



ALABAMA
Talent Playbook



**State Role and
Governance**

The State Role

**Facilitating the Transition to a
Skills-Based Economy**

State Role Transitioning to a Skills-Based Economy

State Role in Facilitating the Transition to a Skills-Based Economy

State governments have a critical responsibility in facilitating the transition of public infrastructure, built on advanced technology, to drive the economy by supporting the opportunity and upskilling of its citizens as well as supporting multiple industry sectors and employers. With authority and influence over the credentialing ecosystem, as well as ability to coordinate across agencies and with the private sector, state governments are well-positioned to drive education and workforce transformation at scale and secure sustainability through policy.

In Alabama, the Talent Triad leverages the power of state and local agencies, subject matter experts, leading technologists, and the private sector to create a talent marketplace that will:

- Increase the labor force participation rate by creating new opportunities for learners and workers to own their learning and employment data and transact their skills as a currency in the labor market, through verification of achieved skills, credentials, and experiences.
- Support employers in identifying and connecting with new candidates, while also identifying the upcoming talent pipelines.
- Increase postsecondary attainment and labor force participation, thereby helping to meet state goals and to create a more resilient economy.
- Support the state's effort to consolidate and streamline workforce efforts.
- Connect education and workforce initiatives.

To do this, Alabama established governance structures with well-defined roles and responsibilities, and has codified the Talent Triad, and the competency and credential policies that underlie it, in policy through the State Workforce Development Board. The policy includes the Governor's directive to utilize the Talent Triad in all Career Centers for the purposes of intake and assessment for Wager-Peyser and WIOA adult, youth, and dislocated worker program participants, which was adopted in March 2024.

States must be involved in the development, design, implementation, and interoperability of talent marketplaces that can serve the public by facilitating the connection between employers, education and training providers, and citizens. Governments are the only entity with the authority and influence to support policy and practice changes that can usher in a skills-based economy.

Creating Opportunity

States that design open systems with the priorities and goals of students and jobseekers, employers, education and workforce training providers will drive a stronger economy for all. This requires that state governance must become more nuanced. This is not yet another data system or program, funded under a specific agency, where agencies are using data purely for government needs. The work being described in this paper is about creating a shared governance and technology infrastructure structure that allows data to be interoperable and publishes data via open, linked data standards across all agencies and external stakeholders, allowing for individuals to benefit.

Alabama's state leadership has centered on the following key areas.

Creating Opportunity for Every Alabamian

Alabama has a shared vision that enables every Alabamian to pursue opportunity through:

- Creating population level solutions that remove barriers for individuals traditionally left out of the economy, providing differentiated and personalized upskilling pathways, and supporting the talent development needs of all employers.
- Create a higher return on investment of public and private dollars that help to transform existing programs to serve the diverse regions and workforce needs across the state.
- Adopting state-level goals that address both postsecondary attainment and employment outcomes, connecting credential completion to workforce needs in the state.
- Using every data resource available to identify current and future in-demand occupations at regional and statewide levels.
- Aligning high-quality credentials to in-demand occupations.
- Organizing skills and competency data to ensure alignment between academic programs and employment opportunities.

Alabama has enshrined policies needed to foster a skills-based economy. The Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) is composed of 16 sectoral partnerships, representing each industry sector, which was codified by Act 2019-506. The ACCCP is tasked with a two-fold mission: (1) identifying Alabama's regional and statewide in-demand occupations and (2) developing competency models, career pathways, and credentials of value linked to those in-demand occupations. The ACCCP uses a process called the five-star rubric to create the regional and statewide lists of in-demand occupations.

The shared governance role of the ACCCP brings the vision for talent to life and ensures that all resources being allocated across the state are aligned and driving for a common purpose, while also serving the unique needs of every Alabamian and employer.

Driving Strategic Value

Driving Strategic Value for Alabamians

State efforts to validate quality credentials and register those credentials are important activities but to create real value for stakeholders, states can then use these core definitions of quality to drive funding, decision-making, marketing, and economic growth to create true outcomes for citizens and employers.

States that are driving strategic value are:

- Recognizing how improved transparency and defined quality standards can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of state investments in upskilling and reskilling.
- Leveraging open, linked-data to create opportunities for marketing and putting information directly into citizens' hands and technology to support the education-to-employment pathways that have real return.
- Making all learning count by creating consistent standards and applications for how learning gained outside of the classroom can apply toward high-quality credentials.
- Assuring learning is aligned to labor market demand across the state's colleges and universities.

Alabama adopted early governance structures that enabled it to drive practical and strategic outcomes, leading to the creation of the state's talent marketplace, the Talent Triad.

Alabama's Talent Triad is a statewide, multi-agency initiative that leverages public and philanthropic investments and is supported by private technology and non-profit expertise. Spearheaded from the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT), the Talent Triad uses a unique governing structure and policy environment to achieve its goals.

Under leadership of the GOEWT, Alabama's education and workforce goals are two-fold:

1. Add 500,000 credentialed Alabamians to the potential workforce by 2025 through Success Plus postsecondary education attainment goal.
2. Surpass the national labor force participation rate by 2025 by braiding resources to help Alabamians overcome benefits cliffs and barriers to entering education or the workforce.

The GOEWT plays an integral role in advancing the goals of the Talent Triad, ultimately balancing the priorities of the Governor with those of other stakeholders, including employers, students, job seekers, and education and training providers. The GOEWT addresses the policy, process, convening, and vision-development behind the Talent Triad.

The Talent Triad



The Talent Triad is the only LER effort spearheaded from a Governor's Office, which Alabama thinks is important for creating the leverage for this population level solution possible. Anything below a state level, a city or region for example, may not have the numbers of people, institutions, and employers needed to power a marketplace approach. And logistically, centering LER work within a Governor's Office creates the kind of authority structure that can shift agency priorities.

Equally important as the locus of control in a position of authority is having the right point person: one person or a small team who can lead the work over years and provide continuity, and who have expertise on how to coordinate all the actors across the state along with multiple funding sources.

The Talent Triad also benefits from strong advocacy within the legislature, particularly from budget and policy chairs in the House and Senate. Furthermore, Alabama's business community is supportive of the Talent Triad. Alabama Workforce Council Chairman Tim McCartney commented, "They are responsive to the business community, and they understand that the state has a labor shortage that is precipitated by low postsecondary attainment and low labor force participation. These two things are linked, and you can't move one without the other."

The broader governance structure that enables the Talent Triad emerged in 2019 when Governor Ivey signed Act 2019-506 into law. This Act created the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP). The ACCCP is a public/private entity tasked with two primary missions:

1. Identifying Alabama's regional and statewide in-demand occupations.
2. Developing competency models, career pathways, and credentials of value linked to those in-demand occupations using labor market information.

The Committee is co- chaired by the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System and the State Superintendent of Education, and members include the Governor, the Chair of the Alabama Workforce Council, the State Secretary of Labor, and one gubernatorial appointee from each of seven workforce regions, among others. The ACCCP also engages subject matter experts, from education and training providers who are tasked with translating employer demand, into bespoke training programs that articulate to time- and credit-based degrees.

Rather than focusing on single industries, single occupations, or single credentials, the Talent Triad, and the governance structure behind it, seek comprehensive solutions, recognizing that systemic change will not happen without movement on all sides of the talent marketplace. Institutions are incentivized to adopt competency- based education approaches; employers are supported to engage in skills-based hiring; and learners are proactively encouraged to develop and utilize their digital wallets. Unless these things happen in tandem, the effort will fall flat.

Key Takeaways

The state convenes 16 Technical Advisory Committees as industry sectoral partnerships, which are working across all industries in Alabama. Importantly, these Committees are highly focused on business needs, while postsecondary institutions and education providers are in a reactive role. The Committees also engage with HR and people leaders within companies who are experts in developing job descriptions and understanding detailed talent acquisition needs and strategies.

To identify in-demand occupations, the ACCCP uses a “five-star rubric” that measures:

1. Occupational wages must be at least 70% of the mean regional wage.
2. Occupation belongs within a career cluster that is ranked in the top 8 for the annual regional Success Plus Attainment goal.
3. Shows positive annual growth and positive projected growth over a decade.
4. On the regional top 40 in-demand jobs list or is at least in the 75th percentile of average regional wage.
5. Requires a postsecondary degree, certificate, or credential for initial employment.

Once priority occupations are identified, the ACCCP works to identify and unpack the credentials required for the role. This is a multi-stage process that seeks to impose quality measures upon the credential environment and to link credentials more intentionally to occupations.

The result of this process is the Alabama Compendium of Valuable Credentials. The credentials that appear on this list are aligned to regional and statewide in-demand career pathways. These credentials of value are also prioritized in public funding. This process was recently codified through the passage of Act 2023-365. Representative Terri Collins sponsored the bill in the House, with Senator Donnie Chesteen supporting in the Senate. The bill passed unanimously through both houses. Governor Kay Ivey signed the bill into law on June 1, 2023. The inaugural Compendium of Valuable Credentials will be published on June 30, 2024.

Actors working to advance applications should prioritize engaging their Governor’s Office, tapping into the statewide authority and leadership needed to work across many state agencies, education and training providers and the private sector. Leveraging leadership in this way can also create long-term sustainability, building efforts into state’s future vision.

While legislation will be difficult to move in the short term, considering how efforts to identify in-demand occupations and elevate the priorities of industries in ways that are replicable, effective, and meaningful to employer partners is key. In Alabama, engagement by business representatives who are knowledgeable and empowered has been a significant lever for change.

Key Takeaways

Alabama cautions states against “putting the cart before the horse,” by buying into technology solutions and vendor products before deeply considering the state’s interests and environment. States should develop policies and systems in advance of making decisions about technology.

The state of Alabama is interested in learning about other effective governance structures that can create buy-in among stakeholders and lend continuity to state-level LER initiatives.

We encourage other states to share their stories, and to reach out for more information. The Talent Triad is a customizable platform that can help states advance their own unique goals, supported by a national movement and regional consensus.

The logo features a stylized 'A' composed of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of red and white.

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