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Tennessee Earns National Recognition for Workforce Development Program

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WASHINGTON – The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) honored the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development with the prestigious Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development at the 2023 Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. Presented by the Employment & Training Committee, this award is bestowed upon a state demonstrating excellence and innovation in the area of workforce development.

Tennessee received the award for its Project Reentry, Employment, Adult Education (R.E.A.P.) Program, a unique statewide program aimed at curbing recidivism, educating those currently incarcerated, and creating a new pipeline of qualified workers for employers in Tennessee. Project R.E.A.P. is putting specially designed computer tablets in Tennessee's county jail system to provide incarcerated individuals the opportunity to complete the required adult education coursework in preparation for the HiSET high school equivalency exam. In addition to the adult education course offerings, participants can also use the tablets for career training, certification reentry preparation, resume building, job search support, mental health services, and substance abuse wellness, as well as life skills and educational games, TED Talks, movies, and music.

“Project R.E.A.P. in Tennessee is breaking new ground by providing incarcerated individuals the necessary tools, resources, and education to reenter the workforce,” said NASWA President & CEO Scott B. Sanders. “Not only is this innovation enhancing their technical and educational skills, but it is also giving them the means needed to succeed in the workforce.”

“Tennessee realizes the potential for justice-involved individuals to make a meaningful impact on our state’s workforce once they reenter our communities,” said Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Deniece Thomas. “The technology Project R.E.A.P. provides allows these individuals to have better access to adult education courses while incarcerated, which benefits not only them but ultimately every Tennessean.”

For more information, visit NASWA’s [Winter Policy Forum](#) and [Employment & Training Committee](#) webpages.