



# SKILL UP TENNESSEE: 2023 JOB TRAINING PROGRAM ECONOMIC IMPACTS

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## SNAP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) and states to provide training and employment services to eligible SNAP participants (USDA-FNS, 2018). Established in 1985 by Congress, the SNAP E&T program is administered by states and territories through local service providers. The ultimate goal of SNAP E&T is to help SNAP participants gain skills, training, work, or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment, thus leading to self-sufficiency. Access to robust post-secondary training and education, individualized case management, assessment and support combined with participant supportive services help participants in SNAP E&T realize their goals (Food and Nutrition Service, 2022).

The purpose of this publication is to highlight the 2023 impacts of Skill Up Tennessee (Skill Up TN), the University of Tennessee Extension's (UT Extension) SNAP E&T program. Skill Up TN Program participation, regional differences for participants across Tennessee, and estimates of the economic impacts of the program on the state economy are presented. In addition, this report chronicles program impacts from 2020 to 2023. Similar publications were produced highlighting the impacts of the 2020, 2021, and 2022 SNAP E&T programs (Upendram et al., 2021; Sneed et al. 2022; Upendram et al., 2023).

## SKILL UP TN DESCRIPTION

Skill Up TN is UT Extension's SNAP E&T program that is conducted in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). The purpose of the program is to assist eligible SNAP participants in gaining skills, training, work or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment. The ultimate goal is the self-sufficiency of individual participants and sustainability of the program.

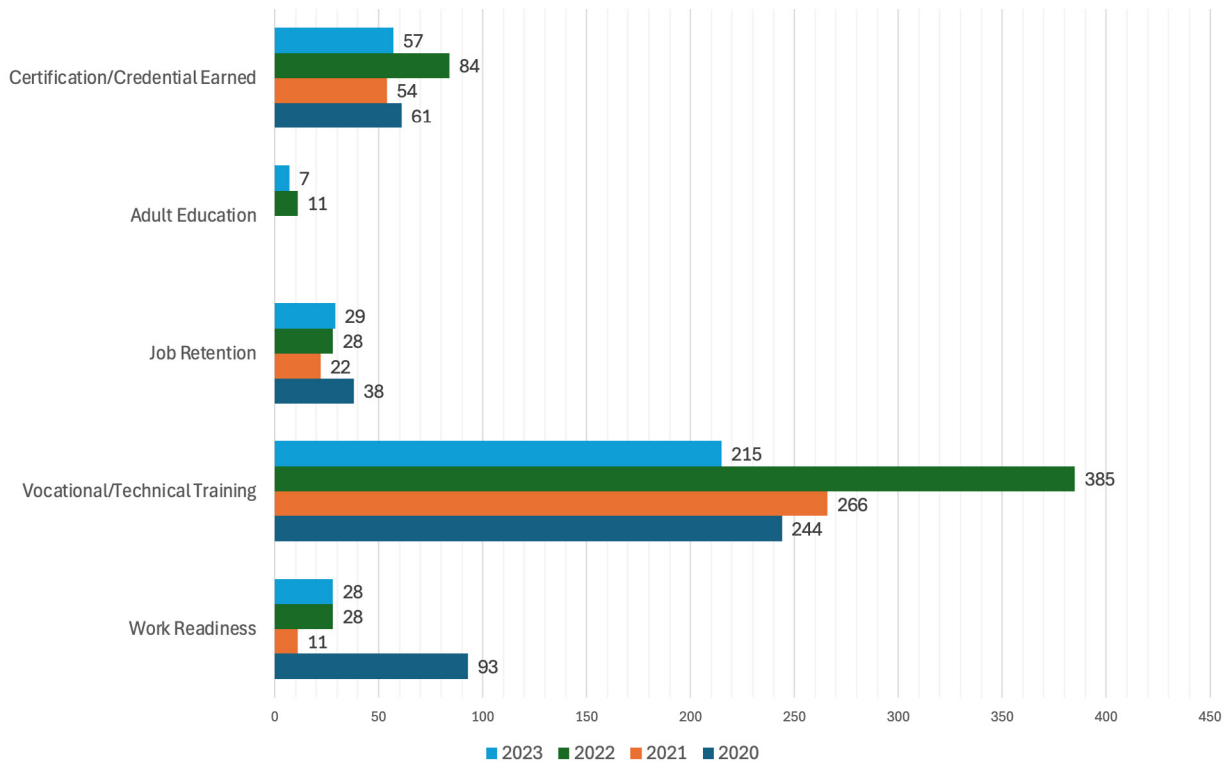
For those eligible to participate, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension educators, along with regional Skill Up TN Career Navigators, offer a menu of educational services, including:

- Individual assessment to help an individual set and achieve employment goals;
- Career navigation to help in pursuing training, finding the right job, and obtaining any needed support;
- Access to services such as vocational technical training and job retention to prepare for success;
- Supportive services to help pay for training and starting a job.

In 2023, 722 individuals from 80 counties were recruited and signed up for participation in the Skill Up TN program. After eligibility reviews, a total of 311 individuals participated in the Skill Up TN program. An additional 352 individuals were referred to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In 2023, a total of 28 participants enrolled in work readiness training. The number of participants enrolled in vocational technical training at a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT), community college, or other training provider was 215. In 2023, 29 participants enrolled in job retention services. Fifty-seven participants earned recognized credentials or received certification in vocational/technical training. Figure 2 displays changes in component participation and credentialing/ certification.

It is important to note that many participants often participate in multiple educational services offered through the Skill Up TN program as they work toward their career goals. Skill Up TN walks with participants, sometimes for years, on their journey toward employment.

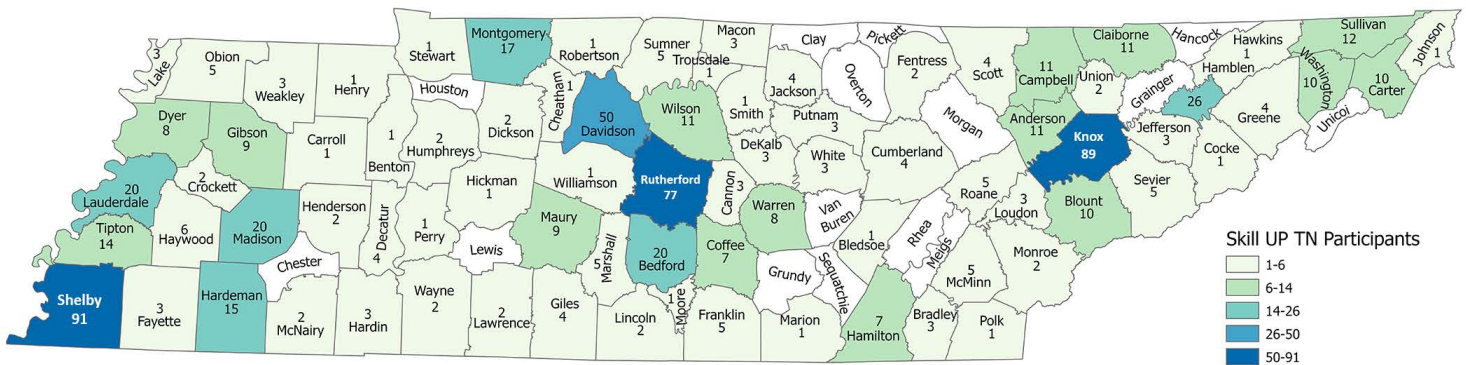


Note: No data were available for adult education participation in 2020 and 2021.

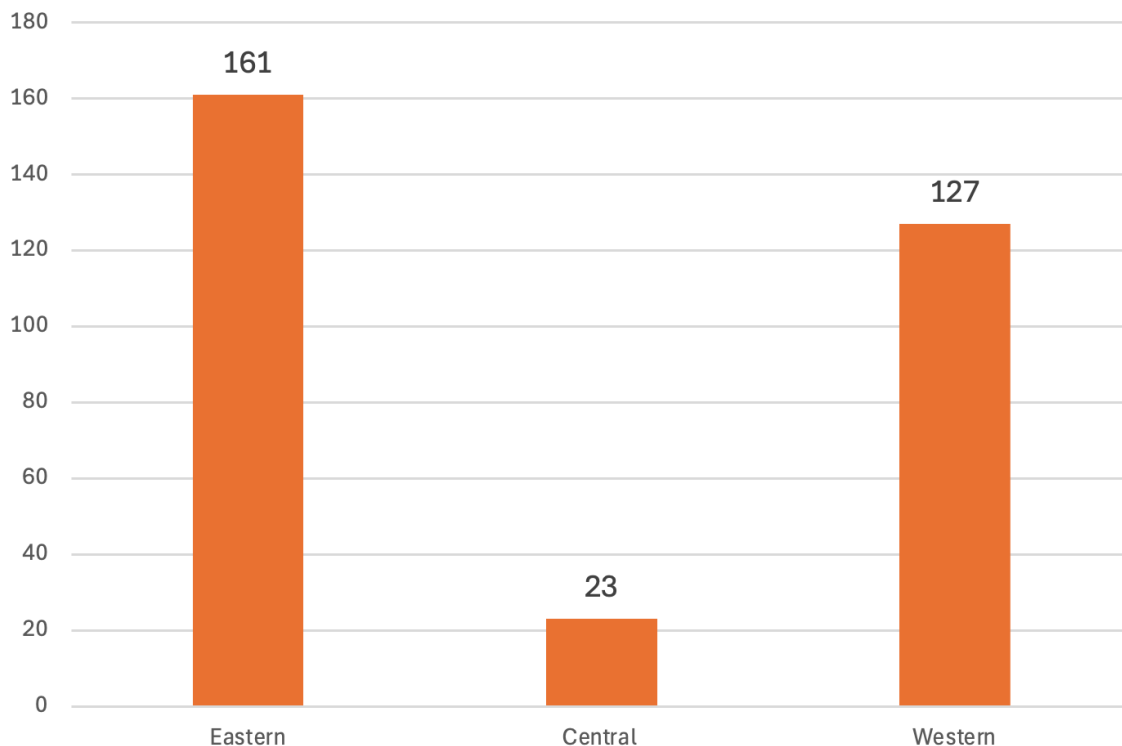
Figure 1. Component Participation 2020 to 2023

## STATEWIDE PRESENCE

Across our state, Skill Up TN is working to connect participants with support and resources to help them gain the training and skills needed for employment. Figure 2 shows the spatial distribution of Skill Up TN recruitment in 2023 by county. Even in counties with no reported recruitment, active marketing and promotion of the Skill Up TN program were conducted by the FCS Extension educators and/or the Skill Up TN Career Navigators.



From those recruited, Skill Up TN served 161 participants from the Western region, 23 from the Central region, and 127 from the Eastern region (Figure 3). There was a staff vacancy in the Central region until mid-June 2023. Thus, the number of participants from the Central region is lower. During this vacancy, participants recruited from the Central region were sent to TDLWD for case management.



**Figure 3. Skill Up TN Recruitment by Extension Region**

It is important to note that participation in SNAP E&T is voluntary for participants and not required to receive SNAP benefits. Recruitment efforts continue to be strengthened in underserved regions of the state. These efforts will improve workforce opportunities for residents in these counties and enhance economic development.

### **ECONOMIC MODEL - IMPLAN**

Economic impact analysis using IMPLAN, an economic input-output database and modeling system (IMPLAN Group, LLC), provides descriptive measures including output, employment and value-added for up to 546 industrial sectors in the economy. Total industry output is defined as the value of production by industry per year. Employment represents the total wage and salary of employees plus self-employed jobs in a region for both full-time and part-time workers. Total value added is defined as all income paid to workers by employers, including the value of certain benefits; self-employed net income; interests, rents, royalties, dividends and profit payments; and excise and sales taxes paid by individuals as collected by businesses.

Multipliers measure the response of the economy to a change in demand or production. A multiplier measures how dollars are re-invested and circulated in a local economy, leading to additional economic activity (Hughes, 2018). Multiplier analysis generally focuses on the effects of external changes on: a) the output of the sectors in the economy, b) the income earned by households because of the new outputs and c) the employment (in physical terms) that is expected to be generated because of the new outputs.

When a particular industry sector is expected to change, increase or decrease, three types of impacts economy-wide are measured: Direct, indirect and induced effects:

- Direct effects are the immediate effects associated with a change in the final demand for a particular industry.
- The indirect effects are the secondary effects, or production changes in backward-linked industries that provide goods and services.
- The induced effects represent the response by all local industries caused by increased expenditures resulting from new household income and inter-institutional transfers generated from the direct and indirect effects of the change in final demand for a specific industry.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The 2023 output impacts<sup>1</sup> of the Skill Up TN program on the state's economy are presented in Figure 4.

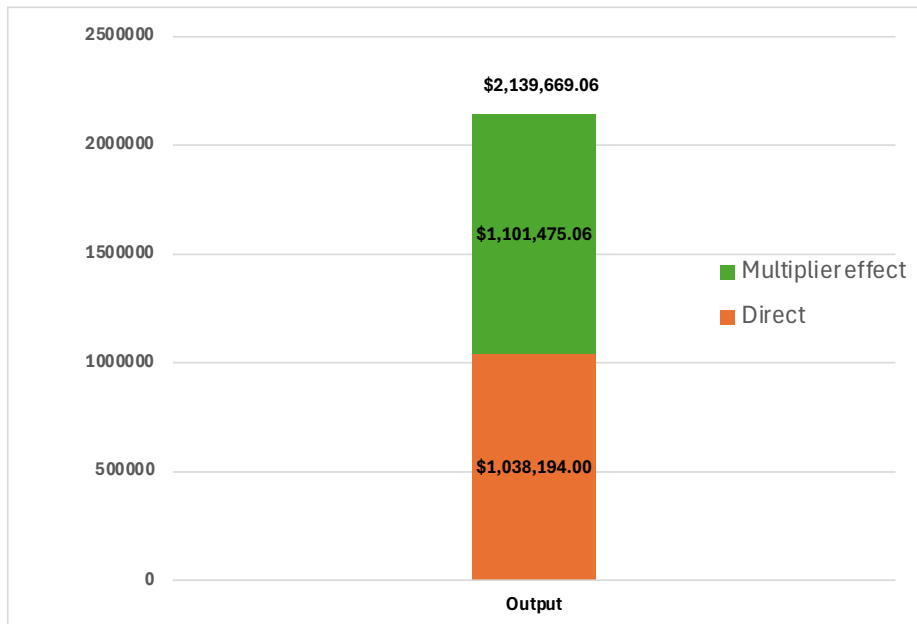


Figure 4. 2023 Impacts

In 2023, the program's direct spending (output change) devoted to training participants across Tennessee is estimated at \$1,038,194, which was attributed to IMPLAN Sector 495 (community food, housing and other relief services, including rehabilitation services). With multiplier effects (indirect and induced impacts), the total estimated economic impact of the Skill Up TN program is estimated to be \$2,139,669. For every dollar of direct output from Skill Up TN, the total economic impact on the state's economy is \$2.06. Figure 5 illustrates the total economic impact adjusted for inflation. Figure 6 displays changes in economic impact per dollar and are not adjusted for inflation since we are comparing the level of economic impact over time.



For every **dollar** of direct output from Skill Up TN the total economic impact on the state's economy is **\$2.06**.

Figure 5. Total Economic Impact (In 2024 Dollars)

<sup>1</sup>The state benefits from a reduction in government spending on income support programs and an increased employment pool due to the Skill UP TN program; these impacts are not assessed and are not included in the economic impacts.

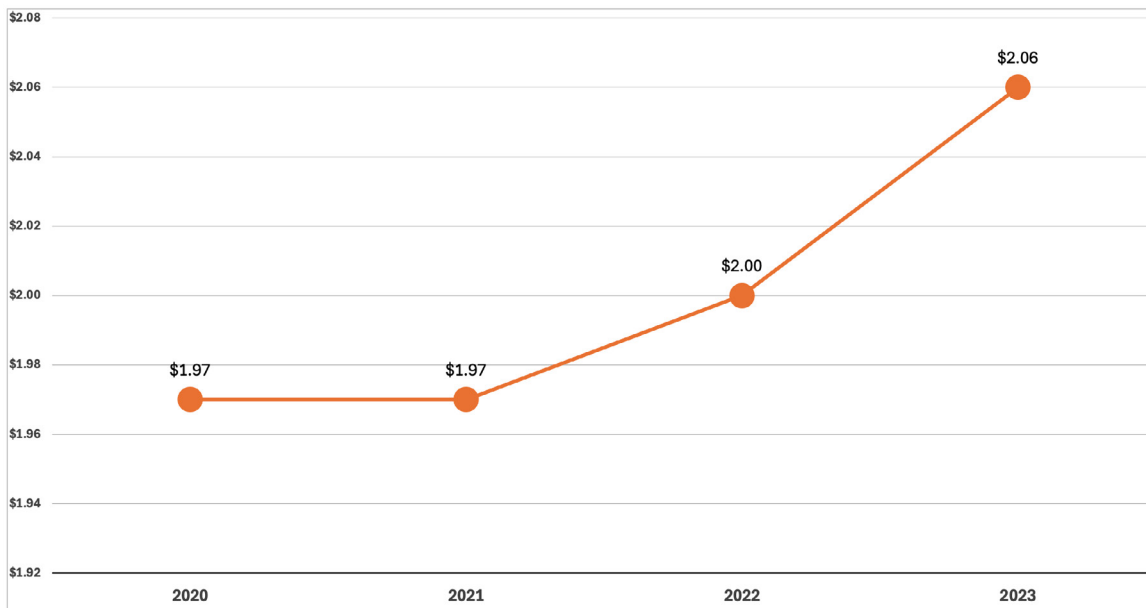


Figure 6. Economic Impact per Dollar

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Across the state, Skill Up TN, UT Extension's SNAP E&T program, is making an impact in the lives of Tennessee families with limited resources. Through career coaching, technical training leading to industry-recognized credentials, work readiness training, supportive services and more, individuals and families are realizing their career dreams thanks to the outreach and work of Extension's educators and Skill Up TN Career Navigators.

Skill Up TN's impact is not limited to the participants who are served. The economy of the state is positively impacted as well. Every dollar of direct output from Skill Up TN leads to \$2.06 in state-level output.

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