

1a. Executive Summary

The *Tennessee Technology Workforce Alliance* is a statewide alliance of over 72 employers, state agencies, local governments, workforce development agencies, service providers, advocacy organizations, trainees, and service recipients—all committed to meeting the needs of employers and job seekers through technology training leading to placement in high quality jobs in the information technology industry. The Alliance has come together to expand an existing partnership into a statewide sectoral partnership.

The Alliance’s particular emphasis is on improving access to technology-focused training and employment opportunities in rural areas and for traditionally underrepresented populations, including justice-impacted individuals, individuals and families living in poverty, disconnected youth, and youth aging out of the foster care system. The Alliance will train a minimum of 1,763 individuals, placing them in good jobs in eight high demand occupations in the technology field. The Alliance’s collaboratively-developed system includes: 1) A training model that includes both skills training and multiple work-and-learn models (registered apprenticeships and on-the-job training) leading to industry- and employer-recognized skills certifications; 2) Training for employers and service providers; 3) Recruitment, enrollment, and retention strategies designed for the target populations; and 4) Expansion of the Alliance throughout the state.

Built on a successful training partnership already in place in four correctional facilities and two community-based settings in West and Middle Tennessee, the Alliance will provide services statewide in three Career Success Centers, six satellite centers in rural counties (including distressed, at risk, and Persistent Poverty counties), six correctional facilities, and three reentry transitional housing programs.

1b. Backbone Organization

Persevere, a nationwide 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the Backbone Organization for the Tennessee Technology Workforce Alliance (“the Alliance”). Unique among employment training and workforce development organizations, Persevere started with a single employer who began helping justice-involved individuals one at a time, providing training, support and a job with his software company. With a criminal record of his own, he recognized the advantage of having skills of value to the technology industry, while many other justice-involved people lacked those skills and had trouble finding jobs of any kind.

Soon, he realized that he could reach many more people through a nonprofit organization and a network of correctional organizations, employers, and service providers than he could working with one man at a time. Persevere now serves hundreds of justice-involved and at-risk individuals across four states (Tennessee, Arizona, South Carolina, Georgia), with two more states joining in the coming months.

For the last 7 years, Persevere has been building partnerships across the state of Tennessee to provide technology training leading to certification, career readiness training, and job placement in the tech industry for justice-involved individuals, individuals at-risk for justice involvement, and low-income families. To date, these include 5 state agencies, 4 state legislators,

representatives of 21 city and county governments, 15 employer leaders, 3 workforce development partners, 14 supportive service providers, 2 advocacy organizations, 5 business and professional associations, and 2 institutions of higher education. With the addition of service recipients (adults and youth), these partnerships evolved into the Technology Training Workforce Alliance. Please refer to page 15 for a full listing of current Alliance members.

Persevere's credibility with key industry leaders is demonstrated by 1) the position of a technology company CEO as the President of Persevere's Board of Directors; 2) the willingness of employers in the technology industry, such as EPIC Games, Banyan Labs, and Vant4ge to play key roles in curriculum development, Work-and-Learn options (i.e., on-the-job training - OJT), and program design, as well as employing Persevere graduates; 3) the participation of large employers in the recruiting industry (Indeed.com, honestjobs.com) who deliver services through a technological medium to provide OJT, directly hire graduates, assist with job placement, and provide a resource for an IT Recruiting career option; 4) Persevere's hiring rate for program graduates (95%); and 5) the presence of employers on the Alliance leadership team.

It is Persevere's mission to address the workforce issues of the technology industry, particularly regarding access for justice-involved and other disadvantaged populations, making it the focus of effort for all staff. In Tennessee, that includes a full time Senior Director of Growth & Development, a Program Manager, course instructors, and a cadre of full time Technology Employee Specialists (approximately one per every 35 participants) whose sole focus is establishing relationships with employers and assisting with job placement.

Persevere has a diverse funding portfolio and two resource development staff positions. Funding sources include government grants (DOJ and DOL), corporate giving (Walmart and Epic Games, among others), state contracts (Depts of Corrections), and private donations.

2a. Employer Leadership and Commitments

Alliance members have relationships with employers of all sizes at the local, regional, and national levels. Many of them participated in the development of the Alliance's program (including recruitment/enrollment plans, training curriculum, etc.) through participation in a recent employer survey, completion of STEEP and WOT analyses, attendance at employer and/or leadership team meetings, and through individual conversations with Alliance representatives. Several participate on the Alliance leadership team with initial documented commitments to hire 461 program graduates and provide OJT for 200 more per year.

All leadership team members provide input into program design and will contribute their guidance to implementation and evaluation efforts. The following is a summary of the nature of additional contributions from our key employer leaders.

Vant4ge is a software company providing risk needs assessment, client relationship management, case and provider services management software for corrections and related agencies. Vant4ge's CEO is the founder of Persevere and serves as President of Persevere's Board of Directors. *Contributions* - Commitment to hire 50 graduates per year; Direct

involvement with curriculum design, recruitment and enrollment policies, data collection, and evaluation; Access to Vant4gePoint software for data and services tracking.

Banyan Labs is a software development company that has provided OJT opportunities for all Persevere graduates thus far. *Contributions:* Commitment to hire 50 graduates per year (and continued OJT); Mentoring for graduates as they start new jobs; Input into career preparation curriculum and activities; Assistance with data collection and evaluation.

Epic Games is a leading interactive entertainment company and provider of 3D engine technology. Epic operates Fortnite, one of the world’s largest games, and is the developer of the Unreal Engine, which powers the world’s leading games and is also adopted across industries such as film and television, architecture, automotive, manufacturing, and simulation. *Contributions:* Curriculum and instructor training for the Alliance’s Game Development training pathway; Commitment to hire Alliance graduates.

ProTech is a technical talent acquisition recruiting and professional services firm that directly hires and facilitates placement of tech workers across industries. *Contributions:* Commitment to hire at least 10 graduates; Assistance with curriculum and support for the Alliance’s IT Recruiting course; Open to apprenticeships.

TechOne is a leading IT Consulting company helping companies like Roche, Kaiser, Intel, and Cisco address their IT challenges. *Contribution:* Commitment to hire 20 graduates.

Vaco is a nationwide talent recruitment firm with specialties in technology, finance, and operations. *Contributions:* Input on the Alliances IT Recruitment course; Commitment to hire 10 graduates; Assistance with job placement.

Indeed is the number one job site in the world and one of Persevere’s first employer partners. Indeed was critical in helping Persevere develop procedures for transitioning graduates to employment and deploying mentoring and support services to help them succeed. *Contributions:* Continued support providing feedback on post-graduate job support services; Participating in the OJT program; Commitment to continue to hire graduates and explore future contributions.

Other employers who are willing to hire graduates are listed on page 15. Some have provided signed agreements (Attachment 2), and the Alliance will use the Design Phase of the project to recruit more employers and acquire signed commitments from all employers.

The key strategies for recruiting additional employers focus on the Alliance network of partners and the projects of Technology Employment Specialists. All Alliance partners from the largest governmental agencies to the smallest service providers work with employers. Coordination with existing reentry programs for justice-involved clients, workforce development agencies, and technology talent recruitment firms connects the Alliance with hundreds of employers providing Tennessee-based jobs both directly and indirectly. The Alliance will implement a coordinated outreach plan, spearheaded by a full time Employment Coordinator and an employer outreach committee, to grow the Alliance’s employer base.

In addition, several years ago, Persevere developed a position known as the Technology Employment Specialist (TES). Each TES works with a caseload of participants in the same area,

providing career readiness instruction while they are receiving their coding instruction, and then is responsible for placing them in jobs. In the course of their work, TESs recruit employers and match them with new graduates.

2b. Other Stakeholders and Partnerships

Page 15 provides a complete list of project partners, also noting leadership team membership. The following are the contributions of key stakeholders and groups of stakeholders.

State Government Agencies and Representatives - In addition to the support of several state legislators, the Alliance has important collaborative relationships with key state agencies that are vital to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of services.

Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) was Persevere's first and most committed non-employer partner. It supports the implementation of services for justice-involved individuals in its correctional facilities and on community supervision throughout the state. Through the Alliance project Persevere services will expand to include a fifth correctional facility and 500 more parolees and probationers. The collaboration includes close coordination with several TDOC divisions, including Prisons, Community Supervision, Workforce Development, and Rehabilitation. The Alliance's implementation plan is based on services developed through the partnership with TDOC and TDHS (below).

Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) provides both funding and technical support for Persevere's multigenerational training and job placement program for TANF-eligible families in West TN. The Department has committed to continue this support.

Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development (TDOL) works with the Alliance through its Apprenticeship, Reentry Services, and Adult Education divisions. TDOL has assisted Persevere in becoming a registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship provider. The collaboration also includes coordination with the department's related reentry services for justice-involved individuals.

County and Local Government Agencies - Persevere and the Alliance coordinated and collaborated with several subdivisions of the State of Tennessee for the development of this application. These include the target city and county mayors where Career Success Centers or satellites will be located - **City of Memphis, City of Ripley, Lake County, Houston County, Knox County, Claiborne County, Hamilton County, and Rutherford County**. They have committed to facilitate coordination with local services and programs (Attachment 1).

Workforce Development Partners - **Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI), EQUUS, and Workforce Essentials** are contractors and providers of services authorized and funded through the regional Workforce Development Boards. They collaborate with Persevere and the Alliance on many levels, from providing overall guidance on workforce related issues to providing WIOA funding to OJT employers (i.e., Banyan Labs), training funding to Persevere, and direct support for eligible participants (up to \$4,000 each). They also manage the American Job Centers (AJC) throughout the state, which play a key role in the coordination and delivery of services, ranging from assisting participants with resume development, instruction in job preparedness, assistance

with job applications, and more. Persevere’s Career Success Center in Memphis serves as an access point for AJC services, an arrangement that will be explored for other centers.

Wraparound Service Providers - The Alliance includes many wraparound service providers. They are discussed more in Section 5c, but the contributions of key providers are included here. They are all members of the leadership team, providing input into the design, implementation, and evaluation of services.

Legacy Treatment Center will provide substance abuse treatment services for program participants throughout the state. **Men of Valor**, provider of pre-release and reentry services (including housing) for incarcerated individuals, will host an Alliance training site in East Tennessee. **Transitional Housing and Work Program of Davidson County (THWP)** provides reentry housing and support services and will host a training site in Middle Tennessee. **2nd Opportunity** provides a wide array of support services to justice-involved individuals, Opportunity Youth, people needing substance abuse treatment or mental health services, and more. 2nd Opportunity will provide training for participants in accessing postsecondary education, and financial literacy, and training for employers in Trauma-informed Management. **Project Return** provides very similar services for formerly-incarcerated men and women as those provided through Persevere and the Alliance, except that they focus on the construction and hospitality industries. In addition to expanding the Alliance’s network of support providers and referring potential participants to the program, Project Return offers a place to refer individuals who come to Persevere but then discover that IT work is not really for them. **Ladies of Hope Ministries** provides career education and support services for justice-involved women and will provide career prep and planning workshops, in addition to serving the Alliance leadership team and referring participants.

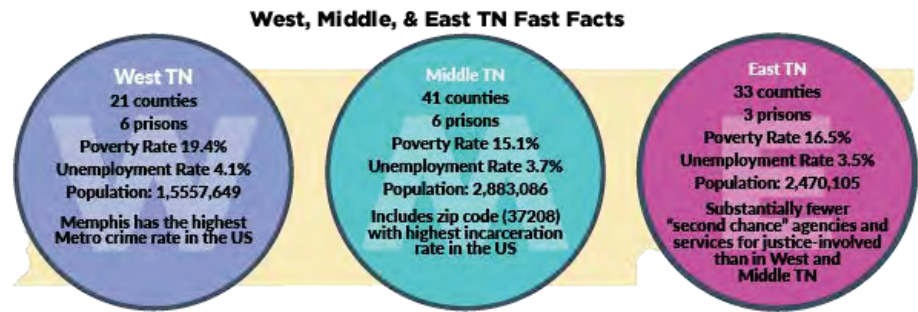
Advocacy Organizations - The **Urban League of Middle Tennessee** will provide financial literacy training, access to CompTIA courses, and leadership team support. Other Advocacy agencies include Just City (legal advocacy) in Memphis, Knoxville Legal Aid, and The McGruder Center in Nashville where Judge Rachel Bell holds Saturday dockets for expungements, resources fairs, and legal clinics.

Participant Representatives - Participants at all stages (new enrollees, year 1 participants, employed graduates) have a voice in the program. They were involved in the development of the proposal through surveys, interviews, and leadership team participation. Two adult and two youth (ages 18-24) representatives will have permanent seats on the leadership team. Evaluation efforts will include participant input through surveys and focus group interviews.

Educational Partners - Our key educational and evaluation partner is **Trevecca Nazarene University**. Trevecca has also agreed to assist with the development of career pathways to connect graduates to colleges and universities for more advanced studies. **Christian Brothers University**, which provides student interns to assist with tech and life skills instruction.

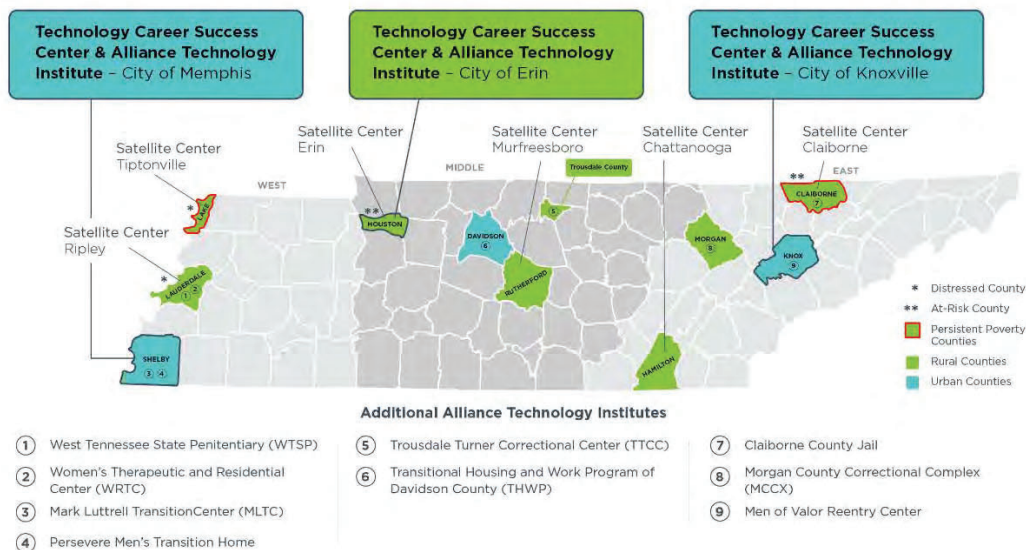
3. Regional Description

ⁱTennessee is divided into three Grand Divisions (West, Middle and East), each legally represented in the state’s constitution. Alliance partners represent all three divisions, and research included state, division, county, and city data.



The Alliance proposes to expand partnership activities (which previously operated predominantly in West TN and emerging in Middle TN) to all three of the state’s Grand Divisions. Services will be provided in 12 *Alliance Technology Training Institute* sites (primary training centers), three comprehensive *Career Success Centers* (hubs for training, wraparound services, and service coordination), and 6 *satellite centers*. These centers are located in six of the state’s nine development districts and the nine regional workforce development districts. All the satellite centers, one of the Career Success Centers, and all the correctional facilities served by the Alliance are located in rural counties, including two distressed, two at-risk, and two Persistent Poverty counties (see below; larger map included in attachments).ⁱⁱ

Tennessee Technology Workforce Alliance
SERVICE LOCATIONS



These service areas were selected because of local needs - unemployment rates, the presence of concentrations of populations with significant barriers to employment (particularly opportunity youth, incarcerated individuals, parolees and probationers, youth who have aged out of the foster care system, and families living in poverty; many experience *multiple* barriers), and lack of access to training opportunities and jobs due to rural isolation.

The Alliance will train 1,763 participants over the EDA funding period - *all from traditionally underrepresented populations*. See section 4e for demographic breakdown.ⁱⁱⁱ

The per capita income in our target rural counties is below national and state averages with the per capita income for the distressed, at risk, and Persistent Poverty counties ranging from \$14,742 to \$23,505, far below the U.S. level of \$56,200.^{iv} Please refer to Attachment 4 for detailed demographics and economic data for the target counties.

These areas also present potential for both tech employers and workers. The Southwest Development District noted in its recent CEDS report that information technology is a growth industry in West TN, and the growth of broadband access (a work in progress) is attractive.^v In addition, remote work is an advantage in rural areas where transportation is limited. Justice-involved individuals benefit the most from remote work. The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated individuals is 27%, more than nine times the national average.^{vi} Good skills and remote work opportunities make employing them more attractive for employers.

The Alliance training program targets 8 IT occupations: web developers, web administrators, computer programmers, software developers (applications and systems), computer user support specialists, software quality assurance engineers and testers, video game designers, and mobile app developers.^{vii} More information, including job projections, wages, and regional considerations is provided in Section 4c (below) and in Attachment 4.

An analysis of related skills and qualifications that employers rate both most critical and often lacking, revealed a demand/training gap for 20 tech-related skills/tools and 18 soft skills. Tech tools most often identified in that gap include SQL, C#, HTML, and Python. Soft skills included problem solving, conflict management, interpersonal skills, and time management. The table in Attachment 4 shows the top 5 employer-identified soft skill and tech skill gaps, aligned with the target occupations.^{viii} Alliance courses provide certification documenting qualifications for all of the top 5 skills in the gap and many others, and for the target occupations. Please see Section 5b and Attachment 4 for information on how the Alliance training services align courses, instruction, and support services with the target occupations and skills gaps.

CEDS Alignment - Alliance centers and services span the state, with centers located in six of the state’s nine development districts - Memphis Area Association of Governments (MAAG), Northwest Tennessee Development District (NWTDD), Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC), Upper Cumberland Development District (UCDD), Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETDD), and the East Tennessee Development District (ETDD). The training system described herein supports the CEDS for all of these areas.

Some issues are addressed in the plans for all of these districts: providing programs with work-based learning, addressing the rural/urban divide, and transportation. These are addressed through career readiness instruction, virtual instruction, the placement of centers/satellites in rural areas, and coordination with partner agencies.

Some issues were targeted by individual districts, and also included in the Alliance plans, including the growth of IT occupations in other sectors (GNRC, MAAG), and the growth of some Alliance-targeted occupations (MAAG), the particular need for training of black/African

American (MAAG) and dislocated workers (SETDD), the need for supportive services (SETDD, UCDD), and the need to decrease the gap between skills and employer needs (ETDD, SETDD). Links to all of the CEDS plans for these districts are provided in Attachment 3.

4. Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System

4a Identify the Components: Program Design and Program Implementation

The Tennessee Technology Workforce Alliance is an existing sectoral partnership supporting Persevere’s services and those of Alliance partners in West Tennessee (with an emerging presence in other areas). The Alliance proposes a significant expansion of scope (a statewide presence with a focus on rural counties and additional technology course offerings) and depth (a deeper employer base and more formalization of interagency referrals and services).

Through close and integrated work with TDOC, TDHS, and TLWD, the partnership has been working within the multiregional Tennessee Workforce Development System, an interdependent network of state agencies and state organizations. By extension, the Alliance has also been working with the established Workforce Development System, aligned with target area plans, and accessing WIOA resources through its workforce development partners EDSI, EQUUS, and Workforce Essentials.

The system’s support services and structure for delivering them are very helpful, particularly the availability of funding for training and supportive services for the eligible; however, a need remains for a large scale information technology sectoral partnership. Current public and private providers of technology training are prohibitively expensive (private providers), limited in the number of students they can accept, and not accessible for many justice-involved individuals, TANF recipients, and other at-risk populations. An assessment of programs offered by the 25 public community colleges and universities in Tennessee (see Attachment 4) revealed that while most provide technology programs, they are most commonly within AA, AS, or BA degree programs, rather than offered as a certification easily acquired in 12-18 months. Further, only 5 of our 12 target counties are served by these colleges.

4b. Alignment with EDA’s Recovery and Resilience Priority and Other Priorities

The Alliance is aligned with the Recovery and Resilience Priority through 1) aligning with the recovery plans for development districts (particularly GNRC and SETDD) regarding “retooling” the workforce to withstand and recover from economic shocks, and providing training for dislocated workers; 2) providing training for employers in the development of workforce succession plans; 3) connecting employers with their local RWD systems so they’ll be aware of recovery and resilience resources available to them through the network; 4) providing trained employees capable of assisting with the a sudden transfer of technology usage, like what we experienced with COVID; and 5) training a workforce capable of working remotely, both in terms of technical and time/self-management skills, so as little time as possible is lost to disaster and other adverse events (this includes strategies for electricity and battery conservation and diverse internet access options).

The Alliance is also closely aligned with other EDA investment priorities. **Equity:** The Alliance focuses exclusively on underserved populations, including those identified in the priority, and recruitment/enrollment and service delivery strategies are specific to their needs. In addition, services target two **Persistent Poverty Counties** (Lake and Claiborne), two Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) distressed counties (Lake and Lauderdale), and two ARC at-risk counties (Houston and Claiborne). **Workforce Development:** This is a primary Alliance focus. **Technology-based Economic Development:** The Alliance’s focus on tech workforce development increases the capacity for employers to transition to more technology-focused business strategies.

4c. Workers to be Trained, Available Jobs, and Wages

The Alliance expects to place a minimum 1,231 individuals in good jobs in occupations in the IT industry (70% of the 1763 recruited and served) during the 30 month Program Implementation phase, *building the capacity for an additional 900 - 1,000 per year thereafter*. The table below illustrates wages and annual job projections for each of the target occupations.

Occupation	Annual Jobs Project.	Market Wages (annual)						Alliance Wages	
		West TN		Middle TN		East TN		Entry	3-year
		Entry	Avg	Entry	Avg	Entry	Avg.		
Web Developers	194	\$38k	\$66k	\$38k	\$55k	\$35k	\$58k	\$42k	\$58k
Web Administrators	420	\$56k	\$74k	\$42k	\$75k	\$45k	\$73k	\$50k	\$70k
Computer Programmers	291	\$39k	\$66k	\$46k	\$61k	\$44k	\$62k	\$43k	\$59k
Software Devs (Apps and Sys)	1198	\$52k	\$78k	\$48k	\$65k	\$48k	\$70k	\$55k	\$70k
Comp. User Support Spec	1027	\$37k	\$48k	\$36k	\$49k	\$33k	\$44k	\$37k	\$49k
Software QA	420	\$32k	\$62k	\$52k	\$66k	\$34k	\$65k	\$40k	\$63k
Video Game Designers	420	\$53k	\$95k	\$55K	\$85k	\$50k	\$81k	\$55k	\$80k
Mobile App Developer)	417	\$64k	\$90k	\$64k	\$86k	\$64k	\$75k	\$64k	\$88k
Total Annual Projection	4387	<i>Please refer to the endnotes for all sources.^{ix}</i>							

The table identifies entry level and overall average wages for each of the Grand Divisions. Alliance wages show entry level projected wages after three years on the job. Projected Alliance wages are based on *actual* placement wages provided by Persevere and Banyan Labs and employer projections.

4d. Why the Partnership is Achievable.

The partnership is achievable because of the relations of partners to each other and resources throughout the state, the qualifications of the Backbone Organization (Persevere), and

the commitment of employers to grow the partnership. Persevere’s qualifications have been summarized in Section 1b. It is also notable that two-thirds of Alliance partners have been engaged with Persevere for 2-7 years, and the ability to engage the remainder within a year or less indicates the capability of Persevere and all partners to engage other agencies. Future efforts will build on the web of relationships of the partnership. Finally, Alliance employers are highly committed to the work, donating substantial amounts of cash, in-kind services (time and expertise), and discounted product (software/Vant4gePoint). They have already begun recruiting other large businesses to the Alliance.

4e. Target Demographics and Stakeholder Impact

The table below identifies the projected number of individuals to be recruited, complete training, and to be placed in quality jobs within the project period.

Outcome	Total	M	F	Af.A	JI	Inc	D/At	Rural	FC	TANF	OY
Recruited	1763	1234	529	1059	970	388	352	1058	52	1498	176
Completions	1410	987	423	847	776	310	281	846	41	1198	141
Placed in quality jobs	1234	861	373	741	679	271	246	741	36	1048	123

M - Male; F - female; Af.A – African American; JI-justice-involved; Inc – incarcerated; D/At - Resident of distressed or at-risk county; FC - Aged out of foster care; TANF- TANF/WIC/SNAP recipient; DY- Opportunity Youth

Other projected outcomes include:

Job placements committed by employers: 461 plus 200/OJT per year. See Section 4c and employer commitment letters for details about commitment and jobs. The participants served in year 1 will be placed in year 2. The remaining will complete and be placed in year 3.

Projected wages: Entry: \$37,000 to \$55,000; At 3 years: \$49,000 - \$80,000. See section 4c.

Size of credibly projected income gains: +\$12,009 to +\$25,000, depending on occupation.^x

Projected training cost per worker, including wraparound services: \$11,154

It takes a wage of over \$33,280/year for a TANF recipient to make it over the “benefits cliff” in Tennessee.^{xi} Most transitional jobs programs cannot reach that point, decreasing the incentive for recipients to even try.^{xii} Alliance wage projections surpass the “cliff threshold,” promoting both recruitment and completion rates for these very difficult to reach populations.

Because the target population includes so many TANF/WIC/SNAP recipients (85%),^{xiii} outcomes also include targets for achieving one of TANF’s purposes: “end the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.” In addition to the training, certification, and job placement targets above, outcomes include increasing access to and use of community resources (80%) and referring participants for access to health care (50%).

In terms of collateral impact, ultimately reducing the amount of money spent on public assistance and incarceration (see below), increasing the financial impact of increased income, decreasing crime related to recidivism, and improving the collaboration between state agencies, service provider employers will affect all 3,000, 308 residents of the target counties. Because

Alliance Centers will also serve residents from surrounding counties, there is actually a statewide impact that will grow in future years as the project expands beyond the EDA funding period.

More directly, every participant represents a family (4,936 direct beneficiaries) and employer (we project that over 200 employers of various sizes will be involved) that will benefit from their employment. The impact grows when other factors are considered, such as the fact that breaking the cycle of multigenerational unemployment affects future generations (current plus next generation = 14,772 people). Also, for justice-involved individuals, decreased recidivism affects their lives, their families’ and those of their potential victims (29,544). Therefore, **achieving the above outcomes will affect a minimum of 29,544 individuals**, with an impact that expands to every community, county, and the state.

The larger scale benefits are best seen through the fiscal impact. The actual cost savings achieved through reduced benefits (1,231 families x \$7,344 reduction in TANF benefits = **\$9,040,464**) can be redirected to other needs. Then there are saved costs related to lack of recidivism for justice-involved participants. With an expected 5% participant recidivism rate (compared to TN’s 41%), estimated based on Persevere’s current rate of 0% in TN^{xiv}, and a projected length of reincarceration of two years, the State will save **\$19,929,000**.^{xv}

In addition, the infrastructure (employer and partner base; centers; recruitment, referral, and enrollment processes) built during the EDA funding period will allow the Alliance to serve many more in the coming years, adding courses as the tech job market evolves.

5. Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation

5a. Estimated Funding Request

The Alliance requests \$19,663,752 to refine and expand the sectoral partnership and implement the comprehensive technology skills training and job placement program, including the development of the infrastructure to maintain the services in the future. The attached budget, budget narrative, and staffing plan detail expenditures over a 36-month project period.

Funds and staff have been included to support the evaluation of the project, including tools for collecting and managing data for required performance metrics and formal process and outcome evaluations to be conducted by Alliance partner, Trevecca Nazarene University.

The primary data collection and service delivery tracking and reporting system will be Vant4gePoint, managed through Vant4gePoint, a client and service provider management system developed by Vant4ge, our key business partner.

Sustainability is a priority. EDA funding will allow the Alliance to develop the infrastructure for the project and document additional evidence of effectiveness that will be the foundation for raising funds to sustain the project. Skills instruction will be sustained through WIOA training funding (\$6,000 per student; Persevere is currently in the credentialing process with the TN Dept. of Ed.) which will generate a minimum of \$2,100,000 based on a continuation of the projections contained herein for enrollment of WIOA-eligible students. A portion of wraparound support will be provided through WIOA supportive services funds (\$1,452,000) and TennCare (mental health and substance abuse treatment). The refined referral and delivery

systems will maximize existing partner resources, including shared case management, and any redirection of the saved TDHS and TDOC resources identified above would also assist with implementation. The remaining funds required for full implementation, particularly management and TESs, will be the target of a dedicated fundraising plan focused on partner contributions; state, federal, corporate, and foundations grants; and private donations.

5b. Program Design and Program Implementation Descriptions

Design - Key activities, responsibilities, and timeline for the six-month Design Phase are provided below. Deliverables are employment records; training agendas and training attendance records; leadership team meeting minutes; signed employer and partner agreements; written recruitment, enrollment, and referral procedures; a detailed evaluation plan; course outlines/ curriculum summaries; and a detailed project implementation plan.

Program Design Phase Activities, Responsibilities & Timeline

Activity	Responsibility	Timeline					
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Place/hire Prog. Mgr, Coord, Recruit/Enroll., key LIs	Prog Dir, LT	█					
Train TES and Lead Instructors	PD, PM	█	█				
Convene LT to review progress and provide direction	PD	█	█	█	█	█	
Outreach to employers, secure agreements	PD, PM, LT, E	█	█	█	█	█	
Refine referral systems and secure agreements	PM, SSC, LT	█	█	█	█	█	
Develop detailed implementation plan	PD, PM, Partners	█	█	█	█	█	
Secure locations for new Centers and Satellites	PD, PM		█	█	█	█	
Hire remaining staff	PD, PM		█	█	█		
Train remaining staff	PD, PM,		█	█	█	█	
Develop and refine curriculum for new courses	LI, Emp		█	█	█	█	
Refine Recruitment & Enrollment Procedures	PM, REC, LT		█	█	█		
Develop and accept evaluation plan	PD, Eval		█	█	█		
Launch recruitment efforts	PD, PM, ERC					█	█

PD = Program Director; PM = Program Manager; ERC = Enrollment & Recruitment Coordinator
LT= Leadership Team; SSC = Supportive Services Coordinator; LI = Lead Instructors; E= Employers

Program Implementation:

The Alliance program is based on 6 mutually supportive components: 1) Technology training provided through the Alliance Technology Training Institutes; 2) Career Readiness, Lifeskills, and Financial Fitness instruction and support; 3) On-the-job-training (OJT) or Apprenticeships; 4) Wraparound supportive services; 5) Job placement and support; and 6) employer support. Implementation will begin during the seventh month of year 1 and continue through the end of year 3 (36 months); however, Alliance members will continue to provide support and follow up for graduates after the EDA funding period.

Skills-Based Technology Training – Technology employment skills training will be provided at the Alliance Technology Training Institute sites, located at each of the Centers and satellites, in 5 prisons/correctional facilities, one county jail, and three reentry transitional housing programs. The 12-month training program begins with two courses required for all participants: Technology Foundations and Front End Developer (6 months). Participants can then

choose to branch off toward one pathway - Full Stack Developer or Video Game Designer, each requiring an additional 6 month advanced course. Other courses include Tech Support (aligned with the high-demand Computer User Support Specialist occupation), Quality Assurance Testing, and Mobile App Development. Attachment 5 includes the Persevere FY22 Academic Catalog and Handbook, and sample syllabi.

The courses have been designed to be both occupation-focused and aligned with certifications in the field. Students who successfully complete each course will receive certification and qualifications to test for any of several related industry-recognized certifications (paid for by the Alliance). Attachment 4 contains a partial list of certifications.

Persevere's program is a registered apprenticeship program in the state of Tennessee (see Attachments 4 and 5). Students who choose to apprentice with an Alliance employer will earn apprentice certification while learning advanced skills.

Career Readiness, Life Skills, and Financial Fitness - Concurrent with technology instruction, participants receive career readiness, life skills, and financial fitness instruction taught by Persevere TESs and Alliance partners 2nd Opportunity and the Urban League.

OJT and Apprenticeship - For participants needing more intensive supervision and practice (approx. 65% of graduates), 6 months of paid OJT (with additional mentorship) is available through Banyan Labs and other employers, subsidized through WIOA funds. Those ready to be directly employed (either right after certification or after OJT) who opt for ongoing support and employer-specific training can choose an apprenticeship (75%).

Wraparound Support - See section 5c, below

Job Placement and Support - Each participant is assigned a TES who places them in a job when they have completed training. TESs work closely with local, regional, state, and national employers and they provide mentoring for up to a year after placement.

Employer Support - This includes 1) partner- and TES-provided technical support for employers on skills-based hiring practices to reduce bias, improve return on investment, and promote people-centered practices; and 2) Trauma-informed Management training (provided by 2nd Opportunity) to provide strategies for supervising trauma-impacted employees.

Eligibility, Recruitment & Enrollment - To be eligible, participants must be: 1) resident and citizen of the State of Tennessee; 2) justice-involved (including incarcerated, probation, parole, or formerly under supervision), family member of someone who is justice-involved, opportunity youth, youth aging out of the foster care system, or TANF-eligible; 3) possess a high school diploma/GED/HiSET or possess equivalent skills, as assessed by the Comprehensive Adult Skills Assessment (CASA). Additional requirements are in place for incarcerated candidates. Persevere has also developed policies and procedures related to recruitment and enrollment with strategies specifically focused on our targeted groups. These include collaboration with TDOC for referrals for individuals on parole or incarcerated, referrals from TDHS for TANF recipients, outreach to schools for opportunity youth, and more. Please refer to the attachments for a comprehensive list. In addition, one of the key activities of the

Design Phase will be to review and develop a comprehensive recruitment and enrollment strategy for each region.

5c. Barriers and Mitigation of the Impact – Experience has taught all the partners working with the target populations that the most significant barriers to participation and success are substance abuse, mental health support, rural isolation, transportation, childcare, housing, difficulties managing and organizing time, and responding to barriers caused by COVID. Wraparound services begin with case managers who assess participant needs at intake (using the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix, GAINS-SS, CASA, and O*NET Interest Inventory, and other assessments) and work with them to prioritize needs and solutions. They then reach out to service providers to make referrals. Through weekly contact in the first two months and monthly thereafter, the case manager helps the participant to continue moving forward with the plan.

Referring participants to community partners for supportive services remains a primary strategy, and the plan to develop more streamlined referral procedures and commitments will enhance the effectiveness of this strategy; however, the Alliance has developed additional plans to fill in the gaps not covered by partner services or during the initial enrollment period when clients have not yet assessed them.

The need for substance abuse treatment will continue to be addressed through referrals to a variety of agencies around the state; however, because of the scope and severity of the issue, the Alliance has partnered with Legacy Treatment Centers to provide direct treatment for participants who cannot be placed through referrals. For mental health support and treatment, based on initial screening at intake, any participants needing further assessment will be assessed by a Certified Mental Health Counselor who will make appropriate referrals to the providers. The CMHC can also provide short term crisis counseling to any client and will also be the primary case manager for any participant with significant mental health needs.

Our partnership with EDSI and EQUUS makes WIOA supportive services funds available for eligible participants (up to \$4,000 per participant). Because 85% of our participants are expected to be TANF recipients, we know that at least 1,498 people (see p. 10) will be eligible for these funds which can assist with transportation, childcare, housing, legal aid, medical expenses, and other costs that may prevent participation in training. Case managers will prioritize helping participants register for WIOA participation as part of the enrollment process.

Transportation and rural isolation are also addressed through virtual instruction centers and satellite centers in rural counties to ensure in-person tutorial support and case management. The potential barrier of lack of access to technology and internet access is mitigated by providing a laptop for every participant to use during the training and OJT period and funds for internet access (provided at a discounted rate, including cellular access, if necessary - which can also be covered through WIOA supportive services funds).

Case managers and TEs will provide ongoing follow-up support for up to one year beyond job placement, and one of the outcomes for life skills instruction during a participant's training year is to develop the ability to locate and access local support services.

State Government Agencies & Representatives

- State Senator Jack Johnson, 23rd District (Williamson County) Senate Majority Leader
- State Senator Ed Jackson, 27th District (Lake, Lauderdale, Dyer, Crocket & Madison Counties)
- State Senator Raumesh Akbari, 29th District (Shelby County)
- State Representative Sam McKenzie, 15th District (Knox Co.)
- State Representative Michael Curcio, 69th District (Hickman, and parts of Maury and Dickson Counties)
- Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development *
 - Apprenticeship TN
 - Adult Education
- Tennessee Department of Correction *
 - TDOC Day Reporting Centers
 - Community Supervision
 - Workforce Development
 - Rehabilitation
- Tennessee Department of Human Services
- Tennessee Department of Children's Services
- Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development

County and Local Government Agencies & Representatives

- Claiborne County Mayor *
- Claiborne County Juvenile Court
- Claiborne County Sheriff
- Davidson County Mayor
- Davidson County Juvenile Courts - Judge Callaway
- Davidson County Sheriff
- Dickson County Mayor
- City of Franklin Mayor (Williamson County)
- Houston County Mayor
- Houston County Sheriff
- City of Memphis Mayor (Shelby County) *
- Knox County Mayor
- Lake County Mayor
- City of Ripley Mayor (Lauderdale County)
- Rutherford County Department of Health
- Shelby County Mayor
- Shelby County Office of Justice Initiatives & Criminal Justice Center
- Williamson County Mayor
- County Mayor Hamiton

Employer Leaders



Service Providers/Non-profit

- 2nd Opportunity*
- C.E. McGruder Family Resource Center
- Fourth Purpose'
- Legacy Treatment Center *
- Ladies of Hope *
- Memphis Athletic Ministries (MAM)'
- Memphis ROCKS
- Men of Valor *
- Project Harmony
- Project Return*
- Transitional Housing and Work Program of Davidson County *
- Volunteer Odyssey
- 901 BLOC Squad
- Positive Images & Associates*

Workforce Development Partners

- Workforce Development Boards
- EDSI (Educational Data Systems Inc.) / American Job Centers *
- Equus / American Job Centers *
- Workforce Essentials

Chambers of Commerce

- Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Claiborne Economic Partnership
- Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce

Advocacy Organizations

- Urban League of Middle Tennessee *
- Just City

Professional Associations

- Correctional Leaders Association (CLA)
- American Correctional Association (ACA)

Educational Institutions

- Christian Brothers University'
- Trevecca Nazarene University*'

Client/Participant/Employee Representatives

- Current Persevere Participants *
 - Employed Persevere Graduates *
- (Two from each group on Leadership Team)