Workforce Connections

ANNUAL REPORT
2012-2013

... promoting individual self-sufficiency and fostering community economic growth through local workforce development

CAC
Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee
January 8, 2014

Dear Workforce Board Members:

I am once again pleased to present you with our annual report. This has been an interesting year and much has been accomplished.

I want to thank each of you for attending our meetings, conducting deliberations on some difficult issues, serving on committees, and performing other services for us during the year. Your leadership is an integral part of our success and critically necessary for us to accomplish our goals.

Many of us have served on this board for quite some time. During the next year, some new members will be appointed who will bring fresh ideas and new approaches to our work. I look forward to working with them in the future. We have several members who, after serving us well, are no longer able to continue. I thank them for their service and wish them well in future endeavors.

We are blessed with a terrific staff that is dedicated to the organization and, more importantly, the participants they serve. You will note several references in the report to the services provided by our youth program staff and those in our Career Center.

Enjoy reading the report.

Sincerely,

Tom Jensen, Chairperson

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January 8, 2014

Dear Workforce Board Members:

Thank you for your time, leadership, and expertise for the year. This annual report defines what we accomplished and it would not have been possible without you. Please enjoy reading it.

Despite budgetary concerns along with the mental and physical stress of moving from the University Avenue Career Center to nearby remodeled facilities on Middlebrook, our staff performed admirably this year. They persevered to serve participants in the face of economic uncertainty as the federal budget consisted of a number of continuing resolutions that was not finalized until late in the fiscal year.

We served fewer new participants this year due to budget considerations. To make ends meet, it was necessary to stop new enrollments during the first quarter. You will remember our discussions regarding this issue. In addition, we made a significant effort to increase our carryover funds; that seems to be the prudent solution to another anticipated problem in the first quarter of next year.

I have enjoyed serving you this year and watching our staff assist the participants to achieve their education and training outcomes and gain employment. We will keep up the effort.

Sincerely,

Vaughn Smith, Director
Workforce Connections (WFC), a division of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC), provides workforce development services to the citizens and businesses of Knox County. WFC is accountable to and works in conjunction with the local workforce investment board to administer varied state and federally funded programs. WFC ensures that these employment related resources effectively meet the needs of residents in Local Workforce Investment Area Three (Knox County).

During 2012-2013, Workforce Connections:

* **Connected people with jobs-**
  * Provided job search assistance in more than 26,565 customer visits
  * Assisted 562 people in earning Career Readiness Certificates

* **Prepared people for jobs-**
  * Provided training services to almost 140 unemployed adults and dislocated workers, enabling them to gain new job skills and improve their employability
  * Helped 52 youth attain a diploma or GED

* **Helped individuals improve their standard of living-**
  * In-school youth had opportunities to earn $1800 through part-time summer work experiences. In addition, in-school youth earned over $22,000 in incentives for improving grades, upgrading basic reading and math skills, graduation and follow-up
  * Older youth program completers saw their annual wages increase by an average of $21,184
  * Adults and Dislocated Workers completing training programs will collectively earn more than $7,900,000 in their first year after program completion

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Benedicta Owusu-Ansah came to Knoxville from Ghana, Africa in 2007. Always interested in healthcare, she enrolled in the LPN program in 2012 and successfully completed it a year later. Shortly after becoming licensed, she obtained a full-time LPN position in Knoxville and is now planning for her RN degree.

January 2014

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Benedicta Owusu-Ansah came to Knoxville from Ghana, Africa in 2007. Always interested in healthcare, she enrolled in the LPN program in 2012 and successfully completed it a year later. Shortly after becoming licensed, she obtained a full-time LPN position in Knoxville and is now planning for her RN degree.
Funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and coordinated with several partners, the Career Center provides career development services to individuals and business services to the employer community. Anyone may access the core services offered at the Career Center. Individuals needing additional assistance may qualify for more intensive services and/or skill training made available through Career Center partners. The Tennessee Career Center is part of the American Job Center network.

The Resource Room at the Career Center continues to serve as a critical service delivery point for job seekers. Customers received assistance with job search, resume development, labor market information, career counseling, and other career development services during more than 26,565 visits.

In 2012-2013, the Career Center enrolled 234 participants in a variety of intensive job search and employment activities. Numbers alone cannot truly reflect the successes of the program and the enormous impact made on families, households, neighborhoods and communities.

“I want to thank you so much for helping me with my resume. You always have a great amount of information that is very valuable. So again, Thanks.”

“Thank you for all of the wonderful advice and helpful resources!”
Anita is a single mother of one. She has worked as a sitter and a housekeeper, but her dream was to drive a truck. Her brother, a truck driver himself, encouraged her to pursue her dream. Anita turned to the Career Center for help in achieving this goal and began attending truck driving school. Things turned worse financially as Anita had to give up her apartment and move her daughter out of state to live with her mother. The truck driving school challenged her too, but Anita’s instructors believed in her ability and hung in there with her. While it took Anita longer to finish school, she did master the big rig and is now an employed full-time truck driver, enjoying every minute of it.

**On-the-Job and Incumbent Worker Training**

Workforce Connections works with local employers to provide specific on-the-job training to new employees or specialized training for incumbent workers who may need certain skills to complete their jobs. This training is a win-win for both employee and employer by upgrading job skills and preventing layoffs.

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**March 2014**

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“Strong lives are motivated by dynamic purposes” - Kenneth Hildebrand
The **Adult Program**, under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, is designed to assist eligible individuals in finding and qualifying for meaningful employment. WIA services also help employers find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in business.

Donna was the little girl who put band aids all over her teddy bear. In high school she studied Health Occupations and knew she found her place in life in nursing. While that desire remained strong, the means of achieving it seemed beyond reach as she worked one low paying job after the other. Inspired by their Tennessee mountain vacations, her family moved to Maryville from Oklahoma and Donna joined them just as the economy soured. One day, while looking for a job, she drove by Maryville College and decided she had waited long enough—now was the time to work toward her nursing degree. Enrolled as a WIA Adult, she began at Pellissippi State Community College as a non-traditional student and was accepted into their RN program. Now she is fulfilling her dream as a full-time RN at Fort Sanders Regional where she has been asked to help with a research project.

Without the help and support of WIA, Donna says she wouldn’t have achieved her dream. Her WIA case manager was her biggest cheerleader in the times of discouragement and fatigue. She is finally getting on her feet financially with a job she loves.  

**“Thanks for all you do. You are such a blessing.”**
An unexpected job loss can be very stressful and unpleasant. The WIA Dislocated Worker Program provides quality services to employers and employees alike. Comprehensive services to assist permanently laid-off employees include job search and placement assistance, labor market and occupation information, testing and assessment, resume preparation, interviewing skills, and skills training if needed.

During 2012-2013, LWIA 3 Dislocated Worker program served hundreds of dislocated workers in job search activities in the Career Center Resource Room. Limited funding restricted the level of retraining services LWIA 3 could provide to Dislocated workers. However, the addition of $90,000 provided by TDLWD Rapid Response funds allowed LWIA 3 to provide needed services, particularly for individuals dislocated during significant closures with RockTenn, Hostess, and Sea Ray Boats. These dislocated workers (and others) used Career Center workshops, Career Readiness Certificate testing, and Resource Room materials extensively. The additional funding allowed LWIA 3 to assist 57 impacted participants with a variety of occupational skills training while working in partnership with Trade Act Programs. Recruiting events were developed and delivered on site to assist laid off employees locate potential new opportunities. The Dislocated Worker program allowed Knoxville’s Tennessee Career Center to give support and services necessary to allow our participants to achieve their goal of re-entering the workforce.

“Knowing is not enough: we must apply. Willing is not enough: we must do.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A dislocated worker, Brandon successfully interviewed with the Maynardville Police Department, but was told he needed to complete the Police Academy Program in order to be offered employment. With WIA assistance, Brandon began attending the Police Academy Program at Walters State Community College. He successfully completed the program, received his certification, and is now a full-time police officer!

Program Impact
2012-2013 dislocated workers completing WFC programs are expected to collectively earn more than $4 million annually!

May 2014
The Youth Program and its partners offer services for in-school and out-of-school youth between the ages of 14—21. These services prepare economically disadvantaged youth for the workforce by helping them improve their basic skills, gain work experience, obtain post-secondary education, and secure employment. Services also include activities to promote leadership and develop citizenship skills.

PROGRAM IMPACT

- In-school youth participants earned $22,000+ in incentive payments for improved grades, passing Gateway exams, graduation, and follow-up.
- 23 of 25 seniors participating in the in-school program successfully graduated from high school in spring 2013.
- 92% (22/23) of the graduating seniors went on to post-secondary programs or obtained jobs.

“I think the Workforce Connections Youth Program provides a positive direction for the youth to strive towards” - Employer for the summer work experience program.

Individual Impact

Older youth participants increased their annual income by an average of $21,184!

June 2014

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“The best things about the WFC Youth Program is the opportunity to give young people work experience and the ability to invest their time wisely and be compensated for it.”

Tunisha entered the youth program as a junior at Austin-East Magnet High School. She had good grades in school but lacked leadership skills and confidence; she was extremely shy and quiet. During the summer of 2012, WFC offered a summer work experience at the Beck Cultural Center where she worked as an archive specialist. She had to maintain the archives which she did exceptionally well, but she also had to interact with and assist customers. This helped bring Tunisha out of her shell and start believing in herself. To further her leadership development, she was nominated to participate on the WFC Youth Educational Advisory Team where she became an active and vocal member of the group helping to make decisions regarding the program. A year after her Beck Cultural Center work experience, she became a permanent staff member. With the help of the WFC youth program, Tunisha has truly grown personally and professionally, demonstrating good communication skills and a strong work ethic. She graduated with honors and is now attending The University of Tennessee Knoxville where she has a full scholarship. There is no doubt she will go on to do great things in her life and career.

“The tassel is worth the hassle” - Author unknown
Workforce Connections collaborates or partners with numerous area organizations to foster employment and economic development in East Tennessee. Our focus is to help individuals—many facing employment challenges such as disability or lack of a high school diploma—gain new skills and find meaningful employment. Agency partnerships contribute greatly to this effort.

**Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)**

The Disability Employment Initiative is a collaborative effort between the United States Department of Labor’s (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). This collaboration has the primary objectives of improving coordination and cooperation among employment and training and asset development programs carried out at a state and local level, including the Ticket to Work program. LWIA 3 is one of 5 local areas in Tennessee currently implementing the DEI program.

LWIA 3 has built effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. The Tennessee Career Center in Knoxville has been certified as an Employment Network with the Social Security Administration—able to take Tickets to Work from SSI and SSDI recipients and has a Disability Resource Coordinator supported through the DEI. The Career Center has partnered with:

- Local mental health providers for conducting career assessments
- Local disability service providers for referrals and job coaching services
- The Diversity Champions Taskforce of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and the Knoxville Area Employment Consortium to initiate the Walgreens Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative
- Vocational Rehabilitation for providing Customized Employment services
- The East TN Technology Access Center for the Career Center staff training and technology upgrades.

In the past year, the Tennessee Career Center in Knoxville has helped over 50 self-identified persons with disabilities with job search and training and assigned 20 Tickets To Work of which nine are now currently employed. These efforts increased the percentage of total population of people with disabilities served by the Career Center to more than 10%.

During 2012-2013, Workforce Connections maintained its partnership with Pellissippi State Community College to operate the Ross Learning Center. CAC and Workforce Connections provided space and phone support for RLC while PSCC provided instructors to deliver adult education classes.

**RLC Success Equation**

Partnerships + Creativity = Opportunities for the Community
Workforce Connections establishes and maintains many relationships with employers, the Chamber of Commerce, and other economic development agencies—all important to support existing industry and new job opportunities in the community.

Employer Partnerships provided job options and useful info through On the Job Training & CRC Referral Programs:

Aerotek ... Allied Barton ... Comfort Keepers ... Covenant Health ... Elavon ... Express Pro ... Fulton Bellows...Green Mountain Coffee Roasters ... Key Safety Systems...Knoxville News Sentinel ... ORAU... Reilly Foods ... 21st Mortgage ... Many Others . .

*Incumbent Worker Training* funds helped employers keep their employees up to date on new skills at the Senior Citizens Home Assistance Services

The Knoxville Seamless Transition Project is a partnership created by the Career Center, the Cerebral Palsy Center and Knox County Schools to help youth with significant disabilities transition out of high school into successful employment. The project, in its 9th year, has a **86% placement rate compared to a 20% national placement rate** for students with significant disabilities.
Workforce Connections administers a variety of services for many people each program year. Most important in this process of service delivery is outcome—for both the individuals and the community at large. Career Center resources help laid-off workers return to work, individuals gain new skills and increase hourly wages, and underemployed individuals find full-time employment. Youth services improve education outcomes and workforce readiness. Partner programs like adult education & disability employment services improve learning, life-skills, and earnings capacity. These outcomes all improve the lives of individuals served, but also contribute to the economic well-being of the community.

Malcolm was a Resource Room user who needed help composing his resume. After assisting him and hearing his story, Becky, one of the career specialists at the Career Center, enrolled him in WIA for job search assistance. With her help, he developed his “best resume ever” and got two different employment offers. As he was telling Becky about going to work for a national pizza chain in their management training program, he revealed he had a disability.

Becky teamed up with Judy, the Disability Resource Coordinator, to enroll Malcolm in the Ticket to Work program. Together Becky and Judy worked with Malcolm to complete an individual plan and furnish Malcolm with resources to get him started on his new work path.

The support Malcolm received meant everything to him. After dealing with difficult life challenges, he met someone who believed in him and his ability to be successful at work. It all began with a simple request for help with a resume. Providing monetary assistance with clothes and fuel allowed him to build some assets out of his initial paychecks and permitted him to build confidence in his future.

“Before I came to the [resume] workshop, I was discouraged and thought I had no chance of getting another job. After the instructor finished, I felt I was worth something again.”

Due to circumstances beyond her control, Amber was left jobless and homeless. A friend noticed her computer talents and encouraged her to use and develop them. With WIA funding and motivation from her Career Specialist, Amber is well on her way to becoming a Network Specialist.

Amber’s motto is “I am going to make it. No turning back!” Amber doesn’t have time for self-pity. She has an infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy to reach her goals. According to her teacher at TCAT, Amber has not lost one ounce of joy at being given the chance for an amazing career.
Under the umbrella of CAC and working in conjunction with Knox County, Workforce Connections prides itself on good stewardship and strong fiscal accountability of public and philanthropic dollars. Workforce Connections expended $2.4 million on a broad range of services during 2012—2013. However, adult & dislocated worker program completers for that program year will collectively earn more than three times that amount ($7.9 million) in wages in their first year after program exit.

EXPENDITURES 2012—2013 $2,478,243.39

- **WIA - Formula Funds** - 88.8%
- **WIA - Business & Specialized Services** - 3.7%
- **Disability Employment Initiatives** - 5.2%
- **CDF & Regional Training Projects** - 2%
- **CAC Local - County Administration** - .3%

While Workforce Investment Act funds comprise the majority of resources administered by Workforce Connections, multiple stakeholders contribute to the operation of a broad range of employment-related programs and services. 2012-13 funding partners included:

- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Roane State Community College
- Workforce Essentials
- Walters State Community College
- Southwest HRA
- Workforce Investment Network

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

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<td>WIA—Business &amp; Specialized Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Employment Initiatives</td>
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<td>CDF &amp; Regional Training Projects</td>
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<td>CAC Local—County Administration</td>
<td>$21,489.53</td>
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<td>$2,478,243.39</td>
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Workforce Connections programs and funders have varying ways of determining if performance is satisfactory. WIA performance measures are a significant benchmark used each year to determine if WIA funded programs are successful. These indicators also determine whether LWIA 3 may receive incentive funding to provide additional services in the area.

**WIA Performance Measures include the following:**

- **Adults Entered Employment Rate** — The percentage of adults who were employed during the first quarter following their exit from the program
- **Adults Employment Retention Rate** — The percentage of adults who continued to be employed for 2 additional quarters (9 months total) after program exit
- **Adult Earnings** — The average earnings for six months for adult program exiters
- **Dislocated Workers Entered Employment Rate** — The percentage of dislocated workers who were employed during the first quarter following their exit from the program
- **Dislocated Workers Employment Retention Rate** — The percentage of dislocated workers who continued to be employed for 2 additional quarters (9 months total) after program exit
- **Dislocated Worker Earnings** — The average earnings for six months for dislocated worker program exiters
- **Youth Placement Rate** — The percentage of youth who are working or enrolled in post-secondary education in the quarter following their program exit
- **Youth Attainment Rate** — The percentage of youth who achieve a degree or certificate as a result of program participation (high school diploma, GED, or recognized educational credential)
- **Literacy and Numeracy Gains** — The percentage of youth identified as basic skills deficient who demonstrate grade level increases in reading and/or math

In other words—how are we doing?

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# Program Year 2012 WIA Performance*

## Entered Employment Rate

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<th>LWIA 3 Outcomes</th>
<th>LWIA 3 Goal</th>
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<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
<td>88.70%</td>
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<td>91.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>87.06%</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
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## Employment Retention Rate

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<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
<td>87.67%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
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<td>91.4%</td>
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## Earnings

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<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
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<td>Adult</td>
<td>$13,192</td>
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## Youth

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<td>Literacy and Numeracy Gains</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
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<td>Attainment of Degree or Certificate</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
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<td>Placement in Employment or Education</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>83.82%</td>
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*Performance Measure information is estimated based on most recently available data. Final standards for the period have not yet been published by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Thanks to the staff who provide quality services each day to the Knoxville-Knox County community and ensure that Workforce Connections meets ongoing performance goals.

- Ray Abbas, Career Center Services Manager
- Mashona Blair, Career Center Receptionist
- Cheryl Burke, Finance & Admin Coordinator
- Jackie Coward, Career Specialist
- Marc Green, Youth Career Specialist
- Connie Harrison, Career Specialist
- Rebecca Herndon, Career Specialist
- Marc Green, Youth Career Specialist
- Hannah Kincaid, Career Specialist
- Kristi Lilly, Disability Resource Specialist
- Tonja Martin, Career Specialist
- Judy Pate, Disability Resource Coordinator
- Stephanie Potter, Youth Program Manager
- Beth Sanderbeck, MIS Specialist
- Sandra Smith, CRC Coordinator
- Sharon Smith, Admin Officer
- Vaughn Smith, Director
- Claudia Tate, Career Specialist
- Windie Wilson, Assistant Director
- Courtney Woolard, Intake & Program Specialist
- Michelle Hinchey, Program Specialist
- Cedric Jackson, Youth Career Specialist
- Stephanie Potter, Youth Program Manager
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Local Workforce Investment Area 3

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Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities