



Built to be REDI.

“REDI” stands for Regional Economic Development Initiative and it is a program administered by Southwest Tennessee Development District in Jackson, Tennessee. REDI is focused on creating technology-based jobs in the region first by building a strong, educated workforce as the firm foundation -- and then by working with local and state entities to build the walls of infrastructure and the covering of higher quality jobs.



REDI's College Access Program:

Originally known as STEP, an acronym for Southwest Tennessee Educational Pathways, the REDI College Access program intends to change the educational culture of the region by embracing the inseparable ties between education, workforce readiness and economic development. Since March 2010, SWTDD's REDI staff has been visiting the 12 REDI counties to roll-out Phase I of REDI: Increasing the number of regional students graduating and entering into some form of post-secondary education. Recruitment of volunteer mentors is continuing with the lead being taken in each county by a local college access coordinator. As REDI's local college access coordinators recruit mentors, the REDI staff is training these volunteers. The long-term benefit is far reaching... Besides increasing our educational attainment levels, we are producing a more educated population and workforce to help West Tennessee grow and prosper for decades.

REDI's Funding Sources:

Besides financial investments by each REDI partner, REDI is receiving funds from Tennessee's College Access Challenge Grant. This formula grant program fosters partnerships in Federal, State and local government entities and philanthropic organizations to significantly increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. REDI is one of these partners!

We're working with area community colleges to enhance paths allowing students to more easily move from community college to a four-year university. We're building a College Mentor Corps of recent college grads to work with low-income high school seniors in the area. Tasks focus on academic preparation, FAFSA completion, college application completion and scholarship applications, all things that REDI is working on as well. It also seeks to impact student retention and completion.

REDI has already received grants totaling \$400,000 from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development and WIA Region 11. Additionally, REDI has applied for other grants to help further our regional initiative. We've submitted applications to the Economic Development Administration and to the United States Department of Agriculture. If awarded, these funds will help continue the implementation of REDI and allow us to roll-out a cutting-edge technology component, Digital Factories, in our program.



More on Digital Factories:

Job creation is a concern to all of our REDI counties. Our entire region has experienced the loss of manufacturing jobs over the last few years. In 2009 alone, our 12 county region lost 3,776 manufacturing jobs. In an effort to create jobs, REDI is working to roll out pilot "Digital Factories" in the region. These would be patterned after the one in Perry County and would be placed in our communities as grant funds became available. These centers would identify, train and place promising candidates into worldwide telecommuting career opportunities... online jobs. The Bureau of labor Statistics has documented 160 occupational codes in service provision that are considered off shorable and therefore a potential job for a rural West Tennessee community. Counties will be sent an RFI to submit to determine who will get the first round of factories. Staff is working on the pilot proposals and grant funds now.



Why Get involved?

According to research findings... Between the years 2008 and 2018, the number of new jobs in Tennessee requiring postsecondary education and training will grow by 194,000. Furthermore it is estimated that, by 2018, 54 percent of jobs in the State of Tennessee will REQUIRE postsecondary education.

We can't wait until tomorrow to respond to the needs that we see for our region's children and grandchildren today. To succeed in getting high school and non-traditional students the help and encouragement needed to become a registered college and/or technical school student will require volunteers who are willing to step up and make a difference one person at a time.

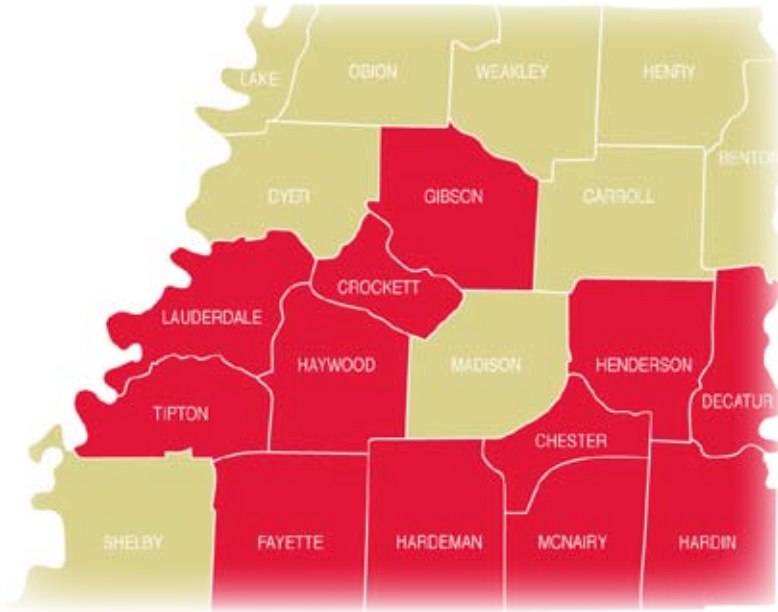
Get REDI:

It is easy to get involved in REDI! If you'd like to volunteer or if you have a student who needs assistance with applications for financial aid, admissions, and scholarships, we can help! Call Southwest Tennessee Development District's REDI staff and they'll put you in contact with your community's local college access coordinator.

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Making a difference for students today
and impacting the future
of West Tennessee
for a lifetime!

What is REDI:

REDI is a regional economic development initiative formed and administered by Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD) in Jackson, Tennessee. In short, we've created an award-winning regional collaboration between 12 REDI counties for the immediate benefit of students in these counties and for the long-term economic strength of our area.

In October of 2009, after nearly two years of planning, representatives from 13 communities in West Tennessee came together for a three day conference to discuss ways to make this REDI collaboration work. The result was a cutting-edge, enthusiastic public/private sector partnership.

In March 2010, SWTDD hired a REDI director and two REDI coordinators to canvas the 12 county area -- and they hit the ground running! Today, REDI is a nationally-recognized program that has already signed up more than 800 high school seniors and is training more than 260 mentors.

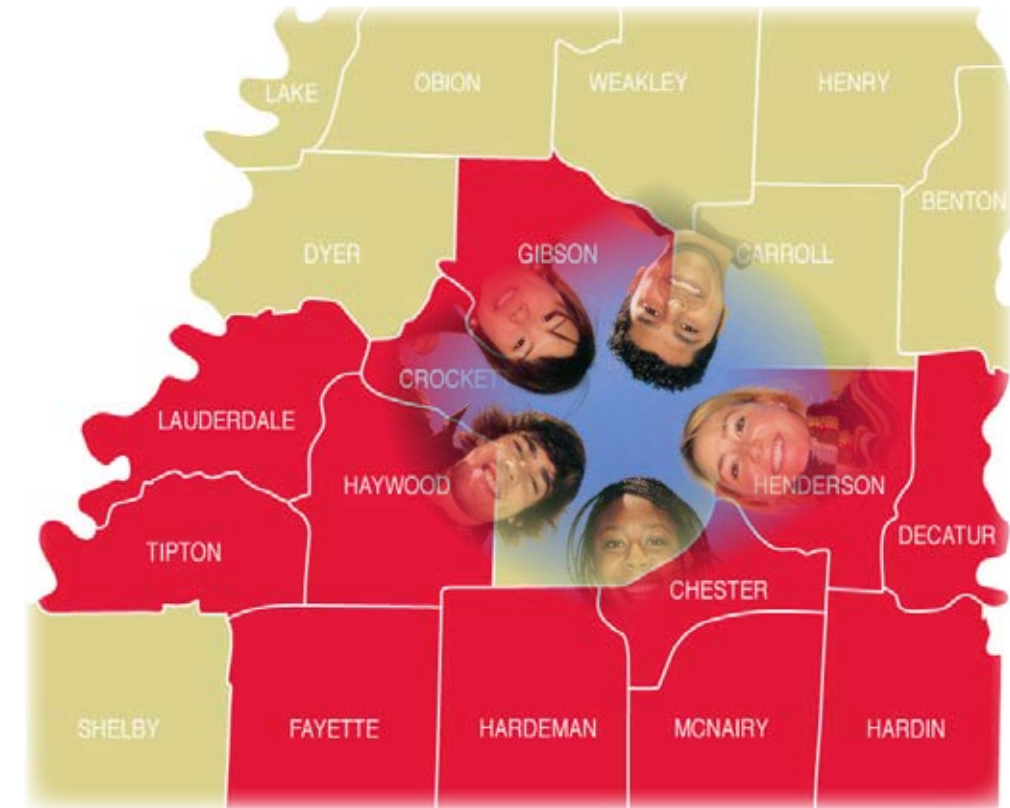
These REDI advisors/mentors/coordinators are helping students and their families understand the importance of postsecondary education, walking them through the daunting task of filling out financial aid forms and admissions paperwork, and providing career counseling when necessary to get the Class of 2011 graduates plugged into postsecondary education.

Besides multiple communities within each of our 12 counties, other REDI partners include private sector businesses, the State of Tennessee, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and West Tennessee Industrial Association.

Together REDI and its partners will transform the educational culture in West Tennessee and increase the area's potential for high quality, higher paying jobs in the years to come.

REDI Quick Facts:

- ★ REDI stands for Regional Economic Development Initiative and is administered by Southwest Tennessee Development District.
- ★ REDI is comprised of the following 12 counties in West Tennessee: Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, McNairy and Tipton.
- ★ The goal of REDI is to create a public/private sector partnership in this region of West Tennessee to address issues that affect job creation and quality of life for West Tennessee citizens.
- ★ The combined population of the REDI counties is 340,350 -- making "us" the 4th largest "county" in the State of Tennessee.
- ★ REDI has expanded State legislative coverage with seven Representatives and four Senators.
- ★ REDI has four areas of concentration: Education, Technology, Workforce Development and Capacity Building.
- ★ REDI is focused on creating technology-based jobs in the region.
- ★ REDI is the only regional initiative that has Education, Workforce Development and Economic Development -- all at the same table -- working together to make improvements in the region.
- ★ The REDI program is a two-phase College Access Program designed to change the educational culture of West Tennessee and improve the educational attainment levels of the region.
- ★ Phase I of REDI is a volunteer mentoring program. These mentors are trained to work with area students on the importance of post-secondary education, advisement on career paths, and provide assistance with admissions applications and financial aid forms.
- ★ Phase II of REDI is a "Last Dollar Scholarship" designed to pay the last dollar for a student for two years to a Community College or Technical School.



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