



**Kay Ivey**  
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of  
**REHABILITATION SERVICES**



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COMMISSIONER

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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *YLF opens the door to new opportunities for teens with disabilities*

MONTGOMERY – For the 20th year, students with disabilities from throughout the state will participate in the Alabama Governor’s Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), sponsored by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and hosted by Troy University.

The five-day annual event, which will be June 3-7, will help more than 30 high school students with disabilities grow through sessions focusing on self-esteem, self-advocacy, career choices, independent living and leadership.

Throughout the week, the students will explore the qualities needed to become an effective leader, establish a leadership plan and gain rewards for exhibiting those qualities.

This process, YLF Coordinator Karen Jenkins said, often brings positive changes to participants.

“We have a lot of delegates who come to YLF, and they have never been away from home and they have never worked,” she said. “One of our main goals is to expose them to different opportunities and increase their knowledge and their skills so that they will be able to successfully transition from high school into adulthood.”

The delegates are chosen through a statewide search to identify students displaying leadership potential. Those selected represent the state’s demographics in

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SERVING ALABAMA’S CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

terms of geography, gender, ethnicity and type of disability. To be eligible, a student must be a junior or senior in high school, be between 17 and 21 years of age and have a disability.

Activities include participation in a self-advocacy panel, table etiquette, tips on living on your own, career exploration and a technology expo.

On June 6, the participants will travel to Montgomery to meet Gov. Kay Ivey and other state leaders. The trip will include a tour of the Capitol and a mentor luncheon.

The week will wrap up June 7 with a graduation ceremony.

For more information, contact Kathleen McGehee at (334) 202-2893 or Karen Jenkins at (334) 546-9077.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

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