



*Helping People. Changing Lives.*

**community  
Action**®

**P A R T N E R S H I P**

**AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK**

**Annual Report  
2024-2025**

**Northwest Tennessee Economic  
Development Council**

**231 South Wilson Street**

**Dresden, TN 38225**

**731-364-3228**

**Cheryl Oglesby-Townes**

**Executive Director**

## Table of Contents

- Table of Contents
- A Word from the Chair
- Message from the Executive Director
- Board of Directors
- Mission & Vision
- Our Team
- Our Workforce
- Employment Satisfaction
- Finance
- CSBG
- LIHEAP
- TEFAP
- Head Start & Early Head Start
- Head Start & Early Head Start Policy Council



# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



Stakeholders,

It has been an incredible honor to serve as Chairman of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council the past two years. It is my honor to add this message to this year's Annual Report. The report serves not only as a reflection of our agency's progress, but as a testament to the dedication and collaboration that defines our mission of service across the region.

The Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council plays a important role in improving the quality of life for individuals and families in our communities. Through programs and services, we strive to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of our neighbors. Our work extends beyond direct assistance-it is about empowering people, strengthening communities, and building pathways toward economic opportunity and self-sufficiency.

This success is made possible by the tireless commitment of our leadership and team members. Each day, this team serves with professionalism, compassion, and a deep understanding of the challenges and hopes of those we assist. Their efforts make a lasting difference in the lives of thousands of Tennesseans. On behalf of the board, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of our team for their service, resilience, and heart.

I also want to recognize the exceptional leadership and dedication of our Board of Directors. The structure of our Board-representing public officials, private sector leaders, and community members-embodies a unique model that ensures our decisions remain balanced, community-driven, and accountable. This diversity of perspective is one of our greatest strengths, ensuring that every voice in Northwest Tennessee has a place at the table.

As we reflect on the past year's accomplishments and look ahead, we are reminded that our mission is not simply about programs-it is about people. Together, through the shared commitment of our Board, staff, and community partners, we continue to build stronger, more resilient communities across Northwest Tennessee.

Thank you for your continued trust and support in this work.

*Joseph J. Butler*

**JOSEPH BUTLER**

CHAIRMAN

MAYOR OF CARROLL COUNTY, TN

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings Stakeholders,

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. This is the promise of our national network, as well as locally here at Northwest TN Economic Development Council.

Since April 1965, Northwest TN Economic Development Council has been your local community action partner in the fight against poverty. Created through the 1964 Economic

Opportunity Act, we provide essential services to help residents achieve self-sufficiency. We serve the counties of Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion and Weakley Counties. Our Head Start/Early Head Start services are provided in Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, Madison and Weakley counties.

I'm incredibly grateful to lead this Agency for a second year as Executive Director, working alongside a TEAM whose dedication and expertise continue to drive our Agency forward. We are committed to serving the Northwest Tennessee service area through our core program, the Community Services Block Grant, as well as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, and our Head Start/Early Head Start program. This program year, we proudly commemorate 60 years of service as your local community action agency.

This 2024-2025 report reflects the impact this Agency has had within our nine-county service area over the past year. This work would not be possible without the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to ensure our customers are provided with quality and efficient services to meet their immediate needs toward self-sufficiency. Additionally, we are supported by local volunteers, various community partnerships and a governing board that provides oversight and engages with our leadership in decision making to meet the needs of our local communities.

Community Action is heart work, and we continue this work while remaining focused on our mission and vision of making a difference within our community. Thank you for your support and continued advocacy of our programs. We remain committed to serving the communities within Northwest Tennessee.

**Cheryl Oglesby-Townes**

Executive Director

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| <u>COUNTY</u> | <u>GROUP</u> | <u>BOARD MEMBER</u> | <u>ALTERNATE</u>  |
|---------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Benton        | A            | Mark Ward           | Charles Cooper    |
| Benton        | B            | Bethany Patton      | Adreonna Holland  |
| Benton        | C            | Hattie Zollicoffer  | Toni Witherspoon  |
| Carroll       | A            | Joseph Butler       | Stacy McCaleb     |
| Carroll       | B            | Brad Hurley         | Dodie Parker      |
| Carroll       | C            | Wilma Pearson       | Lesia Gilbert     |
| Crockett      | A            | Gary Reasons        | Carolyn Nance     |
| Crockett      | B            | Tommy Smith         | Allie Mallard     |
| Crockett      | C            | Jean Love           | Jimmie Mae Hudson |
| Dyer          | A            | David Quick         | Beverly Ellington |
| Dyer          | B            | Slater Barr         | Tiffany Pride     |
| Dyer          | C            | George Turks        | Elbert Holliman   |
| Gibson        | A            | Nelson Cunningham   | Leslie Milligan   |
| Gibson        | B            | Charles Simpson     | Malinda Baltz     |
| Gibson        | C            | Kim Evans           | Annie Edwards     |
| Henry         | A            | Randy Geiger        | Randi French      |
| Henry         | B            | Michelle Atkins     | Ranson Goodman    |
| Henry         | C            | George Bass         | Verla Smith       |
| Lake          | A            | Danny Cook          | Vacant            |
| Lake          | B            | Connie Hopper       | Melinda Crawford  |
| Lake          | C            | Shelby Rickman      | Macie Roberson    |
| Obion         | A            | Steve Carr          | Haley Forester    |
| Obion         | B            | Patsy Barker        | Joyce Gray        |
| Obion         | C            | Robena Smith        | Maurice Stricklin |
| Weakley       | A            | Dale Hutcherson     | Judge Tommy Moore |
| Weakley       | B            | Dr. Marti Herndon   | Julia Lynch       |
| Weakley       | C            | Patsy Ekwegbalu     | Joyce Washington  |

# MISSION & VISION

## MISSION

Helping people and changing lives in our community through education, partnership, and delivery of quality services in Northwest Tennessee.

## VISION

Hand in hand, working together - we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other to make a difference in our communities.



# OUR TEAM



**Cheryl Oglesby-Townes**  
**Executive Director**



**Jacob King**  
**Human Resources**  
**Director**



**Shawna Shell**  
**Finance Director**



**Rakaya Humphreys**  
**Head Start/Early Head Start**  
**Director**



**Cindy Stephens**  
**CSBG Director**



**Lalanía Gray**  
**LIHEAP Director**



**Lance Legons**  
**TEFAP Coordinator**

# OUR WORKFORCE



## Employees

**270**

## Full Time/Part Time

**228/42**

## Substitutes

**35**

## Staff Demographics

**252/18  
FEMALE/MALE**



## Employees by Department

**Admin**

**10**

**Facilities**

**10**

**IT**

**3**

**Head Start**

**239**

**CSBG**

**19**

**LIHEAP**

**3**



# EMPLOYMENT SATISFACTION SURVEY



## Length of Employment



## Does your role have purpose?

**99% YES**

## Do you feel respected by your supervisor?

**90% YES**

## Reapply for your current position?

**77% YES**

## Do you see yourself working here next year

**81% YES**

## Annual Turnover Rate

**29.1%**



## FINANCE/PROGRAM EXPENSES

| <b>Program</b>               | <b>Grant Expenses</b> | <b>Inkind</b>    | <b>Total Expenses</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>CSBG</b>                  | <b>319,074</b>        | <b>213,921</b>   | <b>532,995</b>        |
| <b>LIHEAP</b>                | <b>3,417,628</b>      | <b>47,097</b>    | <b>3,464,725</b>      |
| <b>TEFAP</b>                 | <b>72,494</b>         | <b>45,995</b>    | <b>118,489</b>        |
| <b>Head Start</b>            | <b>10,567,087</b>     | <b>3,129,903</b> | <b>13,736,990</b>     |
| <b>Early Headstart</b>       | <b>3,082,342</b>      | <b>316,138</b>   | <b>3,398,480</b>      |
| <b>Direct Appropriations</b> | <b>25,050</b>         | <b>0</b>         | <b>25,050</b>         |
| <b>Administration</b>        | <b>0</b>              | <b>28,020</b>    | <b>28,020</b>         |

| <b>Local Programs</b>                                     | <b>Grant Expenses</b> | <b>Inkind</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b> |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Project HELP Fund<br/>(Weakley Co Electric)</b>        | <b>\$560</b>          | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$560</b>          |
| <b>Plus One Fund<br/>(Trenton Lights &amp; Water)</b>     | <b>\$0</b>            | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$0</b>            |
| <b>We Care Fund<br/>(Gibson Co. Utility<br/>District)</b> | <b>\$398</b>          | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$398</b>          |
| <b>Helping Hands<br/>(Henry Co.)</b>                      | <b>\$6,108</b>        | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$6,108</b>        |
| <b>Community Cares<br/>(GEMC)</b>                         | <b>\$7,647</b>        | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$7,647</b>        |



# Community Services Block Grant

## Rent Assistance/Evictions Prevented

**115 Households**

## Value of Assistance

**\$72,419.69**

## Clothing Assistance

**281 Individuals**

## Value of Assistance

**\$60,161.00**

## Food Bank

**59 Individuals**

## Food Bank Value

**\$3,633.09**



# LIHEAP



## LIHEAP



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

### Regular Assistance Households

8,834

### Value of Assistance

\$3,272,904.46

### Emergency/Crisis Assistance Households

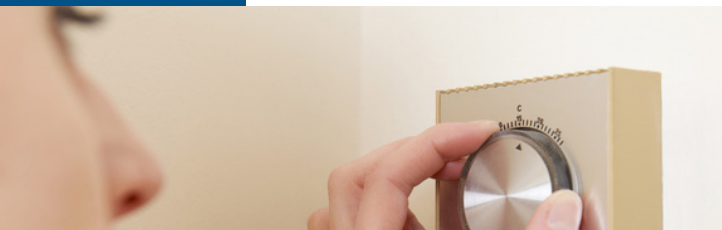
581

### Value of Assistance

\$425,622.56

### Vendors

34





- Total Units of Food Received.....650,724
- Value of Units Received.....\$608,337.72
- Total Units of Food Distributed.....811,439
- Value of Units Distributed.....\$784,890.88
- Total # of Households/Individuals Served.....20,547
- Total Units of Food Damaged.....996
- Total Value of Units Damaged.....\$926.65

# HEAD START



## Head Start./Early Head Start Children Served

893/235  
HS/EHS

## Number of Children Funded

739/132  
HS/EHS

## Percentage of Eligible Children Served

85.27%/97.87%  
HS/EHS

## Attendance Percentage

87.09%/76.77%  
HS/EHS

## Received Medical Exams

78.76%/61.86%  
HS/EHS

## Received Dental Exams

80.53%/75.35%  
HS/EHS



# HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

| <u>COUNTY</u> | <u>GROUP</u> | <u>COUNCIL MEMBER</u> | <u>ALTERNATE</u>         |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Benton        | P            | Michael Myers         | Vacant                   |
| Benton        | C            | Jeanette Brandon      | Charles Cooper           |
| Carroll       | P            | Weltonette Smith      | Haley Kendall            |
| Carroll       | C            | Christy Williams      | Jimmie Sue Staten        |
| Gibson        | P            | Lisa Johnson          | Kathryn Bawcum           |
| Gibson        | C            | Gladys Robinson       | Laura Speer              |
| Henry         | P            | Elizabeth Paulus      | Sharvon Howard           |
| Henry         | C            | Thomas Hurt           | James Travis             |
| Lake          | P            | Jennifer Best         | Candace Forrest          |
| Lake          | C            | Kristi Jones          | Amanda Chadwick Elkhoury |
| Madison       | P            | Ebony Spann           | Vacant                   |
| Madison       | P            | Gary Cooper           | Derrick Darling          |
| Madison       | C            | Vacant                | Johnny Dodd              |
| Obion         | P            | Madison Grooms        | Audry Perry              |
| Obion         | C            | Vikki Hayslett        | Lisa Darnall             |
| Weakley       | P            | Jahn Acevedo          | Jamie Cotton             |
| Weakley       | C            | Yueh Feng Wu          | Kamlin Galey             |

P (Parent) C (Community Representative)