitive edge. From a customer point of view, the work process that adds value to Workforce Investment Act services is the Career Advisor and the process a client works through with their assigned Career Advisor. Career Advisors' work processes vary depending on the needs of the client, but for the most part the progression of processes remains the same: interview jobseeker/training seeker, register with Job Service, perform job search, take the Test for Adult Basic Education, sit for the National Career Readiness Certificate assessment and complete a career interest inventory, apply for financial aid, interview prospective training providers, complete application for eligibility, prepare an Individual Service Strategy, enroll in training,

follow up monthly, and provider referrals and support services as needed.

The above process / work flow is critical to the success of client and in the Workforce Board reaching performance standards. It is a value-added process and begins and maintains relationships between Workforce Board staff and the client served through the Workforce Investment Act program.

Similar work processes are completed for employers for Incumbent Worker Training Grants and On-the-Job Training Grants.

### **6.1c Emergency Readiness**

The majority of work processes could continue to flow during and after an emergency depending on the severity and how staff members are personally affected by the emergency. The largest concern for the Workforce Board in regards to an emergency situation and continuation of services is the integrity, security, and availability of client's personal information used to determine eligibility for receiving service through the Workforce Investment Act program. To ensure integrity, security and availability, the eCMATS data is backed-up on servers at the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development in Nashville, TN as well as kept in paper files at the local Career Centers or Administrative Office for the Workforce Board. If one system fails or is destroyed in an emergency situation, the other system is available to continue providing services to clients.

On the local level, the Workforce Board office and the Career Centers have evacuation plans in case of a fire or other emergency in which staff and clients are required to evacuate the building. Drills are performed to ensure all staff members know the routes and are prepared in the event of an actual emergency. All Workforce Board staff are equipped with a company-issued cell phone in which emergency information is issued via mass text-messaging in addition to a phone-tree system.

## **6.2 Work Processes**

### **6.2a Work Process Design**

The structure of Workforce Investment Act programs and systems is defined in the Workforce Investment Act as far as the Board and its composition, Grant Recipient and Administrative Entity, Youth Council, County Mayors, etc. However, the actual delivery of services and

program offerings do vary somewhat from one local area to the next. This is due to built-in flexibility to allow local leadership to mold programs to fit local economies and demands.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board fully believes in training and empowering employees and accountability for actions. Empowering front-line Career Advisors enables customers to move through the eligibility process quickly and smoothly without delay. The efficiency of the system allows the local area to serve more customers than it would be able to if the system was centralized with only administration offering approvals. Each Career Advisor is held liable for their decisions and performance standards for the clients they enroll. The empowerment and accountability gains buy-in on the employees (Career Advisor in this instance) part and has positively affected performance.

### **6.2b Work Process Management**

As stated in 6.1a, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board's work process is based solely on the requirement and goals of the Workforce Investment Act. The Board developed policies and procedures to answer the requirements of the Act. The Career Center flow chart displayed in Figure 5.1-1 is also a process developed to meet the parameters of the Act. However, adjustments are made to processes as Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGL) are issued from the US Department of Labor making changes to the Act and providing guidance on how to interpret the changes.

For example, Workforce Investment Act performance standards initially consisted of 17 core measures. The performance measures changed in TEGL 17-05 issued from the US Department of Labor. The TEGL provides new common measures and how to interpret and plan for the change. The Workforce Board opted to alter the current work process to better align with the new performance measures.

The Workforce Board may also make changes based on findings in audits or findings by an internal monitor. In order to stay abreast of the changing performance measures, the Board took a proactive approach through the employment of internal monitors. The monitors utilize the Discoverer technology to run reports and identify outliers or "red flags." The monitors also review case files for anything missing, out of place, or

incorrect. The internal monitoring enables the Board to stay ahead of the curve and make adjustments prior to a major mistake.

### 6.2c Work Process Improvement

The Workforce Board is proactive in improving workflow and work processes and is consistently seeking out best practices from across the State and Country. Workforce Board staff members attend the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development—Strategic Plan Presentations each spring in hopes of learning new best practices and benchmarks for excellence. The Workforce Board has also participated in a Mentor – Mentee relationship with an exceptional Workforce Board in Georgia. The Georgia Workforce Board provided insight and guidance resulting in best practices implemented locally. The Workforce Board and staff also attend the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) forum each year also seeking out best practices.

## 7: Results

### 7.1 Product Outcomes

#### 7.1a Product Results

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board’s success is measured by Performance Standards

developed by the US Department of Labor. These standards are then negotiated with each of the states, including Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development then negotiates with the thirteen Local Workforce Investment Areas across the State. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board represents the 11-county rural area that constitutes Local Workforce Investment Area 12.

Initially, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board was responsible for Core Measures which included 17 measures broken out by funding stream. For example, the Workforce Board receives grant funds for Adults, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. Thus, the Core Measures includes performance measures for Adults, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. In 2007, Common Measures or Common Performance Standards began to integrate into the system with Local Areas being held responsible for both sets of measures, Core and Common. From the 2008 program year forward, the Workforce Board along with the twelve other Local Areas will solely be responsible for Common Performance Standards. The Common Performance Standards for 2009-2010 are stated in Figure 7.1-1 below.

**Figure 7.1-1 Common Performance Standards**

(Common) Performance Standard	Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development	Local Workforce Investment Area 12
Adult		
Entered Employment	84.0%	84.0%
Employment Retention	84.0%	85.5%
Average Earning	\$12,800	\$12,800
Dislocated Worker		
Entered Employment	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Retention	90.0%	93.0%
Average Earning	\$13,300	\$13,300
Youth		
Placement	68.0%	68.0%
Attainment	69.0%	69.0%
Literacy/Numeracy	25.0%	25.0%

On a local level, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board restructured its Youth program to increase enrollment and total number served through the Workforce Investment Act programs. The redesign was also implemented to provide outreach to those youth most in need—GEDNext

program. See Figure 7.1-2 for Peer Tutoring Work Experience program report. See Figure 7.1-3 for the progress of the GEDNext program.

**Figure 7.1-2 Peer Tutoring Work Experience**

Measure	2006-07	5 yr. total
Peer Tutors	51	321
Students Tutored	553	5,776
Percentage Improved	80.5%	91.4%

**Figure 7.1-3 GEDNext**

Measure	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
GED Earned	2	32	49	156

**7.2 Customer-Focused Outcomes**

**7.2a Customer-Focused Results**

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board also follows performance standards for customer satisfaction broken down by customer group, participants/jobseekers and employers. The University of Memphis provides the customer satisfaction rating by providing an unbiased, objective survey to participants and employers who rate their satisfaction level. The levels reported by the University of Memphis are representative of overall satisfaction. The Workforce Board also employs a customer satisfaction survey, one for employers and one for Career Center customers. The local surveys are more specific to the services rendered and whether the customer received the services

he/she was seeking from the Career Center or Workforce Board.

**Figure 7.2-1 Customer Satisfaction**

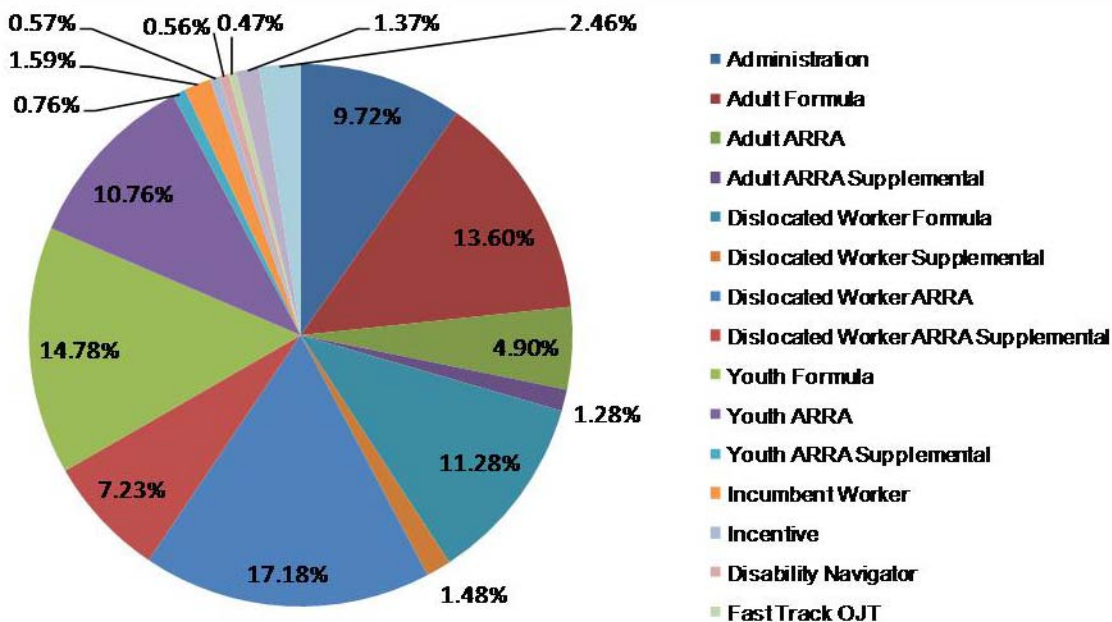
Performance Standard	Goal	Actual
Customer Satisfaction		
Participant/Jobseeker	81.0%	85.0%
Employers	80.0%	80.0%

**7.3 Financial and Market Outcomes**

**7.3a Financial and Market Results**

As a not-for-profit organization, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board focuses fiscal responsibility on how funds are spent rather than generated. In the most recent program year, 2009-2010, the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board only spent 9.72 percent of the WIA Grant budget expended on administration costs and 83.26 percent of the expended budget went directly to Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. An additional 3.43 percent was utilized to provide employer services. Overall, \$5,921,842.55 WIA funds were expended to serve 4,393 clients resulting in a cost of only \$1,348.02 per participant.

**Figure 7.3-1 Percent Expended Pie Chart**



As mentioned in 4.1a., the Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board examines comparative data from previous program years to forecast and project for the upcoming program years. The Board expects similar levels of demand for services and enables the fiscal staff to allocate by funding stream. Figure 7.3-2 displays exiters by program year.

**Figure 7.3-2 Exiters by Program Year**

Funding Stream	PY06	PY07	PY08	PY09
All Exiters	1582	1317	945	4078
Adult	1022	1022	623	3773
WIA Elig. Adult	345	310	296	274
IWT/OJT	677	712	208	2744
CRC	0	0	118	755
Youth	299	100	196	180
Dislocated Worker	261	195	126	125

## 7.4 Workforce-Focused Outcomes

### 7.4a Workforce Results

As noted in 5.1 Workforce Engagement, the Workforce Board staff is not motivated through bonuses or other means of monetary compensation beyond each employee’s salary due to working under the restrictions of the Tennessee Board of Regents in which additional monetary compensation is not permitted.

The Workforce Board sustains long-term employees as well as new hires. The culture is one of communication and starts at the top-down with the Executive Director maintaining an “open-door policy.”

The Human Resources Department completes an exit interview when an employee chooses to leave the organization. The interview is used to note any indicators as to why employees are dissatisfied or unhappy with the current state of the Workforce Board or the work environment. Any outliers are noted and corrected to enhance the work environment and increase employee retention.

Capacity and capabilities of the staff influence workforce engagement, satisfaction, and retention. Career Advisor’s caseloads are monitored regularly to ensure equal distribution.

Although it is impossible to keep a completely equal distribution, the Workforce Board projects and plans for future surges and shifts staff to cover and assist their coworkers in times of influx. For example, the Executive Director will receive notice of a plant closure well in advance of the public notice. At that time, the Executive Director will begin plans to shift staff resources to the area of greatest need. Influxes as a result of the National Career Readiness Certificate program are also addressed with the movement of staff. Staff members are happy to assist their coworkers in the time of need as they know the assistance will be reciprocated when necessary.

Discoverer reports are used to generate a caseload tracking report from eCMATS. Each Career Advisor maintains a unique location code which allows for easy tracking. The report shows how many participants are enrolled under each Career Advisor and in what category Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth.

A final factor, and most important to staff in regards to workplace satisfaction is providing a safe and healthy work environment. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has put in place a number of safety and security measures which include building inspection, security system, security cameras, company issued cell phones, practice drills, carbon monoxide detectors, and weather alarm/radio. The Board also offers a counseling service provider for employees to call for assistance with personal or work related issues. Staff is encouraged to voice concerns for future safety measures.

## 7.5 Process Effectiveness Outcomes

### 7.5a Process Effectiveness Results

The Workforce Board follows the description of services stated in the Workforce Investment Act. Accordingly, the Board has developed work systems to ensure that all participants are offered and receive the same services in the same flow. The generic work system for a participant seeking training services is: interview jobseeker/training seeker, register with Job Service, perform job search, take the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE), sit for the National Career Readiness Certificate Assessment and complete a career interest inventory, apply for financial aid, interview prospective training providers, complete application for eligibility, prepare an Individual Service Strategy, enroll in training,

follow up monthly, and provider referrals and support services as needed.

The most effective measure for effectiveness of work process is to look to performance standards. If participants are successful, the performance standards will reflect that with positive performance. Hence, the Workforce Board uses Common Performance Standards to determine if the current work processes are proving valuable. The Workforce Board also analyzes customer service reports for ways to improve.

## **7.6 Leadership Outcomes**

### **7.6a Leadership and Social Responsibility Results**

The development of the SWOT Analysis has been a guiding factor and much progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses and opportunities identified by the Career Center partners. The SWOT is also beneficial by identifying strengths that can be made stronger and identifying threats that can be addressed locally.

A long-term goal established by the Board is to diversify the Workforce Board available funds through the acquisition of grants other than Workforce Investment Act grants. The goal was established due to shrinking funds across the board and a last resort reduction in force caused by lack of funds. Since the establishment of the goal, the Workforce Board has secured \$317,000 through three awarded competitive grants. The first, the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Training Grant awarded by the US Department of Transportation totaled over \$234,000. Secondly, the Workforce Board was granted \$3,000 through the Community Enhancement Grant program by

the Tennessee Secretary of State. Lastly, the AT&T Aspire Grant of \$80,000 was received to enhance youth programming. The Workforce Board is also made it to the final round of competition for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Grant offered by the US Department of Labor. The Board learned valuable lessons from the process and is better equipped to apply for future opportunities.

As mentioned on numerous occasions, the Workforce Board performance is rated through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Core/Common Performance Standards. The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board has repeatedly met or exceeded negotiated performance standards and has never been under sanctions by the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

The Board has proven fiscal responsibility by succeeding in every Program Accountability Review (PAR) team audit/monitoring visit. The fiscal department has never had an accounting exception or finding reported for corrective action.

The Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board program has also been very successful in Program Accountability Review (PAR) team audits/data validation visits. Very few exceptions have been noted and each exception was followed-up with a corrective action plan. The Workforce Board has never received a discrimination complaint and very few program complaints have even been received.

