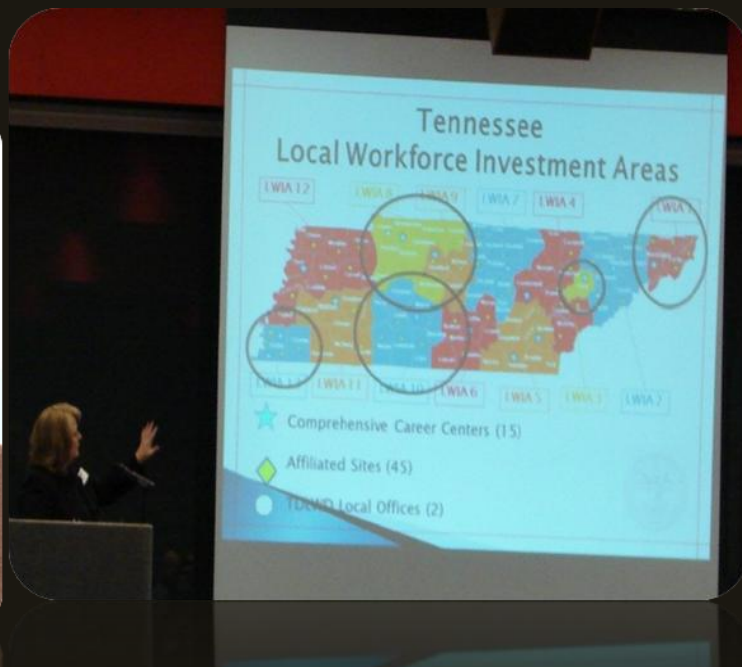


Tennessee: The Power of Partnership

Highlights from the December 2011 Meeting of the Tennessee Employment Consortium



Jim Henry, Commissioner of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), outlines how DIDD will coordinate with the Disability Employment Initiative. Susie Bourque, Assistant Administrator of Employment and Workforce Development at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, provides an overview of the new \$2.9 million grant. Cherrell Campbell-Street, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), speaks about the Division's role in this statewide collaboration.

On December 14, people from across Tennessee gathered at the Northfield Workforce Development & Conference Center to learn about the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), the new three year grant of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). Hosted by the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance at Northfield, a center that attests to the results of innovative alliances between the private and public sectors, the day highlighted the strength and potential of Tennessee's partnerships.

Susie Bourque, TDLWD's Assistant Administrator of Employment and Workforce Development, educated the audience about the grant's goals and objectives. Presentations from DIDD Commissioner Henry and DRS Assistant Commissioner Campbell-Street provided insight into how both agencies will coordinate efforts with the project. Three of the five Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) that will receive DEI funding shared their perspectives on this new opportunity to bridge the gap between people with disabilities and employment.

Advocates, workforce experts and providers showcased best practices and real-world solutions. Presentations ranged the gamut from Benefits to Work to coordinating employment resources to braided/blended funding strategies. The message of the day was clear, "Together, let's get Tennessee to work!"

A Call to Action

DIDD Commissioner Jim Henry challenged all DIDD Day Service providers to attain a 20% employment rate among the people they support through DIDD waiver-funded Day Services by fall 2012.

As an example of the potential of DEI, he spoke about Sam*, a young man supported by DIDD, who is interested in a career in auto mechanics. Sam, Impact, his DIDD Day Service provider, and the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance (LWIA 10) are working together to arrange a tour of Northfield's automotive training program.

Through the Ticket to Work, DEI also has the potential to create employment options for people while they are on the DIDD Waiting List.

* Not his real name

** See page 6 for a picture of Northfield's automotive training program.



Let's be so successful that Washington and the other 49 states consider all of us from Career Centers to DIDD providers to Vocational Rehabilitation, a source of technical assistance.

~ Commissioner Jim Henry

Learning About Tennessee's \$2.9 Million



Disability Employment Initiative

Susie Bourque, Assistant Administrator of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, outlined the six key objectives for each of the five participating Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs):

- ▶ Recruit or designate a staff member to act as a Disability Resource Coordinator
- ▶ Participate or apply for enrollment as an Employment Network (Ticket to Work)
- ▶ Establish an Integrated Resource Team
- ▶ Develop an aggressive Customized Employment effort
- ▶ Develop and maintain asset development strategies
- ▶ Develop strategies to enhance and strengthen partnerships and collaborations

Fast Fact:

Tennessee has 13 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs). There was immense interest in the DEI from LWIAs across Tennessee. However, the DEI's funder, the U.S. Department of Labor, restricted the funding to only five of Tennessee's LWIA's. The funded LWIAs are: 1, 3, 8, 10 and 13. The selection was made by lottery.



Tennessee was only one of seven states to be awarded a Disability Employment Initiative Grant in 2011.

Outcomes of DEI

1. Increase service to adults with disabilities in the participating LWIAs by 25%.
2. Increase the number of participants with disabilities placed in employment by 20%.
3. Increase the number of participants with disabilities retained in employment by 10%.
4. Increase the 6 month earnings of participants with disabilities to approximately 97% of the earnings achieved by the LWIA adult population.

Meet the LWIA Executive Directors

On December 14, we were extremely fortunate that LWIAs 8, 10 and 13 were able to join us to share their expertise.



Desi Franklin

**Workforce Investment Network,
LWIA 13**

Counties Served: Fayette & Shelby

www.maccwins.com/services.htm



Jan McKeel

**South Central Tennessee
Workforce Alliance, LWIA 10**

**Counties Served: Giles,
Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis,
Marshall, Maury, Perry &
Wayne**

www.sctworkforce.org



Marla Rye

Workforce Essentials, LWIA 8

**Counties Served: Cheatham,
Dickson, Houston, Humphreys,
Montgomery Robertson,
Stewart, Sumner & Williamson**

www.workforceessentials.com

LWIA 1 and LWIA 3 will also receive funding through DEI.

Kathy Pierce

Alliance for Business & Training, LWIA 1

Counties Served: Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Washington & Unicoi

www.ab-t.org

Vaughn Smith

Workforce Connections, LWIA 3

County Served: Knox

www.knoxcac.org

The Resources of Tennessee's Workforce System: A Tour of the Northfield Workforce Development & Conference Center



Our hosts, The South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance (LWIA 10), provided a tour of their Northfield Workforce Development & Conference Center. Earlier in the morning, Jan McKeel, Executive Director of LWIA 10, gave details of the past, present and future of Northfield. Through local and state partnerships, LWIA 10 purchased this part of the Spring Hill General Motor's plant. Saturn's former showroom now welcomes LWIA 10's visitors to a host of conference facilities, workforce training programs and businesses. Currently home to more than a dozen training programs, Northfield also houses TRG's customer service center. Jan and her team aren't done yet – not by a long shot.

As part of the GM Plant, Northfield will see an additional 650 workers added in 2012 to work on a new GM vehicle.

Northfield is just one example of the powerful partnerships between Tennessee's LWIAs and their business communities.