



ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

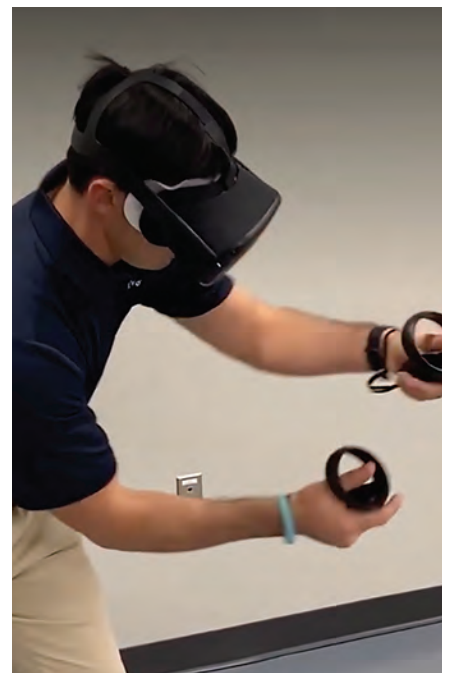




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Dear Governor Kay Ivey & Alabama Legislators:

The State of Alabama, and the entire country, has endured a harrowing year. In February 2020, Alabama was nearing full employment. Unfortunately, as a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), between March 21, and January 2, 2021, 901,562 Alabamians filed an initial unemployment claim. That is far greater than the 500,000 additional credentialed workers who need to be added to Alabama's workforce by 2025 in order to achieve the Governor's postsecondary education attainment goal.

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 has proven to be not only a sound talent development strategy, but our approach has also served as a nationally recognized workforce development response to the pandemic. Connecting employers to credentialed Alabamians through competency-based learning and skills-based hiring practices is the recipe for reaching Alabama's attainment goal and for reskilling and upskilling Alabamians who have been affected by the pandemic.

Many of Alabama's industries have proven resilient during the pandemic, and the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) will continue to collaborate with our education and workforce stakeholders to align the education and training programs that will prepare Alabamians for the post-COVID-19 labor market.

In 2021, Alabama will launch the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways and the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) to connect our education and workforce data across agencies and to return that data back to the people of Alabama. The AWC will use data from the ATLAS on Career Pathways and the ACCET to power a skills-based job description generator to help employers create the "recipe" for the jobs they are filling by using the competency frameworks developed by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP). The ACCET will serve as a verified resume for jobseekers that will connect them directly to the skills-based job descriptions that employers post on the ACCET. Promoting competency-based learning and skills-based hiring will save money for both jobseekers and students by shortening the length of time required to attain the credentials needed to enter an in-demand job and by reducing the trial-and-error elements of the hiring process by replacing paper resumes with verified digital resumes.

The efforts mentioned above, and countless others across business and education in Alabama, are testaments to our mutual commitment to aligning education and the economy to provide pathways to self-sufficiency for every Alabamian.

We are honored to submit the 2021 Alabama Workforce Council Annual Report, which will provide you with an analysis of our efforts in 2020 and our priorities for 2021. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and support during the forthcoming pivotal year for Alabama and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim McCartney".

Tim McCartney
Chair, Alabama Workforce Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Koblas".

Sandra Koblas
Vice Chair, Alabama Workforce Council

BACKGROUND, MISSION, & STRUCTURE

Background

In 2013, the Governor’s College and Career Ready Task Force assembled leaders from education, industry, and government in an effort to produce recommendations for improving educational outcomes and to promote workforce and economic development in Alabama.¹

The Task Force recommended the creation of the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) to serve as a blue-ribbon panel established to improve educational outcomes and strengthen workforce and economic development efforts by advising members of the State School Board, the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System, college and university presidents of Alabama’s four-year institutions, and the Superintendent of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) on aligning the state’s workforce education programs with the workforce needs of Alabama’s businesses.

In July 2015, the Governor appointed 28 members to the Alabama Workforce Council.² In July 2015, Zeke Smith, Executive Vice President of External Affairs at Alabama Power, was appointed to chair the council.³ In June 2018, Mr. Tim McCartney, formerly of McCartney Construction, Inc., replaced Zeke Smith as Chairman of the AWC.

Regional Workforce Councils

The Governor’s College and Career Ready Task Force also called for the creation of Regional Workforce Councils. Formally established in 2015 by the Alabama Legislature, ten Regional Workforce Development Councils were created to provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. The Regional Workforce Councils 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.



In 2016, the original ten Regional Workforce Councils 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.⁴

¹ “Report on Recommendations to Governor Robert Bentley.” Governor’s College and Career Ready Task Force, 3 January 2014.

² “Governor Bentley Appoints Members to the Alabama Workforce Council; Releases College and Career Ready Task Force Recommendations.” Press Office, Office of Governor Robert Bentley, 1 July 2014.

³ “Governor Bentley Appoints Members to the Alabama Workforce Council; Releases College and Career Ready Task Force Recommendations.” Press Office, Office of Governor Robert Bentley, 1 July 2014.

⁴ “Regional Workforce Council,” [madeinalabama.com](http://www.madeinalabama.com), accessed on 25 July 2018
<http://www.madeinalabama.com/workforce-and-training/regional-workforce-councils>.



Leadership

Weaving federal workforce development streams and reducing inter-agency barriers will better position the AWC to recommend and shepherd a statewide workforce development strategy. Since 2017, the AWC has worked to coordinate the combined efforts of Alabama's education and workforce partners to implement Governor Ivey's workforce development strategic plan. Under Governor Ivey's leadership, the AWC has made great strides:

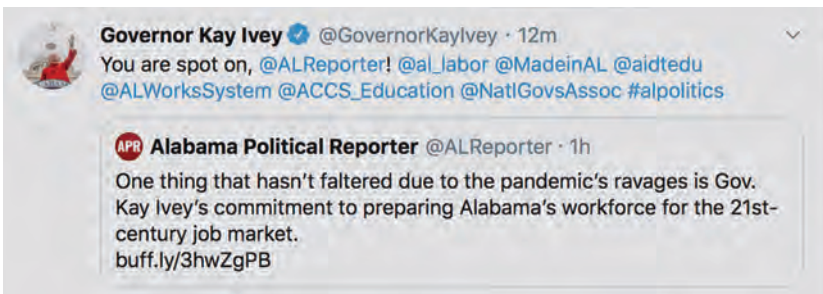
- The Success Plus attainment goal and the accompanying Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) are connecting education and training programs to labor market demand by mapping the DNA of occupations and instilling competency-based hiring and education practices.
- The 2020 Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan provides the foundation for the delivery and management of career and training services that will help folks overcome benefit cliffs and enter the workforce.
- The design and development of the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) and the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways that will help agencies, businesses, and individuals make data-informed decisions on where and how to spend scarce resources.
- The creation of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA) to serve as a catalyst for scaling new-era career and technical education, expanding all forms of work-based learning, and aiding employers with scaling first-class, employer-driven training.
- Alabama's status as a leader in workforce development policy on the national stage has been elevated by participating in policy academies led by the National Governors Association on work-based learning and developing a pre-to-three pathway for our youngest learners, participating in the National Skills Coalition's non-degree credential attainment policy academy that has led to a state definition of non-degree credentials of value, partnering with the Lumina Foundation and Credential Engine to develop a credential and competency ontology for Alabama to power our competency-based learning and hiring efforts.
- Scoring myriad education and workforce grants that have proven elusive for Alabama for years, including a \$3.5M State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) grant that will be used to build the ATLAS on Career Pathways' infrastructure and the \$17.8M Reimagining Workforce Preparation grant, awarded in September of 2020, designed to reskill Alabamians who are unemployed or underemployed due to COVID-19.



Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

As Alabama transitions from the immediate public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, attention will rightfully be placed on the economic and workforce recovery for the thousands of Alabamians and businesses who have been affected.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tremendous progress was being made through Governor Ivey's vision for coordinating the workforce and education systems to meet the needs of individuals and business and industry.



The scope of the recovery will require even greater alignment among the education and workforce agencies and an even more aggressive timeline for expanding work-based learning, credentials of value, and competency-based learning. The AWC provides the unified leadership necessary to assist the K-12 system, community college system, and workforce system with implementing Governor Ivey's workforce goals.

ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

**S U M M A R Y
O F T H E
A W C 2 0 2 1
P R I O R I T I E S**

SUMMARY OF THE AWC'S 2021 PRIORITIES:

Strong Start, Strong Finish Initiative

As part of the Strong Start, Strong Finish Initiative, Governor Ivey set a post-secondary education attainment goal for Alabama of adding 500,000 highly-skilled employees to Alabama's workforce by 2025 through the Success Plus plan, which will equate to approximately 60 percent of Alabamians holding post-secondary credentials, degrees, and certificates of value.⁵

Like the Commonwealth of Virginia, Alabama has also set a target that 10-percent of all credentials earned towards the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal will be non-degree credentials.⁶

The Lumina Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to increasing the number of Americans who hold quality post-secondary credentials, has set the goal that 60 percent of Americans will hold a high-quality degree, certificate, or credential by 2025.⁷



Between Now and 2025:

Assuming current rates of degree and certificate production continue, about 24.2 million Americans will earn postsecondary credentials. To reach the 2025 goal, 16.4 million more high-skilled workers need to be added to that total.⁸

Alabama's attainment gap is similar to the national numbers. Alabama's 2016 attainment rate was 43.1 percent and the current attainment rate is 44 percent (7.8 percent of Alabamians hold short-term credentials and 36.2 percent hold an associate degree or higher)⁹; however, Alabama's demand for post-secondary education attainment in 2025 will be 51 percent.¹⁰

To reach the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal, Alabama must maintain current rates of attainment and significantly increase the number of people who enroll in programs and earn all types of postsecondary credentials. With the inclusion of workforce certificates (beginning in 2014) and certifications (in 2018), Alabama's postsecondary attainment rate has increased by 12.4 percent since 2008.¹¹

⁵ Governor Kay Ivey, *Preparing Alabama's Workforce for Opportunity and Growth: Recommendations from the Alabama Workforce Council's Statewide Education Attainment Committee*, 30 April 2018, accessed on 29 November 2020, page 3, https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2018-12-27-AWC-Attainment-Report_final.pdf.

⁶ Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation: Learning Beyond High School Builds Talent*, "America's Progress, States, Alabama," accessed on 29 November 2020 <<https://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger-nation/report/2020/#nation>>.

⁷ Lumina Foundation *Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2020*, Lumina Foundation, accessed on 29 July 2018 <<https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/strategic-plan-2017-to-2020-apr17.pdf>>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation: Learning Beyond High School Builds Talent*.

¹⁰ *Preparing Alabama's Workforce for Opportunity and Growth: Recommendations from the Alabama Workforce Council's Statewide Educational Attainment Committee*, 30 April 2018, page 2, accessed on 27 November 2020 <https://alabamaworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2018.04.30_SuccessPlus.pdf>.

¹¹ Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation: Learning Beyond High School Builds Talent*

Five Absolute Priorities for Reaching the Post-Secondary Educational Attainment Goal:

Based on recommendations from the Success Plus plan, Governor Ivey has set five absolute priorities for reaching the post-secondary educational attainment goal:

- **AWARENESS** – All Alabama residents will understand the importance of earning certificates, credentials, and degrees and will know how to find information and resources to start or continue their education and training.
- **ACCESS AND SUCCESS** – All Alabama residents will have access to education and will receive the continuous support they need to complete certificates, credentials, and degrees.
- **PATHWAYS** – Career pathways from education and training to high-demand jobs will be defined.
- **LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION** – Partners at the state, regional, and local levels will work together to increase post-secondary educational attainment in Alabama.¹²
- **ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** – Progress toward Alabama’s goal for post-secondary educational attainment will be tracked and shared regularly using data and evidence-based practices.



To measure progress against each of the Success Plus absolute priorities, five key metrics have been identified, which will be tracked and shared regularly:

1. **Post-secondary educational attainment rate**
2. **College and career readiness**
3. **Participation in work-based learning**
4. **Enrollment and completions for all levels of education and training by population, race/ethnicity, gender, and workforce region**
5. **The employment and workforce participation rate**

The five key metrics mostly focus on tracking progress toward Alabama’s goal for post-secondary educational attainment. Therefore, the following twenty strategies have been assigned to achieve the Success Plus absolute priorities. Four strategies have been assigned to each of the five absolute priorities. The AWC has aligned its 2021 priorities to the five Success Plus absolute priorities (awareness, access and success, pathways, leadership and collaboration, and assessment and continuous improvement) as a strategy for surpassing the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal by 2025.

¹² *Ibid*, page 6.

The 2021 Alabama Workforce Council Strategies Aligned to the Five Success Plus Absolute Priorities:

Success Plus Priority	Strategies	Responsible Committee	Expected Timeline
Awareness	AlabamaWorks! Storyboard Initiative	Outreach and Engagement Committee and the Regional Workforce Council Support Committees	Beginning in Q1 2021 and continuous thereafter
	AlabamaWorks! Monthly Webinar	Outreach and Engagement Committee	Began in March 2020 and will continue thereafter
	Alabama Community E-Directory/WECAN Initiative	PPP, Outreach and Engagement, and the Regional Workforce Council Support Committees	Will launch in Q1 2021 and will be integrated into the ACCET in Q2 2021
	Alabama Skills Draft Competition	Outreach and Engagement and the Regional Workforce Council Support Committees	Will launch in Q1 2022

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

Success Plus Priority	Strategies	Responsible Committee	Expected Timeline
Access and Success	Nine Points on K-12 Education	Human Capital Development	See below in the Education and Industry Collaboration Committee Report for the timeline on each of the nine points
	Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator	ACCCP	Will launch in Q2 2021
	Alabama Credential Registry	ACCCP	Will launch in Q1 2021
	Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance and Transparency	ACCCP	See below to learn more about Alabama's non-degree credential milestones
Pathways	Alabama Skills-Based Hiring Initiative	ACCCP	Will launch concurrently with the Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator
	Alabama Network of Open Competencies	ACCCP	Will launch concurrently with the Alabama Credential Registry
	The Alabama Occupational Ontology	ACCCP	Will launch concurrently in Q3 2021
	Adoption of the ACCCP's List of In-Demand Occupations	Human Capital Development	No later than Q4 of 2021
Leadership and Collaboration	Alabama Combined Workforce Days	Outreach and Engagement Committee	Will launch concurrently with the Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator
	National Policy Academies	PPP, Outreach and Engagement, and Human Capital Dev. Committees	Will launch concurrently with the Alabama Credential Registry
	Competitive Education and Workforce Grants	PPP	Will launch concurrently in Q3 2021
	The Alabama STEM Council	Human Capital Development	Work began in Q4 of 2020

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

Success Plus Priority	Strategies	Responsible Committee	Expected Timeline
Assessment and Continuous Improvement	The ATLAS on Career Pathways	Human Capital Development and ACCCP	Will launch in Q2 2021
	Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool Verified Resume	Human Capital Development and ACCCP	Will launch in Q2 2021
	Annual Regional and Statewide Subgroup and Cluster Attainment Targets	PPP, Outreach and Engagement, and the Regional Workforce Council Support Committees	Began in 2019 and will continue indefinitely on an annual basis
	Alabama Workforce Council Surveys	Outreach and Engagement Committee	See below for the 2021 AWC survey schedule

ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

**A LOOK AHEAD
TO THE 2021 ALABAMA
WORKFORCE COUNCIL
PRIORITIES**

A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2021 ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The Success Plus plan outlined five priorities (awareness, access and success, pathways, leadership and collaboration, and assessment and continuous improvement), and the AWC has aligned its 2021 priorities to provide strategies for surpassing the five Success Plus priorities.

A. AWARENESS

a. AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative

As a culminating initiative of the ACCCP, each of the seven workforce regions will select five career clusters in each of the seven regional workforce areas for the AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative.

The regional workforce councils will select from among the career pathways approved by the ACCCP in each of the five focus sectors for the AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative. The AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative will develop 60- to 90-second videos that focus on each of the career pathways selected by the regional workforce councils. There will be a series of videos produced for the AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative.

The regional workforce councils will submit the five focus occupations in an order of their preference so that the videos associated with the most preferred occupations are produced first.

The videos will focus on individuals who received training by community colleges and training providers in the respective regions and who are employed in the respective regions.



b. 2021 Alabama Workforce Council Webinar Dates

The AWC webinar series will be conducted monthly via WebEx, and all sessions will be held from 9 to 10am. After the Chairman's Message, which will serve as an opening and overview, each webinar will consist of four 15-minute segments:

- 1. State of the Workforce Update**
- 2. Monthly Spotlight on a Workforce Best Practice**
- 3. Keynote Topic/Presenter**
- 4. Ask the Experts Panel**

AlabamaWorks! Workforce Recovery and Expansion Webinar Segment Descriptions

- **Chairman’s Message**
AWC Chairman will open the webinar with a welcome and overview of the four segments.
- **State of the Workforce Update**
Unemployment rate, job trends data, total employment by sector report. This will be a recurring monthly theme.
- **Monthly Spotlight on a Workforce Best Practice**
We will highlight a member of business and industry, education, or the public workforce system who will present a best practice or paragon that should be emulated statewide.
- **Keynote Topic/Presenter**
A prominent state/national speaker will present on a germane topic each month.
- **Ask the Experts Panel**
The panel will be moderated by AWC Chairman and he will ask the presenters questions and generate discussion among them.

2021 AWC Monthly Webinar Dates and Topics

January 25, 2021	Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance
February 15, 2021	The Alabama STEM Council
March 15, 2021	The Alabama Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
April 19, 2021	Work-Based Learning, Apprenticeship, and the NGA Work-Based Learning Policy Academy
May 17, 2021	Competency-Based Occupational Frameworks
June 21, 2021	Integrated Human and Workforce Services
July 19, 2021	AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative
August 16, 2021	WECAN and the Community E-Directory
September 20, 2021	The Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program
October 18, 2021	The Alabama Financial Literacy Program and the Customized Ready-to-Work Program
November 15, 2021	The ATLAS on Career Pathways and the ACCET
December 20, 2021	The Alabama Credential Registry and the ACCCP Year-Two Deliverables

c. Alabama Community E-Directory and the Workforce and Education Community Assessment Network (WECAN) Initiative

ACTIVITIES:

The WECAN Initiative:

The WECAN Initiative will create county, regional, and state-level asset maps.

The Chairs of the Alabama Workforce Council and the State Workforce Investment Board will co-chair the statewide WECAN Initiative, and the chairs of the seven regional workforce councils will chair the regional WECAN initiatives. The chairs of the seven regional workforce councils will appoint a county-level chair for the WECAN initiative for each county in their regions.

A state leadership team consisting of the state co-chairs, the Deputy Secretary of Commerce of the Workforce Development Division (WDD), and the Director of the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) will develop resources to support the regional and county-level teams.

The WECAN Leadership Team

Each region will form a WECAN leadership team that will consist of the:

- (1) Regional Workforce Council Liaisons**
- (2) Regional WIOA Board Liaisons**
- (3) The Alabama Career Center Area Managers and Staff**

The regional leadership team will assist the county leads.

At the state level, state agencies will be asked to complete an asset-mapping survey. Commerce WDD staff will develop a state resource, regional resource, and county resource survey tool.

Two Phase Initiative

The WECAN Initiative will consist of two phases.

PHASE ONE

Phase I will consist of asset identification and using the identified assets to prioritize services that eliminate barriers for Alabamians seeking to enter training or the workforce.

PHASE TWO

Phase II will be focused on capacity building for identified assets and vouchsafing the long-term viability of the WECAN Initiative by instituting an iterative asset assessment.

The AWC has partnered with the Business Education Alliance (BEA) to extend access to the Alabama Community E-Directory developed by the BEA to Alabama's community-based organizations and workforce stakeholders in each of the seven workforce regions. The regional asset maps developed through the WECAN Initiative will be uploaded to the Alabama Community E-Directory in 2021.



d. AlabamaWorks! Skills Draft Competitions

As a component of the AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative, the restructured AWC Outreach and Engagement Committee, formerly the Marketing Committee, will partner with the regional workforce council to host skills-draft competitions in a secondary and postsecondary division in each of the seven workforce regions.

Students in each division will compete in each of the 16 career clusters and will be ranked according to a scoring system established by the AWC Outreach and Engagement Committee.

Partner employers will hire students and provide hiring incentives based on the students "draft score" that results from the competition. The AWC Skills Draft will initiate during the first quarter of 2022.

B. ACCESS AND SUCCESS

a. Nine Points on K-12 Education

PRE COVID-19

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began, Alabama faced a shortage of skilled workers in Alabama and had extremely low unemployment.

TODAY

Today, there is still a shortage of skilled workers, but there is an unprecedented number of unemployed people, many of whom may not be going back to the business where they were previously employed.

Those people need additional skills training that they now have the time to obtain. The foundation of having the ability to obtain useful credentials, certificates, and degrees that can lead to a successful career begins with the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics.

This foundation must be laid in Alabama's K-12 educational system. Unfortunately, Alabama sits at rock bottom on national achievement scores in reading and mathematics. In 2019, our 4th and 8th grades were 49th in reading and 52nd in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Furthermore, there is a 12-percentage-point gap between the number of students who are graduating high school, at 92 percent, and those that graduate college and career ready, at 80 percent.

THESE PERCENTAGES BRING UP QUESTIONS

What will life mean for those 12 percent of students who graduate from high school, but are not college-and-career ready? What message does this send to Alabama employers? To achieve the Success Plus goal, Alabama's K-12 education system must improve. Every student must graduate college and career ready if Alabama is to have a shot at reaching its attainment goal by 2025.

If Alabama does not have a quality, best in class, K-12 educational system, the state will not be able to compete with other states for the high paying jobs that can help Alabama citizens have a better life. The AWC stands ready to partner with K-12 education stakeholders across Alabama to make necessary improvements.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Allen Harris chairs the newly restructured Human Capital Development Committee, formerly the Education and Industry Collaboration Committee.

Mr. Harris and his committee members have collaborated with the State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey, and his team at the Alabama State Department of Education throughout the summer and fall of 2020 to develop nine recommendations for enhancing the elementary and secondary education systems in Alabama. Please see the Human Capital Development Committee Report for a detailed description of each of the nine recommendations.

b. Alabama Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal

The State of Alabama will utilize the \$15,000 subgrant from the National Skills Coalition Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance Policy Academy to fund a website, named the Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal.

The Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal will connect employers to the Alabama Credential Registry and the Alabama Competency Taxonomy to enable them to create customized, skills-based job descriptions that are based on the in-demand occupations identified by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways.

HOW IT WORKS

Employers will create a profile linked to their existing Alabama Credential Registry profile that they use to register non-degree credentials.

Once employers have created a profile they will then be allowed to access a database and menu of options for building skills-based job descriptions by selecting the competencies and credentials associated with the job they are seeking to fill.

The Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal will be integrated into the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) in the second quarter of 2021, and, at that point, it will be linked to the student-based learning and employment records that will allow employers to determine a candidate pool of jobseekers who possess the competencies and credentials aligned to the skills-based job descriptions posted by employers.

The Skills-Based Job Description Generator and Employer Portal will be hosted on the AlabamaWorks! website, and linked to the Alabama Credential Registry, until the ACCET is complete in June 2021.

c. The Alabama Credential Registry

The infrastructure for the Alabama Credential Registry was developed by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

The AWC is collaborating with myriad education and workforce stakeholders to publish all of the certificates, licenses, traditional degrees, and non-degree credentials offered in Alabama to the Alabama Credential Registry.

Credential information registered to the Alabama Credential Registry will be displayed through tools like the Credential Finder and Alabama's College and Career Exploration Tool (under development) to signal to employers that a worker or student possesses the requisite skills for either an entry-level job or a promotion as a result of mastering the next competency within a stackable sequence.

The ACCCP must create an annual Compendium of Valuable Credentials composed of the regional and state lists of credentials that are mapped onto the regional and state

in-demand career occupations. Credential providers may register a credential to the Alabama Credential Registry.

The 16 Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) will review credentials against the Alabama's two-tiered, non-degree credential quality-assurance criteria.

Credentials will be given a unique identifier using the Alabama Credential Taxonomy in stage-two review. Each TAC will compile its recommended lists of regional and statewide compendia of valuable credentials and submit it to the ACCCP by March 5, 2021. The ACCCP will approve each TAC's compendia of valuable credentials on March 17, 2020.

The first regional and statewide compendia of valuable credentials will become effective on March 31, 2021.

d. Non-Degree Credential Quality-Assurance and Transparency

On September 18, 2019, the National Skills Coalition released *Expanding Opportunities: Defining Quality Non-Degree Credentials for States*, a paper that has become one of the definitive resources on non-degree credential (NDC) quality assurance.¹³

Alabama participated, along with Iowa, New Jersey, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington, as a round one state in the National Skills Coalitions (NSC) NDC quality assurance project.

The National Skills Coalition's NDC round one quality assurance project led to the acceptance of several general principles for the definition of a NDC of quality, including the need for the definition to be student focused, to support equitable credential attainment, to be flexible while safeguarding quality, and should include a public process for determining which credentials are quality credentials.

Alabama participated in a National Skills Coalition Convening on Quality Assurance for Non-Degree Credentials as part of the round one project on March 26, 2019 in New Orleans, Louisiana, along with several other states. The information gathered at the convening informed the development of *Expanding Opportunities*.

The Alabama Industry Recognized and Registered Apprenticeship Program Act

Governor Ivey signed the Alabama Industry Recognized and Registered Apprenticeship Program Act (SB 295) in law as Act 2019-506 on May 30, 2019, which passed the Senate 32-0 and the House 97-0-4. Act 2019-506 created the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP), which is a public-private non-degree credential quality and transparency entity organized into industry-based sector strategies.

¹³ Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, Bryan Wilson, Kermit Kaleba, and Jenna Leventoff, *Expanding Opportunities: Defining Non-Degree Credentials for States*, September 2019, accessed on 29 November 2020 <[https:// www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/9.18-NSC_QNDC-paper_web.pdf](https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/9.18-NSC_QNDC-paper_web.pdf)>.

On December 18, 2019, the GOEWT advisory board adopted a state definition for quality non-degree credentials that was closely modeled on the National Skills Coalition definition.

The Alabama definition of a quality non-degree credential is as follows: “a quality non-degree credential is one that provides individuals with the means to equitably achieve their informed employment and educational goals.

There must be valid, reliable, and transparent evidence that the credential satisfies the criteria that constitute quality, which include:

- (1) Substantial job opportunities**
- (2) Transparent evidence of the competencies mastered by credential holders**
- (3) Evidence of the employment earning outcomes of individuals after obtaining employment**
- (4) Stackability to additional education or training is strongly preferred**

ACCCP'S TWO-FOLD MISSION

The ACCCP is tasked with a two-fold mission:

- (1) Identify Alabama's regional and statewide in-demand occupations**
- (2) Identify competency models, career pathways, and credentials of value linked to those in-demand occupations using labor market information**

The ACCCP uses a process called the five-star rubric to create the list of in-demand occupations and uses a two-tier review process to register credentials. Thus, credentials of value are linked to one or more specific competencies and the competencies are sequenced within a competency model to build the occupational DNA for a job.

Occupations are then sequenced as part of a stackable progress that provides for career pathways with multiple points of entry and exit. This strategy also allows for unbundling and modularizing traditional degrees (particularly associate degrees.)

The ACCCP is composed of nine *ex officio* members and seven gubernatorial appointments who each represent one of the seven Alabama workforce regions, which are the members of the Alabama Workforce Council's (AWC) ACCCP Committee.

Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)

The ACCCP includes 16 Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) that are each composed of seven gubernatorially-appointed members who are members of business and industry. The first annual ACCCP regional appointments and TAC appointments were made on December 5, 2019. Each of the seven members of each TAC represents one of the seven Alabama workforce regions. Each TAC is led by an officer.

Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs)

There are 64 subject-matter experts (SMEs) who have passed the SME assessment. Approximately 4-6 SMEs serve each TAC. The SMEs are employed by state education and workforce agencies. The SMEs help TAC members translate their ideas into action by navigating the education and workforce systems.

The ACCCP approved the 2020 regional and statewide lists of in-demand occupations for their cluster on December 18, 2019.

The Governor's Survey of Employer Competencies (GSEC)

The TACs received draft competency models for each of the occupations on their regional and statewide lists of in-demand occupations on June 17, 2020. The inaugural Governor's Survey of Employer Competencies (GSEC), an establishment-based survey commissioned by the GOEWT, was conducted statewide between June 15 and July 3, 2020, and 1,501 employers completed the survey.

TACs received the results of the GSEC on July 13, 2020. Between July 13, 2020, and August 10, 2020, the TAC officers held TAC meetings to review the draft competency models against the survey of employer competency results and the comprehensive competency dictionary.

Competency Models and Completed Career Pathways

The TACs submitted their revisions to the competency models on August 24, 2020. Between August 24 and September 18, 2020, the TACs completed career pathways by stacking approved competency models into career pathways. The TACs submitted the draft career pathways to the ACCCP for approval on September 18, 2020.

Each TAC developed dynamic career pathways that are connected to one of the 79 base career pathways associated with its cluster. The ACCCP approved all revised competency models and career pathways at the October 21, 2020 Quarter Three meeting. The ACCCP promulgated the first official list of in-demand occupations, competency models, and career pathways and lattices on October 21, 2020.

Alabama is in the Midst of Developing a Competency-Based, Learner-Centered Education and Workforce Ecosystem Centered on Credential Transparency

As averred by Credential Engine in the November 2020 report, entitled *Making Sense of Credentials: A State Roadmap and Action Guide for Transparency*, ". . . with over 750,000 different credentials it is hard to easily find reliable and actionable information on the value of various credentials, where to get them, what each competency and skill means, cost, and employment opportunities associated with each opportunity."¹⁴

¹⁴ Credential Engine, *Making Sense of Credentials: A State Roadmap and Action Guide for Transparency*, 16 November 2020, Washington, D.C., author, accessed on 29 November 2020
<<https://credentialengine.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/State-Roadmap-and-Action-Guide.pdf>>.

Alabama is in the midst of developing a competency-based, learner-centered education and workforce ecosystem centered on credential transparency. The state is creating bespoke competency and credential taxonomies that provide for competency-based career pathways predicated on stackable, transparent, recognized, postsecondary credentials of value that are aligned to in-demand occupations.

Foundation and Collaboration

These advancements have provided the foundation for economic upward mobility by permitting an individual to progress from an entry-level position, to a middle-skills job, to an advanced career through the mastery of increasingly rigorous levels of competencies (the mastery of which are denoted by credentials of value).¹⁵

Alabama is collaborating with the Lumina Foundation, the National Skills Coalition, and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative to establish a standardized protocol to inventory and publish credentials.

Competency-Based Framework

Alabama has begun to develop a competency-based framework for evaluating credentials for inclusion in the Compendium of Valuable Credentials.

Alabama won a grant from Credential Engine in June 2019 to establish a standardized protocol to inventory and publish credentials. As part of the process of vetting a credential for inclusion on the state’s list of credentials of value (the Alabama compendium of valuable credentials), relevant credential data will be published to the Alabama Credential Registry.



¹⁵ Ruder, Alex, “Benefits Cliffs and Career Choice: Understanding the Financial Incentives for Career Advancement,” AASD/NASTA Annual Educational Conference, August 26, 2019 (h/t to Dr. Ruder for his assistance.)

The JSON-LD Format

The ACCCP is publishing credential information as structured linked data in the Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL) and the Credential Transparency Description Language - Achievement Standards Network (CTDL-ASN) using the JSON-LD format.



The CTDL is an open-source language and is the “Lingua Franca” or Rosetta Stone that permits all credentials to be catalogued, organized, and compared.¹⁶

Under the leadership of Governor Ivey and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), Alabama is using the CTDL and CTDL-ASN to set up the hardware and software infrastructure for collecting and organizing credential program data in the state. ACHE is using the infrastructure to create the Alabama Credential Registry that will also connect to the ATLAS on Career Pathways.¹⁷

Alabama will reach the “tipping point” goal of publishing over half of the credentials in the state to the Alabama Credential Registry by 2022. Using the CTDL-ASN as the format for publishing credentials will enhance the scope of audiences who use the ATLAS on Career Pathways to access credentialing information.

There are over 5,000 Industry Certifications in the U.S. Credential Marketplace

Industry-recognized credentialing organizations will be a required partner for vetting credentials of value added to the Alabama compendium of valuable credentials. It has been estimated that there are over 5,000 industry certifications in the U.S. credential marketplace, and not all are of equal quality.¹⁸

Employers are Key

Employers are key in the process of identifying and making transparent the industry certifications that are most in demand. A Burning Glass analysis of jobs posted in 2015 determined that a mere 50 industry certifications composed two-thirds of the industry certifications mentioned in the job postings.¹⁹

Encouraging employer participation in the identification of valuable credentials for inclusion on the Alabama Compendium of Valuable credentials has generated greater interest among employers in hiring credentialed employees possessing the competencies reflected in stackable credential sequences vetted by the ACCCP.

¹⁶ Credential Engine, Making Sense of Credentials: A State Roadmap and Action Guide for Transparency, 16 November 2020, page 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 8.

¹⁸ Michelle Van Noy, Rutgers Education and Employment Research Center, Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, Identifying High Quality Industry Certifications, September 2020, accessed on 29 November 2020 <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/rutgers_eerc_identifying_high_quality_industry_certifications_final.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 3.

C. PATHWAYS

a. The Alabama Skills-Based Hiring Initiative

Skills-based hiring is an approach to talent management that starts with identifying the particular skills required in a role and recruiting candidates who have passed competency, or performance-based assessments. Skills-based hiring promises to empower employers to align recruitment around business results, rather than around resumes.

Classroom-to-Career Pathways

Skills-based hiring also empowers students, workers, and schools to establish and follow classroom-to-career pathways. Thus, skills-based hiring can aid workers with moving out of poverty through entry-level and mid-level roles that prepare them to obtain the transferable skills needed to move laterally between industries.²⁰

Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education (CBE) provides the promise of skills-based job candidate matching and hiring, but few employers have embraced these practices. Education and workforce providers have chased the ephemeral dream of connecting education and workforce training programs directly to employer demand for years. Skills-based job descriptions that allow employers to screen job applicants for the specific skills and competencies needed to do a job is needed now more than ever.

In 1965, 80 percent of our workforce needed only a high school education to reach self-sufficiency. Today, that number is only 35 percent. Moreover, 95 percent of the jobs created since the last recession require at least some postsecondary education.

Unbundling and re-bundling degree programs by making non-degree certifications credit bearing is a vital workforce development pandemic response strategy that will help individuals who were displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic enter in-demand occupations and have long-term access to viable career pathways.

Skills-based job descriptions will reduce degree inflation, will incentivize postsecondary education and training providers to articulate non-degree programs to two and four-year degree programs, and will match employers with jobseekers.

²⁰ Southern New Hampshire University, College for America, "The Coming Paradigm Shift in Competency-Based Hiring," 12 April 2017, accessed on 3 September 2020 <<https://collegeforamerica.org/competency-based-hiring/>>.



Alabama Skills-Based Hiring Initiative

The Alabama Skills-Based Hiring Initiative will generate interest, capacity, and standards for skills-based job descriptions in Alabama. The AWC will lead the initiative as an extension of the Commitment to the Alabama Worker. The Skills-Based Hiring Initiative will be messaged as the culmination of the two-year-long effort conducted by the ACCCP to develop the Alabama Credential and Competency Taxonomies that, together, produce the Alabama Occupational Ontology.

The Alabama Occupational Ontology is the DNA of Each Occupation

Employers will be able to see, and contribute to, the state encyclopedia of occupational skills and credentials of value that denote mastery of those skills.

Each employer may access the Alabama Occupational Ontology through their employer profile on the ACCET to create customized occupational competency models for their firms, to post jobs and review the verified digital resumes of interested candidates through the ACCET.

Through the Skills-Based Hiring Initiative, the AWC will provide training for employers on creating skills-based job descriptions using the Alabama Occupational Ontology. The training will include using the competency models and Alabama Credential Registry to create job descriptions that use the competency statement used by the ACCCP.

The training will also provide education on degree inflation and how skills-based job descriptions can increase employee retention. Employers will also be given tips on how to develop in-house career pathways using skills-based jobs descriptions to stack credentials and competencies.

b. Alabama Network of Open Competencies

As a component of the Alabama Skills-Based Hiring Initiative, the AWC will launch the Alabama Network of Open Competencies (ANOC).

The ANOC will be a feature of the ACCET that will allow employers to select the competencies to the occupations, occupational competency models, career pathways, and credentials of value identified by the ACCCP that are aligned to the occupations that employers are trying to fill.

Employers will have the option to actively contribute information and feedback directly to the TACs to improve the resources aligned to those occupations.

c. Adoption of the Alabama Occupational Ontology

The 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 (the Alabama competency taxonomy is based on work done through the Lumina Foundation's Beta Credential Project).

Taken together, the Alabama Competency and Credential Taxonomies form the Alabama Occupational Ontology and build the occupational DNA for a job. The Alabama Competency Taxonomy is a seven-tiered system for coding each individual competency that composes an occupation.

Through the Alabama Competency Taxonomy, each of the competencies can be coded, organized, and mapped onto a credential of value so that the credential of value can be recognized as certifying mastery of that competency. The Alabama Competency Taxonomy will allow employers to develop skills-based job descriptions by customizing the ACCCP's competency models and career pathways. On March 24, 2020, Alabama was awarded funding of \$200,000 from the Lumina Foundation to implement common state criteria for credentials of value in Alabama over the next year.²¹

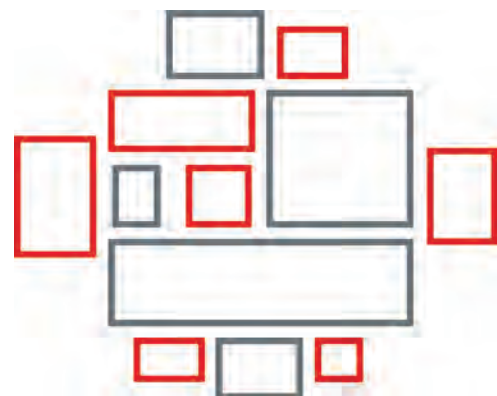
Competency-Based Framework for Evaluating Credentials

Through the work of the GOEWT and the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP), Alabama has begun to develop a competency-based framework for evaluating credentials for inclusion in the Compendium of Valuable Credentials.

The ACCCP developed a five-tier credential taxonomy that will include the following information:

- **Career Cluster (each of the 16 career clusters will be given a numeric code)**
- **Career Pathway (each of the career pathways will be given a numeric code)**
- **Division (Secondary or Postsecondary)**
- **Category (Basic, Advanced, or Complementary)**
- **Classification (Regional or Statewide)**

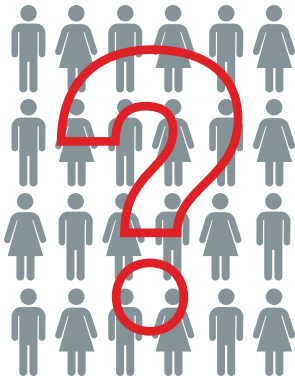
The Alabama Occupational Ontology will be available for widespread adoption during the third quarter of 2021.



²¹ Email from Dr. Amber Garrison Duncan to Nick Moore, RE: Invitation to Submit a Proposal to Lumina, 24 March 2020.

d. Adoption of the ACCCP's List of In-Demand Occupations

The ACCCP's first list of in-demand occupations was adopted in December 2019, and the second annual list of in-demand occupations was previewed at the ACCCP's quarter four meeting on December 16, 2020.



The second annual list of in-demand occupations will be on the ACCCP's quarter one meeting agenda for a vote of approval on March 17, 2021. The Alabama Department of Labor recently adopted the ACCCP's list of in-demand occupations and the Alabama State Workforce Investment Board adopted the ACCCP's list of in-demand occupations for the state's eligible training provider list for the purpose of qualifying as a provider of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding.

Now that the ACCCP's list of in-demand occupations have been validated over two years and adopted by several agencies, it is time to adopt the ACCCP's list of in-demand occupations as the list of regional and statewide in-demand occupations used by all state agencies.

The ACCCP's list of in-demand occupations is based on a sound, empirical process. Adoption of one list of in-demand occupations will prevent confusion and duplication of efforts.

C. LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

a. Alabama Combined Workforce Days

Dates, 1-3pm via WebEx

The AWC will oversee the planning and execution of four quarterly combined workforce days in Alabama. The workforce days will be thematic and will serve to drive the full workforce ecosystem forward during the next quarter.

FOR 2021

THE THEMES ARE :

- (1) The Future of Work Post-COVID-19**
- (2) Credential transparency and competency-based learning/hiring**
- (3) Work-based learning and employer-driven, skills-based training**
- (4) Using the ATLAS on Career Pathways data to make informed public- and private-sector decisions.**

March 17, 2021

Review of the Annual Report, training and agenda setting, establish 2021 plan:

- (1) The Future of Work Post-COVID-19**
- (2) Credential transparency and competency-based learning/hiring**
- (3) Work-based learning and employer-driven, skills-based training**
- (4) Using the ATLAS on Career Pathways data to make informed public- and private-sector decisions. Understanding the Alabama Occupational Ontology**

June 16, 2021

The WECAN Initiative, the AlabamaWorks for You Storyboard Initiative, and Credential Transparency, Competency-Based Learning, and Skills-Based Hiring

September 15, 2021

The Governor’s Survey of Employer Competencies, the Alabama Survey of the Underemployed and Unemployed Employed, Work-Based Learning, Skills-Based Hiring, and 2021 Committee Report Development Workshop

December 15, 2021

The ATLAS on Career Pathways and the ACCET, the Alabama Occupational Ontology, the 2022 List of In-Demand Occupations and the 2022 Compendia of Valuable Credentials

b. National Policy Academies

National Skills Coalition Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance Policy Academy

Non-degree credentials (NDCs), such as certificates, industry certifications, apprenticeship certificates, and occupational licenses are a key component of meeting the Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal of adding 500,000 credential workers to Alabama’s workforce by 2025.



Alabama participated, along with Iowa, New Jersey, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington, as a “round one” state in the National Skills Coalition (NSC) Non-Degree Credential (NDC) quality assurance project.

Developing an aligned definition of an NDC of value can help provide a common accountability framework for knowing whether a credential meets the definition of a “recognized postsecondary credential” under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Alabama began participating in a second phase the NSC’s Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance Policy Academy, beginning in February 2020 to operationalize the non-degree credential definition, which includes a \$15,000 technical assistance grant, which will be used to develop the Alabama skills-based job description generator.

National Governors Association (NGA) Birth to Age Three Policy Academy

Alabama was awarded a technical assistance grant of \$25,000 from the NGA to improve pre-k readiness and childhood health of Alabama’s children from birth to age three.

The grant will be used to coordinate existing policies and programs to ensure that Alabama meets the pre-k readiness Strong Start, Strong Finish benchmark. The grant will bolster first teacher home visiting, well child visits, infant mortality reduction, early head start childcare partnerships, and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

National Governors Association (NGA) Phase III Policy Academy

In January 2020, the NGA Center for Best Practices competitively selected six states—Alabama, Nevada, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah and Washington—to mentor peer states in building and scaling high-quality work-based learning as part of the third phase of the Work-Based Learning Policy Academy.



The mentor states will work with a cohort of states in three learning labs throughout 2020 and 2021. As part of the academy, Alabama received a \$50,000 grant to scale best practices statewide, to promulgate publications, and to convene stakeholders.

As a phase III mentor state, Alabama will create a full-spectrum human capital development strategy that couples work-based learning with a competency-based credential currency and a braided workforce financial aid system for special populations that possess the most complex barriers to entering education and the workforce. The Alabama Office of Apprenticeship is hosting work-based learning webinars to assist community-based organizations and state and local agencies with strategies to employ work-based learning and supportive services for special populations entering in-demand career pathways. Based on the feedback and stakeholder input gathered at the regional workshops, the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship produced a handbook for each workforce region that provides strategies for employing work-based learning, credential attainment, and supportive services to support the development of human capital to meet Alabama's postsecondary education attainment goal.

c. Competitive Education and Workforce Grants

Competitive Grants and Policy Academies

Since 2018, the AWC has partnered with the Governor's Office to successfully compete for \$25,175,000 in grant funding for projects across the P20-W spectrum. The AWC will continue to aggressively pursue grants in 2020.

The breakdown of the grant funding that has been awarded is as follows:

- Reimage Workforce Preparation — **\$17.8M**
- Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Computer Science — **\$2.4M**
- State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant — **\$1.3M**
- State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) — **\$3.25M**
- NGA Birth to 3 Policy Academy — **\$25,000**
- Credential Engine Grant — **\$50,000**
- Lumina Foundation Quality Assurance Grant — **\$200,000**
- Lumina Foundation Equity Leadership Acceleration Grant — **\$50,000**
- National Skills Coalition Non-Degree Credential Quality Assurance Policy Academy — **\$100,000**

Reimagine Workforce Preparation (RWP) Grant

In September 2020, Alabama was awarded a three-year, \$17.8 million U.S. Department of Education Reimagining Workforce Preparation (RWP) grant to support the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program, which will provide short-term, non-degree workforce training to individuals who have been displaced or were unemployed due to COVID-19.

Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Grant

In September 2019, Alabama was awarded a FY2019 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant in the amount of \$2.4 million from the U.S. Department of Education to support computer science professional development and to scale access to high-quality computer science courses in all of Alabama’s schools.

State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (SAEG)

In June 2019, Alabama was awarded an U.S. Department of Labor state apprenticeship expansion grant which will be used to support the expansion of apprenticeships among members of difficult-to-serve special populations. The grant award is in the amount of \$1.2 million over three years. It is reserved for a contract with the University of Alabama Education Policy Center to develop competency models and career lattices for the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) and to develop the Alabama Competency Taxonomy.

State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) Grant

The grants extend for three to five years for up to \$20M per grantee. In 2015, the Alabama Workforce Council recommended that Alabama establish a P20W longitudinal database system, and the ALSDE applied for the U.S. Department of Education’s SLDS Grant Program. However, Alabama was not awarded the grant in 2015. Alabama applied for a four-year U.S. Department of Education statewide longitudinal database system (SLDS) grant on September 17, 2019 and received official notification on March 4, 2019 of an award in the amount of \$3.25 million. The SLDS grant will be used to support the expansion of the infrastructure for the ATLAS on Career Pathways.



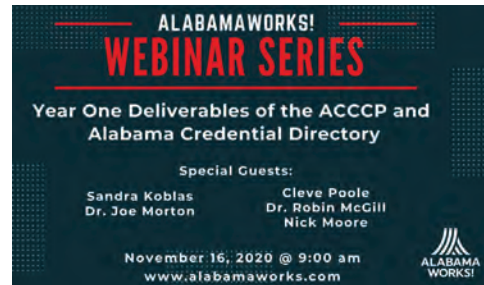
Credential Engine Grant

On June 25, 2019, Alabama received a \$50,000 technical assistance grant from Credential Engine, a nonprofit organization devoted to non-degree credential transparency, to support credential transparency in Alabama.

This award will help Governor Ivey realize the goal of making all degree and non-degree credentials transparent which is a key component of the Governor's workforce development strategic plan. The grant will also be used to build a credential registry function into the ATLAS on Career Pathways so the ACCCP, TACs, and credential providers can easily register credential on the ATLAS on Career Pathways.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education, the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation, and a myriad of state education and workforce development agencies are collaborating to publish all of the certificates, licenses, traditional degrees, and non-degree credentials offered in Alabama to the credential registry.

Credential information displayed through tools like the Credential Finder and ACCET will signal to employers that a worker or student possesses the requisite skills for either an entry-level job or a promotion as a result of mastering the next competency within a stackable sequence. With this support from Credential Engine, Alabama's Credential Registry was launched on July 1, 2020.



The ACCCP must create an annual Compendium of Valuable Credentials composed of the regional and state lists of credentials that are mapped onto the regional and state in-demand career occupations. Credential providers may register a credential to the Alabama Credential Registry.

The TACs will review credentials referred to them against the Alabama's two-tiered, non-degree credential quality-assurance criteria, as described in tier-one review credential review. Credentials will be given a unique identifier using the Alabama Credential Taxonomy in stage-two review.

The ACCCP refers each application, by career cluster and pathway, to a TAC for stage one review. Each TAC will accept credential applications for review between July 1, 2020, and March 5, 2021. The TACs will assist members of business and industry and education, training, and licensing authorities with registering credentials to the Alabama Credential Registry.

Credential providers register credentials at the website "credentials.ache.edu." The ACCCP staff matches the registered credentials to competencies and competency models. The TACs will compile a compendium of valuable credentials composed of the credentials registered to the Alabama Credential Registry that are matched to the competencies and competency models covered by each TAC.

Each TAC will compile its recommended lists of regional and statewide compendia of valuable credentials and submit it to the ACCCP by March 5, 2021. The ACCCP will approve each TAC's compendia of valuable credentials on March 17, 2020. The first regional and statewide compendia of valuable credentials will become effective on March 31, 2021.

Lumina Quality Assurance Grant

On March 24, 2020, the Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation was awarded \$200,000 from the Lumina Foundation, the nation’s largest philanthropic organization focused on increasing success in higher education.

These funds will be used to implement common state criteria for credentials of value in Alabama over the next year. Through the work of the GOEWT and the ACCCP, Alabama has begun to develop a competency-based framework for evaluating credentials for inclusion in the Compendium of Valuable Credentials.

Competency-based career pathways and credentials of value provide the basis for multiple points of entry and exit into and out of the workforce and education and workforce training.

Initially based on O*NET competency frameworks and Lumina’s Connecting Credentials Framework, the Alabama Competency Taxonomy will be a seven-tiered system for describing an occupation in terms of its...

- **Personal Effectiveness Competencies**
- **Academic Competencies**
- **Workplace Competencies**
- **Industry-Wide Competencies**
- **Sector-Specific Competencies**
- **Occupation-Specific Competencies**
- **Management Competencies**

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) will receive the funds on behalf of the GOEWT since this project aligns strongly with the work that ACHE is leading around credentials of value.

Lumina Equity Leadership Acceleration Grant

Alabama is one of six states to receive an Equity Leadership Acceleration Grant (ELAG) from the Lumina Foundation. The grant of \$50,000 is intended to support the state in building coalitions, systems and processes to increase equity in postsecondary attainment. ACHE in partnership with the AWC and the GOEWT, Alabama’s ELAG efforts focus on cultivating equity champions and enhancing communications strategies around postsecondary participation and success. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, Alabama’s grant timeline and objectives have been modified.

Funding originally designated for in-person meetings was redirected toward developing more extensive workforce profiles for each region, in partnership with regional workforce councils and equity champions. The expanded profiles include qualitative information on the impacts of the public health crisis on attainment and workforce development efforts. In addition, the grant funding supported publication and broader distribution of the profiles to inform Alabama’s response and recovery in the wake of the crisis.

ACHE utilized ELAG funds to consult with Equivolve Consulting, in partnership with the AWC and the GOEWT, to produce a profile with key data points for each region, which provide a foundation for collaboration, shared resources and enhanced communication among stakeholders to achieve the state’s attainment goal. Each regional profile contains background information, an education snapshot, a workforce snapshot, employment access and regional key findings.

They can be viewed and downloaded at the website “www.alabamaworks.com/.”

d. The Alabama STEM Council

Alabama is a national leader in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields such as aerospace, biotechnology, biomedicine, cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing.

The state is projected to need to fill more than 850,000 STEM-related occupations by 2026. Governor Ivey established the Governor's Advisory Council on Excellence in STEM (ACES) in October 2018 to coordinate Alabama's STEM talent development pipeline. On November 8, 2019, the Governor's ACES presented Governor Ivey with Alabama's Roadmap to STEM Success to improve STEM education across the state and to expand the STEM talent pipeline.

The Alabama STEM Roadmap featured 24 recommendations, across six priority areas, including the need to establish the Alabama STEM Council. Representative Terri Collins sponsored HB293, a bill to establish the Alabama STEM Council, during the 2020 Legislative Session. After passing the Alabama House of Representatives by a unanimous vote on March 5, 2020, HB293 was unable to advance due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

However, since the Legislature provided \$200,000 in the FY 2021 Education Trust Fund budget to establish the Alabama STEM Council, on September 21, 2020, Governor Ivey established the STEM Council via Executive Order 721 until the Council is codified during the 2021 Legislative Session.²² Dr. Neil Lamb was appointed as Chair of the Alabama STEM Council Executive Committee by Executive Order 721.

The Alabama STEM Council will:

- (1) Advise state leadership on ways to improve STEM-related education and workforce training programs across the state**
- (2) Serve as the primary point of contact for communicating with state and national STEM organizations**
- (3) Oversee, and continuously revise, the Alabama STEM Roadmap**
- (4) Coordinate communication efforts to increase STEM awareness, illustrate the value of STEM learning, and highlight STEM careers, with particular emphasis on reaching underrepresented segments of the population**

The Alabama STEM Council is administered by the Deputy Secretary of the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce. The Council will be governed by an executive committee that will conduct business on behalf of the STEM Council including, but not limited to, launching initiatives, making final recommendations, and addressing issues related to the executive director of the Council.

The executive committee will also develop operating policies and procedures for the Council, the executive director, and any staff utilized by the Council. Forty-five individuals

²² Governor Kay Ivey, Press Release, "Governor Ivey Establishes the Alabama STEM Council," 21 September 2020, accessed on 27 September
<<https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2020/09/governor-ivey-establishes-the-alabama-stem-council/>>.

were appointed as the founding members of the Alabama STEM Council. On November 30, 2020, Mr. Ed Castile, Deputy Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce and director of AIDT announced that Lee Meadows, PhD has been named interim executive director of the newly established Alabama Stem Council as the state moves to advance STEM education and continue the work of Alabama's Roadmap to STEM Success.

In this new role, Dr. Meadows will work with the distinguished leadership of the Alabama STEM Council to help identify and solve barriers to STEM education and discover creative solutions to meet future demand of stem related occupations in Alabama. With over thirty years of experience in science and education, Meadows' career path has taken him from teaching chemistry and physics in high school to training and developing future STEM teachers. The first meeting of the Alabama STEM Council was held on December 2, 2020.

D. ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

a. The ATLAS on Career Pathways

More than forty states (not including Alabama) have developed a state longitudinal database system (SLDS).²³ On January 31, 2015, the AWC formally recommended the establishment of the P-20W longitudinal database system to the Governor to link Alabama's preschool through postsecondary student information with workforce data. Governor Ivey has charged the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) to finish the work of developing Alabama's SLDS.

As part of her Strong Start, Strong Finish education-to-workforce strategic plan, Governor Ivey directed the establishment of the Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways ATLAS as Alabama's SLDS to enable education and workforce data to be analyzed to develop data-informed adjustments to the workforce development strategic plan to provide aligned expectations from the earliest years of a child's development, through the K-12 system, through postsecondary education, and into the workforce.

The ATLAS on Career Pathways is an inter-agency data-sharing system that will permit education and workforce agencies to share data for the purposes of creating reports for internal use. The system will be governed by the P20-W Council (a body composed of each agency head that is a partner to the ATLAS on Career Pathways data-sharing agreement) and will be managed by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics (OEWS).



²³ 50-State Comparison, State Longitudinal Database System, Education Commission of the States, August 2019, accessed on 11 April 2020 <<https://c0arw235.caspio.com/dp/b7f93000c5d42acacdaa48a69a8f>>.

Tonya Lee is the Director of OEWS. The “P” represents preschool, the “20” represents grade 1 through graduate school, and the “W” represents the workforce. The P20-W Council will replace the advisory council described in Governor Bentley’s Executive Order No. 6. The idea of creating a P20-W Council in Alabama is not new. Currently, 38 states have established some variation of a P20W council. Education policy groups, such as A+ Education Partnership, have advocated for the creation of an education investment council, or P20-W Council, since 2012.²⁴

The College and Career Ready Task Force’s 2013 recommendations to the Governor, which resulted in the creation of the Alabama Workforce Council, called for “...formulating policies, developing innovative educational workforce programming, and discussing issues related to the workforce development needs, and . . . coordination and collaboration across PK-12, two- year colleges, four-year universities and business and industry on the local and state levels.”²⁵

Development of the ATLAS on Career Pathways



The OEWS developed an agreed statement of work with the Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA) to develop the infrastructure and data-sharing, security, and deidentification process needed for the ATLAS on Career Pathways.

On September 18, 2019, OEWS determined that ASA would develop the ATLAS on Career Pathways and that a vendor would be procured to develop the ACCET.²⁶

On September 27, 2019, the ASA presented OEWS with a revised MOA that only included the ATLAS on Career Pathways.²⁷

An ATLAS on Career Pathways project charter for OIT was signed by Governor Ivey on October 30, 2020.²⁸

On October 29, 2019, an agreement was signed between ASA and ADOL for the work on the ATLAS on Career Pathways.²⁹

On December 26, 2019, the ASA completed the ATLAS on Career Pathways security plan.³⁰

Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA) was selected in October 2019 to develop the ATLAS, due to its vast experience working with partner agencies on data systems

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Alabama College and Career Ready Task Force Recommendations to Governor Robert Bentley, accessed on 5 August 2018 <http://media.al.com/news_impact/other/See%20the%20College%20and%20Career%20Ready%20Task%20Force%20recommendations.pdf>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Alabama Office of Information Technology, Alabama Terminal on Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathway, Project Charter, 30 October 2019.

²⁹ Alabama Department of Labor, Memorandum of Agreement Between Alabama Department of Labor and Alabama Supercomputer Authority, 29 October 2019.

³⁰ Alabama Supercomputer Authority, ATLAS Security Plan, Version 1.0, 26 December 2019.

and other projects. To date, ASA has developed a version of a Security Document, to outline security measures for file transfer, data processing, server configurations, test procedures, training, and employee authorization to confidential PII data.

The ATLAS on Career Pathways is being developed by incorporating the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS), which is a national collaborative effort to develop common data standards for a key set of education data elements to streamline the exchange, comparison, and understanding of data within and across P20W agencies and sectors. ASA is currently building the infrastructure for database processing.

The ATLAS on Career Pathways inter-agency data-sharing agreement was executed on December 21, 2020.

Using the ATLAS on Career Pathways

Agencies will submit a request to the P20-W Council to generate a report. Once a report is generated by OEWS, the P20-W council must vote unanimously to approve a report before it may be released. All partner agencies in this federated system will warehouse their own data. Partner agencies will not have access to data maintained by other agencies, even if that data is shareable.

During the data-matching process for the purposes of producing longitudinal reports, encrypted data sets will be transferred via a secure site in a password protected file. Once data is downloaded, it will be run through a vigorous automated matching procedure, as the quality of the data is dependent on the match rate success for producing accurate and informative longitudinal analysis.

The P-20W Council's policies and procedures will strictly comply with FERPA regulations in every use of education data. After data is matched, and the system creates a unique ID, files transferred from the agencies will be destroyed. There will be no direct access to personally identifying information (PII) in the system, except in very rare instances, and then access shall be restricted to authorized OEWS staff.

b. The Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET)

In Alabama, the goal is to assist every young adult, beginning at the end of middle school, to develop an individualized career pathway plan that would include career objectives; a program of study; degree or certificate objectives; and work-based learning experiences. These pathway plans would hardly be set in stone, and young adults would not be forced into tracks. Nevertheless, the merits of this approach are obvious.

Young adults simply cannot chart a course if they do not have a goal. The Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) will serve as an integrated case management system for core agencies and partners to the Alabama 2020 WIOA plan that will include routing questions, a WIOA data hub, individual services routing assessments, an app for accessing services, and a common needs assessment.

Digital resume

The ACCET will Allow users to create a verified, digital resume to display industry-recognized credentials and progress against established competency models.

Credential information displayed through the ACCET will signal to employers that a worker or student possess the requisite skills for either an entry-level job or progressive wage increases as a result of mastering the next competency within a stackable sequence.

The ACCET will be a digital dashboard that will allow students to compare and contrast myriad combinations of careers by comparing education requirements, applying for college, completing the FASA, applying for jobs, and accessing WIOA-funded training programs. Jobseekers will be able to seek training and open positions using the ACCET, and employers will also use the tool to find potential employees.

The ACCET will be designed to serve as a one-stop digital dashboard, which will allow Alabamians to compare all college and career options before choosing a career pathway. The ACCET will guide students through a digitally-delivered exploration and survey all 79 pathways within the 16 CTE industry clusters, an interest and career profile, and a graduation plan.

Career path

The ACCET will allow CTE concentrators to map career pathways that will lead to graduation with industry-recognized credentials, postsecondary credit, and work-based learning experience.

The ACCET will include a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion and college application tool.

Students will be able to access the WIOA eligible training provider list (ETPL) through the ACCET in order to receive WIOA funding for postsecondary education and training. Employers will begin including recognized non-degree credentials in job descriptions and providing pay increases for attaining those credentials, which will reduce employee turnover and increase the productivity and skill-level of the workforce.

The ACCET will be designed to serve as a verified, digital resume to display industry-recognized credentials and progress against established competency models.

Credential information displayed through the ACCET will signal to employers that a worker or student possess the requisite skills for either an entry-level job or progressive wage increases as a result of mastering the next competency within a stackable sequence.



Reduce hiring costs

The ACCET will allow employers to auto-populate a list of the individuals who possess the credentials and competencies best suited for each job posting, which will reduce hiring costs and will incent employers to add credentials to job descriptions.

Management

The ACCET will consist of a web-based dashboard, accessible at no cost to the general public, developed by synthesizing data from the Alabama State ATLAS on Career Pathways. The Office of Education and Workforce Statistics, with the advice and consent of the P-20W Council will develop, maintain, and manage the ACCET.

c. Annual Regional and Statewide Subgroup and Cluster Equity Imperative

Alabama is committed to meeting the Alabama postsecondary attainment goal of adding 500,000 credential holders to the workforce by 2025 through human capital development.

Alabama’s attainment goal is founded on an equity imperative to expand postsecondary attainment for populations with barriers to entering the workforce.

Competency-based career pathways and credentials of value provide the basis for multiple points of entry and exit into and out of the workforce and education, which permits an individual to signal the mastery of new skills to employers through earning stackable credentials linked to traditional academic coursework while on the pathway to earning a degree or terminal credential.

ALABAMA

SUCCESS+ Goal = 500,000

Annual LFP Goal = 40,000

Special Population Groups	Population Estimates	Share of Aggregate Attainment Goals	2019-2020 Annual Attainment Goals	2019-2020 Annual Labor Force Participation Goals
Displaced Home Maker	280,438	24,027	2,403	2,303
Caregiver	154,574	25,651	2,565	2,465
Adults with Aging Dependents	134,990	10,038	1,004	1,054
Unemployed or Underemployed	83,565	66,241	6,624	0
Low Income	849,699	113,888	11,389	10,645
Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians	27,311	788	79	68
People with Disabilities	775,390	82,689	8,269	8,229
Older Individuals	1,065,625	29,908	2,991	2,891
Ex-Offenders	15,224	10,690	1,069	1,069
homeless Individuals	17,546	3,844	384	374
Youth Who Aged out of Foster Care	572	827	85	85
English Language Learners	20,725	7,024	702	580
Individuals with Low Level of Literacy	48,998	28,663	2,863	2,488
Individuals with Substantial Cultural Barriers	106,217	22,076	2,208	2,208
Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers	18,266	3,797	380	379
Individuals Nearing TANF Exhaustion	8,565	3,430	343	343
Single Parents	178,243	46,215	4,622	3,991
Long-Term Unemployed	15,960	11,939	1,194	0
Individuals Preparing for Nontraditional Fields	N/A	3,708	371	371
Youth with Parents in Active Duty Military	8,750	4,557	456	456

To achieve Governor Ivey’s human capital development strategy of ensuring that all Alabamians are self-sufficient, the work of developing competency-based career pathways is being coupled with a continuum of services approach to provide wrap-around services for Alabamians who are struggling to overcome barriers to entering education and the workforce.

CAREER CLUSTERS

Career Cluster	2016	2026	Change	Annual Growth	Annual Growth Openings	Annual Exit Openings	Annual Total Openings	Goal 2019-2020
Manufacturing	272,130	298,680	26,551	0.94%	2,655	11,150	13,805	7,735
Health Science	190,320	216,060	25,736	1.28%	2,575	7,345	9,920	6,977
Hospitality & Tourism	239,910	263,070	23,161	0.93%	2,315	18,055	20,370	6,904
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	188,220	203,010	14,792	0.76%	1,475	8,775	10,250	4,747
Business Management & Administration	311,200	315,180	3,981	0.13%	400	14,630	15,030	4,158
Marketing	242,010	249,310	7,304	0.30%	735	14,840	15,570	3,907
Architecture & Construction	144,630	155,380	10,747	0.72%	1,075	5,260	6,330	3,536
Human Services	83,110	93,160	10,044	1.15%	1,000	5,496	6,495	2,726
Education & Training	140,630	148,830	8,201	0.57%	815	6,345	7,160	2,688
Finance	68,440	72,100	3,655	0.52%	365	2,340	2,705	1,452
Information technology	38,240	42,720	4,479	1.11%	450	685	1,130	1,204
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	34,410	39,300	4,889	1.34%	485	830	1,315	1,212
Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security	67,070	69,580	2,511	0.37%	250	2,750	3,000	1,185
Agricultural, Food & Natural Resources	79,940	81,460	1,519	0.19%	150	3,750	3,900	1,105
Government & Public Administration	16,500	17,430	926	0.55%	90	605	695	308
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	22,550	21,780	-779	-0.35%	0	835	755	155

Governor Ivey established annual and aggregate special populations, career cluster, and career pathway attainment targets, by region and statewide, as a strategy for surpassing the postsecondary attainment goal by 2025.

Alabama’s attainment efforts are focused on high school students (Grades 9–12); out-of-school youth; post-secondary students (18-24 years old); adult learners; veterans; individuals in the corrections system; and populations with significant barriers to post-secondary educational attainment opportunities in Alabama, including disabled and special needs individuals, English language learners, first-generation college students, low-income individuals, minorities, rural residents, women, and “individuals with barriers to employment” in the 2020 WIOA Combined State Plan in accordance with WIOA sec. 3(24).

d. Alabama Workforce Council Surveys

2021 ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL SURVEY SCHEDULE

January 2021

Governor’s Survey on Wrap-Around and Supportive Services

- This survey will determine the supportive services most in-demand by Alabamians working in the state’s in-demand, opportunity occupations, the gaps in demanded services, and the impact of the availability of supportive services on labor market participation and employee retention.

March 2021

Governor's Survey of the Underemployed and Unemployed

- Many of Alabama's jobs are resilient, but many won't be coming back in the same form. This will be the second annual Governor's Survey of the Underemployed and Unemployed designed to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the interests, aptitudes, and aspirations of Alabamians who have been economically displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the occupations and education and training programs most in-demand among the unemployed and underemployed.

June 2021

Alabama Workforce Skills Gap and Job Ads Analysis

- Mitigating degree inflation through competency-based learning, modularizing degrees, and skills-based hiring practices is an equity and talent readiness imperative. This survey will help analyze the practice of requiring degrees and other credentials for initial employment or advancement that are beyond those attained by incumbent workers in similar positions. The survey will also determine the viability of skills-based hiring and competency-based learning as an anecdote to degree inflation and the skills gaps emanating from degree inflation.

September 2021

Alabama Survey on Employer and Employee Aspirations and Aptitudes

- This survey will dig deeper than the Governor's Survey of the Underemployed and Unemployed by analyzing the proclivity of workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to enter Alabama's in-demand occupations. Modalities of training and potential benefits cliffs will be examined.

December 2021

The Governor's Survey of Education and Training Providers

- This survey will analyze the level of alignment between credit and non-credit bearing education and training providers in Alabama's public workforce system to Alabama's list of in-demand occupations and the associated credentials of value and career pathways.



ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

**COMMITTEE
REPORTS**

ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

The existing AWC Committees (attainment, structure and alignment, private-public partnerships, education and industry collaboration, and marketing) were restructured into the following five committees:

- 1. The ACCCP (will replace the Structure and Alignment Committee)**
- 2. The Human Capital Development Committee (will replace the Attainment and Education and Industry Collaboration Committees)**
- 3. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Committee**
- 4. The Outreach and Engagement Committee (will replace the Marketing and Promotions Committee)**
- 5. The Regional Workforce Council Support Committee**

A. AWC Public-Private Partnership Committee—Myla Calhoun, Chair

The Public-Private Partnership Committee (PPPC) successfully convened 30+ non-profits from across the state to develop and implement innovative programs designed to address barriers to workforce access and success. The cohort focused on strategies to supplement and support workforce efforts by educators and AWC partner agencies by focusing on wrap-around support programming to remove barriers to employment – childcare, transportation, disability, and recidivism.

Among other key accomplishments this year, the Committee:

Secured Grant Funds

The PPPC helped to secure \$23 million in grant funding to support programs and services related to the Success Plus Access and Success Goal, including a \$4 million U.S. Department of Labor grant to promote access to education and training for individuals in the corrections system; a \$300,000 U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency Grant; a \$17.8 million U.S. Department of Education Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grant to develop the highly collaborative Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program; and a \$733,150 Appalachian Regional Commission grant to build local capacity to effectively prepare for Opportunity Zone investment.

Provided Grant Writing Support

The Committee provided grant writing support to connect with new local and national funding partners. This led to several achievements, including securing a \$75,000 grant from the American Honda Foundation as a national funding partner, a two-year \$100,000 grant from the Sprouts Foundation, and support in developing 12 grant applications representing \$36.9 million in total funding requested.

Supported Success Plus With Network Building

In support of the Success Plus goals outlined by the AWC, and to amplify collaboration amongst cohort members, Regional Workforce Councils and state agency partners, the Alabama Possible organization was awarded \$30,000 to support collaborative network building across the state of Alabama in an effort to improve educational attainment for low-income and first-generation students.

Tailored Cohort Communications

Along with increasing cohort engagement, monthly newsletters and email communications were tailored to focus on the most effective and efficient opportunities for cohort members. Communications evolved, particularly grant alerts for funding opportunities. PPPC grant alerts were tracked throughout the year in order to identify and scale interest among each participating nonprofit. This research led to the development of a highlighted grant opportunity for cohort members. Along with the benefits of increased cohort engagement, grant opportunity evolution, and focused communications, the established communications framework of the PPPC also proved to be a constant way to connect COVID-19 assistance and resources to cohort members.



Curated National Alliances

Speakers from national organizations with a focus directed towards PPPC programs were invited to participate in quarterly meetings as keynote speakers. The PPPC will continue to build national alliances and expand the gateway of communication platforms.

Supported Workforce Development E-Directory

In January 2020, the Business Education Alliance of Alabama (BEA) released a report: *EDUCATION MATTERS: Measuring Alabama's Progress toward 500,000 Highly Skilled Workers*. Shortly after the release of this report, the BEA contacted AWC Chair Tim McCartney and Myla Calhoun, Chair of the PPPC, about a concept centered on the development of an E-Directory of all community organizations engaged in workforce development. Today the Workforce Development E-Directory is on the verge of a full-scale launch, with no fee or cost to join.

The goal of the E-Directory is to help connect the nonprofit and community-based organizations to economic and workforce development professionals. Connecting these organizations to the larger efforts of the AWC can only enhance the effectiveness of the state's workforce development efforts and provide better services for those seeking training and employment. Through the E-Directory, community organizations can be better integrated into the state's efforts and contribute to the goal of 500,000 new highly skilled workers by 2025.

B. The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways Committee—Cleve Poole, Chair

The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) was the major focus of the committee members

The work was slow to get started due to COVID-19 and other issues. Each committee member was given the opportunity to chair a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and other subject-matter experts were mustered to assist, as well.

There was one TAC for each of the 16 recognized occupational clusters. Every imaginable

job can be found within the 16 clusters. With the help of the Alabama Department of Labor, the ACCCP first identified the in-demand jobs within the seven workforce regions and the state as a whole.

The TAC's were then tasked with creating competency models for each of those 282 jobs that were identified as in-demand (competency models reveal the skills needed for a specific job, beginning at the most basic to the most job specific).

After in-depth training provided by the Governor's office of Education and Workforce Transformation, and plenty of preparatory work completed by the Alabama Department of Labor, the TACs met online, typically many times each, to create competency models for the in-demand jobs that fell within their assigned cluster.

Next, the TACs identified other jobs that fell within the pathways leading into or out of the identified in-demand jobs (*for example, a licensed practical nurse may be in the pathway toward becoming a registered nurse*).



Finally, each TAC identified the credentials and certificates that could be earned along the pathway to each in-demand job. The results of the work done by the ACCCP are being utilized by the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship and will also serve as a roadmap for the K-12 and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) to imbed ready-to-work traits in their basic curricula going forward, as well as for job-specific training. Part of the ACCCP's mission was to assist the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship in furthering its mission, so we will continue to work with the AOA to make sure that the ACCCP work product is responsive to its needs. In our work, we have realized that the foundation for every in-demand job is the same: ready-to-work skills.

- **We challenge the K-12 and ACCS programs to imbed those skills throughout their classes beginning in kindergarten.**
- **We also urge the educational partners to move toward degrees and certifications identified by the ACCCP as being part of the pathways for in-demand jobs.**
- **Finally, we urge the Department of Commerce and others to work with existing industry in a move toward skills-based job descriptions and hiring.**

Prior to working on the ACCCP, our committee spent some time in reviewing the available career coaches in the kK12 system and ACCS. It was quite plain that there are not enough to adequately do the job tasked to them. We would urge the legislature to provide more funding, especially in the K-12 system, for career coaches.

C. Outreach and Engagement Committee (Formerly Marketing and Promotions Committee)—Norman Crowe, Chair

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee and committee support staff worked to develop seven new television and radio advertisements that have been widely used to promote AlabamaWorks! as the place to go for job-related resources.

These commercials continue to be viewed on broadband television and radio, and through our partnership with the Alabama Broadcaster’s Association they have produced an 8:1 return on the initial investment for the airtime. Earned media efforts included over 25 press releases or guest editorials that were written, distributed and/or pitched by committee support staff.

These efforts produced significant earned media coverage across the state in print, online and on television, and helped to promote the AlabamaWorks brand and programs. The committee organized the AlabamaWorks Webinar Series which has been a regular, free resource provided to workforce stakeholders each month that delivered insightful updates on a variety of workforce topics during the challenges of COVID-19.

Marketing

Digital marketing efforts on Google and YouTube were a significant driver to the AlabamaWorks website and helped to achieve the highest volume of website visitors in history of the site in three consecutive months at the end of the 2019 fiscal year.

These efforts targeted jobseekers and analytics show that visitors to the website spent a significant time on the website which indicates the investment was very well spent. Social media (Facebook and Twitter) engagement was strong throughout 2020 and promoted AlabamaWorks.

This included promoting workforce news, workforce projects, efforts from elected officials, recognizing Governor Ivey’s efforts and support, guest editorials, regional workforce council efforts, private partners, webinar series and other items.

The committee utilized multiple digital online news sources to produce AlabamaWorks sponsored content statewide in 2020. These efforts generated just shy of 11 million ad impressions and over 15,000 ad clicks.

The committee met virtually a number of times throughout the year. The committee primarily focused on the budget to ensure that the limited marketing dollars were used to best support the goals, objectives and overall brand of AlabamaWorks.

In 2021, the Outreach and Engagement Committee will support 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 the AlabamaWorks umbrella. Additionally, the AlabamaWorks! for You Storyboard Initiative will develop 60- to 90-second videos that will focus on each of the career pathways selected by the regional workforce councils.

There will be a series of videos produced for the AlabamaWorks for You Storyboard Initiative.

The committee will also work with a variety of partners to leverage a series of surveys to further understand various aspects of Alabama’s workforce and use that information to effectively target certain populations, communicate relevant information and support workforce initiatives. Lastly, the committee will provide marketing and communications support to highlight ACCET, ATLAS and the credentialing efforts in 2021.

The committee will continue working with our partners to increase available funds as appropriate to help fund the marketing and promotions campaign that maximizes brand awareness and supports the mission of AlabamaWorks to reach unemployed or under-employed Alabamians and mobilize them to upskill or reenter the workforce.

D. Human Capital Development Committee (formerly the Education and Industry Collaboration Committee and the Attainment Committee)—Allen Harris, Chair

The Human Capital Development Committee is supporting Governor Ivey’s Human Capital Development with ensuring that all Alabamians who are seeking access to education and workforce training are provided with integrated case management by a cross-trained staff who understands how to develop an individual employment plan, provide a comprehensive needs assessment, and how to pre-certify for program eligibility. People should not be asked to visit multiple locations when seeking education and workforce training.

All staff within Alabama’s state and federally funded public workforce system will be trained to utilize a “no-wrong-door-entry strategy” that will allow individuals to enter into the myriad of state and federally funded workforce development programs through the Department of Human Resources (DHR), one-stop centers, community colleges, and through community-based organizations. In September 2020, the Alabama Department of Labor and DHR entered into a memorandum of understanding to permit Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients to pre-certify for WIOA training services at DHR centers without having to physically visit a one-stop center.

Human Capital Development Strategy

To achieve Governor Ivey’s human capital development strategy of ensuring that all Alabamians are self-sufficient, the work to develop competency-based career pathways must be coupled with a continuum of services approach to provide wrap-around services that generate a negative marginal tax rate for Alabamians who are struggling to overcome the benefits cliff and to persist in a career pathway.

- **Any marginal tax rate less than zero indicates resources are increased by an amount greater than new earnings alone.**
- **A negative rate incentivizes work and boosts earnings.**
- **A good example is the federal or state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) which provides low-income taxpayers with refundable credits that increase with income.**

A marginal tax rate of -25 percent means \$400 in earnings becomes \$500.³¹ Generally, government-financed, public-assistance programs are designed to phase-out as the recipient's earnings increase. In practicable terms, however, this often has the effect of causing the loss of benefits to exceed the income gained through the earning increase. This phenomenon, thus, has the simultaneous effects of increasing the effective tax rate for low-income individuals and creating a negative incentive for entering the workforce for some Alabamians.

Many other barriers—such as a lack of transportation, childcare, or basic skills—were reported in each region. However, the benefits cliff is the most nefarious, since it impedes access to the other needs identified by stakeholders, such as transportation and childcare. The objective of the public workforce system is to identify the barriers to entry into the workforce and providing the skills training and education needed to overcome those barriers.

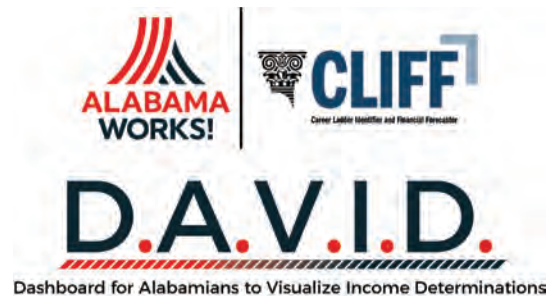
Aligning the benefits provided by the plethora of federally funded, means-tested and categorical workforce, human services, and education programs administered in Alabama around a continuum of services that assist an individual in overcoming the benefits cliff will enable more Alabamians who are currently not in the labor force to persist in a career pathway and ultimately attain employment in an occupation that pays a family-sustaining wage.³²

The Human Capital Development Committee has partnered with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to develop a deeper understanding of the increased marginal tax rates—or benefit cliffs—faced by individuals transitioning into paid employment.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta has developed a benefit cliff and self-sufficiency tool to help individuals understand how much money they will gain through income and gain or lose in benefits as they progress through a career pathway. The tool is also designed to help individuals understand when they will reach self-sufficiency, based on income, region, occupation, and family dynamics.

The tool has been branded as DAVID, the Dashboard for Alabama to Visualize Income Development, and is designed to help individuals advance into higher paying careers. DAVID will help operationalize the goal of developing a no-wrong-door approach to the workforce development system.

DAVID will be integrated into the ACCET to assist case managers and career coaches to provide a continuum of services approach for consumers of workforce and education programs. On October 21, 2020, DAVID was launched at the Quarter Three Combined Workforce Day, and the Atlanta Fed and the State of Alabama entered into a data-sharing agreement to power DAVID.



³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Ruder, Alex, "Benefits Cliffs and Career Choice: Understanding the Financial Incentives for Career Advancement," AASD/ NASTA Annual Educational Conference, August 26, 2019 (h/t to Dr. Ruder for his assistance.)

To achieve the Success Plus goal, Alabama's K-12 education system must improve. We need every student to graduate college and career ready if we are to have a shot at reaching our attainment goal by 2025. If we don't have a quality, best in class, K-12 educational system, our state will not be able to compete with other states for the high paying jobs that can help our citizens have a better life. The AWC stands ready to partner with K-12 education stakeholders across Alabama to make necessary improvements.

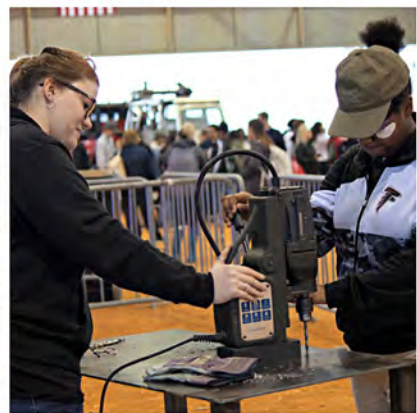
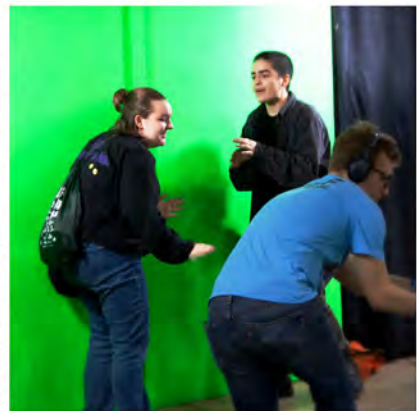
The following recommendations developed by the Human Capital Development Committee for improving Alabama's K-12 education program were presented and agreed to by Dr. Eric Mackey, Superintendent of the Alabama State Department of Education.

Alabama Workforce Council 2020-2021 Recommendations to the Alabama State Department of Education for K-12 Education

1. Immediately develop and disseminate easy-to-understand student literacy profiles, based on data from the formative and diagnostic assessments vetted and approved by the Alabama Literacy Task Force, for parents to use during the current school year to determine whether their children are reading at grade level, and, no later than summer 2022, develop cut scores to determine reading proficiency, for each of the four achievement levels and by grade, based on guidance of the Technical Advisory Committee, the Alabama Literacy Task Force, the Alabama Committee on Grade-Level Reading, and the results spring 2022 Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program.
2. No later than March 31, 2021, develop performance targets to increase NAEP performance to the national achievement averages, and then to the NAEP proficient achievement level, in 4th and 8th grade mathematics and reading. There are three NAEP achievement levels: basic, proficient, and advanced. In 2019, the national average in 4th grade math was 240, and Alabama scored 230. In 2019, the national average in 8th grade math was 281, and Alabama scored 269. The national average for 4th grade reading in 2019 was 219, and Alabama scored 212. The national average for 8th grade reading in 2019 was 262, and Alabama scored 253.
3. All students must be college and career ready at the time of graduation. College and career readiness rates are most important to industry. The college and career readiness rate must equal, or exceed, the graduation rate no later than 2025, and annual progress must be made each year between 2021 and 2025.
4. Adopt the Alabama Administrative Code rule proposed by Governor Ivey that will require completion of, or opting out of, the FAFSA prior to graduation at the January 2021 Alabama State Board of Education meeting.
5. Adopt the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) process for adding credentials to the annual compendia of valuable credentials, in lieu of the current Career Readiness Indicator (CRI) process, no later than December 31, 2021.
6. Submit Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) amendment to the Alabama State Board of Education adding allowing students who complete a career and technical education (CTE) program of study and students who complete an in-school youth apprenticeship to earn college and career readiness (CCR) indicators no later than March 31, 2021 and submit the amendment to the U.S. Department of Education for approval no later than May 31, 2021.

AWC COMMITTEE REPORTS

7. Ensure that CTE directors and career coaches from each local school system attend their respective Regional Workforce Council meetings on a regular basis, and track participation at the state level.
8. Advocate for additional funding, and funding parity, for academic and CTE dual enrollment courses during the 2021 legislative session. Prevent reallocation of dual enrollment funds once appropriated to the local education agencies.
9. Champion legislation during the 2021 legislative session ameliorating the teacher shortages and teacher chronic absenteeism caused by retirement issues.



ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

**REGIONAL
WORKFORCE
COUNCIL REPORTS**

REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL

COVID-19 Response
August 2020

The Regional Workforce Councils (RWCs) recognized that navigating COVID-19, and understanding all of the various State and Federal resources available to individuals and business & industry (B&I) could be very challenging.

The RWCs worked with all of their key state agency partners to make this vast amount of information a little easier for stakeholders to find the resources they need during this National Health Emergency

AWC COVID-19 RECAP

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

All seven (7) RWCs made available to the public, the most up-to-date guidance from Governor Ivey's office, Department of Commerce, AlabamaWorks, and numerous other agencies. Provided the contact information (name, number and email) of who to call and ask questions, relative to the following:

HEALTHCARE

- Disaster Distress Hotlines
- Medical Assistance (for insured and uninsured)
- Alabama Department of Health

EMPLOYMENT

- Unemployment Insurance, Disability and Paid Family Leave
- Created Websites or Facebook Pages (some RWCs within 24 hr Response Time of Shutdowns)
- Connecting Workers, Dislocated due to COVID-19, with B&I Needing Workers
- Developed and Distributed Resource Guides to help B&I Safely Return to Work after a Shutdown
- Maintained Up-To-Date info to connect citizens to the Alabama Career Center for Services

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- Alabama Food Pantries
- Local Food Banks
- Meals for Alabama Students

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Microloans & Loan Matching
- Small Business Loans
- COVID-19 Tax Relief
- Economic Injury Disaster Loan (SBA)

WEBINARS

- Delivered Ready-to-Work classes virtually.
- Questions about CARES Act
- Small Business Administration (SBA) & Small Business Development Center
- US Chamber of Commerce Emergency
- Loan for Small Businesses
- Weekly Informational Webinar from the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC)
- Alabama Technology Network - Return-To-Work plan
- Various Alabama Community Foundations for Emergency Relief Funds

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Increased Social Media engagement tenfold by the General Population as the Go-To Source for reliable and up-to-date pandemic related information
- Launched a Campaign to Remind Citizens about the Importance of Completing the US Census

CONTINUING RWC WORK VIRTUALLY

- Hosting Virtual Hiring / Job Fairs
- Conducting Quarterly RWC Meetings to share information and take care of required business
- Engaging Community Colleges in the Workforce Grant Review process
- Hosting Local Area WIOA Board Meetings

ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
MEMBERS**

AWC MEMBERS



CHAIR

TIM MCCARTNEY

McCartney Construction
(Retired)



VICE CHAIR

SANDRA KOBLAS

Austal USA



LEROY ABRAHAMS

Regions Financial
Corporation



ALAN BAKER

Alabama State
Representative



RONNIE BOLES

General Automotive
and Machine Shop



**MIRANDA
BOULDIN FROST**

LogiCore Corporation



SCOTT BOWERS

AAA Cooper
Transportation



MYLA CALHOUN

Alabama Power



ED CASTILE

Alabama Department
of Commerce



**JENNIFER
CHRISTENBERRY**

ALFA



GEORGE CLARK

Alabama
Workforce Board



PHILIP CLEVELAND

Cleveland Senior
Living



NORMAN CROW

D.T. & Freight
Company



**CHARLES (CHUCK)
DILAURA**

Neptune Technology
Group (Retired)



JOHN HACKETT

Kamtek



SETH HAMMETT

PowerSouth



ALLEN HARRIS

Bailey-Harris
Construction

AWC MEMBERS



MELISSA HERKT

Auburn University
Foundation



JIMMY HULL

ALSDE



DONNY JONES

Tuscaloosa Chamber
of Commerce



RANDY JORDAN

Bryant Bank



MIKE KEMP

Kemp Management
Solutions



MIKE KITCHENS

ACIPCO



CHRISTY KNOWLES

Coosa Valley Medical
Center



NEIL LAMB

Hudson Alpha



**DR. JOSEPH B.
MORTON**

Business Education
Alliance of Alabama



JESSICA OATES

International Paper



MIKE OATRIDGE

Honda Manufacturing
of Alabama



KC PANG

GD Copper USA, Inc



JOE PATTON

Westervelt Company



KEITH PHILLIPS

Alabama Technology
Network/Alabama
C.C. Systems



**DARYLE
PILKINTON**

Arista Aviation Services



CLEVE POOLE

Pioneer Electric
Cooperative



DR. JIM PURCELL

Alabama Commission
on Higher Education



DAVID REED

Whitaker Contracting



RANDY ROGERS

Evonik Industries



ALICIA RYAN

LSINC

AWC MEMBERS



PEGGY SEASE
DCH Health System



RANDY SKAGEN
NUCOR Steel



DARYL TAYLOR
Airbus U.S.
Manufacturing



**FITZGERALD
WASHINGTON**
Alabama
Department of Labor



PHIL WEBB
Webb Concrete &
Building Materials

