

November 19, 2021

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 2020 WIOA Titles I and III Annual Report

We are pleased to submit the enclosed State of Alabama's *Program Year (PY) 2020 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report*. This *Report* contains the Alabama PY 2020 program performance data required under USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 5-18 dated November 7, 2018, which states were instructed to use for the PY 2020 WIOA *Annual Report*. Additionally, this *Report* details other WIOA activities conducted in Alabama during PY 2020.

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 2020 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 23, 2021 11:49 CST)

Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary  
Alabama Department of Labor

GC:FW:TW:dc

Enclosure

c: Winston Tompoe  
Channah B. YisraEL

**State of Alabama**  
**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, *Titles I & III***  
**Program Year 2020 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**

**December 1, 2021**

Prepared in Accordance with WIOA Section 185(d) Specifications

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**Attachment A - Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation**

## Overview

Program Year (PY) 2020 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 Alabama continued to focus on the needs of workers and employers in the state including job skills, education, relevant occupational skills training, and disaster-relief employment 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 2020, 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-three (53) 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. Although the Alabama Career Center System offices briefly closed in mid-March 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis, services continued to be delivered by staff remotely. Alabama Career Centers were able to reopen their doors to the public on May 1, 2020, and they remained open during all of PY 2020.

The principal focus of Alabama's Workforce Development System remains directed toward the fashioning of action strategies appropriate to the ongoing workforce development needs of all Alabamians. In 2007 the acquisition (with WIA Incentive Funds awarded to Alabama) of the state's Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) expanded our capacity for effective delivery of worker displacement-relief services. The MCCV is packed with many of the features offered by standing Career Centers, including learning needs/skills assessment tools, computerized job-bank services, and academic and occupational skills training referral services. The MCCV has helped render needed workforce development services to many persons previously unable to effectively access these services. The highest priority for the vehicle is providing workforce development assistance to those impacted by disasters such as hurricanes and tornados. It is moved to the appropriate location as quickly as allowed by the situation.

Due to the constantly changing and ever present COVID protocols, the Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) was only able to participate in 4 events during PY 2020 throughout the state to provide workforce related assistance to the residents of Alabama. Scheduled events included local and regional job fairs that were sponsored by media, local governments and community agencies. The MCCV also engaged in business recruitment assistance, rapid response services to dislocated workers, outreach to communities with workforce development services, assistance to Veterans returning home, and career fairs at schools.

In regard to adult programs, funds are being used for On-The-Job Training (OJT) where up to seventy-five (75) 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 agreements with nineteen (19) for-profit, non-profit, and governmental employers for incumbent worker 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 2020, 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, 2023 to spend all of the PY 2020 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 three waivers in place during PY 2020.

#### **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 2020. 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. Only two (2) youth were enrolled statewide who would not have been eligible for an ITA as an adult (ages 16 or 17). However, all of these youth earned a credential and a Measurable Skills Gain during PY 2020 resulting in a 100% rate for both measures.

This waiver will continue to be available in PY 2021. Participation rates will be considered prior to any applications for the waiver to be extended is submitted.

### **Waiver of the Requirement for Eligible Training Providers to Collect Performance Data for All Students in a Training Program**

This waiver of 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 – 680.530 related to WIOA performance and the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) allowed the state to add providers to the ETPL without collecting performance for all students. Training providers were still required to report performance data for WIOA participants. The goal of this waiver was to increase the number of providers on the ETPL since this allows providers to be added without having to collect and report additional information.

This waiver was used on a very limited basis in PY 2020 and had little impact on the number of providers on the ETPL. Alabama had sixty-four (64) different training providers and approximately seven hundred fifty-four (754) separate programs on Alabama’s WIOA Eligible Training Provider List during PY 2019. During PY 2020, there were seventy-four (74) different training providers and approximately seven hundred fifty-three (753) separate programs. This shows the impact of the waiver was negligible. The waiver expired on June 30, 2021, and the state does not plan to reapply for the waiver.

### **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 and the local areas did not use this waiver during PY 2020 and therefore there are no outcomes. This waiver will continue to be available during 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 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 department data systems.

The Alabama Department of Commerce (Title I) and the Alabama Department of Labor (Title III) completed the process of transitioning to a unified reporting system (AlabamaWorks!) and developing data sharing agreements with each of the partner agencies to glean this information so that the data collection can be centralized and reported to USDOL on this performance measure during PY 2020. The new AlabamaWorks! reporting system designed and maintained by Geographic Solutions launched in April 2020 and was fully implemented during PY 2020. The current plan is for the state to begin reporting on this measure for the 2021 program year.

#### *WIOA Section 116(e) Process Evaluations*

During PY 2020 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
- Evaluation of suitable methods of capturing Employer Penetration Rate
- 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/>.

During PY 2020 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](https://wioa-alabama.org)).

At this time 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, dissemination, and retention of these deliverables. Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities for both sections can be found at the WIOA-alabama.org website.

Information/Research requests, compliance reviews, and similar Federal evaluations are processed through the Workforce Development Division's State Reporting Section. The Section is responsible for obtaining all requested items, preparing for on-site visits and compliance reviews, developing policy and procedures for evaluation activities, creating/disseminating performance reports, and providing technical assistance.

In PY2020, 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 policy guide and reference for the Workforce system using the DOL definition of evaluation described in WIOA 116(e). This multi-year evaluation plan will focus on Alabama's key and immediate research questions in addition to complying with existing Federal requirements regarding continuous improvement.

### 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 2020, of the 4,524 job seekers responding to the survey, 97.3% considered the services exceptional, and 71.3% said the Career Center services were good. Of the 447 employers who responded to the survey, 99.3% 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 AJL (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 2020 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.) 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 continues today.

The increased focus on sector strategies and career pathways can be seen in the Requests for Proposals (RFP) for WIOA programs by various local areas. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for WIOA youth program providers were released by many areas in Fall 2020 and others in Spring 2021. Many of them also had ongoing RFPs for occupational skills training programs open throughout PY 2020. 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 LWDAs have an Individual Training Account (ITA) Program. Participants in the program are required to choose 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 LWDAs 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 in 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 2020, approximately 8,130 participants were entered into training programs through all fund sources, 2,183 of these were enrolled into 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) continued an apprenticeship pilot project with Newman Technology of Alabama, Inc. located in Albertville, Alabama. This project began in PY 2017 and is expected to run through PY 2021. Nine apprentices are enrolled and receiving on the job training at Newman Technology and classroom training at Northeast Alabama Community College. During PY 2020 the apprentices had several measurable skills gains as they finished each semester of classroom training, and at the end of the four years, apprentices will have earned several credentials including an associate degree in either Multi-Skilled Maintenance Technician or Tool and Die and the related apprenticeship national credential. This pilot project was funded to address employers' need for employees with these skills and a shortage of individuals with these skills in the state.

In addition to this pilot project, the Incumbent Worker Training Program funded three additional apprenticeship projects in PY2020 with Sealing Equipment Products Company (SEPCO), Precision Grinding, Inc., and O-Flex Group. SEPCO and Precision Grinding are participating in a consortium for Multi-skilled Maintenance Technician apprenticeship. Sealing Equipment Products Company has two apprentices and Precision Grinding has three apprentices. O-Flex has one apprentice in the Multi-skilled Maintenance field. At the end of the apprenticeships, the participants will have earned two certifications in addition to the related apprenticeship national credential. Additionally, the employers will have employees with the skills they need to remain competitive.

The State of Alabama also made 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 PY2020. 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 121 participants in PY2020 and will continue during PY2021.

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 PY2020 employers received up to seventy-five (75) 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 seventy-five (75) 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.

#### 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 Governor's Workforce Development Area's (GWDA) services for out-of-school youth ages 16 - 24 included a Work-Based Learning Activity offered through the Career Centers located in the LWDA's. This activity included work experience in public nonprofit businesses and paid internships in 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 30 hours per week for 13 weeks, or a maximum of 390 hours. The participant's hourly rate of pay varies from \$8.00 to \$16.00 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 2020 in an effort to better reach difficult to serve youth. Thirty-nine (39) 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 2020.

- 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 2020. 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 2020 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, 2021, Alabama has awarded nearly \$17,212,498 in IWTP funding to Alabama businesses, benefitting over 25,838 workers. This includes \$377,746 awarded for nineteen (19) new IWTP contracts for PY 2020 (07/01/20 – 06/30/21). Statewide, PY2020 contracts were awarded to companies of all sizes in eighteen (18) counties benefitting one hundred forty-five (145) individual workers.

### 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. One individual was provided this service during PY 2020.

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 provided to one participant and will be expanded in PY 2021.

### 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 PY20 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021):

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Workers Affected</b>
Accessories and Other Apparel Mfg.	70
Aircraft Parts and Equipment (Other)	136
Airport Operations	85
Amusement and Recreation Ind (All Other)	172
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	91
Audio and Video Media Reproduction	100
Automotive Repair and Maintenance	75
Chemical Preparation Mfg. (All Other)	55
Durable Goods Merchant Whse. (All Other)	275
Electric Power Distribution	87
Electrical Equipment/Component (All Other)	75
Engineering Services	111
Furniture and Related Product Mfg.	87
Iron and Steel Mills	309
Miscellaneous Manufacturing (All Other)	234
Motor Vehicle Parts Mfg. (All Other)	96
Packaging and Labeling Services	62
Railroad Rolling Stock Manufacturing	550
Support Activities, Road Transport (Other)	62
Wood Kitchen Cabinets and Countertops	<u>300</u>
<b>Total Workers Affected:</b>	<b>3,032</b>

Rapid Response records indicate 3,844 workers throughout the state were impacted by forty-two (42) dislocation events (companies) serviced by the Rapid Response Section during PY 2020. Rapid Response Section staff conducted 22 group employee/local service agency meetings during PY 2020.

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-three (53) 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 nineteen (19) 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 371,525 Career Center customers, 245,677 employers and 2,801 vendor contacts were recorded during Program Year 2020 (July 2020 – June 2021).

#### 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 (20)

1) Aliceville, 2) Andalusia, 3) Camden, 4) Centre, 5) Chatom, 6) Clanton, 7) Fort Deposit, 8) Gilbertown, 9) Haleyville, 10) Jefferson State, 11) Livingston, 12) Luverne, 13) Ozark, 14) Phenix City, 15) Phil Campbell, 16) Roanoke, 17) Scottsboro, 18) Union Springs, 19) Valley, and 20) 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 throughout PY 2020. The grant provided disaster-relief employment for 141 participants and training (On-the-Job (OJT) Training or Individuals Training Account (ITA)) services to 110 participants during PY 2020. Disaster-relief employment is available statewide, and OJTs and ITAs are available in local areas 1, 3, and 6 where there is 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 will serve dislocated workers impacted by opioids in local areas 2, 3, 4, and 5. This grant was awarded right before the end of the program year and no participants were served by the end of the program year. The projected number of participants to be served through training, career services, and supportive services during the two year grant period is 170. The state expects to enroll the first participants in this project by January 2021.

#### Technical Assistance

The State of Alabama requested technical assistance in developing sound assessment and evaluations methodologies, including evaluation of customer satisfaction in its PY 2020 – 2023 WIOA Combined State Plan. However, the State of Alabama did not receive any formal technical assistance during PY 2020. This technical assistance need still exists.

The Southeast *AlabamaWorks!* LWDA has requested technical assistance from the State Reporting Section staff to conduct webinars dedicated solely to the issues impacting Adult and Youth medium earnings, two measures that the LWDA failed in PY 2020.

The Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE) LWDA has requested any technical assistance available from the State on the GeoSolutions system that would improve data entry

as well as their knowledge of the financial section of the software. SWAPTE also requested any support available to increase the Lower Living Standard Income Level for youth to become eligible. They feel this increase would enable them to serve more youth and increase outcomes.

The Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE) LWDA has requested any technical assistance available in the following areas: *AlabamaWorks!* data system, assistive technology, Local Area monitoring, Work-Based Learning, and On-The-Job-Training.

## Success Stories

### Adult Success Stories

**Justin**, a Veteran, had been looking for a company to work for that he could learn a trade and obtain his Registered Apprentice credential. He started at Metrology South on an OJT on 02/24/2020. The OJT had been written so that when he completed his 1,040 hours, if he was sure he wanted to go into their Registered Apprentice program, he would receive credit for the first 1,000 hours of the Registered Apprentice training. Around the time he was to complete his OJT (9/02/2020), the company had requested Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) funds to train several employees. Justin was put into the IWTP training the day following his OJT training completion. He successfully completed the IWTP on 10/30/2020 and gained knowledge of AS9100D. He also started in a Registered Apprenticeship.

He is still in Metrology South's Registered Apprentice program and states he loves it. The company is very thrilled with his progress and the fact he has been like a sponge being able to take in all he has with regards to the Registered Apprentice program. This company's Registered Apprentice program is 8,000 hours, and he says he is in it for the long haul. He started at \$19/hour and by the time he finished both the OJT and the IWTP training (less than 8 months from his date of hire) he was making \$30/hour.

**Marsha** was referred to WIOA OJT by Alabama Dept of Rehabilitation Services. Marsha is deaf and reads lips and signs. Career Center staff worked to get her a job at Homtex using OJT. She was hired in August 2020 as a Creeler to operate a new machine the company helped with PPE production. Once a new machine came in, though, it was clear it was going to take more than one person to lift some of the parts and do the job, so they asked her if she would be okay being trained in the packaging part of the PPE unit instead. She agreed. Staff made the necessary changes to her OJT training plan, and she was given a \$1/hour increase to move to that position. She learned quickly and has done an amazing job.

When the company experienced a COVID-19-related issue, they were forced to temporarily lay off the employees in their PPE department (about 50 people). She was asked if she would agree to be moved to another area of their plant temporarily to learn yet another job. She agreed (at this point she had completed her OJT hours) and was one of the few who avoided being laid off. She says she loves the jobs she has learned and is thankful to be making \$17/hour and that Homtex has given her these opportunities. She said the company and employees have been great working with her. The employer loves her and says she does not get distracted by the loud noises, is very detailed, and takes great pride in her work.

### Dislocated Worker Success Stories

**Matthew** was referred to the Alabama Career Center as he had been laid off and needed a job, but he did not just want a job, he wanted a career in a trade field. He has some previous part time experience that he could use, build on, and add to, to have a good trades career. Career Center staff contacted a small local employer (Performance Refrigeration) and explained the experience he had and asked if they would be interested in talking to him. The owner of the company said he did not have a current job opening but

said he would talk to him. Staff told the owner that Matthew would be eligible for OJT and really wants to build a career in a trades field.

The owner interviewed him and offered him a job that day. He was hired and put on an OJT just a few days later. The employer has two divisions within his company, one is what they call an installation side and the other is a service side. They hired Matthew on the installation side. He has learned how to operate a forklift, read blueprints, and construct refrigeration units. He has developed plumbing, electrical, and refrigeration skills. He started the job in late May of 2020 at \$12/hour and before he completed his OJT in early December was given a \$2/hour raise. Now, just two months after he completed his OJT (less than 9 months after he was hired), his hourly wage is \$16/hour. Matthew has maintained contact with the Career Center since he started work and never fails to thank staff for introducing him to this company. The employer loves him and his work ethics. The employer says he has a great attitude, is eager to learn and learns quickly and no matter what they ask him to do he takes on the challenge. The employer has also thanked the Career Center multiple times for bringing Matthew to them and has been extremely thankful for OJT funding that has helped them offset their training costs with Matthew.

### Youth Success Stories

**Brittney** came to the Sheffield Career Center seeking employment assistance. She was determined eligible for the WIOA Work Based Learning Program. She expressed an interest in working in a medical office setting. A placement was obtained for her in the Medical Records Department at North Alabama Medical Center. She successfully completed 390 hours of Work Based Learning with excellent performance evaluations. She was hired as a full-time employee of the hospital after completing Work Based Learning. Unfortunately, COVID-19 affected her employment with the hospital, and she was laid off in May 2020.

Brittney was referred to Infants and Children's Clinic PC by the Business Services Representative for consideration for the On-the-Job Training Program. She was hired as a Receptionist through the WIOA On-the-Job Training Program in August 2020. Her experience working in the Medical Records Department at the hospital played a large role in the decision to hire her. Brittney successfully completed 840 hours of OJT in January 2021 and received excellent mid and final OJT evaluations.

**Kenya** was determined eligible for WIOA under the WIOA Youth category. When WIOA eligibility was completed on Kenya, she was a recent high school graduate with no prior work experience. Kenya's goal was to begin working in order to gain employability skills and vital work experience. She began working under the Work Based Learning (WBL) program at CoreLinc in Roanoke, AL from August 2020 to November 2020. During her WBL training, Kenya received the highest praise from her worksite supervisors and co-workers. After Kenya completed her WBL hours, CoreLinc wished to retain Kenya as an employee, and thus offered her a position with the company. Kenya was then placed in On-the-Job Training (OJT) in November 2020. Kenya completed OJT with great success in February 2021. In a time, such as we are in, this employer struggles like most others with finding good employees with a good work ethic, let alone employees who are willing to show up for work. And to be as young as Kenya is, she has shown more dedication and potential than most her age. Kenya's employer still talks about how wonderful an employee Kenya is and wishes that all their employees worked as well as Kenya does.

### 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. The

PY19 unemployment rate monthly high of 14% continued to gradually decline with the end of PY20 seeing a June rate of 3.3%. 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-three (53) 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 Boards 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 2020 (PY20):

**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's 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), National Dislocated Worker Grants, 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.

#### **PY20/FY21 Federal WIOA Allocation Levels**

State-Level Activities	\$ 6,692,801
Statewide Rapid Response Activities	\$ 521,621
Local Area Adult Programs	\$11,401,133
Local Area Youth Programs	\$11,745,468
<u>Local Area Dislocated Worker Programs</u>	<u>\$14,354,892</u>
TOTAL	\$44,715,915

#### **Local Workforce Development Area WIOA Allocation Levels**

##### North Alabama Works (Area 1)

Adult	\$1,708,455
Youth	\$1,683,334
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,527,537</u>
TOTAL	\$5,919,326

##### East Alabama Works (Area 2)

Adult	\$ 996,045
Youth	\$ 974,057
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,141,280</u>
TOTAL	\$4,111,382

##### West Alabama Works (Area 3)

Adult	\$ 827,145
Youth	\$1,164,544
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,046,795</u>
TOTAL	\$3,038,484

##### Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Area 4)

Adult	\$1,299,839
Youth	\$1,330,270
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,830,398</u>
TOTAL	\$4,460,507

##### Central Alabama Works (Area 5)

Adult	\$2,809,656
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Youth	\$2,939,233
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,663,637</u>
TOTAL	\$8,412,526

Southeast Alabama Works (Area 6)

Adult	\$ 843,458
Youth	\$ 851,880
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$1,576,917</u>
TOTAL	\$3,272,255

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Area 7)

Adult	\$2,916,535
Youth	\$2,802,150
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>\$2,568,328</u>
TOTAL	\$8,287,013

## The Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT)

Governor Ivey established the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) in 2018 to coordinate Alabama's education and workforce systems. 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.

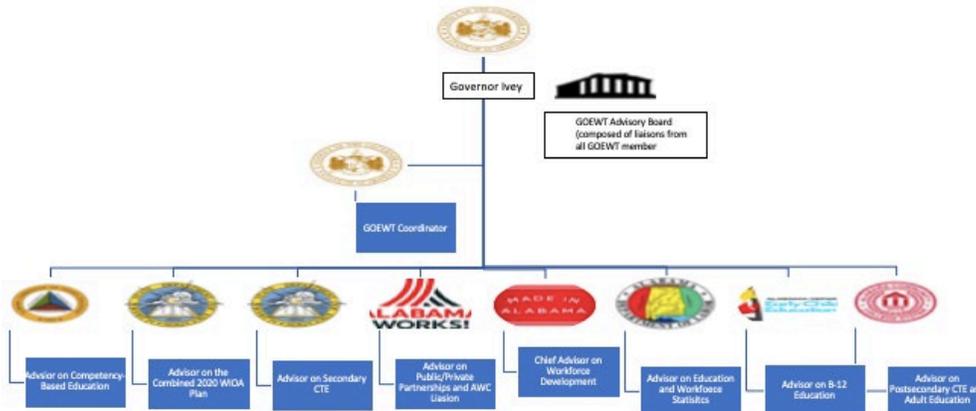
The GOEWT is led by the Director of the GOEWT, who also concurrently serves as the Governor's Education Policy Advisor. The Director of the GOEWT is charged with nine tasks for achieving the goals and objectives of the GOEWT. The Director of the GOEWT is charged with (1) braiding Alabama's federal education 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. The GOEWT Advisory Board is chaired by the Chief Advisor to the GOEWT. During each called meeting of the GOEWT Advisory Board, there is an official meeting followed by a work session. During the official meeting, the Council may vote to confirm or disapprove of recommendations presented by the Director of the GOEWT at the previous called work session. The Chief Advisor on Workforce Development presides over the GOEWT Advisory Board business meetings, and the Director of the GOEWT holds the floor during the work sessions.

### 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

## GOEWT Organizational Chart



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 policy analyst, who provides administrative, technical, and logistical support to the director of the GOEWT. The research and innovation analyst (RIA) 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).

Since its establishment in October 2018, the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) has worked to coordinate the combined efforts of Alabama's education and workforce partners to implement Governor Ivey's Talent Development Strategic Plan. Under Governor Ivey's leadership, Alabama has made great strides:

- (1) The Success Plus attainment goal and the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) are connecting education and training programs to labor market demand by mapping the DNA of occupations and instilling competency-based hiring and education practices;
- (2) the 2020 Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan provides the foundation for the delivery and management of career and training services that will help Alabamians overcome benefit cliffs and enter the workforce;
- (3) the design and development of the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) and the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways that will help agencies, businesses, and individuals make data-informed decisions on where and how to spend scarce resources;
- (4) the creation of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA) serves as a catalyst for scaling new-era career and technical education, expanding all forms of work-based learning, and aiding employers with scaling first-class, employer-driven training;
- (5) Alabama's status as a leader in workforce development policy on the national stage has been elevated by participating in policy academies led by the National Governors Association on work-based learning and developing a pre-to-three pathway for our youngest learners, participating in the National Skills Coalition's non-degree credential attainment policy academy that has led to a state definition of non-degree credentials of value, partnering with the Lumina Foundation and Credential Engine to develop a credential and competency ontology for Alabama to power our competency-based learning and hiring efforts;
- (6) Alabama has secured myriad education and workforce grants that have proven elusive for years, including a \$3.5M State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) grant that will be used to build the ATLAS on Career Pathways' infrastructure, a \$2.4M Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant that will be used to power the Computer Science for Alabama (CS4AL) program that is focused on growing Alabama's computer science teacher pool, a \$1.3M state apprenticeship expansion grant that will be used to assist employers with establishing registered apprenticeship programs, and a \$17.8 M Reimagining Workforce Preparation grant from the CARES Act that will support the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program;
- (7) Alabama is on the cusp of having a Pre-K to workforce system that connects the First-Class Pre-K Program to the workforce through Governor Ivey's Strong Start, Strong Finish Initiative; and
- (8) Alabama is retooling the workforce system to meet the needs of the Post-COVID-19 workforce through the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program that will provide pandemic response employment, avert layoffs, upskills incumbent workers, and retool dislocated workers.

#### **Strategic GOEWT Projects 2021-2022**

- (1) **Brustein Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Project**—the GOEWT is working with Attorney Michael Brustein to revise the Alabama's WIOA polices to help integrate Alabama's workforce system and to increase the number of people who are served with WIOA funds.
- (2) **WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Quality Criteria**—the GOEWT is working with the Department of Commerce to establish enhanced quality criteria for programs on Alabama's ETPL.
- (3) **CSW Competency Dictionary, Competency Frameworks, and Career Pathways Visualizations**—the GOEWT is working with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) to improve the competency frameworks and career pathways, as well as visualizations for the career pathways, developed by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) for Alabama's 272 in-demand occupations.
- (4) **ACCCP 2022 Competency Model and Dynamic Career Pathway Review Process**—the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways is currently working to develop the 2022 in-demand occupations, competency models, and career pathways.

- (5) **Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) Learning and Employment Record (LER) Development with EBSCO**—EBSCO was selected to develop the ACCET verified resume, known as a LER. The project will commence in August 2021 and will launch in March 2022. The project will give individuals a digital transcript that can be used to directly connect with employers through skills-based job descriptions.
- (6) **Virtual Career Coaching Add-On for ACCET**—the GOEWT is working to develop a digital career coaching module for ACCET that will allow jobseekers and students to use machine learning and chat bots to triage simple career counseling questions. Workbay was selected as the vendor and \$125,000 of WIOA set-aside funds will be used to fund the project. The project will commence in October 2021 and will conclude in March 2022.
- (7) **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and Non-Credit Articulation Index**—the GOEWT and the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) are working with education and workforce stakeholders to develop a statewide resource for determining how much academic credit should be awarded for prior learning experiences. This will ensure people can get academic credit for all forms of non-traditional learning.
- (8) **Measuring Credentials and Attainment by Credential Type with Credential Engine and ATLAS on Career Pathways**—the GOEWT and AWC are partnering with Credential Engine to measure the progress Alabama has made so far against the postsecondary attainment goal of adding 500,000 credential workers to the workforce by 2025 by special population and region. The report will be ready in April 2022.
- (9) **Launching the Alabama Credential Registry**—the Alabama Credential Registry and the website “credentials.alabama.gov” was launched in September 2021. The GOEWT will be working to build awareness about the Alabama Credential Registry and to get all non-degree credentials registered.
- (10) **Launching the Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal**—the Skills-Based Job Description Generator will allow employers to use the competencies and credentials associated with jobs in their firms to develop job descriptions that will match jobseekers to the job description based on skills. This will save employers time and money in the hiring process and will help employers get matched with jobs based on the skills they possess rather than only based on proxies, such as degrees. The Alabama Supercomputer Authority is developing the Skills-Based Job Description Generator, and it will be linked seamlessly with the learning and employment record being developed by EBSCO to connect digital resumes and transcripts to skills-based job descriptions.
- (11) **John Pallasch Partnership on Workforce and Human Services Integration**—the GOEWT is working with former Deputy U.S. Secretary of Labor, John Pallasch, to integrate Alabama’s workforce and human services systems into a “no-wrong-door” system that allows people to access human resources, such as SNAP and TANF, and workforce services in one location. Mr. Pallasch is on a contract with the State Workforce Board that commences in October 2021.
- (12) **Financial Literacy Module**—the GOEWT is partnering with Treasurer’s Office to develop a Financial Literacy Course for Alabama that will be six asynchronous, online modules. The program will be used by high school students and adults who are reentering the workforce. The program will launch in late 2022.
- (13) **The Success Plus Talent Academy**—Building on the work that began with the Alabama Talent Development Capstone Course, the Success Plus Talent Academy will provide an overview of the workforce system and each program within the workforce system to prepare Alabama’s public workforce system employees to co-enroll Alabamians in multiple workforce and human services program at one location. The Success Plus Talent Academy will begin in June 2022.
- (14) **Regional Workforce Strategic Plans, Regional Meetings**—the GOEWT and AWC are partnering to develop regional workforce council strategic plans that will develop strategies for reaching each region’s attainment and labor force participation targets annually, and aggregately, between 2021 and 2025. A regional planning meeting will be held in each of the seven regions and

## Attachment A

the GOEWT will provide a \$2,500 planning grant for each region. The regional planning meetings will begin in January 2022 and the regional plans will be submitted by June 2022.

- (15) **No Wrong Door Pilots**—the GOEWT is partnering with DHR and Commerce to develop pilot sites where DHR staff will enroll participants in WIOA workforce training programs at the same time they are enrolled in human services programs. The pilot programs will begin in June 2022.
- (16) **Industry Review Task Force Meetings**—the GOEWT convened a task force of association leaders representing myriad trade associations in Alabama that will review and provide feedback on the Alabama Credential Registry, the Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator, and the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool, known collectively as the Alabama Talent Triad, as these technologies launch in 2021-2022.