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REGION 3 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision Statement

The purpose of the regional workforce development system is to facilitate the establishment and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, seamless workforce development system for the region that supports economic and workforce training activities. The Workforce Development Council shall be business led and industry driven.

Mission Statement

The mission of West Alabama Works is to promote the economic prosperity of our region through well-managed, coordinated, integrated, and quality support services for employers and job seekers at all levels.

Top Occupations (not in order)

- Customer Service
- Healthcare/Nursing
- Hospitality
- Industrial Maintenance
- Information Technology
- Logistics
- Machinists
- Production/Assemblers
- Transportation/Drivers
- Welders/Fitters

Top 5 Target Industries

- Automotive
- Healthcare
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Business and Professional Services which includes hospitality and educators





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West Alabama Works Process

Our unwavering commitment to an industry-driven, industry-led model means we begin with industry clusters (automotive, construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and professional services) that drive all other activities. The outcome of this process is a qualified, trainable workforce ready to meet the demands of industry across our region.



QUALIFIED, TRAINABLE WORKFORCE



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GOAL 1: Workforce Development- Enhance the knowledge, skills, and availability of workforce in Region 3.

Objectives:

- Increase completion in the Ready to Work/Alabama Career Essentials program
- Increase employers' awareness, involvement and usage of workforce tools in the region
- Create a comprehensive, cooperative, and efficient service provider model
- Increase employers' and providers' knowledge of available funding streams
- Work with partners to tackle key barriers to workforce development, such as prisoner reentry and substance abuse issues
- Develop an enhanced role for regional career centers in proactively developing qualified workforce candidates
- Create a sustainable workforce matrix to ensure ongoing development of potential employees
- Increase connectivity of workforce services and information with all nine counties in the region
- Continue to enhance the partnership with non-profit partners in the region
- Effectively utilize Career Connect to connect job seekers with training and employment opportunities
- Increase Success Plus initiative outcomes by supporting technical education, short-term certificates, apprenticeships and technical degrees
- Assist those with a criminal record gain employment through Career Connect and Job Connect Portal

Critical Success Factors:

- Must have access to and participate in training
- Must have industry and employer partnership
- Training must be available and accessible to participants
- Participants and employers must see benefit in training

Barriers:

- Lack of funding to offer training
- Lack of transportation to training for participants
- Population
- Affordable housing

Strategies:

- Continue to expand the active clusters to communicate workforce solutions and gather employer workforce needs
- Enhance the communication efforts with workforce that promotes the needs of regional clusters
- Actively work to communicate and deliver workforce services to all



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- communities in the nine-county region
- Utilize social media and technology to tell the story of workforce development to stakeholders, employers, and job seekers
 - Meet with elected officials, non-profits and community stakeholders to engage their participation in rural counties when holding outreach events
 - Continue to support the prisoner reentry program at Bibb County Correctional Facility
 - Develop a sustainable substance abuse prevention program in partnership with PRIDE in the K-12 system
 - Continue to expand the Prisoner Reentry Task Force to include community corrections
 - Continue to implement community outreach events to increase the number of individuals in Career Connect
 - Create and implement a second chance job portal to assist individuals with a criminal history seize the opportunity for a promising career
 - Work with the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama to continue efforts in addressing the transportation workforce needs





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GOAL 2: Administration, Financial Resources and Leadership- Provide leadership and management of Region 3 operations through a comprehensive workforce model.

Objectives

- Develop robust communication between employers and service providers
- Effectively administer the Department of Labor WORC Grant in the counties of Hale, Greene, Pickens, Marengo and Sumter to support businesses and job seekers
- Continue to recruit employers to participate in the AWSP training program
- Obtain funding to assist specific training and job readiness programs

Critical Success Factors

- Staff and facilities
- Operational policies must be in place
- Funding for target training and administration
- Commitment and participation from rural counties and employers
- Legal support
- Engagement of key business and community leaders

Barriers:

- Lack of state and federal funding
- Lack of grant availability
- Fund to support continued growth
- Rural community and employers' commitment
- Providers' commitment to the new model

Strategies

- Enhance current cluster engagement and involvement
- Continue to foster business engagement through management contract
- Develop a plan to maintain and expand funding to workforce development council to provide necessary workforce development programs in Region 3
- Develop a long-term funding model
- Register non-profit corporation





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GOAL 3: Training and Education- Create a model between business and education to synchronize workforce needs and training delivery

Objectives

- Increase the number of students participating in dual enrollment by 30%, aligned with Success Plus
- Complete the revision of the Articulation Agreements that Beville, Wallace Selma, and Shelton State have with K-12 and other colleges
- Maximize educational relevance through real-life learning opportunities in grades K-12 by increasing business/industry partnerships by 50%
- Increase the use of apprenticeship programs across multiple business skills, also aligning with Success Plus
- Continue to expand the RTW/ACE High School Program
- Increase the number of adult RTW/ACE graduates in partnership with Beville State, Shelton State, and Wallace Selma Community Colleges
- Work with regional Career Centers to increase the number of WBL, OJT and ITA participants in the region
- Continue to develop and implement the Educator Workforce Academy with a top-down approach to enhance educators' understanding of workforce development
- Partner with The Chamber to increase regional industry tours with counselors, CTE Directors, and Career Coaches
- Partner with region schools to promote career technical education
- Promote dual enrollment, short term credentials and apprenticeship programs for high school students
- Increase CTE enrollment by 30%
- Partner area schools with business leaders to increase employer engagement and maximize CTE through financial, volunteer and curriculum support
- Advocate for and support qualified CTE instructors, especially paying CTE instructors based on industry experience, rather than teaching experience
- Promote the student jobs program for students ages 14-18 years old to gain viable apprenticeship, internship, and co-op opportunities as they enter the workforce
- Assist schools with setting up dual enrollment options with area community colleges

Critical Success Factors

- Revise Articulation Agreements
- Offer real-life learning opportunities
- Recruit business and industry to participate
- Hold educational meetings with parents, students, B&I, etc.
- Establish cooperation between K-12 and postsecondary systems



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Barriers

- Lack of student, educational institutions, and B&I participation
- Inability to form strong, lasting partnerships in rural counties
- Lack of instructors in dual enrollment
- Lack of competitive pay for qualified CTE instructors
- Potential workforce's knowledge of training/education opportunities
- Turnover in education system
- Lack of funding for education

Strategies

- Develop a comprehensive plan for dual enrollment, aligning with Success Plus
- Develop strategies to help students earn credentials, aligning with Success Plus
- Hold information sessions about dual enrollment to educators, parents, and students
- Hold meeting with K-12 and other colleges to review and update existing agreements
- Generate interest among businesses by sharing their role in improving workforce development
- Create learning opportunities among businesses, educators, and career coaches to offer career education
- Develop marketing materials for Apprenticeships and Ready to Work/Alabama Career Essentials using Success Plus verbiage
- Hold Educator Workforce Academy starting in October each year
- Hold the annual Worlds of Work (WOW) event for regional students in the 9th grade
- Continue to grow the WOW Varsity event for high school students and their parents/guardians
- Continue to grow the WOW 2.0 hiring event for 11th, 12th, and post-secondary students
- Continue Regional Signing Day to honoring apprenticeships and those entering the workforce
- Continue Pathway to Success marketing plan
- Meet with Department of Education stakeholders to advocate for career technical education instructors' rate of pay to reflect industry experience
- Implement and expand modern manufacturing programs at region high schools to equip students with needed skills to enter the workforce after high school
- Create and implement youth jobs portal to promote summer jobs, after-school jobs, co-op and apprenticeships to youth ages 14-18 years old
- Assist local school systems with current summer learning initiatives and development of additional programming through evaluation as a part of the summer learning initiative



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GOAL 4: Marketing and Communication- Promote awareness of Region 3 Workforce opportunities to both industry and current and future workforce across the nine county region.

Objectives

- Increase business and industry participation in West Alabama Works' process
- Increase business and industry partnerships with area schools
- Raise awareness of high-paying, in-demand jobs in Region 3
- Promote AlabamaWorks! brand
- Bring awareness to West Alabama Works' mission and opportunities
- Develop a strategic pipeline to help employers fill needs and give area citizens a path to success through high wage, in-demand careers
- Promote and provide resources for career technical education
- Promote and provide resources for dual enrollment, scholarships and apprenticeships

Critical Success Factors

- Business and industry participation
- Multiple communication streams
- Educators' participation
- Student participation and engagement

Barriers

- Negative stigma of two-year programs and technical education
- Distance in large region
- Post Covid, tackling remote work opportunities for companies who physically need in person workers
- Information overload, too little information is not good for what we do, but too much information can have negative responses
- Dense information with some programs, i.e. WIOA

Strategies

- Develop media relations calendar to promote events and other programs, allowing West Alabama Works to be featured in traditional media at least once a month
- Leverage rural regional leaders to create dialogue in their communities
- Visit outlying areas to tour business and industry
- Engage in local school boards, city council, county commission and other related meetings to speak to community leaders and members
- Engage educators in the region to communicate opportunities
- Utilize career coaches and CTE directors to steer students to high demand careers
- Continue to enhance WOW website as a hub for parents, students and educators to discover high-demand careers, career technical education, apprenticeships and dual-enrollment
- Write, edit, and create content and strategic messaging for schools to



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- relay information to students and their parents/guardians
- Showcase data-driven decisions when monitoring algorithms
- Compile, analyze, and utilizes metrics, data, and analytics
- Continue to partner with business leadership to establish internal and external communication strategies and ensure communication, planning, and results are effectively achieving their objectives for a hiring event
- Apply the appropriate tools and media types to create effective, high-quality visual and experiential media such as using professional assistance in creating compelling messages through storytelling to engage target audiences on our programs and orientations
- Leveraging current and emerging digital media strategies (e.g. email automation, social media, content management systems, etc.) to influence specific audiences to a perform a desired action
- Continue to manage complexity making sense of complex, high quantity, and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve problems for our community and business partners
- Continue to use Career Connect to directly communicate and connect job seekers with employment and training opportunities
- Develop social media strategy via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to highlight programs, partnerships and events
- Produce videos to highlight events, partnerships and programs
- Distribute monthly eNews to keep stakeholders in the loop on WAW's programs and events
- Use paid advertising strategies when available for events and programs





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GOAL 5: Outreach and Service Delivery- Develop and apply action and service delivery that meet both urban and rural needs in the region.

Objectives

- Have forums for service providers, the public, and lead private sector agencies
- Hold at least 4 rural outreach events each year
- Continue the WAW position for rural outreach
- Continue to expand the faith base partners in the region to support workforce efforts
- Maximize opportunities for exchange of ideas for improved service delivery and consistent communication among all service providers
- Enhance the partnership between the Career Center, Regional WIOA Board, and West Alabama Works Regional Council

Critical Success Factors

- Must develop and implement an inventory, referral system, and linkages for individuals that are not “job ready” and have the potential of being left behind

Barriers

- Lack of interest from participants
- Lack of interest from business and industry
- Lack of service providers
- Duplication of services

Strategies

- Create activities that will engage service provider groups and network providers into the activities of the Region 3 Council
- Invite service providers and network providers to regional council meeting and include them on the agenda
- Use Rural Outreach team member to effectively hold community meetings and to host rural outreach events with partners and the Career Connect team
- Work to maintain the overlaid approach to the Regional Council and Regional Workforce Board to enhance communication and cooperation among workforce partners



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Local Resource Overview

Through the current partnership, the Regional Council will be able to leverage the Chamber's existing network of committees, such as the Education Policy Council, Diverse Business Council, Non-profit Council, and Public Affairs Council. Each of these councils would play a key role in determining needs and resources within their respective areas. This organizational structure would allow the voting members of the Region 3 Workforce Council to focus on key issues surrounding workforce development and work with the Workforce Development staff to formulate key deliverables to meet the needs of the region. A steering committee meets monthly to communicate industry needs and the monthly business of the 501(c)3.

The Chamber will capitalize on its research capabilities and partnerships to support the region's workforce clusters and then formulate needs assessments through its already existing relationships in those industry clusters. Through these clusters, the Workforce Development Director coordinates the appropriate agencies and providers to develop programs and services to meet the needs of employers in the region.





Structure of West Alabama Works

As part of the partnership the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama has worked with the Region 3 Workforce Development Council to create a 501(c)3 organization called West AlabamaWorks!. This organization is a catalyst in securing additional funding through grants, investors and other workforce funding agencies and programs. West Alabama Works contracts with the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama to manage daily operations and personnel needed to grow the regional workforce offerings. At the same time, the already existing Regional Workforce Council will manage grant opportunities presented through the State of Alabama's workforce initiatives. Through this partnership with the Chamber, the Regional Council and West AlabamaWorks! will be able to maximize potential to raise funds for systemic change.

The partners work together to establish a central connecting point ('One Stop' system) for workforce needs in the region. A key focus is to minimize duplication of services and maximize the potential of each provider by communicating key workforce needs in the entire nine county region through both urban and rural outreach programs. Reporting of results to key stakeholders through a workforce matrix system is done monthly to the steering committee and quarterly at the Regional Summits. This allows all parties involved to evaluate the effectiveness and communication of each area of workforce efforts.

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