

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Martin Walsh
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Walsh:

RE: State of Alabama Program Year 2021 WIOA Titles I and III Annual Report

We are pleased to submit the enclosed State of Alabama's *Program Year (PY) 2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report*. This *Report* contains the Alabama PY 2021 program performance data required under USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 05-18 dated November 7, 2018, which states were instructed to use for the PY 2021 WIOA *Annual Report*. Additionally, this *Report* details other WIOA activities conducted in Alabama during PY 2021.

Alabama continues to focus on collaboration and integration of workforce development resources throughout the state. Alabama looks forward to providing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded workforce development programs to citizens as the State strives to meet the demands of employers for skilled people during this challenging time.

Please direct any questions regarding the Alabama Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act *PY 2021 Annual Report* to Tammy Wilkinson at (334) 242-5154 or Stephen Smith at (334) 309-9085.

Sincerely,



Greg Canfield, Secretary
Alabama Department of Commerce


Fitzgerald Washington (Nov 29, 2022 15:53 CST)

Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary
Alabama Department of Labor

GC:FW:TW:dc

Enclosure

c: Winston Tompoe
Susan Tesone
Julian Hardy

State of Alabama
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, *Titles I & III*
Program Year 2021 Annual Report

Submitted by

Alabama Department of Commerce
Alabama Department of Labor

Prepared for
Martin J. Walsh
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor

November 28, 2022

Prepared in Accordance with WIOA Section 185(d) Specifications

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Attachment A - Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT)

Overview

Program Year (PY) 2021 was a challenging year for workforce development in Alabama. Workforce development experienced interruptions and challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis that struck during Spring 2020. However, throughout the crisis and as it subsided, Alabama continued to focus on the needs of workers and employers in the state including job skills, education, relevant occupational skills training, and work-based learning to give individuals skills needed to obtain a job and enjoy the quality of life they desire.

Workforce development continues to prepare individuals with the occupational skills necessary for work. It is recruiting, placing, mentoring, and counseling potential employees; and it is combining education, employment, and job training efforts.

Alabama's workforce development system is working to manage labor shortages for skilled workers, to increase the business community's satisfaction with education and training, to ensure that workforce development activities are integrated into Alabama's economic development strategies, and to assist special populations with entering into the workforce and becoming self-sufficient.

A continuous evaluation of industry needs and programs that support those needs enables Alabama to provide the most up-to-date and innovative training available with the funding provided through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). For PY 2021, the state continued to collect data for WIOA performance measures. The state reported on all measures put into place under WIOA including Youth Median Earnings (2nd Quarter post-exit); Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gains (Current Quarter). State and local program administrators have benefited as Alabama progresses toward a fully integrated workforce system that concentrates on these demand-driven accountability measures.

The Alabama Career Center System, a proud partner of the American Job Center Network, through its network of fifty-six (56) Career Centers, delivers workforce development services to employers and employees eligible for, and in need of, these services. Each Career Center System location provides customers with needed self-service and customized career services and access to education, job training, employment referral, and other workforce development services. Prospective employees may obtain career counseling and individual case manager assessment services. Those with marketable occupational and employable skills may not require Career Center System services beyond direct placement assistance. Individuals who need to be skilled, reskilled, or upskilled will receive the required training.

In regard to adult programs, funds are being used for On-The-Job Training (OJT) where up to fifty (50) percent of an eligible employee's salary (considered a training cost) for up to six (6) months can be reimbursed to an employer. There were also active Incumbent Worker agreements for-profit, non-profit, and governmental employers for training (funded with Governor's set-aside funds to help current employees get trained on the latest manufacturing techniques). Funds continue to be used to pay for tuition and the cost of books for dislocated workers, adults, and youth to attend a two-year college or other postsecondary institution to learn new skills needed to re-enter the workforce. Additionally, short-term, job-driven training is provided for dislocated workers and adults to help them acquire the skills necessary to re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible. These services were made more accessible due to the ability to transfer funds (up to 100 percent) between the adult and dislocated worker programs. During Program Year 2021, the greatest need was for the adult program.

The funding agency for Commerce's WIOA funds is the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), and states have until June 30, 2024, to spend all of the PY 2021 workforce funds.

The work of state leaders, coupled with the resources and programs available, has helped increase the economic prosperity and educational attainment of its citizens. This Annual Report documents Alabama's record of achievement in its 20th full year of these programs.

Waiver Requests

The State of Alabama had two waivers in place during PY 2021.

Waiver Allowing the Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth, Ages 14 – 21

This waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 allowed the state to offer Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to in-school youth. The waiver enhanced the state's ability to serve in-school youth with ITAs. A total of seventeen (17) in-school youth were enrolled in ITAs during PY 2021. Expected programmatic outcomes included:

- Serving 100 in-school youth per year who would not be eligible for an ITA otherwise (i.e., as an Adult participant)
- 50% of in-school youth enrolled in ITAs will earn a credential
- 45% of in-school youth enrolled in ITAs will obtain a Measurable Skills Gain

This waiver has not boosted participation numbers as expected. Two (2) youth were enrolled statewide during PY 2021, who would not have been eligible for an ITA as an adult (ages 16 or 17). However, there are currently ninety-two (92) youth who entered into an ITA during previous program years at ages 16 or 17. 100% earned a credential, and 100% earned a Measurable Skills Gain.

This waiver will continue to be available in PY 2022. Participation rates will be considered prior to any applications for the waiver to be extended is submitted.

Waiver of the Requirement that states and local areas expend 75% of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY)

This waiver of the requirements of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 allowed the state and local areas to lower the minimum expenditure of funds expended on out-of-school youth from 75% to 50%. Expected measurable programmatic outcomes include:

- An additional 200 in-school youth will be served each year as a result of this waiver
- The decreased dropout rate will result in a shrinking pool of potential out-of-school youth by 10% of the number of dropouts

The state did not use this waiver. This waiver expired at the end of PY 2021.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Performance Measure

On August 31, 2017, the Alabama State Workforce Development Board approved Approaches 1 and 2, which are Retention with the same employer and Repeat Business Customer and recommended that Alabama research a state specific approach.

Approach 1 Retention with the same employer — addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers.

- This approach is useful in determining whether the core programs are serving employers effectively by improving the skills of their workforce and decreasing employee turnover.
- Number of participants who exited who were employed by the same employer during 2nd quarter and 4th quarter after exit/number of participants who exited during the reporting period
- Captured by UI and WRIS wage records

Approach 2 Repeat Business Customers — addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time.

- This approach is useful in determining whether employers, who receive services from the core programs, are satisfied with those services and become repeat customers. This approach also assesses the workforce system's ability to develop and maintain strong relationships with employers over extended periods of time.
- Number of establishments that received an employer service or continues to receive and received an employer service anytime with the previous 3 program years/ number of establishments that received an employer service anytime within the previous 3 program years.
- This data is captured by AlabamaWorks for Title I and Title III and Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services captures data with their in-house system. Adult Education does not provide any employer data for this measure.

In PY2021, Alabama's Workforce Development system served 7,180 employers with support services and information, assisted 11,863 employers with recruitment assistance, and 1,557 employers with training services. Alabama only had 28 employers who were downsizing or closing and utilized Rapid Response assistance. As for Retention with the same employer during the second and fourth quarters after exit, Alabama had 1,451 participants who remained at the same employer out of 27,693 total participants served which is about 5.20%. Alabama had a 24.30% Repeat Business Customer Rate by serving 11,670 employers of 48,106 employers. Since the Covid pandemic has eased and businesses are looking for more employees, Alabama anticipates these numbers to increase as the staff in the Workforce System are doing more to reach out to businesses to assist with finding and retaining valuable employees.

WIOA Section 116(e) Process Evaluations

During PY 2021 Alabama initiated and furthered several new and ongoing process evaluation activities as defined under WIOA Section 116(e).

- Ongoing evaluations of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program performance
- Implementation of discretionary grant performance evaluation policy
- Development of the State Evaluation Plan and revisions to the sanctions policy
- Continued improvement of Quarterly Reporting Analysis element accuracy
- Research into the Employment Related to Training metric

- Updates to the State Data Validation policy
- Interfacing with SNAP and TANF to populate key priority target data
- Creation of the WIOA Provider Performance evaluation process
- Evaluation of Career Center traffic and marketing activities
- Analysis of stakeholder and customer feedback
- Fiscal and Programmatic Monitoring and Technical Assistance
- Continuous training for all stakeholders and employees including:
 - State and Local Workforce Board Training
 - Administrative and Case Management Training
 - Monitoring and Oversight Training

All current and planned evaluation activities are outlined on the WDD website at: <https://wioa-alabama.org/information-management-reporting-section/>.

During PY 2021 several efforts to coordinate projects with WIOA, partner agencies, and workforce boards solidified a thoroughly developed working relationship with all required and optional partners and stakeholders to the workforce system. All process evaluation activities detailed above are presented to these partners and boards on at least an annual basis. Workforce partners and details on these working relationships can be found at: Alabama State Workforce Board | Alabama Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act | Alabama (wioa-alabama.org).

To ensure protection of restricted participant information and in compliance with digital privacy requirements, the State of Alabama does not make publicly available the evaluation reports developed by the State Reporting Section or the Program Integrity Section. These sections are tasked with the creation and retention of these deliverables; the authority to disseminate such reports rests with WDD management. Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities for these sections can be found at the WIOA-alabama.org website.

Information/Research requests, compliance reviews, and similar State and Federal evaluations are processed through the Workforce Development Division's State Reporting Section. The Section is responsible for administration of the AlabamaWorks! system, preparation for on-site visits and compliance reviews, developing policy and procedures for research/evaluation, developing/maintaining workforce data for evaluation activities, analyzing workforce processes, delivering performance and evaluation reports, and providing technical assistance through the AlabamaWorks! Helpdesk.

In PY2021, Alabama began the development of an Evaluation Design Plan which is set to be completed and implemented during PY2021. This Plan will serve as a State Reporting Section policy guide and as reference for the workforce system using the DOL definition of evaluation described in WIOA 116(e). This multi-year evaluation plan focuses on Alabama's key and immediate research questions in addition to complying with existing Federal requirements regarding continuous improvement.

Per TEGL 23-19, Change 1, "States and outlying areas must summarize their data validation methodology, policies, and procedures in their annual narrative performance reports." Data Validation is the process of ensuring the accuracy of reported data (which corresponds to quarterly/annual performance calculations as well as Eligibility elements) through electronic or physical review of participant records and their supporting documentation. Validation is followed by Data Reconciliation, which is the process of correcting errors found in validation and developing policies and procedures to prevent similar errors from reoccurring. WDD has placed the responsibility of data validation with the State Reporting Section. The

State of Alabama performs quarterly data validation processes to inform the annual Data Validation Report which is then submitted to USDOL alongside annual performance.

Customer Satisfaction

Alabama's Career Centers launched a formal standardized Customer Satisfaction Survey for job seekers and employers in PY 2017. The survey is a written survey requesting feedback for the individual Career Center that provided services and is included in the *Alabama Career Center System Guide to Customer Services*. Surveys are provided to both employers and individuals seeking workforce related assistance. Career centers attempt to contact customers to address any issues that are discovered from the surveys.

During PY 2021, of the 6,321 job seekers responding to the survey, 72.897.3% considered the services exceptional, and 97.4% said the Career Center services were good or better. Of the 447 employers who responded to the survey, 99.5% said the Career Center services "met expectations".

Feedback from the surveys is monitored in each Career Center and changes are implemented as needed as part of the Career Center's continuous improvement plan. Additionally, as part of each Career Center Certification process, goals are established for each Career Center to promote continuous improvement.

The new AlabamaWorks! combined data information system for *Title I* and *Title III* programs replaced AIL (current *Title III* data system) and the AlaWorks system (current *Title I* data system). The new AlabamaWorks! system has allowed all Career Center partners to work closer together than ever before. A better understanding of participant data and reporting by the Career Center Partners has put everyone on the same playing field. Performance measures can now be understood and discussed among *Title I* and *Title III* Career Center staff while being shared with the local workforce boards. Due to the time it has taken to implement the new system and pandemic issues, the standardized customer satisfaction survey continues to be used until the AlabamaWorks! vendor can implement a better survey into the new system.

Achievements

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

In PY 2021 the State of Alabama's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), with the support of the State Workforce Board, continued their efforts in the application of industry-focused, sector strategies and career pathways. In partnership with the Regional Workforce Council (RWC) for each Local Area, targeted industry was engaged throughout the process and provided valuable feedback on the strategic plans. The success of the LWDAs workforce models was built on cluster engagement and direction. LWDAs met quarterly to focus on employment and training needs in their respective regions. (Some of these meetings were virtual due to COVID-19.) Workforce Development Board and Regional Workforce Council meetings are held on the same day to increase participation since the boards share many of the same members. Some of the clusters the LWDAs focused on include Advanced/Modern Manufacturing, Automotive, Agriculture & Forestry, Aviation, Construction, Health Care, IT/Cyber Security, and Logistics/Transportation, Services – Education, Retail, Lodging, and Food Service. LWDAs focused on three to seven of these clusters depending on the industries located in the area. Through these clusters, needs were assessed and working groups were formed to work on projects or initiatives. Even though the strategic work was industry driven, the LWDAs also had tremendous engagement with education partners and service providers, who were also engaged at all levels of the process. This work focusing on the sectors is continual.

Strategies to connect employers and job seekers includes a partnership between the Regional Workforce Council, local schools, and local businesses to conduct World of Works Career Exploration events (WOW) allowing local in-demand industries to reach in school youth. The interactive WOW platform remained

virtual in PY21 with hopes of returning to in-person events in the next program year. Job fairs connecting employers and job seekers began to return towards the latter part of PY21, allowing businesses to reach a wide variety of job seekers, including adult, dislocated workers, and youth.

The focus on sector strategies and career pathways can also be seen in the Requests for Proposals (RFP) for WIOA programs by various local areas. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for WIOA youth program providers was released by Central Alabama Works! in Summer 2021 and in Spring 2022, and the Central Alabama Partnership for Employment and Training (CAPTE) also issued an RFP for youth providers to provide career preparation in line with local industries and other activities. The five Governor's Local Workforce Areas also had ongoing RFPs for occupational skills training programs open throughout PY 2021. All potential proposals must align with the main industry clusters of the local area. RFPs also require potential proposals to provide training that allows program participants to enter into a career pathway and be able to advance within that industry cluster.

In addition to making plans to offer Occupational Skills Training Programs directly, all seven LWDA's have an Individual Training Account (ITA) Program. Participants in the program are required to choose short-term training in line with high demand occupations in line with the industry sectors in the state. ITAs provide educational or occupational skills training services, and they are currently the primary medium to deliver WIOA training services. ITA services may only be provided to WIOA participants by those training providers who have applied for placement and have been placed on the Eligible Training Provider List. The normal limitation on length of training for regular WIOA funded ITAs is two years. The LWDA's provide all ITA services for adults and dislocated workers.

Prospective education and/or occupational skills training providers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain and subsequently retain WIOA training provider status. Postsecondary education institutions, which offer instruction leading to generally recognized certification in high-demand occupational skills, and other institutions providing similar vocational instruction services, are among the entities, which may apply for inclusion on the state's Eligible Training Provider List.

Youth, including in-school youth served through the ITA in-school youth waiver, are eligible for ITAs through each LWDA's youth program. This program offers enrollment to programs offered by two-year colleges or other eligible training provider's occupational skills training class. Training is generally restricted to occupational fields of demonstrated local labor market demand. Participants are provided the appropriate supportive services, which may encourage them to remain in their respective training programs through completion. Participants receive job placement assistance upon receipt of occupational skills achievement certification.

The ITA service delivery model continues to be monitored, revised, and implemented with ongoing success. Based on the principle of customer choice, the ITA is designed to allow each participant to develop a career strategy and to pursue training based on the most effective track for his / her individual interests and skills. During PY 2021, approximately 7,570 participants were enrolled in ITAs utilizing regular formula WIOA funds.

Work-Based Learning

Apprenticeship - The State of Alabama through its Incumbent Worker Training Program (funded through the Governor's set-aside funds) offers an opportunity for employers to receive reimbursement for Related Technical Instruction expenses such as tuition for Registered Apprentices, who are also incumbent workers. During PY 2021, one employer, the City of Huntsville Utilities was awarded funds to provide training for apprentices to attend training. Twenty-nine (29) participants earned Water Distribution Operator

Certification.

The State of Alabama also continued to make efforts to connect apprentices with WIOA training to support their apprenticeships through the Individual Training Account Program (ITA) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program. Additionally, the State of Alabama received an Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant in PY2019 that continued into PY2021. This grant funded an OJT program specifically for apprentices and these participants were also co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser (W-P) and WIOA career (intensive) services. This program served 98 participants in PY2021 and will continue during PY2022.

In an effort to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship has established the first master's degree Registered Apprenticeship program with a Historically Black College and University in the country. Historically apprenticeships have focused on the trade industries with larger male enrollment. Offering an apprenticeship in social work is a new concept, and the social work field is predominantly female.

On-the-Job Training - The LWDAs (throughout the state) also offer On-the-Job (OJT) training programs. The OJT program gives individuals an opportunity to learn new job skills and allows employers to train new employees while saving money on training costs. A Business Services Representative (BSR) from the local Career Center or WIOA administrative entity and the employer create a training plan that defines training objectives and goals for the trainee(s). During PY2021 employers received up to fifty (50) percent reimbursement of hourly wages paid to a trainee. A negotiated predetermined training period ranged from six (6) to twenty-six (26) weeks based on the skill level of the participant(s) and the training occupation. This program is designed to fulfill the employment needs of local employers by providing a trained workforce while increasing productivity and profits.

There are two (2) OJT programs: New Hire and Performance-Based. The ultimate goal of both OJT training programs is permanent employment upon successful completion of training. The New Hire OJT program may allow an employer to receive up to fifty (50) percent reimbursement of hourly wages paid to a trainee. The reimbursement serves as an incentive to encourage employers to hire individuals who do not have all of the required skills for a particular job. This OJT training program places trainees in occupations that enhance long-term employment opportunities.

The Performance-Based training program is designed to offer training to employers for a large number of employees for a short period of training time. The training hours, training plans, number of trainees' costs, and wages are negotiated through the Workforce Development Division (WDD) Staff for five of the Governor's local workforce development areas. Employers are eligible for training cost reimbursement only if the trainee completes the training plus one day and is retained on the employer's payroll. All Performance-Based agreements are different, based on the employer's needs at that time.

In addition to WIOA funds, during PY2021 the WDD also provided OJT to additional individuals through a separate grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Reimagine Workforce Preparation fund. The Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program approved 46 employers for OJT and provided training to approximately 420 individuals. Training was for up to 225 hours reimbursed at \$9.00 per hour. All positions were in high demand industries and had a minimum wage of \$12.00 per hour. All of these participants were also co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA and received career services.

[Youth: Summer Program/Work Experience](#)

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment, Inc. (SWAPTE) Local Workforce

Development Area has a longstanding partnership with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to provide select in-school youth with the opportunity to gain work experience via a summer jobs program. This program can accommodate participants who are substantially impaired by lost vision or hearing. Special job development is done to identify areas where these young people can be productive and receive real world experience in the elements of having and maintaining employment. During the most recent summer, SWAPTE served 35 youth through this initiative.

The five (5) Governor's Local Workforce Development Area's (GLWDAs) services for out-of-school youth ages 16 - 24 included a Work-Based Learning Activity offered through the Career Centers located in the LWDAs. This activity included work experience in public nonprofit businesses and private-for-profit businesses. The goal of the program is to promote the development of good work habits and basic work skills by participation in a structured paid work-based learning activity. Objectives included: improving a participant's work maturity skills through meaningful work-based learning assignments and proper supervision; and/or enhancing a participant's academic and other basic skills through relevant worksite experience. Work-Based Learning participants may work up to 32 hours per week for a maximum of 390 hours. The participant's hourly rate of pay varies from \$7.25 to \$19.66 per hour depending on the Local Workforce Development Area and the type of employment.

Other Youth Services

The seven Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) oversaw the delivery of existing programs to area youth with great success. Local area providers offered a variety of training, job readiness, and academic remediation programs for PY 2021 in an effort to better reach difficult to serve youth. Twenty-two (22) providers were identified and contracted by the seven local areas throughout the state for funding and programs were implemented to make available the 14 Youth Program Elements as required by WIOA, as well as numerous additional resources for youth.

The Youth programs funded by the local areas offered the following services (some activities may not have been offered by all local boards) directly or via referral during PY 2021.

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or a recognized postsecondary credential
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training
- Work-based learning programs that include paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships, apprenticeships and job shadowing as appropriate
- Occupational skills training which includes training that leads to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand occupations or industry sectors in the local area
- Education, offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area
- Leadership development opportunities, which include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors as appropriate
- Supportive Services
- Adult mentoring
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling

- Financial literacy education for the ability to create household budgets and savings goals, manage spending, credit, debit, and to understand credit scores and financial services.
- Follow-up services that continue for a period of not less than twelve months after the completion of program participation. Follow-up services are based on the needs of the individual.

The services provided through the WIOA system are evaluated on specific criteria set forth by the USDOL and by the WDD. WIOA focuses on young adults who meet the Out-of-School Youth criteria. Youth are expected to earn a credential such as a GED or High School Diploma. Programs must also pre-test participants and offer them assistance in math or reading if the youth tests below an eighth-grade level. Youth enrollees are prepared for the workplace and assisted with job placement or supported in their pursuit of continuing education.

In order to meet these goals, youth receive individual assessment for academic achievement skills, assessment of occupational skills, employability, aptitudes and interests and prior work history, guidance services, and services that prepare for post-secondary education and training. Youth assessed to need academic reinforcement, job readiness/workplace skills, world-of-work transition services, and other available services are directed to area providers of these services. Participants may be provided either intermediate or longer-term career planning services.

[State Funded Activities \(Governor's Fifteen Percent\)](#)

[Eligible Training Provider List](#)

The Workforce Development Division (WDD) uses the AlabamaWorks! Internet-based system to better ensure that the customers of local Career Centers have appropriate access to the state's Eligible Training Provider List. Development and maintenance of this system requires a great deal of cooperation between the WIOA *Title I* Career Center partner agencies and various training providers. Alabama Career Center staff have been trained in the use of the Eligible Training Provider List.

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) has provided guidance regarding methods for the certification, gathering and reporting of performance information, initial certification of out-of-state providers, and recertification of in-state and out-of-state providers. The WDD strives to keep training program information as current and up-to-date as possible.

Presently, there are approximately seventy-four (74) different training providers and approximately seven hundred fifty-three (753) separate programs on Alabama's WIOA Eligible Training Provider List. Twenty-two (22) of these providers are part of the Alabama Community College System and have over sixty-five (65) locations throughout the State. There are also twenty-nine (29) Registered Apprenticeship Programs on the WIOA Eligible Training Provider List. The Alabama Eligible Training Provider List may be accessed at <http://www.alabamaworks.alabama.gov>.

[Incumbent Worker Training Program](#)

The Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) is administered through the Alabama Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division (WDD). Section 134(a)(3)(A)(i) of the WIOA authorizes Incumbent Worker Training as a statewide workforce development activity. Alabama's IWTP was funded through Governor's Ten (10) Percent funds in Program Year 2021. The IWTP provides assistance to Alabama employers to help with expenses associated with new or updated skills training of current, full-time, employees. For-profit companies, non-profits and governmental organizations in operation in Alabama for at least two (2) years are eligible to apply for IWTP funds. An interested company must have at least one full-time, permanent employee other than its owner. Companies seeking IWTP funding must also be current

on all state and federal tax obligations. Applicants must provide a dollar-for-dollar “soft” match to requested funds. A soft match can include, but is not limited to, employee wages, benefits, and cash payments to vendors. Each applicant was eligible to apply for up to \$30,000 of IWTP funds in PY 2021 subject to not exceeding the lifetime award of \$60,000.00.

Successful IWTP applicant companies contract with outside training providers to provide basic work skills training to existing employees. Applicants must demonstrate a need for upgraded skill levels for existing employees. Within their applications, IWTP companies anticipate measurable training outcomes. IWTP skills upgrade training should support company efforts to minimize lay-offs (lay-off aversion) and/or help the company remain competitive. The technical and professional training programs provided with the assistance of these funds, equip incumbent workers with specific workplace skills required to provide optimal performance within existing jobs, and may enable them to broaden the scope of their workplace responsibilities. Successful training completion should allow greater opportunities for employee retention and increased earnings potential, thus achieving one of the major USDOL goals for the IWT Program, which is layoff aversion.

The State of Alabama launched its Incumbent Worker Training Program in September 2001. Through June 30, 2022, Alabama has awarded nearly \$17,376,596 in IWTP funding to Alabama businesses, benefitting over 25,971 workers. This includes \$164,098 awarded for six (6) new IWTP contracts for PY 2021 (07/01/21 – 06/30/22). Statewide, PY2021 contracts were awarded to companies of all sizes in six (6) counties benefitting one hundred thirty-three (133) individual workers.

In addition to WIOA funds, during PY2021 the WDD also provided Incumbent Worker Services to additional individuals through a separate grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Reimagine Workforce Preparation fund. The Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program approved 131 employers for IWT and served approximately 1,136 incumbent workers, which were provided with training to upskill them in their current jobs. All of these participants were also co-enrolled in WIOA and received career services.

WIOA Supportive Services including Relocation Assistance

The State of Alabama through WIOA Governor’s Set Aside funds provide relocation assistance to participants in need of assistance to accept employment in another location. It is intended to serve eligible adults and dislocated workers, who are unable to find suitable employment in their local area and who have secured employment outside of their commuting area (more than 75 miles) necessitating a move. This service is available statewide through the Alabama Career Center System, and information about the program is provided to Dislocated Workers by the State’s Rapid Response Team when responding to mass layoffs. No individuals requested this service during PY 2021. This is probably due to the favorable job market. There were few layoffs, and individuals did not need to move to find work.

In April 2021 the state developed a concept and conducted a pilot for providing other supportive services for WIOA participants such as reimbursement of exam and licensing fees and training materials not covered by ITAs or OJTs. This service was fully expanded in PY 2021. One hundred and eighty-nine (189) participants were served, and reimbursements totaling \$58,840 were provided to support participants.

Rapid Response

The Alabama Department of Commerce’s Workforce Development Division is designated as the State’s Dislocated Worker administrator and is responsible for coordinating WIOA Dislocated Worker program services statewide. These responsibilities include the development of Dislocated Worker program policy and delivery of Rapid Response services. The Rapid Response Section, as part of Alabama’s State Dislocated

Worker administrative responsibilities, receives advance notification of worker dislocation events under requirements of the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. This advance notification better enables the section's effective coordination of direct assistance and/or referral of various other agency services provided to both employers and workers affected by such dislocation events (i.e., substantial layoffs or plant closings). The Rapid Response Section may also provide these services to employers and workers affected by smaller scale dislocation events, i.e., those not triggering a WARN notification, but which are expected to have a substantial impact on the local community. These smaller scale dislocation events may come to the attention of the Rapid Response section staff through the news media, contacts initiated by affected employers/employees, union representatives, or other state and local service agencies.

Alabama's Rapid Response activities are coordinated with federal agencies such as the USDOL's Employment and Training Administration and the Employee Benefits Security Administration. In addition, the Rapid Response Section coordinates an Information Network of available resources and representatives to provide additional transition assistance, such as: Alabama Children's Health Insurance Program (All-Kids), Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), The Alabama Workforce Council (AWC), the Regional Workforce Councils (RWC), the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT), and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). This network is comprised of representatives of:

- Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Office of Small Business Advocacy
Regional Workforce Councils
- Alabama Department of Labor Unemployment Compensation Employment Service
Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Office of the Director
Community Services Development Block Grant Low Income Program
- Alabama College System
- Department of Human Resources
- Alabama Department of Public Health
Alabama All Kids Program (Insurance for Children Under 19) Women Infants & Children
Program
- Alabama Medicaid Agency
Affordable Care Act - Medical Services
- Alabama Cooperative Extension Service
- Alabama Department of Senior Services
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- AFL-CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT)

The Rapid Response Section is comprised of one (1) full time Dislocated Worker Coordinator, who is an employee of the Alabama Department of Commerce and one (1) Supervisor to assist when needed with Group Employee Meetings and to manage the overall program. In situations where Rapid Response activities involve unionized companies, an AFL-CIO Labor Institute for Training (L.I.F.T.) representative is also included in Rapid Response activities.

The Rapid Response Section facilitates Group Employee Meetings to increase dislocated workers' awareness and utilization of the broad range of programs, services, and benefits available through a variety of federal, state, and local resources to which they are entitled as dislocated workers. The Section's overriding objective is to ease the trauma associated with job loss and better enable dislocated workers to return to the workforce. Attempts are made to maximize each individual's fullest potential.

A strong effort is made to appropriately tailor Rapid Response services to the unique circumstances and requirements associated with each individual dislocation event. Upon learning of an anticipated plant closing or substantial layoff, Rapid Response staff schedule on-site meetings with company management and labor representatives (if employees are so represented) to discuss available assistance options.

After consultation with the appropriate Dislocated Worker Network partner representatives, group employee/local service agency meetings are usually organized at the local employer’s worksite. When necessary, meetings may be held at union halls or other local area community centers. During these meetings, affected workers are provided details regarding their eligibility for and the availability of retraining services, unemployment compensation benefits, job search and placement services, health insurance continuance, pension benefits/counseling, entrepreneurial training assistance, and more.

The following is a breakout by industry, of the number of workers affected by plant closings and/or layoffs reported to the Rapid Response Section during PY21 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022):

Industry	Workers Affected
Mattress Manufacturing	42
Offices of Physicians	58
Plastics Products Manufacturing	75
Financial Transactions Processing, Reserve, and Clearinghouse Activities	214
Education Services	258
Food Manufacturing	58
Miscellaneous Durable Goods Merchant Wholesalers	160
Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing	72
Commercial Banking	308
Collection Agencies	133
Data Processing, Hosting, & Related Services	132
Motor Vehicle Parts Mfg. (All Other)	107
Food Services Contractors	147
Packaging and Labeling Services	62
Dairy Product Merchant Wholesalers	170
<u>Temporary Help Services</u>	<u>350</u>
Total Affected	1,594

Rapid Response records indicate 1,594 workers throughout the state were impacted by twenty-one (21) dislocation events (companies) serviced by the Rapid Response Section during PY 2021. Rapid Response Section staff conducted 28 group employee/local service agency meetings during PY 2021.

The Rapid Response Section works closely with and encourages the Alabama Career Centers to participate in the Group Employee Meetings (GEMs) at every event and actively participate. Each dislocated worker is encouraged to visit one of our many Alabama Career Centers to activate their benefits through the WIOA. If the company qualifies as TRAA, then the process for intake or co-enrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TRAA) and the Dislocated Worker programs is covered in each GEM. When the TRAA is approved, the dislocated worker receives a letter in the mail telling them how to apply for TRAA benefits online or through one of our Alabama Career Centers.

The Rapid Response Section provides initial meetings with the companies to discuss our services through Group Employee Meetings and Layoff Aversion. During the initial meeting, the Rapid Response Section inquires about the company's position on closing and offers Layoff Aversion strategies to keep the company open. Strategies can include the Incumbent Worker Training Program, which provides up to \$30,000 dollars in training to upgrade existing permanent full-time employees per project and up to \$60,000 in lifetime maximum benefits as well as, the benefits of the other partner organizations. In January of 2019 DWU held a series of Layoff Aversion Planning Meetings to determine the appropriate activities and resources that are available to affected companies and individuals. Shortly thereafter through an Executive Order establishing the Regional Workforce Councils (RWCs) was signed by the Governor. The DWU utilizes the resources of the councils to develop and finalize all layoff aversion resources. The primary objective for the Regions is to provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry (B&I) at the local level. The RWCs are business driven and business led and follow the newly created comprehensive workforce development system that supports their local economy and job development activities. All counties are served with specific focus on rural counties who typically are underserved.

If the company is adamant on closing, the Rapid Response Section asks if the reason for the closing is related to foreign trade. The Rapid Response Section encourages each company to apply for TRAA benefits during each initial meeting. During the initial meeting, the Team also schedules a date and time to hold Group Employee Meetings. During these meetings, the Rapid Response Section meets with the affected workers to discuss benefits afforded to them as dislocated workers, such as the WIOA programs, Unemployment Compensation, Introduction to our Alabama Career Center System, Mortgage Payment Assistance (Up to \$30,000), Veteran Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Alabama Department of Human Resources, etc. The program usually last about an hour per Group Employee Meeting.



[Alabama's Career Center System Including Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Activities](#)

Alabama's Career Center System, a proud partner of the American Job Center Network, works to consolidate the delivery of services presently offered to the eligible public through different state agencies, into a single, localized, seamless delivery one-stop.

Services include:

- ❖ Career Services
 - Basic Services
 - Individualized Services
 - Follow-up Services
- ❖ Youth Services
- ❖ Job Training Services
- ❖ Supportive Services

Alabama's network of fifty-six (56) Career Centers (points of service) strategically located throughout the state, is the delivery system for WIOA Title I Career Basic services, Individualized service, Follow-up services, Youth services, Job Training services, and Supportive services to individuals and employers eligible for and in need of these services. WIOA Title III services focusing on hiring and job placement for individuals and business are also available through the Career Centers. Professional staff are available in Centers to assist

both job seekers and employers regarding the availability of jobs, training, and skilled prospective employees to meet labor market needs. Self-help service for job seekers and employers is also available 24/7 through the automated workforce system. Employers may also communicate their specific labor market skill needs to these Centers.

A central feature of each Career Center is the Resource Area, where workforce service seekers, including job seekers and businesses, enjoy ready access to computerized databases providing details of available educational and occupational training, job openings, as well as supportive and other services. This information Resource Area also provides businesses with listings of prospective employees possessing the desired skills and work experience. Internet access is available for customers at all Alabama Career Center locations, including the Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV), which brings portable workforce services to those needing them and lacking access to a local Career Center.

Individual job seekers, assessed to require additional occupational skills training in order to better pursue their vocational objectives, may be provided training through the Individual Training Account (ITA) program, with eligible training providers, On-the-Job-Training (OJT) or Work-Based Learning.

Employers are provided space to conduct employee candidate interviews at most Career Center locations. Additionally, case managers provide job seekers and employers with additional intensive assistance to better satisfy their workforce development needs.

Career Center staff work to reduce, if not entirely eliminate, any incidence of service redundancy or overlap among workforce development partner agencies. Achievement of one-stop services integration, and leveraging of resources rather than duplication, is the goal.

The Career Center Operations Template, developed by the State Workforce Development Board in PY 2002, established a uniform services baseline associated with all Career Center locations, including the Career Center System logo, the availability of resource areas, and other features. The “Career Center” brand has been in place for twenty (20) years and helps clients, who move from one area of the state to another, to be able to recognize and access workforce services. The state recently adopted “Alabama Works” as its brand for all things workforce, and this has been incorporated into the Alabama Career Center System as was the inclusion of “a proud partner of the American Job Center Network” into the branding of the Career Centers.

Monthly Career Center tracking reports indicate 230,954 Career Center customers, 305,227 employers and 2,420 vendor contacts were recorded during Program Year 2021 (July 2021 – June 2022).

Comprehensive Career Centers (7)

1) Anniston, 2) Birmingham, 3) Dothan City, 4) Huntsville, 5) Mobile, 6) Montgomery, and 7) Tuscaloosa

Affiliate Career Centers (26)

1) Alabaster, 2) Albertville, 3) Alexander City, 4) Bay Minette, 5) Brewton, 6) Cullman, 7) Decatur, 8) Demopolis, 9) Enterprise, 10) Eufaula, 11) Fayette, 12) Foley, 13) Fort Payne, 14) Gadsden, 15) Greenville, 16) Hamilton, 17) Jackson, 18) Jasper, 19) Monroeville, 20) Oneonta, 21) Opelika, 22) Pell City, 23) Selma, 24) Sheffield, 25) Talladega, and 26) Troy

Itinerant & Satellite Career Centers (23)

1) Aliceville, 2) Andalusia, 3) Athens, 4) Camden, 5) Centre, 6) Chatom, 7) Clanton, 8) Fort Deposit, 9)

Gilbertown, 10) Haleyville, 11) Hayneville, 12) Jefferson State, 13) Livingston, 14) Luverne, 15) Ozark 16) Phenix City, 17) Phil Campbell, 18) Prattville, 19) Roanoke, 20) Scottsboro, 21) Union Springs, 22) Valley, and 23) Vernon

Note: Career Center numbers are subject to change; the Mobile Career Center Vehicle is not included.

National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs)

The State of Alabama had two NDWGs during PY 2020. The State of Alabama was awarded \$1,998,000 in NDWG funds to address the COVID-19 crisis in April 2020, and this program was offered until March 31, 2022. The grant provided disaster-relief employment for 154 participants and training (On-the-Job (OJT) Training or Individuals Training Account (ITA)) services to 156 participants the two-year grant period. Disaster-relief employment was available statewide, and OJTs and ITAs were available in local areas 1, 3, and 6 where there was a need for these services. This grant will continue through March 2022 to serve dislocated workers and communities impacted by COVID-19.

The state was also awarded \$2,617,849 to address the opioid crisis in May 2021. This grant serves dislocated workers impacted by opioids in local areas 2, 3, 4, and 5. Due to challenges stemming from a change in staff, this grant served four (4) individuals during PY2021. The projected number of participants to be served through training, career services, and supportive services during the grant period is 100. The state expects for enrollments to increase during the next program year.

In PY21, in an effort to prioritize DEIA, or diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, the state applied for the Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant. This grant will focus on areas of the state that are home to individuals of prime working age who are ideal targets for skills-based education efforts. This proportion of individuals is higher for Black individuals, Latinx people, and women of every ethnicity. The grant's outreach strategist will develop awareness campaigns to promote the importance of earning credentials to obtain in-demand employment, which will reduce poverty, create economic mobility, and protect against future structural shifts in the labor market caused by exogenous shocks like COVID-19. Outreach strategists will also use qualitative data from discussion groups to create culturally and linguistically competent marketing material to attract marginalized populations, including African Americans, Latinos, single women, working people aged under 25, people with disabilities, people from remote rural communities, and former service industry workers (food, entertainment, accommodation).

Technical Assistance

In PY 2021 several local areas experienced similar challenges, and technical assistance on these issues could benefit the state as a whole. Although the unemployment rate returned to its pre-COVID level of approximately 2.5% throughout the year, the employment participation rate remains lower than desired. This issue was reflected in struggles two local areas had in meeting the Employment in the 2nd and 4th Quarter performance measure goals for Dislocated Workers. The state would appreciate receiving guidance on any strategies to overcome challenges in keeping the current workforce engaged and to also raise the employment participation rate among individuals not currently in the workforce.

Credential Attainment for Youth also continues to be a measure that many local areas struggle with, and some areas also had challenges in meeting the Placement in Education or Employment for Youth measure for PY2021.

Technical assistance on follow-up after exit strategies, monitoring, and assistive technology would also be helpful.

Success Stories

Adult Success Stories

Kip came to the Foley Career Center in June of 2021 seeking fulltime employment. He was eligible through WIOA and placed in On-The-Job Training with the City of Foley. He had previously been employed with various restaurants in the area and was looking for something with more responsibility and benefits.

“After having spent my entire adult life jumping from job to job in dead end kitchen positions, I realized I was treading water. I decided cooking was not the profession for me anymore; I can cook at home every day. I took a job with the local Walmart and ended up in asset protection. After three years in this position, I had formed numerous relationships with the men and women at the Foley Police Department. A position at the PD in the jail came available. I was encouraged to apply for the position, and I did. I got the job! After meeting with Kristi at the Alabama Career Center, I was enrolled in an On-The-Job training program to help with hands or practical training that would help me succeed in my new profession as a Corrections Officer. I’m almost a year in and my training is still rolling in, whether it’s field sobriety testing training, taser use and safety training, leadership training, de-escalation training or CPR, the training I have received has allowed me to flourish in my new career, and I can’t wait to see what the future holds!”

Jaimie, a single head-of-household parent of two school-aged children and a recipient of SNAP services, approached the Troy Career Center staff in January 2022 to seek information on WIOA services to attend Certified Nursing Assistant training. For over a year and a half before seeking WIOA assistance, she had been providing caregiver services to her critically ill spouse under the guidance of his physicians and nurses. This life-changing experience led her to want to use the knowledge she had gained to help others in need.

She completed the Certified Nursing Assistant program through Easter Seals of Central Alabama on April 13, 2022, with a ninth-eight average. The instructor stated that she came to class every day with a smile, a positive attitude, and an eagerness to learn, and she will be an asset to the C.N.A. field.

In August 2022, she went to work with New Beacon Healthcare in Montgomery, AL, as a Certified Nursing Assistant and is loving her new job. Her job covers Montgomery and Bullock counties.

Dislocated Worker Success Stories

Jowanna came to the Birmingham Career Center to seek employment after a lay-off at the State of Alabama office. Jowanna was assessed and interviewed by staff. She was determined to be eligible as a Dislocated Worker due to her lay-off. Jowanna was seeking a training program in which she could flourish. After working with her case manager, she decided to pursue the Medical Support Specialist program at Jefferson State Community College - Birmingham campus.

Jowanna successfully completed the program with an associate degree on December 14, 2021, and gained employment with another State of Alabama office until her probationary period ended. Jowanna’s previous wage was \$17.12 per hour. Through her hard work and tenacity, Jowanna gained employment with another State agency, where she now earns \$18.05 per hour.

This past Spring, Fayette had an employer abruptly close, which displaced more than 80 workers. Several of those displaced workers came to the Career Center seeking assistance. One of those was **Joe Redker**. Joe is a 58-year-old veteran looking for a stable, day-shift job to support his family. Fayette Staff Member Rita Meadows worked with Joe revising his resume, assisting with job search and filing applications, and providing assistance with filing for unemployment.

Joe was certified eligible for the OJT program and accepted a local Delivery Driver position with a Home Medical Employer. Joe completed the OJT in August and is still employed. Joe states that he is excited about the opportunity to work in a job where he is providing service to others, and as a bonus, he is getting to spend more time with his family!

Joe had this to say about working with Fayette staff Rita Meadows:

Rita Meadows was an asset to me while looking for work. "Ms. Meadows even did an excellent job on re-doing my resume and answered any questions I had".

She made the transition easier in a crisis of being laid off.

Youth Success Stories

Zharia graduated from Job Corps with a high school diploma. Zharia came to the Dannon Project Out of School youth program through the CAPTE referral process. The pre-TABE assessment determined she was basic skills deficient. She was referred to the Dannon Project through community outreach. She came into the program to study and obtain a certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Zahria's goal was to obtain a certification that led to stable employment in the medical field.

Zharia worked diligently with her case manager to identify her weaknesses and overcome them. She was also able accentuate her strengths to provide her best chances for success. Zharia obtained her CNA certification and gained employment at a rehabilitation facility earning a starting salary of \$12 per hour. She was also able to gain some independence by obtaining her own apartment.

Seventeen-year-old (turning 18) **Braden** came into the Anniston Career Center with his grandmother, Mrs. Phyllis. Immediately, I noticed that this young man was focused on his career as a Utility Line Worker. He assured me several times that this is what he wanted to do. He said that he had done his research and even had a company that is interested in hiring him. He began his training with Calhoun Community College and received his OSHA Certification and Class a Commercial Driver's License earlier than normally scheduled for the class. Braden graduated, at the top of his class, and accepted employment with Petty Line Construction as a Grounds man. During follow-up, I checked on him and was told by his grandmother that Braden was in an accident on his way to work. Braden's vehicle flipped and threw him out of the passenger window. He was in UAB for 10 days. After colon resection, abdominal wall reconstruction and a broken femur, he was sent home to heal. Later, I did a follow-up with Braden, and he informed me that he was completely healed from the accident and working as normal.

Challenges

Alabama continued to respond effectively to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local Career Centers across the state continued to remain open to serve the needs of employers and jobseekers. Covid

unemployment rates with some monthly highs of 14% continued to gradually decline with the end of PY21 seeing a June rate of 2.6% with a new record low of unemployed persons. As our unemployment rate

continues to drop and employers continue to fill jobs, Alabama once again demonstrated, it is open for business. Career Centers were assisting employers in job orders, participating, and creating local/regional job fairs, and teaming up with training providers to certify jobseekers eligible for job training programs. It was very necessary to cross-train almost all Career Center staff just to meet the needs of everyone visiting their Center. Career Center staff responded to the challenge of aiding those affected by the pandemic receiving Unemployment and basic needs, to assisting some of those same people in finding employment.

The Workforce Investment Partnership

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), *Title I*, prescribes the delivery of a wide array of skills training, job placement, educational opportunities, and other workforce development services. Both job seekers and employers may access WIOA workforce development services through the Alabama Career Center System. Career Centers serve as employee/employer gateways to workforce development services and resources. Many of these services are available at the Career Centers' physical locations. Other services are made available through various other agencies, both directly and indirectly affiliated with the Alabama Career Center System network. This network is principally designed to facilitate customer awareness of and access to the workforce development services required to overcome barriers to employment.

WIOA funds allotted to the state are, in turn, allocated to local workforce development areas within the state. These local workforce development areas, which are charged with administrative responsibility for WIOA programs and services, use some of these allocations for Career Center operations within their boundaries. Alabama currently has fifty-six (56) Career Center System sites including comprehensive and affiliate (itinerate & satellite) centers. A Career Center Operations template issued by the State Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in November 2002 and revised January 2010, formalized operational guidance and expectations for the Alabama Career Center System.

Groups targeted for WIOA services include Adults (age 18 years and over), Youth (age 16 to 24 years), and Dislocated Workers (job loss due to plant closings and layoffs). There is a greater focus on providing Adults, older Youth, and Dislocated Workers with skills leading directly to employment. More attention is given to achievement of long-term educational milestones for the younger Youth group. For this population, more emphasis is given to basic literacy training, and GED and ACT preparation than to short-term employment opportunities.

Specific strategies have been developed to ease the transition of Dislocated Workers from unemployment to reemployment. These measures include establishment of a dislocated workers Rapid Response Team, which brings information of available workforce development services directly to the affected individuals and advises these workers regarding other available support services for which they may be eligible as dislocated workers. Among these services are health insurance program information and strategies to help protect dislocated workers' pension funds. Another strategy has been adoption of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. This program identifies UI claimants likely to exhaust benefits for mandatory in-person intensive services designed to return them to work.

Priority of Services has also been established through policy from the State WDB in accordance with TEG 7-20, for public assistance recipients, individuals with low incomes, and those who are basic skills deficient to receive the highest priority for WIOA services after all eligible veterans and eligible spouses of veterans have been considered for services.

Workforce Development Boards

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), State and Local, as provided under *Sections 101 and 107* of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), are charged with the design, implementation, and ongoing operation of state and local level workforce development programs and activities. In order to better ensure that membership on the WDBs is reasonably representative of the various public and private sector principals actively engaged in local area workforce development activity, the legislation requires that the structuring of WDBs corresponds to specific membership composition criteria. The seven (7) Alabama Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) are represented by seven (7) Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) works to achieve ongoing cohesive and mutually beneficial working relationships among all workforce development partner agencies and stakeholders.

Members of the State Workforce Development Board are appointed by the Governor. LWDB members are appointed by each local area's designated Chief Local Elected Official(s). The Governor is the Chief Local Elected Official for the five (5) Governor's Local Workforce Development Areas. Those areas include: Area 1 - North AlabamaWorks!, Area 2 - East AlabamaWorks!, Area 3 - West AlabamaWorks!, Area 5 - Central AlabamaWorks!, and Area 6 - Southeast AlabamaWorks!. Area 4 - Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE), and Area 7 - Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE), are represented collectively by the Chief Local Elected Officials within their respective counties. The Chief Local Elected Officials for CAPTE are represented by the President of the Jefferson County Commission. The Chief Local Elected Officials for SWAPTE are represented by the Chair of the Chief Local Elected Officials Council (CEOC), which has been established by the LWDA.

The State Workforce Development Board's collective knowledge and experience helps ensure that the Board maintains a broad and encompassing perspective and insight regarding Alabama's workforce development system and its needs. Similarly, the primary focus of the LWDBs is tailored toward the specific needs of their respective Local Workforce Development Areas. State and Local WDBs seek to safeguard against giving a disproportionate amount of time and attention to any one program under their purview, such as WIOA Title I Adult, Youth, or Dislocated Worker operations, lest they lose an appropriate perspective on the overall state or local area system they are charged to oversee. State and Local WDBs are the operational centers for much of the WIOA mandated programs, coordination, and activities within the state's workforce development system.

State Workforce Development Board Members appointed as of Program Year 2021 (PY21):

Governor:

The Honorable Kay Ivey

Representatives of State Legislature:

Alabama House – Terri Collins

Alabama Senate – Clay Scofield

Representatives of Business:

Alabama Power Company – Joseph Brown

Alabama Power Company – Steve Hildebrant AM/NS Calvert – Myriam Aerts

American Cast Iron Pipe Co. – Mike Petrus Austal U.S.A. – Sandra Koblas

BroadSouth Communications, Inc. – Mike Reynolds Bryant Bank – Bobby Humphrey

Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama – Donny Jones Cleveland Senior Living – Dr. Phillip Cleveland

Cooper Law – A.J. Cooper CrowderGulf – Ashley Ramsay-Naile CSP Technologies – Kasey Myers

DCH Healthcare System – Peggy Sease-Fain

Economic Development Association of AL – Jim Searcy General & Automotive Machine Shop, Inc. – Ronnie Boles Hyundai Power Transformers USA – Tony Wojciechowski Kappler Corp. – Laura Kappler-Roberts Lavender, Inc. – Lawrence Lavender Mach III, Inc. – Bruce Willingham
Manufacture Alabama – George Clark, Board Chair Phifer, Inc. – Russell DuBose
Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc. – Cleveland Poole The Boeing Company – Ken Tucker
United Launch Alliance – Chrystal Morgan Volkert, Inc. – Perry Hand

Representatives of Workforce:

AL Construction Recruitment Institute – Jason Phelps Alabama AFL-CIO – Bren Riley
Alabama AFL-CIO – Mary Allbritten
Alabama AFL-CIO – Mike Fields, Executive Board BEJATC – Matthew Dudley
Easter Seals Alabama – Lynne Stokley Federal Reserve Bank – Julie Kornegay Montgomery Job Corps – Frank Coiro SAFE Sylacauga – Margaret Morton
Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training & Employment – Sydney Raine Still Serving Veterans – Paulette Risher

Representatives of Government:

Required WIOA Core Partners:

Ed Castile, Deputy Secretary of Commerce
Workforce Development Alabama Department of Commerce, *Title I*

Jimmy Baker, Chancellor
Alabama Community College System (ACCS), *Title II*

Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary
Alabama Department of Labor, *Title III*

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, *Title IV*

Required County Elected Official:

Merceria Ludgood, Commissioner Mobile County Commission

Required City Elected Official:

Mayor Tony Haygood
City of Tuskegee, Alabama

Other:

Nancy Buckner, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Human Resources

Dr. Jim Purcell, Executive Director Alabama Commission on Higher Education

Josh Laney, Director
Alabama Office of Apprenticeship

Alan Baker, State Representative for State House District No. 66 Alabama House of Representatives

Keith Phillips, Executive Director ATN
Alabama Community College Workforce Development (ACCS)

Mickey Hutto, Board Member Inter-Tribal Council of Alabama

State Level Coordination

Several State agencies partner with the Alabama Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division and the Alabama Department of Labor to deliver WIOA sponsored services and programs, including:

- Alabama Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division - State-level WIOA (WIOA Grant Administration); Local Area WIOA (Local WIOA Grant Administration for LWDA 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), National Dislocated Worker Grants, Other Federal Grant programs, Rapid Response Services, Alabama Industrial Development Training (pre-employment services), Apprenticeship Alabama, seven Regional Workforce Councils (aligned with the WIOA local areas), and the statewide Alabama Workforce Council.
- Alabama Department of Commerce, Business Division - Industrial Recruitment and Aid to Existing Industries
- Alabama Department of Education (Secondary) - Career/Technical Education
- Alabama Community College System - Two-Year College System (workforce training programs), Adult Basic Education, Alabama Technology Network, and Ready-to-Work Program
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Alabama Department of Human Resources - Subsidized Employment Program (SEP), Food Stamp Training Program (SNAP E&T), JOBS Program (TANF)
- Alabama Department of Senior Services
- Alabama Department of Labor - Unemployment Compensation, Employment Service, Labor Market Information, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Veterans Services, WIOA Business Outreach, Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV), Staff for Career Centers

Specific interagency coordination activities include:

- A continuous exchange of customer information among: LWDA 4 (CAPTE), LWDA 7 (SWAPTE), and the Alabama Governor's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6), the Workforce Development Division, the Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama Department of Labor, Trade Act Programs, Employment Service/Unemployment Compensation/Labor Market Information Divisions, Postsecondary Education, Adult Education, the Department of Senior Services, the Department of Human Resources, and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. This exchange better ensures case managers' continuing access to a broad range of locally available workforce development program and services information.
- Regular on-site monitoring/assessment of the progress achieved by WIOA program participants, from their date of application through post program follow-up, by Workforce Development Division Program Integrity Section staff. This action helps determine both the level and quality of the workforce development services provided to these individuals.
- Each local area ensures that its service providers make available to program applicants and/or participants information regarding the full complement of available training/educational opportunities, support services, and other benefits to which they are entitled to receive.

- The establishment by each local area of appropriate linkages, where feasible, with programs operated under the following legislation:
 - the Adult Education and Literacy Act
 - the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998
 - *Title IV*, part F, of the Social Security Act
 - the Food Stamps employment program
 - the National Apprenticeship Act
 - the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - *Title II*, Chapter 2, of the Trade Act of 1974
 - the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act
 - the United States Housing Act of 1957
 - the National Literacy Act of 1991
 - the Head Start Act
 - the Older Americans Act
 - the Trade Act
 - Labor Market Information/Employment Statistics
 - Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act
 - Jobs for Veterans Act

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Activity Resource Allocation

Funds are provided annually to the state by the USDOL for the provision of WIOA, *Title I*, Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs. According to the WIOA, up to fifteen (15) percent of the total Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker funds allotted to the state may be reserved for state-level set aside activities, which include: a) state-level program administration, b) incentive awards for local areas, which demonstrate superior program performance, c) technical assistance / capacity building services, d) activities directly and indirectly supporting the ongoing development and operation of the state’s One- Stop system, e) activities supporting the compilation and statewide dissemination of listings of eligible training providers, f) evaluations of program development strategies, which support continuous system improvement, and g) the development of a statewide fiscal management system.

PY21/FY22 Federal WIOA Allocation Levels

State-Level Activities	\$4,851,911
Statewide Rapid Response Activities	\$474,283
Local Area Adult Programs	\$10,700,267
Local Area Youth Programs	\$11,011,997
<u>Local Area Dislocated Worker Programs</u>	<u>\$13,395,659</u>
TOTAL	\$40,434,117

Local Workforce Development Area WIOA Allocation Levels

North AlabamaWorks! (Area 1)

Adult	\$1,464,002
Youth	\$1,445,745
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,103,453</u>
TOTAL	\$5,013,200

East AlabamaWorks! (Area 2)

Adult	\$1,324,660
Youth	\$1,251,771
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,812,845</u>
TOTAL	\$4,389,276

West AlabamaWorks! (Area 3)

Adult	\$ 764,054
Youth	\$1,045,829
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,030,134</u>
TOTAL	\$2,840,017

Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Area 4)

Adult	\$1,387,805
Youth	\$1,363,455
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,612,182</u>
TOTAL	\$5,363,442

Central AlabamaWorks! (Area 5)

Adult	\$2,292,337
Youth	\$2,409,284
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,066,737</u>
TOTAL	\$6,768,358

Southeast AlabamaWorks! (Area 6)

Adult	\$ 734,590
Youth	\$ 785,666
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,354,853</u>
TOTAL	\$2,875,190

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Area 7)

Adult	\$2,732,819
Youth	\$2,710,247
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,415,455</u>
TOTAL	\$7,858,521

A Goal-Oriented Strategic Analysis of the Alabama Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT)

Executive Summary

The Alabama Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) was created to implement Governor Kay Ivey's Strong Start, Strong Finish education strategic plan. Governor Ivey developed the Strong Start, Strong Finish education strategic plan to integrate Alabama's education, workforce, and human services systems (Office of Governor Kay Ivey, 2019). **The GOEWT was not created by executive order or through an Act of the Legislature; instead, Governor Ivey established the GOEWT within her personal office. Being located within the Governor's personal office provides the GOEWT with a stronger convening authority and a strong coordinating role, since agencies do not view the GOEWT as a subsidiary of a cognate agency.**

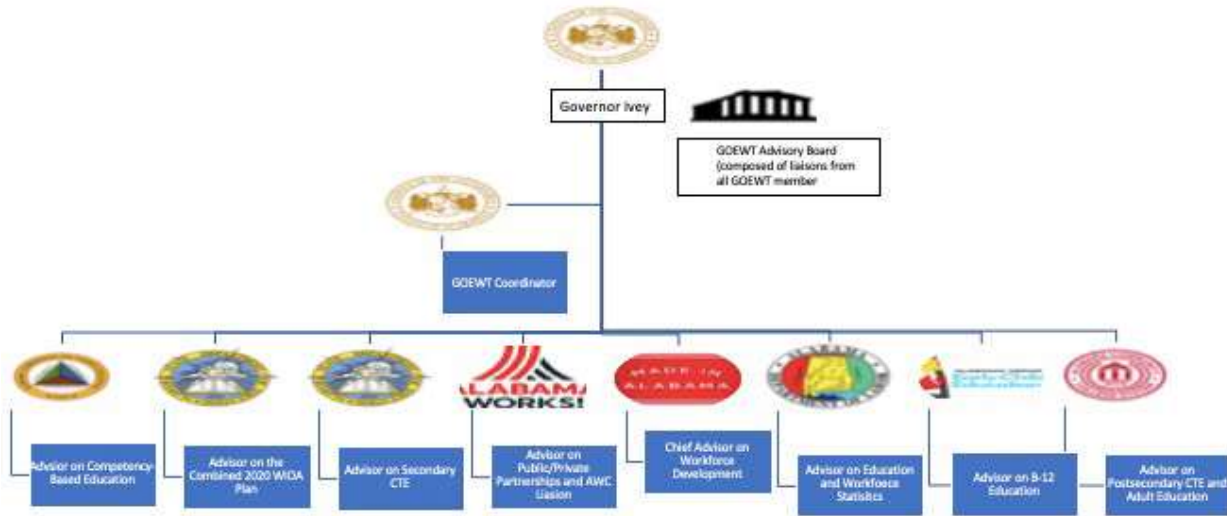
A Brief History of the GOEWT

In 2003, Alabama Governor Bob Riley began the process of consolidating and aligning workforce development efforts in Alabama when he signed Executive Order No. 17 to consolidate state workforce development programs into the Office of Workforce Development (GOWD). The order was developed to reduce duplication and provide seamless delivery of services to citizens and employers in Alabama. The GOWD was housed in the Department of Postsecondary Education, the precursor to the Alabama Community College System, and suffered the fate of many Governor's offices of workforce development throughout the country: the office became a subsidiary of a state agency outside of the Governor's Office and the agency was not sustained after the transition to a new administration. Governor Riley's executive order No. 17 creating the GOWD vouchsafes that Alabama made tremendous progress towards aligning the workforce system; however, the GOWD was forgotten during the administration of Governor Robert Bentley, who served betwixt the Riley and Ivey Administrations. **Governor Ivey established the GOEWT in October 2018 to align and integrate Alabama's education, workforce, and human services systems. The GOEWT was modeled from the approach taken by other states, such as Oklahoma through Oklahoma Works, Ohio with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, South Carolina with its Department of Employment and the Workforce, and Indiana with the Governor's Workforce Cabinet.**

It is also important to understand an organization's competencies in terms of core, distinctive, and core distinctive competencies. Bryson, Eden, and Ackermann (2007) define competencies as the ability to do something well; distinctive competencies are those competencies that are difficult for others to replicate; core competencies are competencies that are central to an organization's success; and distinctive core competencies are competencies that are central to the success of the organization and add public value beyond the alternatives. Broadly speaking, the primary goal of the GOEWT is to align Alabama's education, workforce, and human services programs and to provide an integrated education-to-workforce system for all Alabamians. This goal was established out of the desire to increase Alabama's labor force participation rate and the aspiration to eliminate benefits cliffs, or marginal tax increases, for Alabamians when entering the workforce. The core competencies for the GOEWT are tapping in the governor's convening authority to organize stakeholders across Alabama's education, workforce, and human services systems; developing policies that will be broadly adopted across agencies within the administration; coordinating the collaboration between government, business and industry, and the non-profit sector; and cultivating legislative support for technologies and systems (such as Alabama's longitudinal database system and sector strategies for identifying regional and statewide in-demand jobs) that are used to provide an evidence-based approach to public policy in Alabama. The GOEWT's distinctive competencies are the ability to engender support for policies and communications strategies that go beyond the proclivities of a single agency, industry, or constituency of Alabama's education, workforce, and human services system and motivating Alabama's public sector through a goal-oriented approach to making progress against the GOEWT's core competencies. The GOEWT's core distinctive competency is the ability to leverage the governor's convening and policy-making role to influence the policy, process, and politics affecting the GOEWT's core competencies and its goals, desires, and aspirations. The intersection of the GOEWT's core and distinctive competencies, the ability to convene stakeholders and generate consensus among them, is predicated on the GOEWT's core distinctive competency.

Figure 1

GOEWT Organizational Chart



The GOEWT was charged with three goals: (1) to increase the labor force participation and to decrease the unemployment and underemployment rates; (2) to surpass the Alabama post-secondary attainment goal; and (3) to create career pathways in all 16 career clusters for in-school youth, out-of-school youth, adults, and disconnected populations. The GOEWT was assigned three objectives to achieve its three goals: (1) to braid Alabama’s federal education and workforce development funding streams to support an education-to-workforce pipeline; (2) to create and manage the Alabama Terminal for Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways as Alabama’s state longitudinal database system; and (3) to create the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship. **The GOEWT is led by the Director of the GOEWT, who also concurrently serves as the governor’s education policy advisor.** The Director of the GOEWT is charged with nine tasks for achieving the goals and objectives of the GOEWT. The Director of the GOEWT is charged with (1) braiding Alabama’s federal education and workforce funding streams; (2) leading the Governor’s P-20W Council that governs the ATLAS on Career Pathways; (3) managing the development of the ATLAS on Career Pathways; (4) developing the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET); (5) identifying valuable credentials and career pathways aligned to secondary, post-secondary, and adult education programs of study; (6) coordinating the development of the combined WIOA 2020 State Plan; (7) coordinating the establishment of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship as Alabama’s state apprenticeship agency; (8) creating a unified workforce marketing, outreach, and incentive strategy; and (9) coordinating Alabama’s federal education and workforce development grant applications.

The GOEWT Advisory Board consists of the 24 state agencies involved in education, workforce development, and human services in Alabama. The GOEWT Advisory Board provides advice and consent on the recommendations of the Director of the GOEWT. The Director of the GOEWT presents recommendations to implement the goals and objectives of the GOEWT to the GOEWT Advisory Board.

Figure 2

The GOEWT Advisory Board Member Agencies

Alabama Medicaid Agency	Alabama Department of Mental Health	Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Department of Human Resources	Alabama Department of Commerce	Alabama Department of Senior Services
Alabama Department of Corrections	Governor’s Office of Minority Affairs	Alabama Office of Information Technology
Alabama Department of Labor	Alabama Department of Youth Services	Alabama State Senate
Alabama State House of Representatives	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama Community College System
Alabama Commission on Higher Education	Alabama State Workforce Development Board	Alabama Workforce Council
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education
Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention	Alabama Governor’s Office Volunteer Services	Alabama Department of Revenue

The GOEWT Director is supported by a team of advisors who represent key partner state agencies. The advisors include: (1) a chief advisor on workforce development, who is the director of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship; (2) an advisor on outreach and workforce statistics, who is the director of the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics; (3) an advisor on pre-k-12 education, who is an employee of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education; (4) an advisor on secondary career and technical education, who is an employee of the Alabama State Department of Education; (5) an advisor on public/private partnerships, who is recommended for appointment by the chairperson of the Alabama Workforce Council; (6) an advisor on competency-based education, who is the state higher education executive officer; (7) an advisor on the combined 2020 WIOA plan, who is an employee of either the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Commerce, or the Alabama Community College System; and (8) an advisor on postsecondary career and technical education, who is an employee of the Alabama Community College System.

The GOEWT director is also supported by a small staff, which provides administrative, technical, and logistical support to the director of the GOEWT. The GOEWT staff provides research, evaluation, and technical support to the GOEWT and its partner agencies and supports the GOEWT Director in fulfilling the role of education policy Advisor. The GOEWT is funded by braiding funds through memorandum of agreement between the Governor’s Office and the Alabama Department of Commerce, the Alabama Community College System, and the Alabama State Department of Education to transfer state leadership and administration funds to the GOEWT.

The GOEWT operates efficiently by employing a hub-and-spoke model of collaboration with state agencies to manage myriad special projects, grants, and policy academies. **The most frequently lauded aspect of the GOEWT by other governor’s offices and national associations, such as the National Governors**

Association (Office of Governor Kay Ivey, 2020), is that the GOEWT director concurrently serves as the governor’s education policy advisor, which facilitates an organic synchrony between the k-12, postsecondary, and public workforce systems. The GOEWT’s partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and its focus on integrating human services into the public workforce system has also been cited as a national best practice (Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, 2020). Under Governor Ivey’s leadership, the GOEWT has made progress against its goals and objectives. Since its inception in 2018, the GOEWT has:

- (1) developed the Success Plus attainment goal of adding 500,000 credentialed workers to the workforce by 2025 and the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) for identifying Alabama’s in-demand occupations and credentials of value;
- (2) led the development of the 2020 Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan;
- (3) designed and led the development of the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET), Alabama’s learning and employment record, and the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways, Alabama’s state longitudinal database system;
- (4) led the creation of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA) as Alabama’s state apprenticeship agency;
- (5) elevated Alabama’s status as a leader in workforce development policy on the national stage by participating in policy academies led by the National Governors Association, the Lumina Foundation, and Credential Engine that were focused on developing a competency-based learning and hiring system;
- (6) won myriad education and workforce grants that have proven elusive for Alabama for years, including a \$3,500,000 State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) grant that is being used to build the infrastructure for the ATLAS on Career Pathways and a \$17,800,000 Reimagining Workforce Preparation federal pandemic respond grant that will support the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program (Office of the Governor, 2020); and
- (7) recalibrated Alabama’s public workforce system to meet the needs of the post-COVID-19 workforce through the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program.

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Final Audit Report

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