

ALABAMA'S WIOA COMBINED PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PREPARED FOR THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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Draft

WIOA Legislation

On July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law, reauthorizing WIA for six (6) years, from 2015 through 2020. WIOA opens the door to states' greater use of sector partnerships and career pathway models and includes higher levels of accountability and outcome data reporting. With the passage of WIOA, states set about to plan for greater collaboration, cooperation, and coordination of core agency and partner program services to meet the needs of employers and to provide needed training and education for the workforces of today and tomorrow.

WIOA Planning Task Force Work History

Representatives from the core and partner agencies began monthly task force meetings in July 2015 to share ideas and collaborate on the draft WIOA Strategic Plan for Alabama. Task Force planning activities were designed to share agency resources, identify needs for new or improved services and programs, and to identify areas where duplicated or competing services can be eliminated. All task WIOA Task Force members participated in vision and goals development, discussion, and sharing of program data to inform group decision-making. Steve Walkley and Dennis Hopper of the Alabama Department of Commerce chaired the WIOA Task Force. Other Task Force members included Robert Brantley, Peggy Anderson, David Walters, Melody Koorangi, Collie Wells, Emily Marsal, Lorlei Sanders, Brinda Barrett, Ruby Beezley, Faye Nelson, Carol Penn, Avis Hunter, James Myrick, Brandon Hardin, Tonya Lee, Gene Dudley, Ashley Townsend, Curtis Glisson, Ed Castile, Tim Alford, and Philip Cleveland. Marcia Burke and John Osburn of Burke Enterprises, LLC provided technical assistance for Task Force activities.

WIOA Vision, Goals, Activities

In 2014, Governor Bentley created and formally established the Alabama Workforce Council. The Council was tasked with advising and supporting core partners in Alabama's workforce development and education system to include, but not limited to, reviewing ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State, evaluating regional workforce development and educational needs by promoting regional workforce councils and evaluating public/private partnerships (sectors) to create a feedback loop for industry and education. The core programs including WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Rehabilitation Services provide a number of educational training activities through their respective programs. All of these activities are represented on the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB). The AWDB also has cross representation from the private business sector membership on the Alabama Workforce Council.

The core programs previously under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) have participated and partnered in Alabama's One-Stop Career Center system since 2001. The core partner programs include WIOA Title I, adult, dislocated worker and youth training activities provided through a newly developing system within Alabama. In the proposed system there will be not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9) local workforce development boards and an appropriate number of administrative entities. The State level administrative entity for WIOA Title I is the Alabama Department of Commerce, which provides oversight and policy guidance through the Alabama Workforce Development Board for activities under WIOA Title I.

The Alabama workforce development areas will provide career services, client assessment, case management, and referral to Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work-based learning. They also provide specialized employment and training activities for youth, including basic education, GED programs, occupational skills training, and work-based learning activities.

Alabama has elected to submit a **combined plan** that includes the six (6) required core programs, with five (5) other agencies and entities as partners.

Alabama’s WIOA CORE PROGRAMS:

1. Adult Program (Title I of WIOA)
2. Dislocated Worker Program (Title I)
3. Youth Program (Title I)
4. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II)
5. Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act as amended by Title III)
6. Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV)

Alabama’s WIOA ADDITIONAL PARTNERS:

1. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
2. Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (SNAP)
3. Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
4. Veterans
5. Unemployment Insurance (UI)

These programs have collaborated, cooperated, and provided services in many ways over the past few years. Under WIOA, enhanced activities and programs will create a combined and aligned effort by all agency and program partners to enhance workforce development services to meet the needs of Alabama’s workforce and employers.

Alabama Workforce System (AWS) Summary

Service or Program	Programs and Activities
Alabama Career Center System	Operated as a partnership between the Alabama Department of Commerce ((WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Alabama Department of Labor (Wagner-Peyser, UI, TAA and Veterans). The Career Center System also collaborates with Adult Education, Rehabilitative Services, TANF, SNAP and Title IV of the Older Americans Act (SCESP). Statewide there are 26 Comprehensive Career Centers and 14 satellite and itinerant sites in the system. In PY2014 the Alabama Career Center System provided <u>352,837</u> individuals with Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services and <u>7,924</u> individuals with WIOA training services, serving low-income adults, youth, and dislocated workers. Wagner-Peyser funding for PY2014 was <u>\$8,502,449</u> and Workforce Investment Act funds totaled <u>\$32,090.579</u> .
Adult Education	Adult Education services are offered through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) throughout the state. In Fiscal Year 2015 funding totaled <u>\$20,154,737</u> and had enrolled approximately 20,000 full time and 26,000 part time students in adult education classes. Adult Education has been an active partner with the Alabama Career Center system since 2001 and will continue to expand services within the Career Centers under WIOA.
Alabama Department of Labor – Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services	The Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) houses the Wagner-Peyser program (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services programs. ADOL Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I programs have been collocated as part of the Alabama Career Centers since 2001. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) is provided by the ADOL. Alabama Job Link is the online job seeker and employer registration system that provide job seeker skills, abilities and work history with employers posting job openings in the system. ADOL provides Trade Act services and Veterans employment representatives in the Career Centers. In PY2014

	approximately 350,000 job seekers and 129,970 job openings were posted from 8,985 employers in the AJL system.
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)	The Department of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities to become employable. Services include skill assessments, counseling, training programs, job placement, assistive technology and transportation. For Program Year 2014 funding for the VRS program totaled approximately \$25,000,000; and for the same period <u>31,244</u> job seekers with disabilities were provided services. Since 2001 the VRS has been an active partner in the Alabama Career Center System.
Alabama Department of Human Resources (TANF and SNAP)	The Alabama TANF Program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. TANF provide family assistance to provide income to low income one-parent families needing support to provide basic needs for dependents. The welfare to work component of family assistance is known as the JOBS program. All clients receiving assistance are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. Individuals on family assistance determined to ready to engage in work activities will be placed in a work-related activity such as subsidized/unsubsidized employment, job search, job readiness classes, skills training or GED classes. The number of TANF clients in work activities for FY15 averaged <u>4,800</u> monthly and TANF expenditures for work activities totaled <u>\$12,243,965</u> . SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) also operated a work-related program through a contract with the Alabama Department of Labor for job search assistance. The number of clients provided services was <u>18,089</u> and expenditures totaled <u>\$1,392,000</u> .
Alabama Department of Senior Services – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	The Senior Community Service Employment program provides work-based job training for older Americans age 55 and up. For Program Year 2014 Alabama was allocated <u>\$1,599,492</u> for the program to fund 165 slots for older workers through sixteen (16) subgrantees across the state.

Alabama Workforce Development Strengths and Opportunities under WIOA

An important part of the WIOA Strategic Planning Process is the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of Alabama’s workforce development activities. Alabama’s WIOA plan incorporates and builds upon the identified strengths and proposes improvement and solutions to eliminate identified weaknesses. Alabama’s identified strengths and weaknesses include the following:

Strengths:

- Strong support from political education and business leaders for workforce programs across all agencies and programs.
- Business leadership within the Community College system to align training programs with the needs of business and industry.
- The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) with its network of 26 colleges and 89 instructional sites provides access to students throughout the State seeking career pathways and credentials to qualify for middle skills jobs.
- Alabama has partnership between state level core program agencies that goes back to 2001. There is a culture of strong communication and collaboration that enhances services throughout the Alabama Career Center System.
- The Alabama Career Center System that provides services to job seekers and employers at 26 comprehensive centers and 16 satellite and itinerant sites.

Weaknesses (Opportunities for Improvement):

- Limited data integration – Two of the core partner programs maintain separate data management systems for participant tracking and case management functions.
- Limited awareness of the State and Local Workforce System as a brand by job seekers and employers. A unified and universal brand for the Alabama Workforce System needs to be created and implemented.
- Lack of a P-20W statewide longitudinal data system to track how job seekers and students are using the Alabama Workforce System and competency job training programs from K-12 and postsecondary to employment.
- The workforce system core and other partners must continue to emphasize soft shell training into all Alabama Workforce System supported training programs.

Alabama’s Strategic Vision and Goals for Workforce Development under WIOA

STRATEGIC VISION:

Alabama will have a Workforce System that is aligned with the general and specific needs of Alabama business and focus on the alignment of programs to meet the skills gap needs of our workers (especially those with barriers to employment) and the economic strategies provided through the state’s *Accelerate Alabama 2.0* Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

The Alabama Workforce Council and the WIOA Planning Task Force have recommended and the Governor and Legislature have wholly adopted these recommendations as our strategic WIOA goals:

1. The State of Alabama will implement a Workforce System based on the Governor’s Economic Development Strategic Plan (*Accelerate Alabama 2.0*) which is the second part of a two part plan to maintain the economic development momentum enjoyed by Alabama over the last several years.
2. Provide a longitudinal data system as an integral part of the new Workforce System.
3. Develop and implement a strong network of empowered Regional Workforce Councils that will play a central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain.
4. Implement a streamlined funding system that enables each supply point to excel at meeting business needs and needs of citizens already in or preparing to be in the Alabama workforce.
5. Create or identify streamlined funding channels for training with clear performance metrics.
6. Develop and support a statewide education and training resource system that enables each resource to excel at meeting business needs effectively

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce in Alabama include the following:

1. To align and consolidate the programs and activities of the Community College system and Regional Workforce Councils with the state’s vision and goals.

2. To align the activities and programs of colleges, universities, and training agencies with the *Accelerate Alabama 2.0* plan's three main tenets--Recruitment, Retention and Renewal.
3. To ensure that all programs have strategies to serve individuals with barriers to employment. (The state has a very strong Department of Rehabilitation Services that works with many training and education programs. Our goal is to increase awareness of solutions for these individuals to be vertically integrated into all workforce programs.)

Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers in Alabama include the following:

1. To implement a robust Regional Workforce Council System that provides direct feedback to education programs (Community and Technical College System, the K-12 Career Tech System, etc.) and to the Department of Commerce WIOA training providers.
2. To align the activities and programs of local Workforce Investment Boards with activities and programs the state Regional Workforce Council system.
3. To develop public/private partnerships that provide direct engagement between the public and private entities to increase capacity for meeting employers' workforce needs.

Proposed Organization for Alabama's Workforce Development System under WIOA

