

EDUCATING THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW



OVERVIEW

In 2014, Governor Bill Haslam challenged Tennessee with a new goal – equip 55 percent of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025. By that time, more than half the jobs in the state will require a degree or certification beyond a high school diploma. Currently, only 39 percent of Tennesseans hold a postsecondary degree or credential. If Tennesseans were to achieve the Drive to 55, new degree holders stand to gain over \$9.3 billion in additional annual income. These earnings would generate approximately \$434 million more in state tax revenues and \$312 million in local revenues.

Yet a number of obstacles stand in the way of Tennessee’s economic and educational progress. Although nearly nine in ten students graduate from high school, only two in ten students meet college readiness benchmarks in all four subject areas measured by the ACT.

While the percentage of Tennessee students needing remediation in the first year of college has dropped 14.4 points since 2011, 62 percent of students still require some kind of remediation before taking on college-level coursework.

Tennessee has responded to these challenges with a number of policies, programs, and resources. This document, which provides ideas for Tennesseans to take action, is a companion to SCORE’s issue brief, *Educating the Workforce of Tomorrow: Postsecondary and Career Readiness in Tennessee*. It will take expanded work to ensure more students are prepared for postsecondary and career in Tennessee. There is perhaps no more important area of focus for Tennessee’s communities than educating the workforce of tomorrow.

Securing Tennessee’s future workforce begins today. Together, Tennessee’s regional and local leaders can seize opportunities to leverage available policies and programs to help our students—and Tennessee’s communities—achieve their full potential.

WHAT WE CAN DO

Regional And Local Leaders

- Chambers of commerce, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations play a major role in connecting business and education leaders to build paths from K-12 to college and career. Business and community organization leaders, particularly those focused on building the workforce, can use the Pathways Tennessee framework to convene local leaders, discuss needs and opportunities, and take action. Leaders can connect with the nearest regional Pathways Tennessee partner or the Tennessee Department of Education for resources and guidance.
- Mayors, county commissioners, and school board members can help build strong partnerships between businesses, postsecondary institutions, and K-12 schools. These local elected leaders can apply for Labor and Education Alignment Program (LEAP) grant funding for collaborative projects that address gaps in skills between the available workforce and employer needs.

Employers

- Employers can connect with their nearest regional Pathways Tennessee partner to receive guidance in offering internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to students in nearby high schools.
- Employers can connect with district and school leaders and career counselors to create opportunities for students to explore a broad range of career opportunities.
- Employers can raise awareness of high-demand industry certifications, and how high schools and postsecondary institutions can build paths to obtain these certifications.
- Employers can donate equipment—new or used—to high schools, community colleges, and Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) so students can engage in authentic learning experiences that prepare them for high-demand career areas
- Employers can collaborate with nearby TCATs, community colleges, or 4-year universities to better align programs of study with what professionals need to know in their field of business or industry.

Pathways Tennessee Regions And Partners

Grand Division	Pathways TN Region	Regional Partner	Point of Contact	Email
West	Greater Memphis	Workforce Investment Network	John Churchill	JChurchill@gmacw.com
	Southwest	SW Tennessee Development District	Jo Matherne	jmatherne@swtdd.org
	Northwest	University of Tennessee-Martin	Cynthia West	cwest@utm.edu
Middle*	Upper Cumberland	Highlands Economic Partnership	Lillian Hartgrove	lhartgrove@highlandsoftn.com
	Rutherford County	Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce	Beth Duffield	bduffield@rutherfordchamber.org
East	East	Blount Partnership-Chamber of Commerce	Tammi Ford	TFord@blountpartnership.com JBelitz@blountpartnership.com
	Northeast	First Tennessee Development District	Lottie Ryans	lryans@ftdd.org
	Southeast	Southeast Tennessee Pathways	Annie White	awhite@setnpathways.com

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*Northern Middle and Southern Middle Pathways TN Regional Partnerships are under development.

K-12 Education Leaders

- District and school leaders can explore partnerships with business and industry to promote meaningful student learning. Employers can offer a host of real-world projects that, through innovative K-12 teaching, can bring to life learning opportunities tied to Tennessee's rigorous education standards.
- School leaders, teachers, and counselors can intensify efforts to ensure students are aware of early postsecondary opportunities, including dual credit and dual enrollment.
- School leaders can develop partnerships with TCATs, community colleges, and 4-year universities to broaden available early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs).
- District and school leaders can provide externship opportunities to teachers who are eager to refresh their teaching content by sourcing real-world employer challenges and solutions.

Higher Education Leaders

- Community colleges, TCATs, and 4-year colleges and universities play a crucial role in providing high school students EPSOs. Tennessee has become a leader among states for its innovative policies that lower financial barriers to 2- or 4-year colleges. Now is the moment for colleges and K-12 to partner to deliver rigorous high school learning programs linked to high-demand careers.
- Postsecondary leaders, academic department chairs, and educators can connect with local and regional employers to align their programs of post-secondary study more closely with industry standards and workforce needs.