

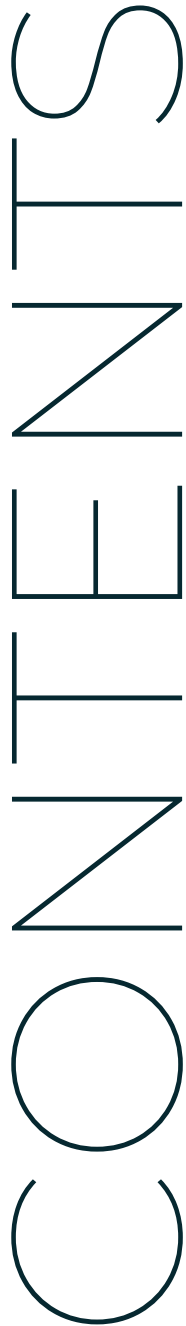


ANNUAL REPORT



# Alabama Workforce Council

# 2022



I. Letter to Governor Ivey and Alabama Legislature	2
II. AWC 2022 Hail and Farewell	3
III. Overview of AWC	4
IV. 2022 AWC Milestones and Accomplishments	9
V. 2022 AWC Webinar Recap	12
VI. 2022 Survey Recap	15
VII. 2022 AWC Committee Reports and Accomplishments	19
VIII. 2022 Regional Council Reports and Accomplishments	21
A. Region 1	21
B. Region 2	21
C. Region 3	22
D. Region 4	23
E. Region 5	23
F. Region 6	23
G. Region 7	24
IX. 2023 AWC Priorities	25
X. 2022 Policy Priorities	27
XI. 2022 Calendar of Meetings and AWC Webinars	38
XII. Attachments	39
A. Resources	39
B. Important Legislation	39
C. Council Leadership	40
D. Council Members	41
E. Timeline of Milestones and Accomplishments	45
F. Important Acronyms	47
G. 2022-2023 AWC Members	49

# I. LETTER TO GOVERNOR IVEY AND THE ALABAMA LEGISLATURE

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Dear Governor Ivey and Alabama Legislators:

As we take stock of 2022, the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) is proud to report that the state of Alabama's workforce is strong due to the leadership of Governor Ivey and the Alabama Legislature.

Alabama's economy continues to grow and enjoys near-full employment with a November 2022 unemployment rate of 2.7 percent. To meet the workforce and talent needs of Alabama's expanding economy, the AWC will remain focused on increasing Alabama's labor force participation rate of 57.1 percent and the Alabama's postsecondary education attainment rate of 45.6 percent in 2023.

The AWC's partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta is beginning to yield insights into how to best reach those Alabamians who are part of the shadow labor force and may be facing a barrier that can be met through supportive services.

The AWC is working with EBSCO and employers across Alabama to launch an innovative talent management portal, known as the Alabama Talent Triad, that will connect employers directly to jobseekers by matching competencies to job descriptions.

The AWC will also remain committed to expanding access to quality data on credential attainment by bolstering the capacity of the ATLAS on Career Pathways to match administrative data and track progress against the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal for each of Alabama's 16 discrete special populations.

The primary focus of the AWC in 2023 will be to serve as a catalyst for coordinating agencies and programs that are tasked with bringing more Alabamians off the sidelines and into the ranks of Alabama's burgeoning labor market.

Thank you for your dedication and bold leadership.

Sincerely,

Tim McCartney  
Chair, Alabama Workforce Council

Christy Knowles  
Vice Chair, Alabama Workforce Council

## II. AWC 2022 HAIL AND FAREWELL

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We have had the pleasure of working with many knowledgeable and outstanding leaders in Alabama over the past 8 years. Many of them served beyond the call as chairs of our committees. This year we say farewell to Mrs. Sandra Koblas from Austal who has served as Vice Chair of the AWC for the past four years; Mr. Bob Schwyn of Honda Alabama; Judge Cleve Poole, formerly of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, and chair of the ACCCP; and Norman Crow of DT Transportation, Chair of the Outreach and Engagement Committee as they step down from their roles with the AWC. Their insight and leadership have been instrumental in the progress we have made through the years.

For every person that steps down, we are fortunate to have talented individuals step up to the appointment and serve on the Alabama Workforce Council. This year we welcome as new members to the AWC: Mr. Steve Hildebrant, Alabama Power Company (retired) who will serve as Chair of the Outreach and Engagement Committee; Mrs. Alex Sadler, Consultant, Economic Development & Training, Tennessee Valley Authority; Mr. Billy Norrell, CEO, Alabama Associated General Contractors; and Mr. Lamar Whitaker, Vice President, Honda Alabama Automotive Plant. Mr. John Allen Nichols from ALFA will serve as the new chair of the ACCCP committee and Mrs. Christy Knowles of Coosa Valley Health will continue to serve as Chair of the Regional Workforce Council Support Committee with the additional role of Vice Chair of the Alabama Workforce Council.

It is our pleasure to work with you to increase the number of Alabamians who are employed in high-wage, in-demand occupations and achieving the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal of adding 500,000 additional credentialed Alabamians to the workforce by 2025.

# III. OVERVIEW OF THE AWC

## A. History and Purpose

The Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) is composed of business executives from some of the most important industries and organizations in the state of Alabama. The AWC's goal is to facilitate collaboration between government and industry to help Alabama develop a sustainable, top-notch workforce that is competitive on a global scale. The AWC was established in 2013 as a successor to the Governor's College and Career Ready Task Force. The AWC was codified in 2014. There are currently 35 industry executives serving on the AWC.

There are several ex-officio members on the council that provide expertise and a historical understanding of the council. The ex-officio members include:

- Deputy Secretary of the Department of Commerce ([Ed Castille](#)).
- Vice Chancellor for Workforce and Economic Development of the ACCS ([Keith Phillips](#)).
- Deputy State Superintendent of Education Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development Division ([Dr. Jimmy Hull](#)).
- Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education ([Jim Purcell](#)).
- Secretary of Labor ([Fitzgerald Washington](#)).
- Chair of the State Workforce Development Board ([George Clark](#)).
- Secretary of the Department of Rehabilitative Services ([Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw](#)).
- Secretary of Department of Human Resources ([Nancy Buckner](#)).
- Executive Director of Region Workforce Council Region 5 ([Gindi Prutzman](#)).

In 2013, The Governor's College and Career Ready Task Force called for the creation of Regional Workforce Councils (RWCs). Formally established in 2015 by the Alabama Legislature, ten RWCs were created to provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. The RWCs are business-driven and work with their member counties to develop a regional strategic plan and comprehensive workforce development system that supports local economic and job development activities. The RWCs provide policy recommendations to the AWC.

In 2016, the original ten RWCs were consolidated into seven, and each is now led by an executive director paid for by funds allocated by the Alabama Legislature. Each regional executive director is paired with a Department of Commerce employee, who serves as the regional workforce council liaison. To ensure regional goals are met, regional executive directors have specific metrics they must achieve, such as conducting needs assessments, creating annual strategic plans, and formulating grant committees. The seven new regions are geographically concurrent with the Workforce Investment Board regions to better align the use of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds with state workforce development activities.

The RWCs are the “boots on the ground” bringing resources that serve both business and Alabama’s workforce. Examples of some of the coordinated initiatives created by the RWC’s include:

- Regional job fairs
- Region 1-North AlabamaWorks! partnerships in the Shoals Area helped a local ministry to expand their daycare to support the local employer’s childcare needs.
- Region 3-West AlabamaWorks! held a virtual reality career exploration that provided hands-on career simulations in skilled trades, manufacturing, automotive, public safety, hospitality, warehouse, and storage. With thirty-five schools participating they reached 1,949 students in 2021.
- Region 4-Central Six AlabamaWorks! created partnerships with the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham and LYFT, to launch a ride share program and provided 368 “no cost” rides for residents to work or training.

## B. Mission and Vision

The Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) is Alabama’s foremost workforce development organization, and it is composed of Alabama’s leading industry, education, and workforce executives. The AWC advocates for cutting-edge workforce policies at the highest levels of government to provide a talented workforce for every business in Alabama and to provide every Alabamian with access to an in-demand job.

### AWC Vision

The AWC’s vision is clear: Aligned systems + an educated workforce = a prosperous economy. By 2025, all Alabamians are connected to career opportunities by prioritizing learning aligned with the needs of our economy. To prioritize learning opportunities for Alabamians that are aligned with the needs of the economy, state education and workforce agencies must align their resource and programs.

### AWC Mission

Our mission is simple: Understand. Align. Impact. Assess. Repeat.

The members of the AWC and the leaders of the state agencies tasked with education and workforce training must understand the mission and vision.

The state agencies must align resources.

The state agencies must impact the 16 discrete populations we are targeting through the attainment and labor force participation goals.

We must assess our progress towards increasing postsecondary attainment and labor force participation.

We must repeat the cycle every year and measure results until the final goal is due on April 30, 2025, of adding 500,000 credentialed Alabamians to the workforce and reaching the national labor force participation rate.

## C. Member Roles and Responsibilities

01

### Four Year Terms

The Council includes members representing business, industry, education, and workforce development. While there is no set number of members, members are appointed by the Governor and serve a four-year, renewable term. This Gubernatorial appointment reflects the importance of the leadership role members assume when they join the Council.

02

### Committee Service

Members serve on at least one Council committee during their tenure on the Council. In addition, time is set aside at some quarterly meetings of the Council for committee meetings.

03

### Engagement with Regional Workforce Councils

Members of the Council play an important role as liaison between the Alabama Workforce Council and the RWCs. Members meet with the Executive Director of their RWC at least twice per year to support strong communication and coordination.

04

### Annual Member Engagement Survey

The Council surveys its members annually to improve the effectiveness of the Council and ensure its members see and receive value in their service.

## D. Committee Structure

The AWC has five standing committees:

- The Human Capital Development Committee
- Outreach and Engagement Committee
- Public Private Partnership Committee
- The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) Committee
- Regional Workforce Council Support Committee

Each of the AWC committees are led by devoted chairpersons that are very engaged in improving our state's workforce.

OVERVIEW

## E. Committee Descriptions

- **Regional Workforce Council Support Committee**—Relationships with RWC business and industry members and developing regional attainment/labor force participation plans based on annual targets.
- **Outreach and Engagement Committee**—Marketing campaign focused on Talent Triad, skills-based hiring, and registering credentials; AWC Orientation; FAFSA completion campaign; and AWC Webinars.
- **Human Capital Development Committee**—Completing and updating the K-12 Ten Points; Workforce Skills Course; and engaging state agencies on the attainment and labor force participation goals.
- **ACCCP Committee**—Development of an annual list of in-demand jobs; annual competency models; and a list of valuable credentials.
- **PPP Committee**—Regional grant technical assistance; grants to community-based organizations that promote college-and-career readiness, postsecondary attainment, and labor force participation.

### **The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways Committee—Cleve Poole, Chair**

The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) Committee was established in 2019 by Act 2019-506, and each of its seven members is appointed to represent one of the seven regional workforce councils on the ACCCP. Committee members, along with nine ex officio members of the ACCCP, vote to adopt an annual list of statewide in-demand jobs and regional lists of in-demand occupations. The ACCCP also votes annually to adopt industry competency models for each statewide and regional in-demand occupation. The ACCCP also votes annually to adopt a Compendium of Valuable Credentials. The ACCCP's work is being utilized by education and training providers to align education and training programs to industry demand. The ACCCP's work product is also being used to develop competency-based training programs, based on skills rather than time, and skills-based hiring practices that connect employers directly to job seekers who possess the skills needed for in-demand occupations.

### **Outreach and Engagement Committee—Norman Crow, Chair**

The mission of the Outreach and Engagement Committee is to connect Alabama's education, workforce, human services, non-profits, and the private sector through a segmented marketing strategy designed to increase the postsecondary attainment and labor force participation rate for Alabama's 16 discrete special populations regionally and statewide. The Outreach and Engagement Committee supports AlabamaWorks! through continued statewide brand awareness efforts that focus on strategic earned media, social media, and advertising to increase public awareness and support programmatic functions that fall under AlabamaWorks! umbrella.



**Alabama Workforce Council(AWC) Public-Private Partnership Committee—Phil Webb, Chair**

The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Committee is composed of corporate foundations and business leaders. The PPP Committee has convened over 30 non-profits from across the state to develop and implement innovative programs designed to address barriers to workforce access and success in Alabama. The AWC PPP Committee is focused on strategies to supplement and support workforce efforts by funding wrap-around support programming to remove barriers to employment, including childcare, transportation, disability, and recidivism. The Chair works with the AWC PPP Committee members, the AWC Chair, and staff to create partnerships between non-profits and foundations to fund projects aligned to the Success Plus goal. The PPP Committee works with the Regional Workforce Councils (RWCs) to provide technical assistance for non-profit organizations that work to increase the postsecondary education attainment rate and the labor force participation rate.

**Human Capital Development Committee—Allen Harris, Chair**

The Human Capital Development Committee was established in 2019 to support the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goals of adding 500,000 credentialed workers to the workforce by 2025 and increasing Alabama's labor force participation rate to the national average by 2025. The chair and members of the Human Capital Development Committee collaborate with state agency partners, non-profit organizations, and industry partners to provide a human-centered approach for delivering education and workforce training.

**The Alabama Workforce Council Regional Workforce Council Support Committee—Christy Knowles, Chair/Jessica Oates, Co-Chair RWC Liaison Committee**

In December 2020, Chairman McCartney established the Regional Workforce Council Support Committee to provide support to each of the seven Regional Workforce Councils (RWCs) for reaching the regional attainment and labor force participation goals. The Regional Workforce Council Support Committee members and co-chairs are working with each region to develop a Regional Attainment and Labor Force Participation Strategic Plan. The regional plans will include a focus on asset-mapping community resources and conducting a gap analysis on training programs that are aligned to in-demand jobs in the region.

# IV. AWC MILESTONES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Alabama's workforce development investments are paying off. 2021 was the second-best year for economic development in Alabama's history. In 2021, Alabama attracted \$7.7 billion in private-sector investments, which resulted in the creation of 10,000 new jobs. Alabama recruited Landing, a technology-focused company creating a model for flexible apartment living, which relocated its headquarters from San Francisco to Birmingham, in 2021. J.M. Smucker Co. invested \$1.1 billion to open a new manufacturing and distribution hub in McCalla, which will create 750 jobs. Other major companies, including Facebook, Amazon, and FedEx, announced Alabama projects in 2021, as well. Due to Governor Ivey's strategic leadership, Site Selection Magazine ranked Alabama as the best state among the South Central States for workforce development in 2022 and 2023.

Area Development magazine presented Alabama with its Silver Shovel Award for economic development success in manufacturing in 2021. Alabama's ability to overcome the complex economic development challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic earned the state a Top 10 ranking in the Governor's Cups analysis from Site Selection magazine, as well.

The Alabama Department of Labor's data shows that as of November 2022, the yearly total of online job ads is 101,757 and there are 63,043 unemployed Alabamians, which is almost two open jobs per unemployed Alabamian and a 5 percent increase in open jobs since November 2021.

Alabama's labor force participation high-water mark was 65.1% in July 1997. In the post-COVID-19 environment, Alabama must pursue a workforce development strategy designed to engage those Alabamians who have decided to remain on the sidelines by not entering the labor force.

Alabamians who are not in the labor force are not avoiding work intentionally. Many people face benefits cliffs when entering the workforce, which are caused when means-tested benefits taper off more quickly than an individual can compensate for their loss through paid employment.

Providing access to education and training, coupled with human services, is a method for meeting the complex needs of Alabamians who are facing barriers to entering the workforce. In 2023, the AWC will partner with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to estimate the number of people in each of Alabama's workforce regions who are in the shadow labor force.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AWC has conducted a recurring Alabama Survey of the Unemployed and Underemployed, which focuses on the barriers Alabamians face when reentering the workforce in wake of the pandemic. The survey results continue to underscore the need to provide access to wrap-around and support services such as transportation, childcare, and housing assistance.

According to the survey results, a lack of childcare causes more than 20% of parents to be late or absent from work four or more days a month. Furthermore, just over half of the respondents have lost a job or opportunity because they lack reliable transportation. More than one-third of respondents have declined or delayed a job opportunity because they were afraid that they would lose a government benefit. In 2023, the AWC will conduct a third iteration of the survey to determine current barriers to entering education and the workforce.

Alabama's strategy to increase the labor force participation rate centers on providing new modalities of training, including short-term programs that are aligned to traditional degrees and supportive services, such as transportation and childcare, that Alabamians need to persist in the workforce.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta partnered with Alabama to develop a benefits cliff and self-sufficiency tool called the Dashboard for Alabama to Visualize Income Development (DAVID) for Alabama. This dashboard is being used in Alabama's career centers to help individuals understand when they will reach self-sufficiency, based on income, region, occupation, and family dynamics.

January

4  
2022

#### Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan Amendments

The U.S. Department of Education approved the amendments to Alabama's Every Student Succeeds Act state plan submitted by the Alabama State Department of Education to include new college and career readiness indicators for completing a Career and Technical Education program of study and for completing an in-school youth apprenticeship.

April

5  
2022

#### Alabama Numeracy Act

Governor Ivey signed the Alabama Numeracy Act (Act 2022-249) into law, which places the same level of focus on mathematics that the Alabama Literacy Act placed on reading. The Alabama Numeracy Act codified Alabama's prohibition against Common Core State Standards.

May

2022

#### Historic Funding for Education and Unprecedented Teacher Pay Raises

For the 2022-2023 school year, the minimum salary for first-year teachers in Alabama is \$43,358, which is an 11.6 percentage point increase in first-year teacher salaries during Governor Ivey's tenure. The \$8.3 billion FY 2023 Education Trust Fund budget was the largest in Alabama's history for the fourth year in a row and provides a 4-21 percent pay raise for teachers based on experience.

June  
2022

### Increased College Access

In April 2021, the Alabama State Board of Education voted to adopt a new policy that ensures students complete or opt-out of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) championed by Governor Ivey and the AWC. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget includes \$500,000 for FAFSA completion, which will support the FAFSA completion dashboard managed by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. According to the National College Attainment Network, Alabama is in second place nationally for year-over-year growth in FAFSA completions, since Alabama saw a 24.5 percent increase year-over-year in FAFSA completions. Several school districts saw enormous year-over-year increases: Choctaw County (178.9%); Anniston City (152.2%) and Perry County (150%). The FAFSA completion rate for the class of 2022 has Alabama ranked 9th in the nation.

July  
12  
2022

### Held the Line on Teacher Quality

In July 2022, the Alabama State Board of Education voted to relax teacher licensure requirements for two years as a response to the acuity of Alabama's teacher shortage. The AWC resisted earlier proposals that would have eliminated the Praxis content knowledge test.

Sept  
27-29  
2022

### Brookings Metro Earn and Learn Project Mobile Convening

Alabama was accepted into the Brookings Metro Earn and Learn Project, which is a 24-month project to help spread and scale earn and learn approaches (paid, work-based opportunities to gain entrance to a profession) through technical support, a community of practice, and strategic learning. Alabama hosted the first interstate convening September 27th-29th in Mobile. Representatives from Colorado and Indiana and research partners from Brookings and New America were in attendance.

Nov  
10  
2022

### Developed a National Model for College and Career Readiness

The Alabama State Board of Education adopted a final rule championed by Governor Ivey and the Alabama Workforce Council in November 2022 requiring students to earn a college and career readiness indicator prior to graduation beginning with the class of 2028.

Sept &  
December  
2022

### Measuring the Success Plus Postsecondary Education Attainment Goal

A report developed by the GOEWT, Credential Engine, and the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC) measured progress against the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal from 2018-2021, generally, along with each of the 16 discrete special populations in Alabama's 2020 Combined WIOA State Plan and each of Alabama's seven workforce regions by credential type.

## V. 2022 AWC WEBINAR RECAP

In 2022 the AWC Monthly Webinar series continued to highlight education and workforce leaders who were implementing innovative practices that benefit our communities and state. The monthly 1-hour webinars were packed with multiple guests focused on a central theme and served as an effective vehicle to reach various workforce stakeholders in Alabama.

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### **January - Workforce Education in 2022: What will it Look Like?**

With Gov. Ivey's continued support, Alabama is leading the way in workforce education. Computer Science access increased from 39% to 82% within four years. Alabama is recognized as 1 of 6 states in the Southeast to reach 9 For 9 in computer science education. Alabama is collaborating with 6 states, and national leaders that are grappling with challenges and creating opportunities. Alabama's FASFA completion rate continues to increase.

### **February 2022: Advancing Strategic Partnerships to Provide Supportive Services**

Work based learning opportunities are being developed in CTE programs with particular focus in co-op services and special ed students who are given learning opportunities. Every CTE program is aligned with at least one in demand job in K12. Alabama Launch will put Alabama on the map as a business industry placement transition experience for post high school education. Gov. Ivey took up the issue of providing opportunity for people with disabilities in Alabama: trends are changing and people with disabilities are applying for jobs now to fill labor shortages.

### **March 2022: Developing In-Demand Career Pathways**

Alabama allows for the recognition of high and mid-level professional skills by building pathways upward for students who start in career and technical education. Resources are available in statewide programs for apprenticeships, scholarships, and two-year degrees in high-demand jobs. Alabama continues to improve reading proficiency by providing equitable early learning experiences.

### **April 2022: Education and Training for a 21st Century Workforce**

Alabama continues to support education and training programs in the construction industry and cyber technology and engineering. The AWC continues work on the credential registry and the Alabama Talent Triad to increase the employability and education of every Alabamian.

## **May 2022: Developing the Educator Workforce of Tomorrow**

Alabama's employment metrics show that our economy is moving in the right direction. Existing companies are expanding, creating a positive economy. ALEX, The Alabama Experience, is featured at the World Games. ALEX is an immersive and interactive way for a potential workforce to see that Alabama offers them an enticing location to seek employment. Teacher licensure is shown to have a direct correlation between licensure tests and positive teacher effectiveness, especially in early grades. Alabama has award-winning student programs that provide work-based learning for our special needs youth.

## **June 2022: Increasing Labor Force Participation to Increase Self Sufficiency**

Alabamians with disabilities are a key resource for solving the labor force participation rate. The JET Program is a work-based learning opportunity for high school students with disabilities that can provide them with a path to self-sufficiency. Alabama is halfway to the Success Plus attainment goal. Teach for America Alabama is working to help increase student achievement and close the teacher shortage in Alabama. Ingram State Technical College provides education and training for the incarcerated so that they can enter the workforce and reduce recidivism. New private programs are being developed to help qualify inmates for work release opportunities by providing representation to inmates who are worthy of parole but cannot be there or hire legal counsel.

## **July 2022: Developing Non-Degree Credential Competency Crosswalks**

Alabama continues to work with AWC committees and partners to remove barriers to adult learning and career pathways. The Training for Credit Crosswalks aims to align noncredit learning, apprenticeships, training, and certifications with college courses and credits.

## **August 2022: Employee Recruitment and Retention**

The Alabama Regional Workforce Council continues with new programs to help industries understand what resources are available. The Employer Talent Recruitment and Retention Survey report results show that pay is the leading challenge to the retention of employees. Preliminary reports from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta show that there is a shadow labor force of people who want to work but are facing first or last-dollar benefits cliffs. Skills training is needed to reach part-time or underutilized employees.

## **September 2022: Workforce Development Begins with Quality Early Childhood Education**

Alabama DHR and ACCS Workforce Development Partnership have been successful in helping train and provide services to help people overcome barriers to entering the workforce. The Alabama Literacy Act and Numeracy Act will ensure every child is literate and numerate and will help to train teachers to improve student math proficiency. First Class PreK continues to exceed expectations.

## **October 2022: Providing Multiple Pathways for Postsecondary and Workforce Success**

Charter schools in Alabama continue to provide flexibility for parents and students. Alabama continues to provide career advancement courses, certifications, apprenticeship opportunities, and solutions to remove barriers to training and education.

## **November 2022: Advancing Excellence in STEM Education and Training**

Through the STEM Council, Alabama is moving towards modern learning for a modern economy. The Alabama Occupational Ontology moves towards a consistent database of well-researched competency statements towards an ability to analyze transferable competencies across industries so someone can make a move from one industry to another. Computer Science Education in Alabama is expanding, especially in rural communities.

## **December 2022: Fostering Demand for Skills-Based Hiring**

Alabama works with industry partners to provide STEM and Computer Science careers with online and lesson plans. Ready for Industry addresses career preparedness for the job search. The Alabama Talent Triad pilot will release in the first quarter of 2023. Skills matter in hiring, and Alabama is at the forefront of this national movement. The PPP provided grant opportunities to address barriers to success in Alabama.

## VI. 2022 AWC Survey Recap

### Exploring the Disruptive Potential of Non-Degree Credentials

Non-degree credentials (certificates, industry certifications, digital badges, apprenticeship certificates, and occupational licenses) are key to surpassing postsecondary education attainment goals and responding to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Education and training providers can use these data to align their educational offerings to the needs of employers and to ensure that educational credentials are aligned to competencies demanded by employers. Policy makers will be able to use these data to determine return on investment, review quality indicators, and to support the development of digital transcripts.

States, including Alabama, are exploring ways to harness the rapid expansion of technology and non-degree credentials to align educational programs to the needs of the economy, to democratize the modalities of postsecondary learning by increasing the methods by which people can learn, and to allow people to own their learning and to make choosing education and training opportunities as transparent and efficient as buying a book on Amazon or booking a trip on Expedia.

Figure 1. Attainment Targets for Alabama's 16 Special Populations(2022-2025)

Special Population Groups	AL	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
Displaced Homemaker	13,977	2,827	1,095	1,131	2,941	2,431	1,141	2,412
Low-Income	120,965	30,648	9,136	9,100	25,592	17,314	9,083	20,092
Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians	3,047	740	245	157	541	203	149	1,013
People with Disabilities	18,568	4,966	995	722	6,187	2,468	891	2,339
Older Individuals	16,346	4,115	1,194	1,093	4,234	2,359	1,265	2,086
Ex-Offenders	80,836	18,590	5,400	4,418	25,167	10,581	5,270	11,410
Homeless Individuals	2,070	534	127	39	656	198	113	401
Youth Aged Out of Foster System	168	40	16	12	60	12	12	16
English Language Learners/Low Levels of Literacy/Substantial Cultural Barriers	18,460	7,026	1,091	854	4,972	1,639	1,041	1,837
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	4,380	1,382	407	296	634	558	527	576
Individuals Nearing TANF Exhaustion	1,520	104	32	120	480	536	80	168
Single Parent	109,901	26,638	7,020	7,346	31,210	17,288	6,248	14,151
Youth with parents in active duty military	8,944	2,443	351	100	1,072	3,053	706	1,219
Unemployed or Underemployed	29,210	5,175	2,094	2,165	6,552	5,409	2,025	5,790
Long-Term Unemployed	14,364	2,931	1,012	834	3,524	2,322	1,064	2,677
Veterans	57,244	14,841	2,785	3,613	13,178	7,629	5,385	9,813
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>123,000</b>	<b>33,000</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>127,000</b>	<b>74,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>76,000</b>

Source: Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (2022).

### Measuring the Postsecondary Attainment Rate in Alabama and Employer Preferences on Non-Degree Credentials

Governor Kay Ivey is focused on increasing Alabama's postsecondary education attainment rate to 60 percent by 2025 (the current attainment rate is 45.7 percent) and increasing Alabama's labor force participation rate of 57.1 percent to the national average of 62.3 percent by 2025. As a strategy for increasing the postsecondary education attainment rate and the labor force participation rates, Alabama is focused on non-degree credential quality assurance and transparency to develop career pathways composed of stackable sequences of non-degree credentials that have immediate value in the labor market and can also be translated into long-term degrees. Alabama has worked with national partners to develop a non-degree credential quality and transparency system to bring order to the turbulent but promising domain of non-degree credentials.

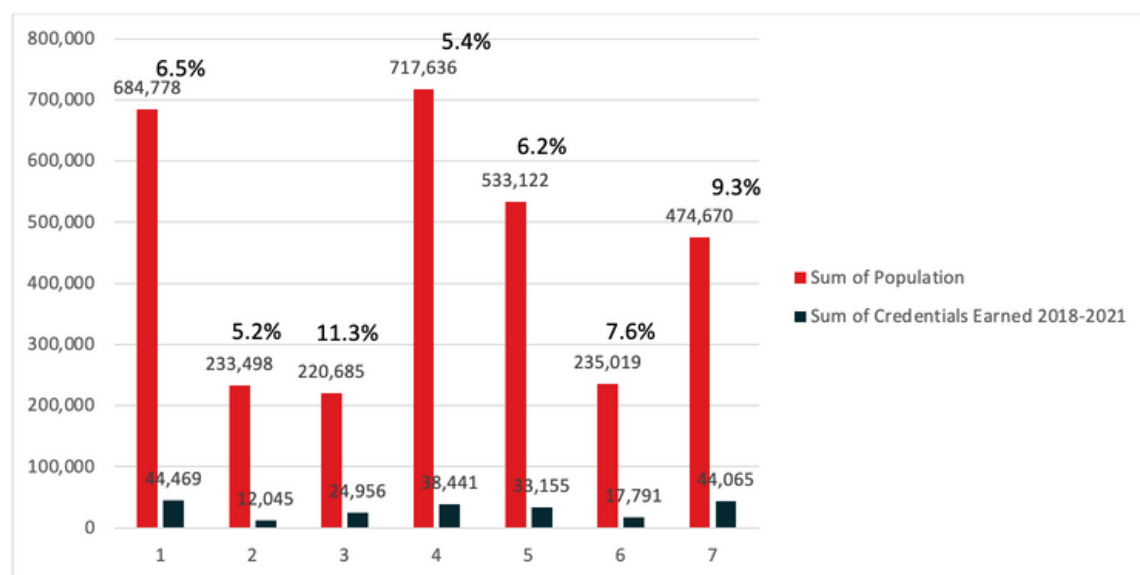


Limited research has been conducted on employers and individual preferences for non-degree credentials. To ameliorate the lack of data available to Alabama on the viability of expanding access to non-degree credentials as a talent development strategy, three key questions are in order: (1) are non-degree credentials earned equitably among Alabama's demographic subpopulations? (2) how do the earnings for those who have earned non-degree credentials compare to those who have not? (3) do employers validate and recognize non-degree credentials and is there a wage premium associated with non-degree credentials?

### Counting Credentials and Attainment Report

To answer question one, the Alabama Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) commissioned Credential Engine and the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC) to measure progress against the Success Plus postsecondary attainment goal from 2018 to 2021. The report, entitled Counting Credentials and Attainment Report, shows that 214,922 credentials were completed in Alabama from 2018 through 2021. People ages 16-24 attained 137,848 credentials and people ages 25-64 attained 38,240 credentials. The remaining 38,834 were earned by an Alabamian, but the age for those earning these credentials could not be identified. In 2021, 45.7 percent of Alabamians ages 25-64 had a credential, an increase of 2.7 percent since 2018. For the critical age group of younger than 25, 21.1 percent of them had a credential (measured for ages 18-24). Combined, 43.3 percent of the entire working-age population (ages 18-64) had a credential. Broken down by credential, from 2018-2021, 145,194 first degrees were attained from public and private post-secondary schools; 33,059 first certificates were attained from public and private post-secondary schools; 1,430 people attained licenses as their first credential; 34,552 attained a certification; and 668 people completed an apprenticeship.

Figure 2. Population and Credentials Earned in Alabama's Seven Workforce Regions (2018-2021)



### **New South Research Non-Degree Credential Survey and the Employer Non-Degree Credential Survey**

To answer questions two and three, GOEWT partnered with New South Research to conduct a survey of Alabama's employers to determine the value employers place on non-degree credentials. New South interviewed 428 employers between February and March 2022. To expand the understanding of the proclivity of Alabama's employers to use non-degree credentials as signals of competence, GOEWT distributed a follow-up to the New South Survey, entitled the Employer Non-Degree Credential Survey between March and May 2022, and 178 employers responded. The two surveys differ in employer size and geography. The New South Non-Degree Credential Survey had a larger sample size compared to the Employer Non-Degree Credential Survey. The New South Non-Degree Credential Survey provided a larger sample size of responses from Alabama's industry sectors by industry type, geographic coverage across the state, and representation of small, large, and very large employers. For a survey of this nature to be representative to compare employers' practices on non-degree credentials, the survey must include a larger number of employers by industry type, geographic type, geographic coverage across the state, and representation of small, large, and very large employers. The sample must also mirror the population and industry mix as it exists. The New South Survey and Employer Non-Degree Credential Survey, while limited by not providing a fully representative sample, provide more insightful analysis of the behavioral aspect of employers' preferences on non-degree credentials compared to what had existed previously.

### **Next Steps and Future Research**

From the results of the New South Survey on Non-Degree Credentials and the Employer Survey on Non-Degree Credentials, there is deep interest in non-degree credentials. However, it is not as clear whether that interest is being acted on by employers in the way of requiring non-degree credentials as a condition of initial employment, providing wage increases for earning non-degree credentials, and providing non-degree credentials and training to employees. The role of the state in vouchsafing the quality of non-degree credentials using the ten-point non-degree credential quality assurance criteria and making non-degree credentials transparent by posting all credentials to the Alabama Credential Registry will hopefully expand the use of non-degree credentials by employers and training providers alike. The second CREC report and additional research underway on connecting non-degree credentials and the course outcomes associated with education and training programs to the competencies required to perform occupations will help to make non-degree credentials a more indelible component of the education and training system in the United States.

# Table A: Comparing the New South Non-Degree Credential Survey and the Non-Degree Credential Survey

New South Non-Degree Credential Survey and Employer Non-Degree Credential Survey Comparison	New South Non-Degree Credential Survey	Non-Degree Credential Survey
Percentage of Employers who Use Non-Degree Credentials to Validate Employee Experience	67%	79%
Percentage of Responding Employers who Provide Wage Increases to Employees who Earn Credentials	55%	40% (16 % usually provide wage premiums and 24% always provide wage premiums)
Percentage of Responding Employers who Open Advancement Opportunities to Credential Earners	55%	40% (14 percent usually provide wage premiums and 26% always provide wage premiums)
Percentage of Employers Reporting Wage Increases of 11% or More for Earning Credentials	49%	44%
Percentage of Responding Employers who Prefer to Hire Job Candidates who Possess Non-Degree Credentials	31%	34%
Percentage of Responding Employers who Require a Drivers' License for Initial Employment	66%	60%
Percentage of Responding Employers with 25% or More Employees with a Credential	46%	66%
Percentage of Responding Employers with 50% or More Employees with a Credential	32%	40%
Percentage of Employers who Require a Credential for Initial Employment	34%	45%
Percentage of Responding Employers who Directly Issue Credentials to Employees	28%	38%
Percentage of Employers who Preferred Short-Term Credentials	70%	70% (trainings that take less than six months to complete)
Percentage of Responding Employers who Pay for Credentials	62% (meaning 38% percent of employers were required to pay for their own training)	70% (meaning 30% percent of employers were required to pay for their own training )

## VII. 2022 AWC Committee Reports & Accomplishments

### A. The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways

Cleve Poole, Chair

In 2022, the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways Committee continued its mission of identifying in-demand occupational career pathways and credentials of value by releasing a new list of in-demand occupations, revising competencies in the Alabama Occupational Ontology, and further developing the quality assurance process for the upcoming Compendia of Valuable Credentials. The 2022 statewide list of in-demand occupations featured a record-high 235 occupations. With the addition of 130 regional in-demand occupations, the committee was able to create and update competency data for 365 of Alabama's best occupations. This competency work was done with the help of more than 100 volunteers from business and industry over the summer of 2022. The ACCCP has developed and revised its non-degree credential quality assurance criteria into a ten-step adjudication process to identify Alabama's credentials of value and award them one of four statuses: Complementary, Success, Postsecondary, or Success+. These compendia will be published by the ACCCP and used in the Alabama Talent Triad to recommend career and education advancement opportunities to Alabamians.

### B. Outreach and Engagement Committee

Norman Crow, Chair

The Outreach and Engagement Committee's annual initiatives included publishing a portfolio of one-page executive summaries of the AWC initiatives in an industry-usable format. The Alabama Talent Triad Marketing Campaign continued to be a priority as the committee worked on the development of marketing and promotional materials to promote the Talent Triad that included presentation materials and prepared remarks so that any AWC member could speak on authority about the workforce initiatives with the same message to various stakeholders in our state. The committee successfully rolled out a FAFSA Informational Campaign that helped to increase Alabama's FAFSA enrollment. Alabama now ranks among the top 15 states for FAFSA completion and No. 2 in year-over-year FAFSA completion, trailing only Texas.

### C. Public-Private Partnership Committee

Phil Webb, Chair

The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Committee technical assistance program submitted over \$7.3 million in grant applications and has secured \$4.1 million in grants to date. A highlighted grant win included The Dannon Project, which recently announced it is working with Google to provide digital skills programs to advance economic opportunities for people impacted by incarceration. Google selected The Dannon Project based on its history of helping people who have been impacted by incarceration receive training, career resources, and job placement support.

The PPP has currently supported eight nonprofits with capacity-building efforts totaling more than \$280,000. There are four applications pending for Q4 2022 totaling \$120,000. These capacity-building grants have been able to help organizations expand operations, including Jones Valley Teaching Farm's position for a K-8 Teaching Farm Specialist to lead the day-to-day operations of partner school sites and lead apprentices. Many of these efforts have helped organizations become competitive in recruiting top-level talent to the state.

#### **D. Human Capital Development Committee**

##### **Allen Harris, Chair**

The Human Capital Development Committee continued its focus on updating and revising the previous AWC's Ten Point K-12 Recommendations to Education. In November 2021, the Ten Points were shared and discussed with the Alabama State Board of Education. The Ten Points from Industry are a culmination of common-sense strategies for improvements in K-12 that affect federal recovery funding, academic improvement, and alignment of in-demand jobs with CTE. The committee aimed to complete the ATLAS Career Pathways system and endorsed a rule change to assure that graduating students have a minimum of one college/career readiness indicator. Additional points include requiring career coaches to attend regional workforce council meetings and establish a system of metrics and implement new policy to place student and teacher absenteeism at approved levels. The committee is pleased that three of these points were completed by September 2022.

## VIII. 2022 REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Region 1—North AlabamaWorks! (NAW)

This year, North Alabama Works (NAW) updated the region's strategic plan by ensuring objectives align with those of Success Plus. These efforts can be seen in the Center for Economic Competitiveness report that Region 1 is well on track for meeting Success Plus goals, with 44,475 credentials awarded from 2018-2021.

NAW, alongside our partners, focused attention on the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program (AWSP) this year to help employers develop these specific hiring and training solutions. NAW approved 30 company applications, allocating \$2,390,639 in funding with 2,772 participants served. Business and industry from 12 of the 13 counties in Region 1 have been served through AWSP, with six projects in designated rural counties. In partnership with the local Career Centers, WIOA programs continue to be highly utilized with 655 credentials attained and 1,897 entering employment. Apprenticeships also continued to expand, with 1,040 apprentices in 37 active registered programs (each includes 1 to 30 employers), 10 pre-apprenticeship programs, and the nation's first graduate-level apprenticeship.

NAW continues to expand its service to local school systems by conducting regional collaboration meetings with superintendents, career technical directors, and career coaches. The Educator Workforce Academy has trained 85 participants and currently has a class of 29 enrolled. This year NAW held a region-wide Worlds of Work event, which brought 8,273 students and 335 teachers and administrators to visit the 127 career exploration exhibits at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville.

Amid the state's lowest unemployment rates in history, NAW is working with local partners to help labor force non-participants enter or reenter the workforce. The NAW Nonprofit Network connects nonprofits throughout the region with workforce partners to assist those in need of supportive services. From December 2021 to August 2022, Region 1 has seen a population increase of 8,639 individuals and a workforce increase of 16,363 individuals, boosting the labor force participation rate from 60.1% to 61.3%. Along with local partners, NAW continues to focus on innovative ways to reduce barriers to the workforce ensuring that both citizens and businesses of North Alabama have every opportunity for success.

### Region 2—East AlabamaWorks! (EAW)

In 2022, East AlabamaWorks! (EAW) developed and implemented solutions for supporting the workforce pipeline, increasing communication, and enhancing customer service. To support career development, EAW hosted Worlds of Work, our interactive, immersive career expo. Over 8,200 8th and 11th grade students attended the unique three-day event.

The EAW CTE Regional Summer Conference was attended by over 200 K-12 faculty and staff where they received critical professional development. EAW launched the Modern Manufacturing Program in the Fall of 2022 with four high schools. The program, supported by local manufacturing companies, provides a workforce pipeline to industry. The industry is excited to see how the program can bridge the gaps currently seen in applicants. Students learn manufacturing concepts including safety, tool identification, handling, precision measurement as well as employability skills needed to be successful.

EAW's Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Sector was a key player to support the expansion of CDL training in Region 2. With an extensive waitlist with many training programs, employers in the sector stepped up to provide equipment and leverage relationships to expand training.

To meet the needs of industry for industrial automation professionals, East Alabama FAME, organized by EAW as a result of the Automotive and Manufacturing Sector, with training provided by a local community college, expanded to serve 12 industry partners with a 28-student cohort. Twenty-four graduates of East Alabama FAME are working for industry in their field. Through the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program, nearly 1,500 employees at 11 different companies received training and upskilling. The training, valued at over \$800,000, helped the industry with better-trained employees and meets the goal of the Success Plus initiative.

## Region 3—West AlabamaWorks! (WAW)

In partnership with our business and industry partners West AlabamaWorks! (WAW) held events to assist students find and enter career pathways.

- Virtual WOW platform taught 2,738 students about career pathways and employers in each career cluster.
- WOW 2.0 connected 300 high school seniors (receiving 418 contingent job offers with 27 partner companies) to employers and created a plan after graduation.
- Regional Signing Day recognized the accomplishments of 87 students who have entered an apprenticeship or a full-time job.
- Virtual reality career exploration took place with 1,676 students in skilled trades, manufacturing, automotive, public safety, hospitality, warehouse, and storage.
- The modern manufacturing program expanded to eight schools with 460 students creating a career pathway to gain needed credentials and learn skills necessary for a career upon graduation.
- Worlds of Work had 3,675 students impacted through 101 exhibitors creating a hands-on opportunity for students to become familiar with a broad overview of high demand, high wage career opportunities.
- Over 355, 10th-12th grade students and their parents/guardians attended WOW Varsity to engage in their future careers.

New this year, IGNITE Student Jobs launched to provide direct access to opportunities youth 14-18 years old to a part-time job, summer job, co-op, apprenticeship, or internship. 605 students have registered and submitted 1,140 applications for 79 different positions. Second Chance in partnership with the Tuscaloosa County District Attorney's Office and Tuscaloosa County Alternative Sentencing launched to provide pathways for job seekers with a criminal history. Finally, Workforce Innovations Tours were held for 20 communities from across the country to learn about WAW's economic, education, and workforce development strategies, and partnerships.

## Region 4—Central Six AlabamaWorks!

By establishing connections between businesses and educators, job seekers, and workforce resources in our six-county region, Central Six AlabamaWorks! increased its efforts to create talent pipelines. Thirty-three educators participated in the Educator Workforce Academy in 2021-22 and 37 in 2022-23. These educators visit local businesses to get a firsthand impression of the employment possibilities in their neighborhoods.

As part of the grant work Central Six is a part of, we have been building an ecosystem in Information Technology. This ecosystem is structured as a convening group with training B&I, job seekers, and employees to identify issues among job seekers and employers, and to bring the groups together to discuss equity and issues in an effort for at least 5 companies to change hiring practices because of our convenings. We are also looking to replicate this model in the Healthcare cluster through the Good Jobs Challenge Grant.

## Region 5—Central AlabamaWorks! (CAW)

Central AlabamaWorks! (CAW) synthesized local business involvement by convening 40 industry sector meetings with over 130 business partners. These led to over 100 Workforce Resource Team meetings. CAW is proud to support our local business and industry partners through grants and training with local community colleges totaling over \$3,000,000 awarded through the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Project to 24 companies.

Our Modern Manufacturing Program grew to include six county CTE Centers serving 19 high schools, and launched the River Region Federation Advanced Manufacturing Education, or FAME Chapter. Over 271 students are enrolled in Modern Manufacturing, and CAW invested more than \$80,000 in equipment across our eight rural counties to enhance student learning within the program. Additionally, we coordinated eight recruiting events for FAME participants in four counties.

Programs that enhanced the readiness of our educators were among some of our impressive initiatives, such as hosting a Simulated Workplace Regional Forum and providing STEM externships, which continue to shape Alabama's workforce of tomorrow. These programs exposed 600 third graders to career exploration through "How Santa Got His Job."

Central AlabamaWorks! is committed to continuing to grow the workforce with business and education partners, as we are committed to improving the lives of Alabamians through meaningful work.

## Region 6—Southeast AlabamaWorks! (SAW)

While laying the foundation for tomorrow's leaders, Southeast AlabamaWorks! (SAW) was determined to assist employers with their immediate recruiting and retention needs. Tying into the career expo events, we offered seven WOW Varsity Senior Job Fairs at high schools throughout the region. Thirty-two schools sent 1,340 seniors to apply for over 2,700 jobs offered by 84 local companies. Many students were interviewed and hired because of the events. We also facilitated six additional neighborhood job fairs strategically located in rural communities with significant workforce needs. Over 400 jobseekers connected with 143 employers in hopes of filling 3,500 open positions.



Although finding new talent was on everyone's mind, developing talent from within through skills training and leadership awareness became another mechanism of retention and growth. SAW partnered with AIDT to offer Leadership Skills training for entry and mid-level supervisors. Eighty-five certifications were earned in nine courses equipping over 30 employers with leaders better informed on the growing trends in management across all industries. We also collaborated with three local community colleges to offer skills training for healthcare, transportation, and manufacturing workers. Through the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program, twenty employers were allocated over \$500,000 in grant funds to train and certify existing employees for Certified Medication Technicians, CDL drivers, just to name a few.

## **Region 7—Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC AlabamaWorks!)**

Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC) of Alabama continued to work with our nine-county regional business and industry partners to cultivate and grow an intentional workforce system that supports our growing economy. Five clusters (aviation, construction, healthcare, hospitality & tourism, and manufacturing) met to discuss trends and needs to address the challenges and opportunities to create training and access solutions for our citizens. Staff continued providing services to support businesses and industry as well as individuals through various outreach events.

SAWDC held its second cohort of Educator Workforce Academy. Participants included CTE directors, principals, assistant principals, career coaches, and teachers. Educators are immersed in business and industry with facility tours to gain knowledge and examples on how to implement simulated workplace environments in the classroom as well as understand the skills needed for the workplace. This allows educators to emphasize the career pathways to support our regional job markets. Cohort two graduated 37 participants this year.

In partnership with our business and industry partners, SAWDC held events to assist students to find and enter career pathways. The events included Virtual WOW platform, high school internships, and career pathways exploration that culminated in job offers and post-graduation planning.

# IX. 2023 ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL PRIORITIES

## What are the AWC's Goals for 2023-2025?

- Implement competency-based education programs and skills-based hiring practices in Alabama.
- Increase Alabama's Labor Force Participation Rate to the National Average by 2025 and achieve Governor Kay Ivey's goal of adding 500,000 additional credentialed workers to the workforce by 2025.

## How will the AWC track and monitor progress?

- The Alabama Talent Triad
  - Alabama is developing a skills-based, learner-centered, and demand-driven education and workforce ecosystem that will expand competency-based education and skills-based hiring statewide.
  - This "Talent Triad" consists of:
    - The Alabama Credential Registry, which will be used to make each credential awarded to Alabamians transparent and will tag credentials to the competencies for which they denote mastery;
    - The Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal will allow employers to create customized job descriptions based on the "DNA" of the jobs in their firms; and
    - The Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) learning and employment record (LER) will allow job seekers to develop verified resumes and to link directly to skills-based job descriptions generated by employers.
  - The three elements of the Talent Triad will be accessible through the Alabama Works website and will include a user type for employers, students/jobseekers, and education and training providers.
  - The Alabama Credential Registry launched in September 2021. The Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal and ACCET will launch in 2023.

## Alabama Workforce Council 2023 Strategic Priorities

### Legislative Priorities

- Codification of the P-20W Council and the ATLAS on Career Pathways
- Passage of the Alabama Credential Quality and Transparency Act
- Increasing access to high-quality childcare programs
- Increasing access to multiple forms of workforce transportation

### Leadership Priorities

- Improve Quarterly Meetings
  - Employer Spotlight (highlight an employer and industry sector each quarter)
  - Implement a regional time segment of the combined agenda to permit AWC members to engage with their RWC colleagues at the combined meetings
  - Implement committee work sessions at the quarterly meetings (committees should draft committee reports between the quarter three and quarter four combined meetings)
  - Develop quality content for monthly webinars and quarterly meetings
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Develop high-quality AlabamaWorks! surveys
  - Conduct an Alabama Workforce Council engagement survey

- Strengthen Communication
  - Develop simple one-pagers that will answer the “why” on all we are doing
  - Focus on marketing Talent Triad and regional attainment and labor force goals
  - Continue annual AWC orientation session; develop regional orientations
  - Coordinate FAFSA completion communication efforts

#### **AWC Committee Priorities and Anticipated Timelines**

##### **Regional Workforce Council Support Committee**

- June – December 2023: Development of Alabama Works Regional Strategic Plans
- 2023: Serve as liaison between the AWC and RWC by assisting in communication and support of AWC initiatives by RWC Directors
- 2023: Conduct monthly calls with the AWC Executive Committee, the Department of Commerce, and the GOEWT.
- January-June 2023: Populate the WECAN E-Directory

##### **Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP)**

- January – April 2023: Fill each Technical Advisory Committee with competent leaders
- March 2023: Launch the Talent Triad
- December 2023: Inaugural Compendium of Valuable Credentials Published

##### **Human Capital Development Committee**

- June – December 2023: Success Plus Talent Academy
- September 2023: Progress Against the Ten on K-12 Education (complete at least 5).

##### **Outreach and Engagement Committee**

- March 2023: Publish a portfolio of one-page executive summaries of the AWC initiatives in an industry-usable format.
- June-December 2023: Alabama Talent Triad Marketing Campaign
- June 2023: Rollout FAFSA Informational Campaign

##### **Public Private Partnerships Committee (PPP)**

- March 2023: Begin awarding technical assistance grants to organizations working to increase the labor force participation rate
- 2023: Secure \$10 million or more of Competitive Grant Funding
- 2023: Expand the number of PPP active members to include all workforce regions

## X. 2022 POLICY PRIORITIES

### A. K-12 Education

Due to the strong leadership of Governor Ivey, the Alabama Legislature, the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and education advocates in business and industry, Alabama's historically anemic student proficiency scores and national rankings are beginning to move in the right direction. This didn't happen by accident. Governor Kay Ivey is Alabama's education governor, and she has done more to transform Alabama's K-12 education system during her five years in office than any of her predecessors.

From the beginning of her term as Governor, Kay Ivey has always maintained that literacy and numeracy are the “blocking and tackling” of education. During her first term, Governor Ivey set the bar for the Legislature and Alabama State Department of Education, and the Alabama State Board of Education to begin the hard work of improving Alabama's education system to produce the educational results that Alabamians deserve. Under Governor Ivey's leadership, wise investments have been made to lay the foundation for excellence in literacy and numeracy.

Governor Ivey signed the Alabama Numeracy Act into law in May 2022, which places the same level of focus on mathematics that the Alabama Literacy Act placed on reading in 2019. Alabama's business community, through the work of the Alabama Workforce Council and other advocacy groups, has worked in conjunction with Governor Ivey to implement much-needed educational improvements.

Unfortunately, Alabama's educational assessments, standards, and state superintendents have been altered or replaced every other year for a decade. Typically, the change affects performance. Alabama's constant changes in leadership, assessments, and standards may have something to do with our low educational test scores. To maintain our current momentum, we must stop the standards war driven by reactionary voices that continue to push to change our standards every other year.

Continued changes in tests and standards confuse students, parents, and educators. It also hinders our ability to determine student progress over time. It is extremely important to consistently maintain standards over a long enough period to accurately compare current performance to prior performance. Without consistency in standards and testing, confusion reigns. The AWC is pleased that Alabama's 2019 Mathematics and 2021 English Language Arts courses of study were developed by Alabama's teachers and members of business and industry.

Alabama has a new assessment system, the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP). Hopefully, our leaders will stick with the new assessment program for a long enough period to eliminate confusion. Consistency will allow all Alabama education stakeholders—parents, students, educators, businesses, and citizens—to understand our educational goals and test results. Due to Governor Ivey's strong and consistent leadership, strong standards, and an assessment system aligned to the standards, we have already seen some limited growth on the 2022 Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP), which is Alabama's annual summative student assessment given in grades 2-8.

Every grade in K-12 saw improvement in scores on the ELA ACAP from 2021 to 2022, with the largest increase in 2nd grade whose proficiency increased from 43% to 49%. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is the only educational test that compares student performance across the country. In 2022, Alabama's 4th grade NAEP math ranking improved from 52nd in the nation to 40th. Alabama's 4th-grade ranking in reading increased from 49th in the nation in 2019 to 39th place in 2022. Alabama's ranking for 8th-grade mathematics improved from 52nd in the nation in 2019 to 47th in 2022. Since 1992 Alabama's 4th-grade students have never been ranked in the top 40 nationally.

Alabama's national rankings in reading and math improved in relation to other states, but Alabama's nominal test scores were not significantly improved. In other words, our rankings improved in relation to other states because our students' scores did not drop from prior years as much as other states did. That means that Alabama's students' loss of learning was significantly lower than other states' students.

Keeping students in school during COVID-19 is certainly one variable that helped Alabama hold its own during a dramatic national decline. Our state's leadership worked very hard to minimize the effect of COVID on our children's loss of learning. Alabamians should be proud that we held our own and did not experience as much COVID-19 learning loss as other states; however, our results should not cause us to become complacent or rest on our laurels.

The results from this year's ACAP and NAEP are reasons to double down and saddle up for the hard work that lies before us. The Alabama Workforce Council will continue to fall in beside Governor Ivey, Superintendent Eric Mackey, the Alabama Legislature, and the members of the Alabama State Board of Education to continue pushing for improvements in our children's education.

## **B. College and Career Readiness and Chronic Absenteeism**

The Alabama State Board of Education took two momentous steps forward during their November 10, 2022, meeting. The Board approved an administrative rule code that will require students to complete at least one college or career readiness indicator prior to graduating, beginning with the class of 2028. The Board also passed a resolution enabling the State Department of Education to collect data on teacher absenteeism

The Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) was proud to lead the charge on these two policies as part of the AWC's 10 points on K-12 education. The AWC worked alongside Governor Ivey and the Business Education Alliance of Alabama for five years on the College and Career Readiness Policy and for over two years on the teacher attendance resolution. Dr. Mackey and the State Board of Education are to be commended for their leadership. The College and Career Readiness rule passed by a vote of 5-2 and the attendance resolution passed unanimously. Prior to the vote on the college and career readiness policy, Governor Ivey stated:

“... closing the gap between the graduation rate and the college and career readiness rate is about more than just numbers—this is about closing opportunity gaps by making sure that our students are ready to take the next step. Since the rule does not take effect until 2028, we have plenty of time to work with local school districts to expand access to a variety of college and career readiness indicators to meet the interests of every student. This is not about adding one more requirement, it is about measuring what matters. This vote will focus our attention and energy on making sure resources are where they need to be. There is nothing more important we can do than graduate our students ready for the next step. The adoption of this rule signals our commitment to this most sacred duty.”

Governor Ivey’s words are not only true but serve as a roadmap for implementing these new policies. The fact that the State Board of Education amended its budget request to add a \$25 million college and career readiness attainment fund, coupled with the five-year implementation timeline, will give us time to expand access to quality career readiness indicators that meet the interests of all students and prepare them for in-demand careers.

At first glance, the college and career readiness completion policy and the attendance data collection policy do not seem connected. When we consider teacher chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10% or more of the school days during a single school year—is linked to student college and career readiness, the connection becomes obvious. When a teacher is absent, students do not receive the same level of instruction that they are accustomed to.

Why measure teacher absenteeism? Because a student’s leader in the classroom is the teacher. If leaders are not held accountable to high standards, then it is useless to try and hold students to the same high standard. The Federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) reported that 37% of Alabama’s teachers were chronically absent during the 2017-2018 school year; however, OCR stopped reporting these data the following year. We currently do not know if teacher absenteeism has remained high since the 2017-2018 school year because Alabama has not been collecting the data necessary to make that determination.

Since the 2017-2018 school year, the Legislature passed legislation sponsored by Rep. Allen Baker that allows teachers to roll over unused sick days. Prior to that legislation, teachers may have inadvertently contributed to the chronic absenteeism rate as reported by the OCR due to the fact that they had to use their unused sick days or lose them. The lack of available data is the reason why the AWC worked with Dr. Mackey and the State Board of Education to pass the teacher attendance data resolution.

The new policy will create an additional burden on our teachers and schools. Local school districts already have the necessary data; it just needs to be tracked. The resolution is not about singling out teachers. People must miss work for a variety of legitimate reasons, and teachers have fought hard over the years to earn the paid leave they have available. Nevertheless, data is needed to help us understand the comprehensive effects of student and teacher absenteeism on student achievement.

If a student is absent 18 days (10% of the 180-day school year) and their teacher is absent 18 days, that is potentially 36 days of missed instruction, which equals 20% of the school year. Given all the other disruptions during the school day, it is unacceptable that students are potentially missing 1 in 5 days of instruction due to the collective effects of chronic absenteeism. Once we collect the data, we can dig deeper and begin to unpack the reasons leading to student and teacher chronic absenteeism. For example, how do school culture and climate affect attendance? How do individual school and district leadership impact attendance? We must continue to measure performance and improve in the areas where we are weakest. Getting to the bottom of chronic absenteeism is one way to do so. We need to measure our performance and determine the root causes of chronic absenteeism to make improvements.

## C. Labor Force Participation

With labor market conditions nearing full employment in Alabama, meeting the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal of adding 500,000 credentialed workers to the workforce by 2025 requires increasing Alabama's labor force participation rate (LFPR), which includes all persons between 16 and 64 who are employed or who are seeking employment.

The majority of Alabamians who are not in the labor force are not avoiding work intentionally. Many people face benefits cliffs when entering the workforce, which is caused when means-tested benefits taper off more quickly than an individual can compensate for their loss through paid employment. Providing access to education and training, coupled with human services, is a method for meeting the complex needs of Alabamians who are facing barriers to entering the workforce.

Nationally, and in Alabama, many young men are missing from the labor force. In January 1960, 97.1 percent of prime-age men (25-54) were participating in the labor force and 42.1 percent of prime-age women (25-54) were participating in the labor force. In September 2021, only 88.1 percent of prime-age males are participating in the labor force.

A 2015 report by Alan Krueger, former Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, found that opioids are likely pulling prime-age workers out of the labor force. Alabama's labor force and economy are among the hardest hit by the opioid crisis. This rise in opioid use in Alabama was associated with a 2.6 percentage point decline in the state's labor force participation rate of prime-age workers.

Governor Ivey created a committee of the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council, entitled the Subcommittee on Abating the Effects of the Opioid Crisis on the Workforce, to develop workforce strategies and for reducing the effects of the opioid crisis on Alabama's labor force participation rate.

Since the onset of the COVID-10 pandemic, the Alabama Workforce Council has conducted a recurring Alabama Survey of the Unemployed and Underemployed, which focuses on the barriers Alabamians face when reentering the workforce in wake of the pandemic. The survey results continue to underscore the need to provide access to wrap-around and support services, such as transportation, childcare, and housing assistance.

According to the survey results, a lack of childcare causes more than 20% of parents to be late or absent from work four or more days a month. Furthermore, just over half of the respondents have lost a job or opportunity because they lack reliable transportation. More than one-third of respondents have declined or delayed a job opportunity because they were afraid that they would lose a government benefit.

Alabama's strategy to increase the labor force participation rate centers on providing new modalities of training, including short-term programs that are aligned to traditional degrees and supportive services, such as transportation and childcare, that Alabamians need to persist in the workforce.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and Governor Ivey's Human Capital Development Committee, Chaired by Department of Human Resources Commissioner Nancy Buckner, have partnered to develop a benefits cliff and self-sufficiency tool called the Dashboard for Alabama to Visualize Income Development (DAVID) for Alabama. This dashboard is designed to help individuals understand when they will reach self-sufficiency, based on income, region, occupation, and family dynamics.

Over the next year, Alabama will launch a series of technology solutions to operationalize Alabama's Talent Development Strategic Plan. This Alabama Talent Triad consists of the Alabama Credential Registry, which will be used to provide full transparency for each credential awarded to Alabamians and will tag credentials to the competencies that compose Alabama's in-demand jobs.

The Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator will allow employers to create customized job descriptions based on the "DNA" of the jobs in their firms. The Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool learning and employment record will allow job seekers to develop verified resumes and to link directly to skills-based job descriptions generated by employers. The AWC will continue to remain singularly focused on developing the relationships, technologies, and programs needed to increase Alabama's LFPR.

## **D. Progress Against the Alabama Workforce Council's 2021-2022 Ten Points on K-12 Education**

1. Disseminate a best practice guide to local education agencies for using federal ESSER II and III funds to establish high-quality CTE programs aligned to the ACCCP's list of in-demand jobs. Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.

- The Governor's Office and A+ Education Partnership are collaborating on an enhanced ESSER II and III recommendations guide that will be released in the fall.

2. Develop annual targets for reaching a 100 percent FAFSA completion rate by 2025. Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.

- The targets have not been developed, although FAFSA completion has increased.



3. Develop biennial targets for reaching the national average in fourth and eighth grade reading and mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 2026.

Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.

- Targets have not yet been developed.

4. Establish a policy requiring career coaches and CTE directors to attend regional workforce council meetings no later than September 30, 2021 and establish a policy requiring career coaches to collaborate with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship to establish in-school youth apprenticeships. Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.

- The policy has not yet been developed.

5. Pass an administrative rule code change to ensure students earn at least one college and career readiness indicator by the time of their graduation. Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.\*

- This point is complete, successfully instituted by, and voted on by the State Board of Education in November 2022.

6. Adopt an administrative rule code change that requires Career Readiness Indicators to be registered to the Alabama Credential Registry and aligned to the ACCCP's Compendium of Valuable Credentials. Recommended completion date: December 31, 2021.

- The policy has not yet been developed.

7. Establish an incentive program, by policy, rule, or Act of the Legislature, for schools to reduce the rate of student and teacher absenteeism to no more than ten days per academic year.

Recommended completion date: March 31, 2022.

- The incentive policy and/or rule have not been adopted.

8. Conduct a gap analysis and resource audit of all CTE programs to determine the level of alignment of CTE programs of study offered at each local education agency to the ACCCP's regional and statewide list of in-demand jobs. Recommended completion date: March 31, 2022.\*

- The gap analysis was completed and found that all of Alabama's CTE programs are aligned to in-demand jobs, but not all of Alabama's in-demand jobs are covered by CTE programs.

9. Establish baselines for grade-level reading proficiency and sufficiency based on the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment System and set annual targets for increasing the number of students entering the fourth grade as proficient readers to 100 percent by 2025. Recommended completion date: June 30, 2022.

- The baselines have been developed but the annual targets have not yet been developed.

10. Ensure that Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) is built using national best practices and governed by an authorized & effective P-20W Council with full engagement of necessary state agency partners. Recommended completion date: June 30, 2022.\*

- The ATLAS on Career Pathways has been developed using national best practices and is working under an inter-agency agreement of all the agencies that compose the P-20W Council.

\*Red text indicates the point has been accomplished

## E. Reasoning Behind the Alabama Workforce Council 2021-2022 Ten Points on K-12 Education

1. Alabama's schools are sitting on billions of dollars in federal recovery funds that must be used strategically. ALSDE must provide recommendations for local school systems on how to use the unprecedented levels of COVID-19 recovery funding to establish Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that prepare students for in-demand jobs in Alabama.

2. If students don't complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), they are much less likely to go to college or receive training. The ALSDE must provide leadership to encourage all school systems in Alabama to assist every graduating senior with completing the FAFSA before graduation.

3. Alabama's reading and mathematics scores are pathetic. We are near the bottom of the charts in every measure. The ALSDE must provide the leadership needed so that Alabama reaches, or surpasses, the national average on the nation's report card—the National Assessment of Educational Progress—by 2028.

4. Alabama's workforce system cannot help our high schools if high school representatives are not communicating with the Regional Workforce Councils. The ALSDE must provide the leadership needed to ensure that CTE leaders in each school system are attending Regional Workforce Council meetings and are working with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship to establish apprenticeships for high school students.

5. How can a student graduate high school but not be college or career ready? It happens every year for 12-15 percent of our students.

6. Credentials are not valuable if they are not recognized by the industry. The ALSDE must bring forward a resolution and rule from the Alabama State School Board, or legislation, requiring all K-12 credentials to be listed on Alabama's list of valuable credentials and credential registry.

7. Students can't learn if they aren't at school, and bad attendance habits will keep students from holding a job. The ALSDE must bring forward a resolution and rule from the Alabama State School Board, or legislation, reducing the number of allowable student absences to 10 per year.

8. CTE programs should be aligned to in-demand jobs—full-stop. The ALSDE must audit every CTE program in the state to determine whether they are preparing students for in-demand jobs.

9. We do harm to the student and to our entire state by promoting students to the fourth grade when they can't read. Nothing else we do in K-12 matters if our students can't read. The ALSDE must provide the leadership needed to ensure that every student enters fourth-grade reading proficiently by 2025.

10. Data are essential for determining whether education and workforce programs are effective. Without a longitudinal database system, for policymakers in Alabama, "the left-hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing."

## F. Increasing Postsecondary Access and Success

In April 2021, the Alabama State Board of Education voted to adopt a new policy that ensures students complete or opt out of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The new rule provides a very simple way to opt out for those who do not want to complete the FAFSA, and local superintendents of education may waive the FAFSA completion criteria on the recommendation of a school's guidance counselor.

FAFSA is the form colleges use to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid, including Pell grants, work-study programs, and loans. This includes not only education at traditional four-year colleges and universities, but also other postsecondary education opportunities such as two-year colleges, certificate programs, and associate degrees.

Alabama's 2021 high school graduates left approximately \$67.8 million in grants on the table because they didn't complete the FAFSA. This is why Governor Ivey and the Alabama Workforce Council recommended the FAFSA policy change last year to State Superintendent Eric Mackey. We know that most jobs in today's economy require some education beyond high school, though many good jobs do not require a four-year degree.

By encouraging more students to complete the FAFSA and obtain financial assistance, this policy change is helping Alabama achieve Governor Kay Ivey's Success Plus goal of adding 500,000 credentialed workers to our workforce by 2025.

Due to the leadership of Governor Ivey and the Alabama Legislature, the Fiscal Year 2023 budget includes \$500,000 for FAFSA completion, which will support the FAFSA completion dashboard managed by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). Shortly after the adoption of the FAFSA completion policy, ACHE partnered with the State Department of Education and Oracle to develop a FAFSA completion portal for Alabama.

According to ACHE's FAFSA Completion Portal, of the 48,611 seniors in Alabama's Class of 2022, 58% (28,416) have submitted their FAFSA, and 54% (26,347) have completed the FAFSA. High school students submit their FAFSA to the U.S. Department of Education, and ACHE is designated to receive the data on the completed FAFSA forms. ACHE can now use the FAFSA completion dashboard to communicate to the high schools when students submit an incomplete FAFSA, so guidance counselors are able to help students fix errors.

According to the National College Attainment Network, Alabama saw a 24.5% increase year-over-year in FAFSA completions, which places Alabama in second place nationally (just behind Texas) for year-over-year growth in FAFSA completions. Several school districts saw enormous year-over-year increases: Choctaw County (178.9%; Anniston City (152.2%) and Perry County (150%). Other states that have implemented FAFSA completion policies are ranked in the top five nationally for FAFSA completions, such as Louisiana, Illinois, and Texas.

## G. Alabama Talent Triad

Alabama is developing a skills-based, learner-centered, and demand-driven education and workforce ecosystem that will expand competency-based education and skills-based hiring statewide. The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) has developed a state-specific, seven-tiered, alpha-numeric competency taxonomy for classifying competencies and a state-specific, five-tiered, alpha-numeric credential taxonomy for classifying credentials. The Alabama Occupational Ontology provides the ingredients to determine and classify the competencies and credentials that form the “occupational DNA” for a job. The GOEWT is partnering with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) to calibrate Alabama’s competency frameworks for each of the occupations on the ACCCP’s list of regional and statewide occupations using the Occupational Ontology. This work will conclude in September 2022 and will provide the common language that will connect the Alabama Credential Registry, the Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal, and the ACCET to form the Alabama Talent Triad.

Alabama is building a series of three technology solutions to operationalize Alabama’s competency-based education and skills-based hiring ecosystem. This Talent Triad consists of the Alabama Credential Registry, which will be used to make each credential awarded to Alabamians transparent and will tag credentials to the competencies for which they denote mastery; the Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator will allow employers to create customized job descriptions based on the “DNA” of the jobs in their firms; the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) learning and employment record (LER) will allow job seekers to develop verified resumes and to link directly to skills-based job descriptions generated by employers. The three elements of the “talent triad” will be linked to a single-sign-on system with a user type for employers, students/job seekers, and education and training providers. The Alabama Credential Registry launched in September 2021, and the Skills-Based Job Description Generator the ACCET LER will launch in 2022.

## H. Success Plus

As part of her Strong Start, Strong Finish Initiative, in April of 2018, Governor Ivey set a postsecondary education attainment goal for Alabama of adding 500,000 additional credentialed Alabamians to our workforce by 2025 through her Success Plus plan. Alabama’s current postsecondary attainment rate is 45.6%.

To mark the fourth anniversary of the announcement of Governor Ivey’s Success Plus plan, AlabamaWorks!, the AWC and the Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) partnered with Credential Engine and the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC) to measure progress against the postsecondary attainment goal from 2018 to 2021.

The Alabama's Success Plus Attainment Goal Progress report provides a clearer picture of the credential landscape and statewide progress toward the attainment goal, and the report advances transparency and connectivity across credentialing systems. The report shows that since 2018, Alabama has made progress toward the Success Plus goal. CREC found that 214,922 credentials were completed in Alabama from 2018 through 2021. People ages 16-24 attained 137,848 credentials and people ages 25-64 attained 38,240 credentials.

With the 25-64 age group projected to constitute a minority of the state's population (49%) by 2028, credential attainment by the 16-24 age group is critical to meeting the Success Plus goals. These trends have been taken into consideration by the Alabama Workforce Council and Success Plus initiatives, which direct programming toward people.

To reach the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal, we must significantly increase the number of people who enroll in programs to earn industry recognized credentials, and we need to increase the number of people that earn postsecondary degrees. Alabama's education and workforce development strategic plan to meet the postsecondary attainment goal is predicated on reaching annual postsecondary attainment goals by region and for discrete populations with barriers to entering education and the workforce.

The Alabama Workforce Council and the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation partnered with Credential Engine and CREC for a second report to measure progress against the postsecondary attainment goal from 2018 to 2021 for each of the 16 special populations listed in the Success Plus plan.

CREC collaborated with 14 state agencies in Alabama to develop the special populations attainment report, entitled Special Populations Attainment Report. Given the limited availability of data on first-time credential attainment for Alabama's special populations, CREC was unable to provide a progress report on attainment for each of the 16 special populations.

Additional work is needed to develop the data infrastructure needed to consistently report progress in credentialing. Currently, there are limitations in data collection, storage, retrieval, cleaning, and interpretation across the 14 relevant state agencies. The ATLAS on Career Pathways, Alabama's inter-agency data system, is working to ameliorate these challenges by focusing on measuring progress towards the attainment goal for each of the 16 special populations as its first research question, and results from the first ATLAS on Career Pathways report will be forthcoming in 2023.

The CREC report was able to disaggregate first-time credential attainment by demographic groups. The analysis found that the proportion of first-time credentials earned in Alabama largely conformed to the percentage of each demographic group in the overall population. There were some discrepancies, however. For example, the percentage of first-time attainments is highest for the white population (67%) and slightly higher than the statewide population (64%). The percentage of first-time attainments for black Alabamians (24%) is lower than the statewide population distribution (27%). White Alabamians earned 72% of all degrees but only 54% of non-degree credentials. Black Alabamians attained 19% of degrees and 33% of non-degree credentials.

Barriers to entering education and training are compounded for Alabamians who are represented across multiple special population categories. Measuring credential attainment for members of special populations is made more difficult by the fact that individuals may be represented in multiple special populations, but some state agencies only collect information on one special population category. Common data collection and reporting standards could improve data availability. Low reporting numbers may also be due to lack of participation in programming or missing data.

State agencies in Alabama can increase the validity and availability of first-time credential attainment data for the 16 special populations by (1) using currently available data to measure first-time credential attainment by demographic groups; (2) producing reports that spur innovation in credentialing; (3) increasing the capacity for analysis across state agencies; (4) prioritizing data collection and analysis for answering key policy questions; (5) aligning and integrating data across education and workforce agencies; and (6) increasing access to postsecondary education and training pathways for special population groups.

Increasing the availability and validity of credential attainment data by implementing the recommendations contained in the Special Populations Attainment Report will help policymakers and practitioners in Alabama to measure progress against the attainment goals for each of the 16 special population groups by region.

# XI. 2022 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS & AWC WEBINARS

## A. 2023 Quarterly Combined Workforce Meetings

- Wednesday, March 29, 2023: AWC Quarter 1 Meeting
- Tuesday, June 27, 2023: AWC Quarter 2 Meeting
- Wednesday, September 6, 2023: AWC Quarter 3 Meeting
- Wednesday December 6, 2023: AWC Quarter 4 Meeting

## B. 2023 Webinar Dates

Webinars will be held at 9am in 2023 on the dates listed below:

- January 9
- February 13
- March 13
- April 10
- May 8
- June 12
- July 10
- August 14
- September 11
- October 9
- November 13
- December 11

## XII. ATTACHMENTS

### A. Resources

Alabama Workforce Council Website

<https://alabamaworks.com/alabama-workforce-council/>

Alabama Workforce Council Annual Reports

2015: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/AWC-Report-2015.pdf>

2016: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/AWC-Report-2016.pdf>

2017: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2017-Alabama-Workforce-Council-Report.pdf>

2018: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/awc-annual-report-2018.pdf>

2019: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/alabama-workforce-council-2019-with-attainment-report-FINALMarch11-v2-1.pdf>

2020: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2-3-2020-annual-attainment-report3.pdf>

2021: <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/AWC-2021-Annual-Report-%E2%80%93-FINAL.pdf>

Regional Workforce Councils

<https://www.madeinalabama.com/why-alabama/workforce-training/regional-workforce-councils/>

### B. Important Legislation

Act No. 2014-16 (Creation of the AWC)

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/ALISON/SearchableInstruments/2014RS/PrintFiles/SB217-enr.pdf>

Act No. 2015-45 (Transfer of the AWC to Department of Commerce)

<https://atlasalabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Act-2015-450-AL-Small-Business-Commission.pdf>



## C. Council Leadership

The Council is led by a Chair and Vice Chair who are appointed by the Governor. Since its founding, the Alabama Workforce Council benefitted from the dedicated leadership of the following business and industry leaders.

Year	Chair	Vice Chair
2014 – 2015	Zeke Smith, Alabama Power Company	George Clark, Manufacture Alabama
2015 – 2016	Zeke Smith, Alabama Power Company	George Clark, Manufacture Alabama
2016 – 2017	Zeke Smith, Alabama Power Company	George Clark, Manufacture Alabama
2017 – 2018	Zeke Smith, Alabama Power Company	George Clark, Manufacture Alabama
2018 – 2019	Tim McCartney, McCartney Construction (Retired)	Sandra Koblas, Austal USA
2019 – 2020	Tim McCartney, McCartney Construction (Retired)	Sandra Koblas, Austal USA
2020 – 2021	Tim McCartney, McCartney Construction (Retired)	Sandra Koblas, Austal USA
2021 – 2022	Tim McCartney, McCartney Construction (Retired)	Sandra Koblas, Austal USA
2022-2023	Tim McCartney, McCartney Construction (Retired)	Christy Knowles Coosa Valley Medical Center

## D. Council Members

The table below includes members of the Alabama Workforce Council from 2014-2023.

	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Term
1	Leroy	Abrahams	Regions Financial Corporation	2018-2022
2	Alan	Baker	State Representative	2014-2026
3	Jimmy	Baker	Alabama Community College System	2016-2018
4	Tom	Bates	Evonik Industries (Ret.)	2014-2017
5	Tommy	Bice	State Department of Education	2015-2016
6	Ronnie	Boles	General Automotive and Machine Shop	2019-2023
7	Miranda	Bouldin-Frost	LogiCore Corporation	2020-2024
8	Scott	Bowers	AAA Cooper Transportation	2017-2021
9	Mike	Bruner	International Paper	2014-2016
10	Nancy	Buckner	Alabama Department of Human Resources	2021-2026
11	Micah	Bullard	North AlabamaWorks!	2018-2019
12	Jane Elizabeth	Burdeshaw	Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	2021-2026
13	Mac	Buttram	State Representative (Former)	2014-2018
14	Myla	Calhoun	Alabama Power	2018-2021
15	Ed	Castile	Department of Commerce	Ex-Officio
16	Bill	Caton	Associated General Contractors	2014-2018
17	Jennifer	Christenberry	ALFA	2014-2021
18	George	Clark	Manufacture Alabama	Ex-Officio
19	Antiqua	Cleggett	Central Six AlabamaWorks!	2021-2022
20	Philip	Cleveland	Alabama State Department of Education	2014-2024
21	Norman	Crow	D.T. & Freight company	2014-2022
22	Michael	Davis	Toray Carbon Fibers America, Inc.	2014-2018
23	Chuck	DiLaura	Neptune Technology Group, Inc.	2014-2021
24	Jed	Downs	Qualico Steel	2014-2016
25	Will	Ferniany	UAB Health System	2014-2017
26	Blaine	Galliher	Windom Galliher & Associates	2014-2018
27	Tommy	Glasscock	Alabama State Department of Education	2019-2020
28	Kay	Gray	Dynetics	2017-2020
29	Dale	Greer	Cullman Economic Development Agency	2014-2019

30	John	Hackett	Kamtek	2017-2021
31	Seth	Hammett	PowerSouth	2017-2024
32	Jason	Harper	Madison County Commission	2015-2019
33	Allen	Harris	Bailey-Harris Construction	2014-2025
34	Mark	Henrich	Alabama Community College System	2015-2016
35	Melissa	Herk	Auburn University Foundation	2019-2023
36	Steve	Hildebrant	Alabama Power Company, Retired	2022-2026
37	Kelvin	Hill	Georgia Pacific	2014-2015
38	Jimmy	Hull	Alabama State Department of Education	Ex-Officio
39	Walter	Howlett	AG Gaston Enterprises	2017
40	Michelle	Hurdle	Airbus Americas, Inc.	2014-2018
41	Philip	Jackson	Coosa Composites, LLC	2014-2019
42	Phil	Johnston	Mercedes Benz, U.S. International	2014-2015
43	Donny	Jones	Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce	2015-2021
44	Randy	Jordan	Bryant Bank	2014-2021
45	Mike	Kemp	Kemp Management Solutions	2018-2021
46	Dave	King	Dynamics, Inc.	2014-2017
47	Mike	Kitchens	ACIPCO	2014-2024
48	Christy	Knowles	Coosa Valley Medical Center	2017-2025
49	Sandra	Koblas	Austal U.S.A.	2014-2022
50	Neil	Lamb	Hudson Alpha	2018-2026
51	Jeff	Lynn	Alabama Community College System	2017-2020
52	Jerry	Mays	Former Mayor of Phil Campbell	2014-2019
53	Tim	McCartney	McCartney Construction Company, Inc.	2014-2024
54	Patrick	McCarty	Aerospace Coatings	2017-2019
55	Alex	McCrary	Alabama Power Company	2021-2026
56	Lisa	Morales	East AlabamaWorks!	2019-2020
57	Joe	Morton	Business Education Alliance AL	2014-2023
58	Kasey	Myers	CKN Aerospace, Alabama Fuel Systems	2014-2017
59	John Allen	Nichols	Alabama Farmers Federation	2021-2025
60	Billy	Norrell	Alabama Associated General Contractors	2022-2026
61	Jessica	Oates	International Paper	2018-2022
62	Mike	Oatridge	Honda Manufacturing of Alabama	2015-2022

63	KC	Pang	GC Copper USA	2018-2026
64	Joe	Patton	Westervelt Company	2017-2021
65	Ray	Perez	Honda Manufacturing of AL, LLC	2014-2015
66	Keith	Phillips	Alabama Technology Network/ACCS	Ex-Officio
67	Daryle	Pilkinton	Arista Aviation Services	2019-2023
68	Cleve	Poole	Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc.	2014-2022
69	Jim	Purcell	Alabama Commission on Higher Education	Ex-Officio
70	David	Reed	Whitaker Contracting	2019-2023
71	Ed	Richardson	Alabama State Department of Education	2017-2018
72	Randy	Rogers	Evonik Industries	2014-2022
73	Alicia	Ryan	LSINC	2020-2024
74	Alex	Sadler	Tennessee Valley Authority	2022-2026
75	Gary	Savage	B.L. Harbert Corporation	2015-2019
76	Peggy	Sease-Fain	DCH Health System	2019-2023
77	Michael	Sentence	Alabama State Department of Education	2016-2017
78	Randy	Skagen	Nucor Steel	2017-2021
79	Tequila	Smith	Alabama Power Company	2021-2022
80	Zeke	Smith	Alabama Power	2014-2018
81	Chris	Stricklin	Dunn University	2021-2025
82	Daryl	Taylor	Airbus U.S. Manufacturing	2018-2022
83	Art	Tipton	Southern Research Institute	2014-2018
84	Fitzgerald	Washington	Alabama Department of Labor	Ex-Officio
85	Terry	Waters	Assoc. of Edison Illuminating Companies	2014-2018
86	Phil	Webb	Webb Concrete & Building Materials	2018-2026
87	Keith	Weil	Golden Dragon Copper Tubing	2014-2018
88	Lamar	Whitaker	Honda Alabama Automotive Plant	2022-2026

## E. TIMELINE OF MILESTONES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The timeline below includes highlights from among the many milestones and accomplishments achieved by the Alabama Workforce Council since its founding in 2014 to demonstrate the types and range of activities led and achieved by the Council.

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### 2014

- Alabama Legislature establishes the Council, and the Governor appoints the first members (July 1, 2014)
- Council creates four committees to carry out advisory duties
- Council engages Auburn University's Economic & Community Development Institute to assess the current workforce development operating structure

### 2015

- Council releases its first Annual Report (January 2015)
- Alabama Legislature passes Act 2015-450 which codifies the Regional Workforce Development Councils and transfers them to the Workforce Development Division within the Department of Commerce
- Council engages IDEAS Group to help develop a statewide workforce development, training, and retraining plan for Alabama with systemic, process, policy, technology, and branding recommendations

### 2016

- Council releases its 2nd Annual Report (January 2016)
- Department of Commerce launches new AlabamaWorks! Brand designed to seamlessly link employers looking for skilled workers with Alabamians seeking jobs or job training (November 15, 2016)
- Council supports efforts to consolidate the previous 10 Workforce Development Councils regions into seven new regions with the goal of creating stronger regional congruency and resource utilization

### 2017

- AWC releases its 3rd Annual Report (January 2017)
- Governor Kay Ivey – through Executive Order No. 702 (as amended) – tasks the Council with developing a committee to study attainment and to produce a report addressing this issue by April 30, 2018
- council establishes the Educational Attainment Committee to develop a public roadmap to assist state leaders in setting priorities for state agencies and measuring progress towards full attainment

## 2018

- AWC releases its 4th Annual Report (January 2018)
- Council approves Alabama's plan for increasing educational attainment, Success Plus: Preparing Alabama's Workforce for Opportunity and Growth (April 30, 2018); developed through in-depth data analysis, more than a dozen meetings, and public input from more than 1,500 Alabamians, the plan sets an attainment goal of adding 500,000 highly skilled workers to the state's workforce by the year 2025 and outlines recommendations, priorities, and strategies for achieving the goal

## 2019

- Council releases its 5th Annual Report (January 2019)
- Council aligns its committee structure with the five Success Plus priorities and engages external support to help achieve the priorities
- Alabama Legislature establishes the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) through Legislative Act No. 2019-506; the ACCCP is tasked with identifying in-demand career pathways across Alabama and identifying credentials of value associated with each of the in-demand occupations
- The Public Private Partnerships Committee (PPP) convenes a cohort from across the state to promote collaboration and create partner linkages that expand workforce and economic opportunities; the PPP helps the cohort secure \$6.4M in out-of-state grant support in 2019
- The Alabama Office of Apprenticeships (AOA) is created to expand the use of registered apprenticeships (RAs) and Alabama industry recognized apprenticeship programs (AIRAPs) in order to provide high-quality career training which will enable workers and employers to prosper

## 2020

- Council releases its 6th Annual Report (January 2020)
- Alabama's 2020 Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan is approved and provides the foundation for the delivery and management of career and training services that will help folks overcome benefit cliffs and enter the workforce
- Despite the enormous economic and social impact of the pandemic, Alabama's efforts to connect education and workforce development through the Success Plus postsecondary education goal continue and become a nationally recognized workforce development response to the pandemic

## 2021

- Council releases its 7th Annual Report (January 2021)
- Governor Ivey and the Alabama Workforce Council implemented the ATLAS on Career Pathways as Alabama's state longitudinal database system (February 2021)
- Alabama Workforce Council led the first annual Talent Development Convening attended by 46 states (April 2021)
- Governor Ivey and the Council led the adoption of an administrative rule that requires students to complete or opt-out of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) prior to graduation (April 2021)
- Governor Ivey and the AWC launch the Alabama Credential Registry as the first component of the Alabama Talent Triad (September 2021)

## 2022

- The AWC has worked to better integrate the public workforce system, and the DAVID system is now being used in career centers across Alabama (March 2022).
- Due to the AWC's advocacy, in the past year, myriad state agencies have adopted the ACCCP's list of in-demand jobs, and the State Workforce Board has aligned our public workforce systems to our non-degree credential quality assurance criteria and list of in-demand jobs (June 2022).
- Given the increased range of activities, the Council approved the hiring of an Executive Administrator to support the ongoing mission, vision, and priorities of the AWC (June 2022).
- Due to the AWC's advocacy, the State Board of Education did not eliminate teacher subject-matter assessments (July 2022).
- We are on the cusp of closing the gap between the college and career readiness rate by administrative rule. The State Board of Education voted for final passage of a rule to require students to earn a college and career readiness before graduation beginning with the class of 2028 (November 2022).
- Since the adoption of the FAFSA completion policy in April 2021, Alabama's year-over-year growth in FAFSA completions led Alabama to becoming the state with the 9th highest level of FAFSA completion in the country (November 2022).

## F. IMPORTANT ACRONYMS

### Workforce Terms

#### **Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP)**

A committee of the Alabama Workforce Council, established by Act 2019-506, tasked with annually identifying occupations, career pathways, and credentials that are both in-demand and of value regionally and statewide

#### **Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET)**

Online dashboard and verified for students that provides information at all phases of career and college exploration through workforce participation

#### **Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways**

Online database which provides the data needed to identify in-demand career and credentials

#### **Alabama Workforce Council (AWC)**

A group consisting of businesspeople of diverse industries from around the state who serve at the pleasure of the governor to work with state government heads to develop policy to improve Alabama's workforce

#### **Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program (AWSP)**

Workforce training program that provides opportunities for over 7,000 Alabama workers that have been displaced by COVID-19 to develop new skills in high demand industries

#### **Credential Registry**

Catalog of all for-credit and not-for-credit credentials offered in the State of Alabama including community colleges, four-year universities, apprenticeships, adult education programs, etc.

#### **Dashboard for Alabamians to Visualize Income Determination (DAVID)**

A partnership between Alabama and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta which helps families navigate the loss of public assistance, or benefits cliffs, by forecasting how income will fluctuate over time as they move toward self-sufficiency.

#### **Learning and Employment Record (LER)**

a record of all learning and employment of an individual used for use when exploring future directions within the workforce (the ACCET is Alabama's LER).

#### **Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins CTE)**

A federal law that providing nearly \$1.3 billion annually to CTE programs across the nation at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

#### **Regional Workforce Council (RWC)**

A group consisting of business leaders from the seven regions of the state who work with the executive director of the workforce council to serve as liaisons between state departments connecting industries with the activities and programs available to them to help develop the workforce.



**Skills-Based Job Description Generator (SBJDG)**

Online interface that compiles competencies required for a job to provide an index for those who have earned or developed those required credentials and skills so that they can identify and pursue them.

**Workforce and Education Community Assets Network (WECAN)**

Asset mapping project developed to assist those in the low-income system back into the workforce helping them to become more self-sufficient.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Federal legislation passed by Congress in 2014 focusing on training and employment in the State of Alabama.

**Workforce Partners**

Alabama Community College System (ACCS)  
Alabama Department of Commerce (Commerce)  
Alabama Department of Human Services (DHR)  
Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL)  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)  
Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS)  
Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT)

**Education Agencies**

Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE)  
Alabama Community College System (ACCS)  
Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)  
Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)

## G. 2022-2023 ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL MEMBERS

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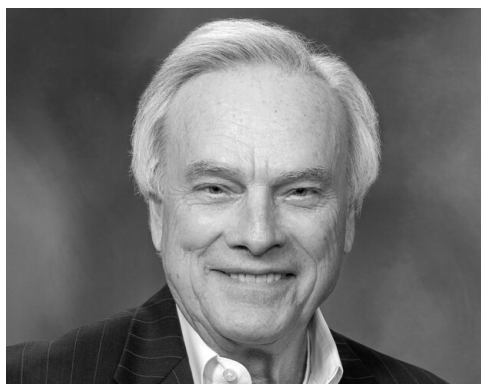
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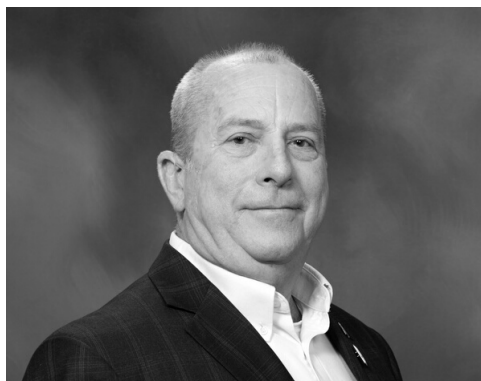
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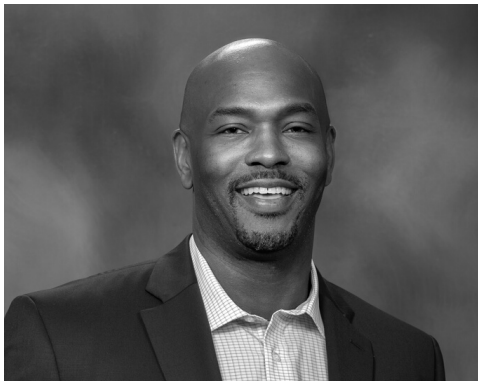
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