

For immediate release

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Workforce Essentials and the Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board announce programs to benefit small businesses and individuals

Are you a small business adversely impacted by Covid-19? Are you an adult in a training or education program without access to a computer to study and learn remotely? Workforce Essentials, in partnership with the Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board, was awarded \$896,000 in Tennessee Community CARES Program funds by the Tennessee Department of Human Services to assist small businesses and individuals within its 13 county service area.

“We applied for funding with two approaches in mind,” said Marla Rye, executive director. “First, the technology program will provide laptops or tablets for adults who are enrolled in Adult Education and studying to take the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET). This program has moved to a remote access format, and we want to ensure that adult learners have the technology they need to succeed.” In addition, adults who are unemployed or under-employed as a result of COVID-19 and are enrolled in an online or hybrid training program with an approved provider may apply for the technology assistance, Rye noted. The laptops or tablets are provided free of charge and become the personal property of individuals who meet the criteria. The program is budgeted to provide up to 750 computer devices for individual use. The technology application is available through the American Job Centers in each county, and requires a signature from the school or training provider to verify enrollment. A list of American Job Center locations and contact information can be accessed at <https://www.workforceessentials.com/blog/news/2020/09/18/community-cares-technology-grants/>

The second program funded through the Tennessee Community CARES Grant will support small businesses with Layoff Aversion strategies, ranging from reimbursement for cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment, to reimbursement for employee training or upskilling necessitated by the pandemic. According to Rye, the grant was written with rural counties and small businesses in mind. “Our priority is to provide reimbursement funds to businesses with fewer than 50 employees which operate in counties of less than 100,000 population. Specifically, the Layoff Aversion program will prioritize applications from small businesses in the following counties: Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Robertson, Stewart, and Trousdale. The Layoff Aversion application is available at <https://www.workforceessentials.com/blog/news/2020/09/18/community-cares-business-grants/>

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