Recognizing Tennessee's postsecondary completion challenges, a new Complete Tennessee pilot program aims to help communities develop targeted plans to address regional barriers to higher education attainment.
Complete Tennessee recognizes that addressing barriers to postsecondary progress in our state will require the voices of many and the participation of all. Only then can we truly advance the state’s ambitious goal to ensure more Tennesseans have the chance to earn a degree or credential that will open the doors to increased economic mobility, enhanced community engagement, and a better quality of life.

Despite recent progress and investment in postsecondary programs designed to improve access and completion, Tennessee is still ranked 44th in the nation for college attainment. Today, only 40.7% of Tennesseans have a college degree or certificate.

To help mobilize Tennesseans in support of the state’s postsecondary goals, Complete Tennessee has launched a new College Completion Communities initiative. The pilot program will engage local communities in developing thoughtful strategies that will help increase higher education attainment and address Tennessee’s postsecondary completion challenges.

**• Engage Local Communities | Building a Completion Council**

Complete Tennessee will help local leaders and education stakeholders develop thoughtful plans to improve postsecondary access and completion.

These community advocates will form a Completion Council, comprised of educators, chamber of commerce members, business and community leaders, and elected officials, to lead in the development and implementation of a Completion Plan of Action.

**• Develop Thoughtful Strategies | Crafting a Completion Plan of Action**

The local Completion Council will develop a targeted three-year Completion Plan of Action focused on addressing the greatest barriers to postsecondary attainment in their community.

The Completion Plan of Action must serve a diverse population of students and community members while engaging educators, industry leaders, and elected officials in the plan’s development, implementation, and evaluation.
Secondary to Postsecondary
Increasing high school students’ exposure to postsecondary programs, coursework, and institutions.

Adult Reconnect
Raising the number of adult returning students who complete a college degree or credential.

Postsecondary Support
Launching programs and initiatives that help low-income students complete a postsecondary program.

Industry Engagement
Strengthening the education-to-career pipeline by fostering connections between industry and education leaders.

The College Completion Communities Pilot
Complete Tennessee has identified 5 communities that will participate in the College Completion Communities pilot program:

- West Tennessee: Lake, Obion, and Weakley counties
- West Tennessee: Lauderdale and Tipton counties
- Middle Tennessee: Humphreys and Perry counties
- East Tennessee: Bradley and Meigs counties
- East Tennessee: Greene, Hamblen, and Washington counties

The counties chosen to join the pilot have local leaders and education stakeholders who have demonstrated a strong interest in supporting the Drive to 55 and Complete Tennessee’s mission of improving higher education outcomes across the state’s network of technical and community colleges and universities.

Tennessee Postsecondary Attainment Challenges | Opportunities for Improvement

- Increase Attainment | Addressing Tennessee’s Postsecondary Challenges
Each Council’s Completion Plan of Action must be designed to address at least two of the following priority issues that Complete Tennessee has identified as opportunities to improve the state’s postsecondary attainment challenges:

Tennessee Postsecondary Attainment Challenges | Opportunities for Improvement

- Increasing high school students’ exposure to postsecondary programs, coursework, and institutions.
- Raising the number of adult returning students who complete a college degree or credential.
- Launching programs and initiatives that help low-income students complete a postsecondary program.
- Strengthening the education-to-career pipeline by fostering connections between industry and education leaders.

Tennessee Completion Challenges
Low-income students experience below-average graduation rates at two- and four-year colleges and universities.

The Tennessee Postsecondary Attainment Challenges | Opportunities for Improvement include:

- Postsecondary Support
- Adult Reconnect
- Secondary to Postsecondary
- Industry Engagement

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Complete Tennessee is a nonprofit 501(c)3 education advocacy organization focused on increasing postsecondary access and completion in Tennessee. Complete Tennessee’s mission will be advanced through three objectives: enhanced community engagement, improved research and accountability metrics, and innovative leadership development.

To learn more about Complete Tennessee, visit www.completetennessee.org.