



Bob Riley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Cary F. Boswell
COMMISSIONER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kathleen McGehee
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

Workshop provides training on helping people with autism become employed

MONTGOMERY- With unemployment in the double digits, finding work can be a challenge. For people with autism, some of whom lack social and communication skills, it is even more difficult.

To address that, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is hosting a training to help vocational rehabilitation professionals assist this growing population in finding and keeping a job.

"People with autism can and want to work," said Cary F. Boswell, ADRS commissioner. "We want to make sure that those of us who assist them have the skills and knowledge necessary to serve them in the best way possible so that they can be successful at work and be contributing members of their communities."

The two-day training is being led by S. Michael Chapman, the statewide director of TEACCH, the nationally renowned autism program at the University of North Carolina.

The workshop will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., on July 21, and 8:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on July 22, at the ADRS state office, 602 S. Lawrence St. in Montgomery.

Workshop attendees will learn about the many challenges a person with autism could face at work, and the type of accommodations that should be made for him or her to be successful.

Some of the workshop lessons include "Characteristics of Autism and Their Impact on Employment," "Assessment of Vocational Skills and Behaviors," and "The Use of Structure and Visual Clarification in the Work Setting."

In addition to staff from ADRS , workshop participants include other professionals who work with people with disabilities from Goodwill Industries of Central Alabama, Easter Seals Central Alabama, United Cerebral Palsy of Birmingham, Huntsville Rehabilitation Program, United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville, Easter Seals West Central Alabama, and Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center of Dothan.

The workshop is being financed by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, more commonly known as the stimulus package.

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.