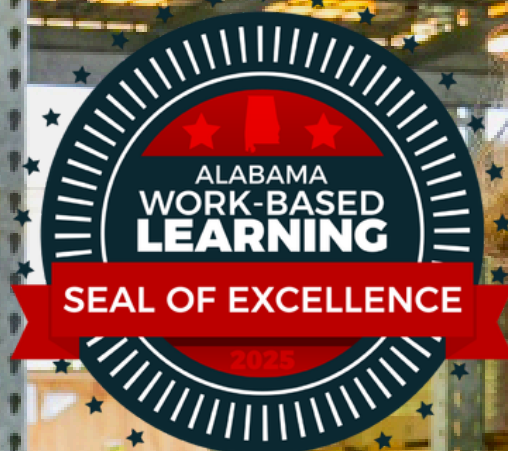




ALABAMA WORK-BASED LEARNING HANDBOOK



Workforce
Alabama



ALABAMA
OFFICE OF
APPRENTICESHIP



ALABAMA DEFINITION OF **WORK-BASED LEARNING**

Sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, first-hand engagement with the tasks required of a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

What is WBL?

Under the leadership of Governor Ivey, multiple state agencies responsible for workforce development have adopted a uniform definition of work-based learning (WBL). This was an essential first step in the process of increasing the common understanding of work-based learning and expanding its use. This effort was originally facilitated by a grant from the National Governors Association and participation in a three-year Work-Based Learning Policy Academy. Through the NGA Policy Academy, the Alabama team had the opportunity to engage with and learn from many other states and gain information from their best practices. Alabama was identified as a mentor state in the Policy Academy because of our state's vision to scale high-quality work-based learning opportunities for youth and young adults.

The development of a WBL handbook was the next step in that process. The purpose of this handbook is to help WBL practitioners, participants, and employers share a common language about the types and most common characteristics of work-based learning models. The use of common terminology improves communication between all stakeholders, which is necessary to continue growing the utilization of WBL as a key workforce development strategy that meets the needs of employers and learners.

Future activities related to this work include conducting comprehensive inventories of the WBL activities being implemented across the state, hosting WBL convenings, and recognizing scalable WBL best practices. These efforts will increase awareness of WBL as a tool and help continue to grow opportunities for engagement.



WORK-BASED LEARNING Continuum



The continuum illustrates a non-linear path from career awareness to exploration to preparation, with a myriad of activity options. The various work-based learning activities do not fall into hard and fast, siloed buckets, and just like with any continuum, some of the activities straddle more than one category. Not all of the activities along the continuum fit the definition of work-based learning on their own, but they are all critical components that support the overarching goals.



CAREER AWARENESS

Learning About Work



Awareness activities expand the possibilities that students consider as viable career options. These activities begin in the earliest stages of education and are an essential way for students to increase their awareness of personal interests and talents

**Job
Shadowing**

**Career Expo/
Career Day**

**Industry
Tours**





CAREER EXPLORATION Learning For Work

As students begin to focus on careers of interest, they should be provided opportunities to get involved directly with people actively working in those careers. Career exploration experiences encourage students to develop personal career interests, a better understanding of various career pathways, and the workplace readiness skills needed to begin making informed decisions about secondary and postsecondary education and training.

**Employability Skill
Training**

**Simulated
Workplace**

**School-Based
Enterprise**

Externship

Cooperative Education

Internship

CAREER PREPARATION

Learning Through Work



When students have identified a specific career of interest, they should have long-term and firsthand engagements working in the career fields of their interest. These experiences are designed primarily to give students extensive practice in applying fundamental, practical, and technical knowledge and skills in the career of their choice. Career preparation experiences take place over a longer period of time and involve more responsibilities.

**Clinical/Practicum
Field Experience**

**Internship
(Tied to a field of
study)**

**On-the-Job
Learning**

Pre-Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship



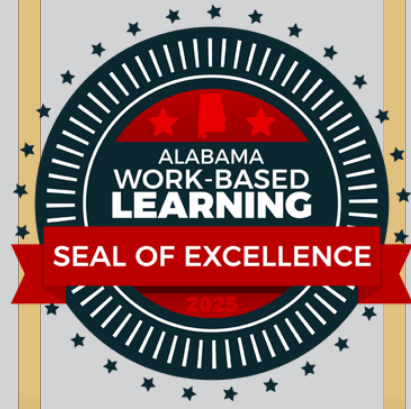
Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence Winner

Alabama Productivity Center

Justin Rogers

(251) 234-1724

justin.rogers@ua.edu



The Alabama Productivity Center (APC) Internship Program connects undergraduate and graduate students from universities across Alabama with hands-on, real-world project experiences that directly support business and industry. APC partners with companies to identify operational priorities, often focused on continuous improvement, efficiency, and performance challenges, then matches students to projects where they can deliver meaningful solutions.

APC manages the full internship process, including recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding of students. Interns are employed as temporary University of Alabama employees and work on-site at partnered organizations, gaining direct experience in professional environments while contributing to measurable outcomes. Throughout each placement, APC provides coaching, project management guidance, training, and implementation support to ensure both student growth and successful project delivery.

Since 2013, the program has engaged students from 19 colleges and universities and supported projects across 32 Alabama counties. APC has partnered with 129 companies since 2020, generating more than \$180 million in reported business impact through student-led projects. These efforts have contributed to the creation of 117 new jobs and the retention of 643 jobs throughout Alabama.

This experiential learning model benefits both students and employers. Companies gain additional capacity and fresh perspectives to improve operations, while students apply classroom knowledge, build technical and professional skills, and explore career pathways. By connecting education with industry needs, APC strengthens Alabama's talent pipeline and creates lasting economic value statewide.



Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence Winner

Alabaster City Schools

Jayden Kidd

(205) 484-1160

jayden.kidd@acsboe.org

The ACS Champions Craft Academy (CCA)'s simulated workplace provides an immersive, hands-on workforce development experience that empowers high school students to excel in the skilled trades. The curriculum equips students with both the technical mastery and professional soft skills essential for today's competitive labor market. Through project-based learning in Electrical, Industrial Fabrication, Construction Technology, and Foundations, students engage in training that mirrors real-world jobsite expectations.

Beyond technical instruction, CCA prioritizes character development, leadership, and accountability. Students cultivate essential workplace traits such as effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, and a strong work ethic that are highly sought after by modern employers. Our network of local industry partners provides students with access to professional mentorship, career pathway exploration, and insight into trade careers.

Key annual events, including Industry Day and the guest speaker series, give students opportunities to connect with potential employers and pursue internships or apprenticeships, often serving as a pipeline to full-time employment after graduation. As demand for skilled labor grows, CCA continues to evolve and will introduce new HVAC and Plumbing programs this fall to expand high-demand career pathways. CCA is proud to graduate confident, skilled young men and women prepared to build strong futures and make a lasting impact in their communities.



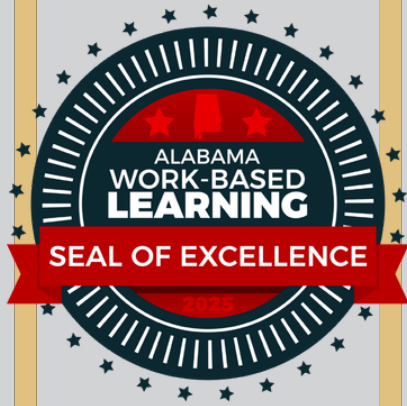
Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence Winner

Enterprise State Community College

Aubri Hanson

(334) 347-2623

ahanson@escc.edu



The Mechatronics Program at Enterprise State Community College prepares students for high-skill, high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing and industrial automation. The program integrates mechanical systems, electrical circuits, fluid power, programmable logic controllers, robotics, instrumentation, motor controls, CNC, additive manufacturing, and industrial troubleshooting in a hands-on learning environment aligned with industry standards. A defining feature is its flexible scheduling structure, allowing students to choose morning or afternoon class blocks with extended open lab access to complete projects and build skills.

Students learn in lab environments that mirror real production facilities. They program PLC systems, wire motor control panels, configure sensors and actuators, and diagnose automation system faults using industry test equipment. Instruction incorporates nationally recognized industry certifications in areas such as precision measurement, electrical systems, fluid power, and robotics. Dual enrollment students can earn college credit while still in high school, creating a pathway into the workforce or continued education.

The program maintains strong partnerships with regional industry leaders in manufacturing, lumber, aerospace, and automation. Employers provide equipment support, advisory input, internships, scholarships, and hiring pipelines. Through industry-aligned instruction and real-world application, ESCC's Mechatronics program helps develop the skilled workforce needed to meet Alabama's growing demand for advanced technical talent.



Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence Winner

Florence City Schools

Jessica Flanagan

(256) 335-6326

jmflanagan@florencek12.org

The vision of Florence City Schools is “Tomorrow... Today!” The LAUNCH work-based learning program was designed with that focus in mind. LAUNCH connects students with meaningful, career-focused experiences during high school, helping them build strong connections to the workforce and develop long-term career pathways.

LAUNCH integrates structured workplace placements into students’ school schedules, allowing participants to gain hands-on experience in a chosen career field while remaining enrolled in their academic coursework. In addition to workplace experience, students participate in professional skills instruction and have access to networking and career exploration opportunities throughout the program.

LAUNCH utilizes a tiered placement model to support students at different stages of career readiness. Students may participate in internship or apprenticeship-focused placements that provide in-depth experience within a single career field, while other students can engage in multi-field job shadowing to explore a variety of career paths. Over the past eight years, LAUNCH has helped more than 500 students solidify their career plans, empowering them to graduate with purpose, confidence, and a clear vision for their futures.



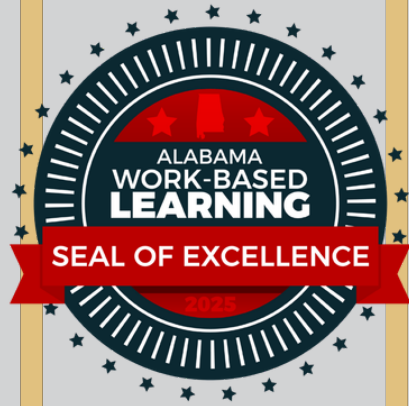
Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence Winner

GLAM and Bishop State Community College

Robin Ricks and Erica Gilkerson

(333) 595-1697, (251) 405-7070

robin@edaa.org, egilkerson@bishop.edu



Girls Learning About Manufacturing (GLAM) Camp is an immersive career exploration experience designed to introduce middle and high school girls to high-wage, high-demand careers in Alabama's manufacturing industry. Founded in 2020, GLAM connects students with industry partners, community colleges, and workforce leaders through hands-on activities, facility tours, and authentic engagement with professionals across a wide range of career pathways. In 2025, GLAM was honored as a recipient of the Alabama Seal of Excellence in Work-Based Learning award, recognizing the program's strong alignment with Alabama's workforce priorities and its impact on student awareness and career interest.

GLAM Camp is held in partnership with Bishop State Community College and regional manufacturing employers. Students participate in interactive technical labs, team-based problem solving, and behind-the-scenes tours of advanced manufacturing facilities. They meet professionals across the industry including engineers, welders, logistics specialists, HR professionals, accountants, IT leaders, and executives, helping them better understand the diverse opportunities available within the sector.

GLAM's model emphasizes exposure, engagement, and encouragement at a critical age when career aspirations begin to take shape. By combining experiential learning with meaningful industry interaction, GLAM strengthens Alabama's talent pipeline and expands opportunities for young women to pursue careers in manufacturing and the skilled trades.



Job Shadowing

- Very short term (usually one to a few days)
- On-site, workplace visits
- Used to expose students to the world of work and possibly to make them aware of jobs they didn't know existed
- Traditionally one-on-one or perhaps up to three guests visiting a person or company

Job shadowing is an effective tool for increasing awareness and exposure to careers. Individuals can use the information gained from a job shadowing experience to determine if a general career field is of interest to them. Job shadowing provides students with more exposure to both careers and workplaces as they interact with and observe one or more employees. They can learn about the nature of the job and the work environment, as well as the required education and training. Students can participate in more than one job shadowing opportunity, allowing them to compare careers of interest.

Examples: Ride along with HVAC service tech, Construction site visit, Classroom observation day, Take your child to work day

2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 5
Elmore County Technical Center
Lindsay Jordan
(334) 567-1218
lindsay.jordan@elmoreco.com

Elmore County Technical Center's (ECTC) Job Shadow Day connects students with local employers for a one-day workplace experience in their CTE program of study. The event is coordinated by Elmore County Schools' career coaches, cooperative education coordinator, and CTE counselor. This team recruits a variety of employers and matches students to available host sites based on their interests. Students must obtain a CTE teacher recommendation and permission from parents and school administrators to participate. Prior to the shadow, students call to confirm their shadow details with host site industry professionals. On Job Shadow Day, students drive themselves to the shadow sites where they are visited by staff members throughout the day. Attendance is marked as a field trip from the full day of school



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Career Expo/Career Fair



- Single day event where groups of employers from various clusters will present information about careers in their field
- Familiarizes students with the breadth of occupations and careers available
- Often organized by grade level to allow for age-appropriate activity planning
- Sometimes coupled with, but not to be confused with a “Job Fair,” where companies interview and hire for open positions

Most effective implementations of career expos include preparation activities to guide learning, as well as follow-up discussions to answer questions that were generated and extend learning. Each Regional Workforce Council hosts Career Expos for 8th Graders, (WOW-Worlds of Work, WOO-Worlds of Opportunity, Career Discovery, etc.) Some other very good career fairs are hosted by the high school CTE programs for younger students, which gives the older students an opportunity to serve as ambassadors to the younger students and share with them why they might want to explore careers in this pathway.



2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 1

Calhoun Community College

Kelli Morris

(256) 306-2602

kelli.morris@calhoun.edu

Calhoun Community College Career Services has partnered with the Nursing and Health Sciences Department since 2016 to host structured networking events, including the Nursing Fair, connecting students with employers and university partners recruiting Calhoun students and upcoming graduates. Local and regional employers actively seek engagement with students with nursing recruitment centralized through the fair offered twice a year. Faculty reinforce this initiative by requiring student attendance and embedding resume development and fair preparation into course curriculum. As a result, the fair has served more than 2,500 students and 600 employers, generating hundreds of employment opportunities, increased exposure to university pathways for continued education, and strengthened long-term workforce pipelines.



2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 7

Mobile County Public Schools and Mobile Chamber

Claire Minto

(337) 515-1184

cminto@mcpss.com

Now in its eighth year, the Mobile County Public Schools and Mobile Chamber (MCPSS) Career Fair was redesigned in Spring 2024 in partnership with the Mobile Chamber to align with the region's high-wage, high-demand. A major enhancement was the addition of a comprehensive preparation component. Across all 12 high schools, seniors completed 20 days of structured lessons in career interest inventories, résumé writing, employer research, elevator pitches, professional etiquette, and interview readiness. Students also created an Alabama Talent Triad account and completed a Skills and Experiences Profile. The fair is organized by career clusters, where employers, training providers, and closely aligned college programs are partnered together so students can see the full pathway toward their careers while giving businesses access to a prepared talent pool. This year, over 3000 seniors visited 82 different partners in a successful Mobile Area event.



2026 WBL Seal of Excellence Winner

Region 7

GLAM and Bishop State Community College

Robin Ricks and Erica Gilkerson

(333) 595-1697, (251) 405-7070

robin@edaa.org, egilkerson@bishop.edu



Girls Learning About Manufacturing (GLAM) Camp introduces middle and high school girls to high wage, high demand careers in Alabama's manufacturing sector. Held in partnership with Bishop State Community College and regional manufacturing employers, GLAM provides hands-on technical labs, team-based problem solving, and facility tours that connect students directly with industry professionals. By combining experiential learning with meaningful employer engagement, GLAM strengthens Alabama's talent pipeline and expands career awareness for young women at a critical stage in their career decision making.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Employability Skill Training

- Provides participants with the foundational skills that are common and essential across all industry sectors and allow for effective performance in any level job
- Some specific programs exist for this (i.e. Ready to Work), but these skill trainings may also be built into other types of training.

Employability skills are basic skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors. These skills have many names— soft skills, workforce readiness skills, career readiness skills—but they all include the same set of core skills that employers want. Employability skills are an essential component of college and career readiness. Alabama has an industry-developed, state-recognized employability skill program called Ready to Work. RTW is offered as pre-employment training through AIDT, many high schools, and community colleges. For more information, visit alabamareadytowork.org.

Sometimes formal employability skill training is finite, but every successful WBL program has a strong focus on continued learning of employability skills. Many educators or workforce training professionals already teach essential employability skills in their academic or technical skill classes, not just in an independent stand-alone activity. Most common skills listed by employers are: Showing up to work every day and on time, keeping cell phones put away at all times, getting along with other employees, and being able to pass a drug test.

2026 WBL Statewide Contenders

Region 5

Alabama Dept. of Youth School Services District 210

Dr. Shashauna Bloomfield

(334) 215-6038

shashauna.bloomfield@k12.dys.alabama.gov

The Alabama Department of Youth Services is a comprehensive, skills-based program designed to support youth in correctional facilities as they prepare to reenter society. This program focuses on equipping participants with industry-recognized credentials, practical job skills, and essential life competencies to foster successful reintegration and long-term independence. Collaborating with local businesses, industries, educational institutions, and community organizations, the program ensures participants receive both professional training and personal development support. With a combination of classroom instruction, virtual reality experiences, mentorship, and mock interviews, participants gain the knowledge and experience necessary to secure gainful employment upon release. The program also provides wrap around services, including mentors in their communities, life skills training, job placement assistance, ensuring a holistic approach to successful reentry.



2024 WBL Statewide Contenders

Region 6

Troy University Small Business Development Center

Juliana Bolivar

(334) 434-3347

jbolivar@troy.edu

Start Your Business Program (SYB) is a customizable work-based learning model developed by the Troy University Small Business Development Center and currently delivered in partnership with the Alabama Department of Human Resources to A-RESET participants. The program provides a structured, hands-on entrepreneurial pathway through a 20-session format, with scalable versions ranging from condensed five-session intensives to extended cohort models. SYB integrates entrepreneurial mindset development, business fundamentals, marketing, financial literacy, business planning, and emerging technology tools, including AI applications. Designed to serve rural, justice-involved, women-owned, and other underserved populations, the model bridges workforce gaps by simulating real work through guided mentorship, applied exercises, and resource mapping. Rather than functioning as a standalone class, SYB creates a supported pathway that connects participants to continued economic mobility and self-employment opportunities.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Industry Tours



- Visits to local businesses
- Typically half-day or full-day
- Can be visits to several businesses in one industry
- Can be visits to several different industries

Industry tours broaden awareness about local career opportunities and increase knowledge about the many jobs available within a business or geographic area, beyond those jobs that might typically come to mind. They also can help dispel misperceptions about certain kinds of jobs that might have traditionally been thought of as “dirty”. Industry tours with students typically occur with middle and high school students. They are also very effective with groups of educators, providing some of the most impactful professional development available. Industry tours are often coordinated by local Economic Development Authorities, Regional Workforce Councils, and Chambers of Commerce.

2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Statewide

Forestry Workforce Training Institute

Maggie Pope

(251) 589-4328

mpope@forestryworks.com

ForestryWorks Field Days are immersive, hands-on learning experiences designed to connect educators and students with real-world forestry and forest products careers. Hosted in partnership with local industry, these events take place at active worksites such as sawmills, logging operations, nurseries, and managed forestlands. Participants engage directly with professionals, observe modern equipment and safety practices, and explore the full forest-to-product supply chain. Field Days are structured to reinforce classroom instruction while exposing attendees to high-demand career pathways, sustainable forest management, and regional economic impact. By combining guided tours, demonstrations, and interactive discussions, Field Days help bridge the gap between education and industry, inspiring informed career decisions and strengthening the future forestry workforce.



2024 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 2

Gadsden State FAME

Keri Wood

(256) 549-8633

kwood@gadsdenstate.edu

Gadsden State offers industry tours for all FAME students applying for the FAME program. GSCC takes the students to sponsor companies to see what the industry looks like today and where they may work. The students shadow other FAME students to see what it will be like to work at that company. They can ask questions to the workers in the field they are applying for and talk to current FAME students working at the company.



2024 WBL Best Practice

Region 5

Auburn University Facilities Management

Hayley White

(334) 734-2551

hw0028@auburn.edu

The Auburn University Facilities Management tour provides an engaging experience for high school students to see the vast span of AUFM and connect what they see with an opportunity for a future employment experience. In addition, the program provides a platform for marketing the AUFM summer internship program and their registered apprenticeship program. Tours are completely customizable based on the student's needs and interests. They can learn about the utilities/energy, landscaping, and HVAC departments. AUFM also provides industry tours for local CTE Directors and WBL teachers to showcase all the career paths, job opportunities, and tour options.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Simulated Workplace

- Classes are structured like companies
- Students apply for entry
- Major focus on employability skills and preparation for entering the workforce at the entry level
- Employer advisory committees help schools build realistic simulated environments

The Alabama Simulated Workplace model transforms CTE classrooms into a company setting that introduces students to business processes using distinct workplace components. By incorporating realistic workplace content like interviews, applications, employee manuals, and promotions for skill gains, simulated workplaces transform the classroom into an experience to prepare students with more than just content knowledge. In any high-quality simulated workplace, there will be active employer advisory committees that help determine what the lab setup should be and how to make the simulation look like the real world. Initial and continuous employer input is essential so that programs are as much like the real work environment as possible.

2026 WBL Seal of Excellence Winner

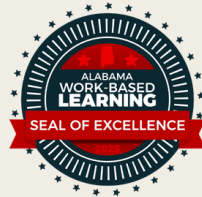
Region 4

Alabaster City Schools Champions Craft Academy

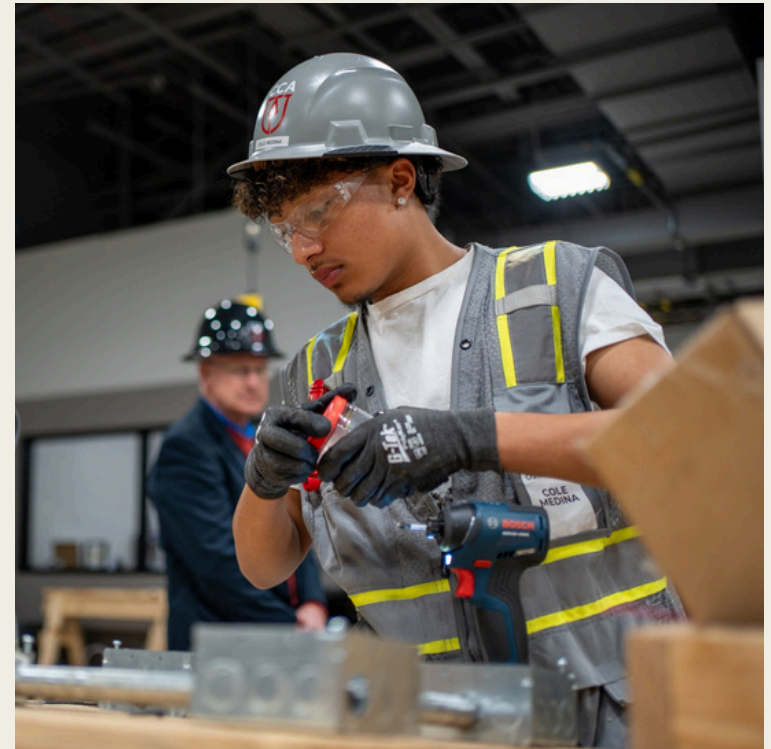
Jayden Kidd

(205) 484-1160

jayden.kidd@acsboe.org



The ACS Champions Craft Academy (CCA)'s simulated workplace is a premier workforce development program that prepares high school students for successful careers in the skilled trades. By blending hands-on training in electrical, industrial fabrication, and construction technology with a focus on leadership and professionalism, CCA bridges the gap between the classroom and the jobsite. Students gain a competitive edge through industry partnerships, internships, and job-readiness training that prepares them for immediate employment upon graduation. Signature events like Industry Day facilitate direct networking with local employers, allowing students to showcase their technical proficiency and work ethic. CCA is dedicated to developing confident, career-ready graduates who are equipped to make a significant impact in the construction industry.



2024 WBL Statewide Contender

Jefferson State Community College

Leah Bigbee

(205) 856-7917

leah.bigbee@jeffersonstate.edu

The Distribution Control Center (DCC) program at Jefferson State Community College is a one-of-a-kind, simulated workplace training experience developed with Alabama Power. The 10 week fast-track program takes place at the Shelby-Hoover campus of Jefferson State and Alabama Power HQ. Often described as the “911 of the power grid,” DCC operators are the first responders of the electrical system, monitoring outages, coordinating field crews, and restoring power across the state. This challenging program requires strong math and electrical aptitude, the ability to pass the SOPD assessment, and the composure to manage high-pressure situations where lives and critical services are at stake. Veterans and strategic thinkers, including gamers, often excel. Students train in a live lab using the same software, equipment, curriculum, and simulations as Alabama Power’s operations center, gaining real-world experience.



2026 WBL Seal of Excellence Winner

Region 7

Enterprise State Community College

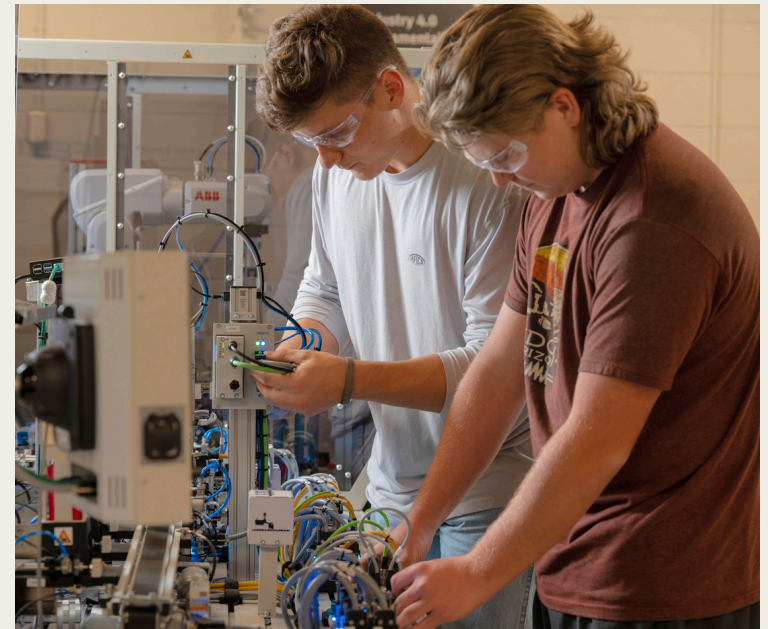
Aubri Hanson

(334) 347-2623

ahanson@escc.edu



The Mechatronics program operates as a simulated industrial workplace. Students follow professional standards for safety, teamwork, documentation, and production efficiency. Labs mirror real manufacturing environments where students troubleshoot PLC systems, wire motor controls, configure sensors, and analyze system faults using industry grade tools. Students track competencies, meet performance standards, and complete structured work-based learning experiences tied to employer expectations. Graduates leave prepared to enter advanced manufacturing, automation, and industrial maintenance roles with verified skills and industry recognized credentials.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Externships

- Goal is to send a proficient employee outside the existing job (potentially outside the industry) to broaden awareness and gain content knowledge
- Usually done for a defined period with a plan for returning to the initial employer
- The employee may be paid by their primary employer or through outside sources for the time they spend at the externship placement

The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended externship placements as a way for career coaches, counselors, and teachers to expand their own knowledge of career fields available to their students. Individuals providing guidance to students on selecting career paths are better prepared with firsthand knowledge and in-depth experience when discussing options with students. Externships can be arranged by school systems, individual employers, or employer associations

2024 WBL Best Practice

Alabama STEM Council Teacher Externships
Alabama Department of Workforce / AL STEM Council
Dr. Cynthia McCarty
cynthia.mccarty@workforce.alabama.gov

The Alabama STEM Council offers teacher externships designed for secondary teachers, career and technical education (CTE) teachers, school counselors, and other education professionals. These externships provide participants with real-world experiences that demonstrate how classroom content connects to careers and industry needs. Participants may choose between two formats. In the Immersive Experience, participants spend three full days at a single industry site, gaining deep insight into operations and workforce skills. Teachers choosing the Exploratory Experience spend one full day at each of three different industries for a broader perspective across sectors.



2024 WBL Best Practice

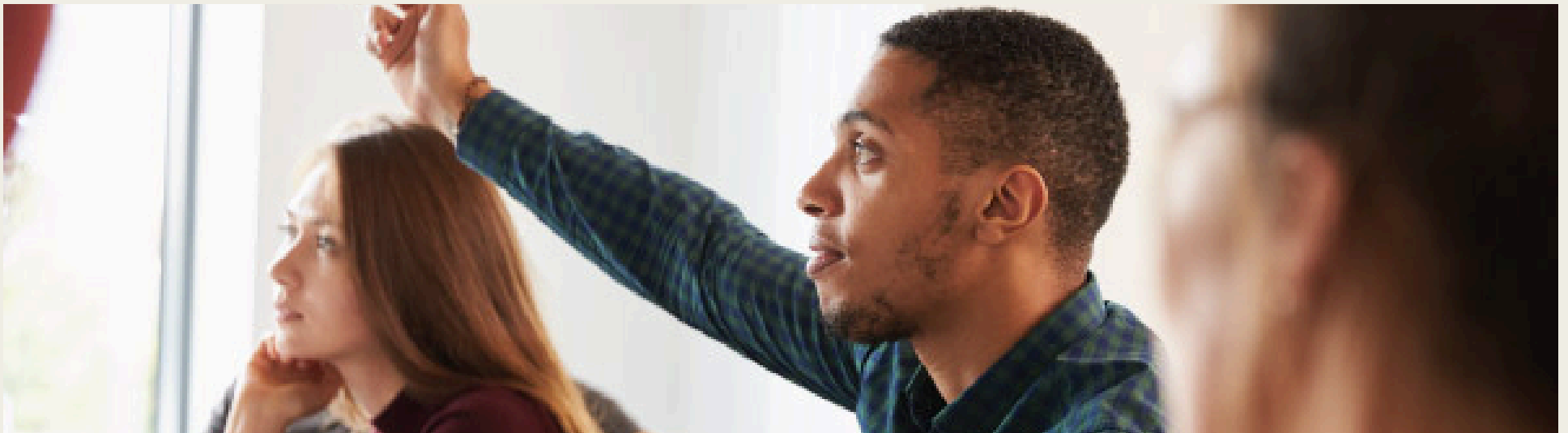
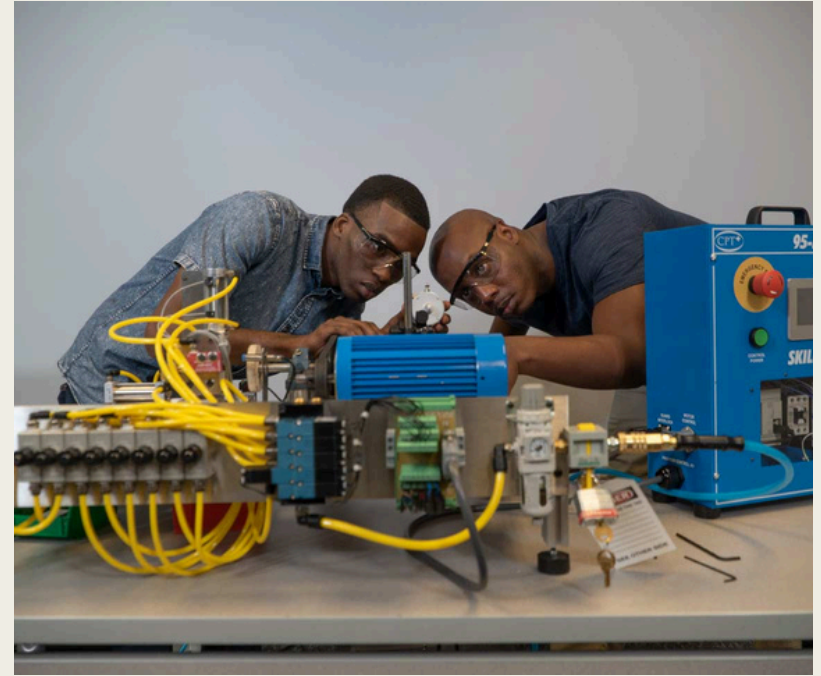
Alabama Community College System

Audrey Webb

(205) 567-4900

audrey.webb@accs.edu

The Alabama Community College System coordinates externships for postsecondary technical instructors. These five-day externships are designed to provide instructors with hands-on experience in the technical work directly related to the fields they teach. During the externship, instructors work alongside employees at their host company, gaining valuable insight into current industry practices and technologies. Participants receive a stipend for their time and complete assigned pre-work prior to the experience. At the conclusion of the externship, instructors are required to submit a deliverable that demonstrates how they will incorporate what they learned into specific lessons or curriculum within their programs.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

School-Based Enterprise



A school-based enterprise (SBE) is an entrepreneurial operation in a school setting that provides goods/services to meet the needs of the market. SBEs are managed and operated by students as hands-on learning. SBEs provide realistic and practical learning experiences that reinforce classroom instruction. SBEs can sell to consumers through a permanent location, a mobile kiosk, or through Internet marketing. Products may include spirit wear, food and beverage items, school supplies, signs and banners while other SBEs provide services such as creative design, advertising sales, and more. School-based enterprises are effective educational tools that help to prepare students for the transition from school to work or college. For many students, they provide their first work experience; for others, they provide an opportunity to build management, supervision, and leadership skills.

2024 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 1

Redstone Federal Credit Union

Patricia Lloyd

(256) 722-3735

plloyd@redfcu.org

Redstone Federal Credit Union's Schools Program provides work experience and grows the financial literacy of participating students. Program participants can also earn scholarships and employment with Redstone upon graduation. The program consists of eight high school branches and three college/university branches that are fully operated by the students. Students gain real-life work experience, improve their financial literacy, and earn money while training. Schools also benefit from Redstone's specially designed debit card that pays the school each time it's swiped. The branded debit cards have generated over \$742,000 for their educational partners. The program educates youth on financial matters, trains them to teach their family and classmates, and then shows them how beneficial it can be by providing employment, class credit, and a stronger financial foundation.



Internship



- May be paid or unpaid work experience
- Length of the placement is often pre-determined
- Familiarizes potential candidates with the specific industry and/or the specific employer who is hosting the intern
- Involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals
- Completion of internships organized by an educational institution may be associated with secondary or post-secondary course credit
- Typically one-time work or service experiences related to the student's major or career goal

Internships are widely used across industry sectors to give participants a firsthand look at working in a specific industry or occupation. The level of involvement can vary. Some interns are closely mentored in a specific role, while others explore a range of positions within an organization. Internships arranged through academic institutions may provide academic credit, while others are established directly by employers as a way to recruit and evaluate new talent. Teacher preparation programs often include student teaching internships as a capstone experience, allowing teacher candidates to apply the content knowledge gained in their coursework under the guidance of a mentor teacher. Employer-led internships may not be connected to academic credit. Many companies also use summer internship programs as an opportunity to evaluate potential employees before extending job offers.

2026 WBL Seal of Excellence Winner

Region 3

The University of Alabama

Alabama Productivity Center

Justin Rogers

(251) 234-1724

justin.rogers@ua.edu



The Alabama Productivity Center Internship Program connects undergraduate and graduate students from universities across Alabama with hands-on project experiences that support business and industry. APC partners with companies to identify operational and continuous improvement needs, recruits, interviews, hires, and onboards students to work on-site as temporary University of Alabama employees. Interns apply classroom knowledge to projects that improve processes, reduce waste, and strengthen organizational performance. APC staff provide project management guidance, training, and professional coaching to support student success and deliver measurable results for employers. The program creates immediate business impact, with \$22.5 million reported in 2025 alone, while helping students gain practical experience and career-ready skills that strengthen Alabama's future workforce.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 1

Huntsville City Schools

Caroline King

(256) 466-4011

caroline.king@hsv-k12.org

This partnership between Huntsville City Schools and Huntsville Hospital provides high school seniors with paid, real-world work experience while earning school credit. Since launching in 2023, the program has employed 63 students from six high schools across 31 hospital departments under the mentorship of 25 managers. Students contribute in areas such as administrative support, IT, clinical services, and operations. Over three years, participants have completed more than 14,000 hours and earned nearly \$190,000 in wages. By connecting education with industry, the initiative strengthens the local workforce pipeline and prepares students for long-term success.



2026 WBL Seal of Excellence Winner

Region 1

Florence City Schools LAUNCH Program

Jessica Flanagan

(256) 335-6326

jmflanagan@florencek12.org



The LAUNCH work-based learning program bridges the gap between workforce and education by integrating career-focused, hands-on work experiences into student academic schedules. The program supports career exploration, skill development, and workforce readiness by connecting participants with structured workplace positions not typically offered to high school students. LAUNCH students participate in internships or long-term job shadowing while also engaging in professional skills instruction and ongoing networking opportunities. Placements follow a tiered model that accommodates varying levels of career readiness, allowing students to gain in-depth experience in a single career field or explore multiple industries before selecting a pathway. LAUNCH prepares students to make informed career decisions with long-term success.



2026 WBL Statewide Contenders

Region 7

Baldwin County Schools Utilities Internship

Morell Baxter
(251) 769-6038
mbaxter@bcbe.org

The Baldwin County Utilities Internship Program connects students to high-demand careers in energy, water, and public infrastructure. Through hands-on, supervised experiences, interns gain real-world skills in electrical systems, maintenance, operations, and safety while learning from industry professionals. The program emphasizes accountability, teamwork, and professionalism, preparing students for long-term success. From career coaching to employment, participants receive training and mentorship throughout the process. Students build confidence, technical expertise, and a strong work ethic while serving their community. The program strengthens the local workforce and opens doors to lifelong careers in essential public utilities.

Region 1

Madison City Schools

Madison Hospital Ambassador Program
Michelle Hyams
(423) 280-7910
mghyams@madisoncity.k12.al.us

Madison Hospital Student Ambassador Program is an immersive, leadership-based program designed to inspire local high school seniors with immense potential to develop connections with senior staff and discover their career pathway by serving in a community hospital environment. Mentorship is crucial to the success of this endeavor. The program is built upon three fundamental pillars: intentional leadership, career pathways, and relationship development.

Region 7

Eastern Shore Chamber Foundation

Eastern Shore Bridge Program
Christopher Lugo
(334) 804-8018
clugo@eschamber.com

The Eastern Shore Bridge Program, an initiative of the Eastern Shore Chamber Foundation, AIDT Maritime Training Center, Innovate Alabama, and Baldwin County Public Schools, is a paid, work-based learning model designed to connect high school seniors with high-demand career pathways across Baldwin County. Bridge aligns classroom instruction with structured, employer-hosted internships in industries such as maritime, manufacturing, healthcare, and small business. Students earn \$15 per hour while gaining industry-recognized credentials, hands-on technical training, and professional skills development. Through partnerships with local employers, postsecondary institutions, and workforce agencies, Bridge strengthens the regional talent pipeline and reduces barriers to employment. The program ensures students graduate with real-world experience, employer connections, and a clear pathway to postsecondary education, apprenticeship, or direct employment in Alabama's priority sectors.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Clinical/Practicum



- Work experience that is typically unpaid
- Length of the placement is often pre-determined
- Most often used to describe placements in healthcare training programs
- Clinical/practicum course credit may be earned when organized and completed with a secondary or post-secondary educational institution

One of the most common uses of clinicals and practicum experiences is within the medical field. Clinical experience gives health science students an opportunity to integrate knowledge gained in the classroom with clinical practice. During clinicals, students are placed in a variety of healthcare settings and spend time observing patients at different stages of medical practice. This provides students with a better understanding of the scope of the profession. Similarly, students in education and social work pathways participate in field and practicum experiences where they have the opportunity to apply what they are learning. Some clinical and practicum field experiences are paid, while some are specifically prohibited from being paid placement. This determination is normally made by an accrediting body when there is a licensure requirement involved in the occupation.

2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 6

Dothan Tech Education and Training

Paula Snider

(478) 955-6640

pasnider@dothan.k12.al.us

The Education program at Dothan Tech introduces students to careers in education through hands-on experiences in elementary schools, preschools, and daycares. Students observe and assist teachers, develop lesson plans, volunteer at community events, and manage campus activities like the snack cart. They earn certifications such as Google for Educators and CPR, while learning professionalism and ethics. Students participate in leadership organizations including FCCLA, FTA, and Educators Rising, gaining service and competition experience. The program also offers dual enrollment courses and campus visits to various colleges and universities. Annual Signing Days connect graduates with local employers and Colleges of Education. Led by Paula Snider, the program prepares students for successful careers and continued education in teaching



Cooperative Education



- Paid employment at a work site
- Focus is on gaining work experience
- Sometimes transitions to a long-term employment situation
- Job is not necessarily tied to the specific field of training the student is participating in
- Often just called “work-based learning” or WBL by K-12 teachers and administrators
- Participation is associated with earning secondary or post-secondary course credit
- Training agreement between employer and educational institution

Cooperative Education represents a cooperative agreement between an employer and an educational institution. Students participating in CoOp gain employability skills and industry experience. Cooperative Education is one of the most widely used forms of work-based learning and has seen a major resurgence in popularity in recent years. This form of training is commonly used in both secondary and postsecondary programs. Successful CoOp implementations are built on flexible scheduling models established between the employer and the school. These arrangements are mutually beneficial, allowing for the student to continue academic study while providing value to the employer. Students are able to earn money while employers are able to fill entry-level jobs. A key distinction from some other types of WBL is that not every CoOp placement is tied to the field of study for the student.

2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 2

Gadsden State Community College

CoMet: Consortium of Machining Education Training

Keri Wood

(256) 490-6413

kwood@gadsdenstate.edu

The Consortium of Machining Education Training (CoMeT) is a hybrid work-based learning program where students attend classes two days a week while simultaneously working for an industry partner. This "earn while you learn" education model combines a cutting-edge curriculum that supports advanced manufacturing technology with paid work experience. Students also learn highly sought after business principles and best practices of a world class manufacturer. Students are guaranteed at least 24 work hours per week with a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. Students will receive an Associate Degree of Applied Science in Precision Machining at the completion of the five-semester program. CoMeT students also earn 7 industry-recognized credentials.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

On-The-Job Learning (OJL)



- Paid work experience
- Tasks learned on the job are directly linked to technical instruction the student is receiving
- Must be through structured, supervised work experience
- Often results in long-term employment with the company

The critical defining characteristic of on the job learning (OJL) is the connection between academic study and real-world learning experience. This connection sets OJL apart as a more specifically career focused activity than a more general CoOp placement. Participants in OJL are not only seeking work experience and employability skills, but they are also learning the technical skills necessary for the career they are pursuing. The connection of OJL to training for a specific occupation is one of the factors considered that sometimes makes WIOA funding available to support employers with program implementation.

2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 1

Drake State Technical College

Huntsville Tech FAME Program

Myron Parks

(256) 783-7032

myron.parks@drakestate.edu

The Huntsville Tech FAME Chapter at Drake State Community and Technical College is a work-based learning program that allows students to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in Mechatronics while completing 1,800 hours of on-the-job training (OJT) and earning an Advanced Manufacturing Technician certificate through FAME. Students attend class two days per week and work with their sponsoring employer three days per week. Industry partners pay students a minimum of \$18 per hour while they participate in the program. The Huntsville Tech FAME Chapter meets monthly to discuss student recruitment, employer engagement, curriculum enhancement, and FAME-related events. This partnership benefits both students and employers by preparing the next generation of highly skilled industrial maintenance technicians while providing students with valuable experience and a clear pathway to a long-term career in advanced manufacturing.



Pre-Apprenticeship



- Training must be connected to a registered apprenticeship
- Participants are completing on-the-job learning and/or related technical instruction which will be counted toward completion of a registered apprenticeship IF the pre-apprentice ever becomes an apprentice
- May be certified by the AOA as an indicator of quality
- Participants may be youth or adults

Pre-apprenticeships are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship and ultimately a career. Pre-apprenticeship programs offer participants structured training opportunities to prepare them for entry into a Registered Apprenticeship Program. They can provide a set of services that participants need to progress into an apprenticeship, such as work-readiness skills and wraparound supports for transportation and childcare.

2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Lockheed Martin

Dianah Cortez

(720) 360-5393

dianah.m.cortez@lmco.com

The MBS pre-apprenticeship program, certified by the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, is a partnership between Lockheed Martin and seven area high schools. The program allows participants the opportunity to gain exposure to the electronics advanced manufacturing field. Curriculum is tailored to fit within the school's existing CTE program or can be a stand-alone course, and it includes Basic Engineering Drawings, Basic Electrostatic Discharge, Basic Point to Point Wiring, Basic Shop Math, Basic Soldering, Basic Torque, and more. Students who complete the certified pre-apprenticeship program receive an OSHA 10 certification, an Alabama Ready to Work certification, and are guaranteed an interview for Lockheed Martin's Advanced Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Program (AMTAP).



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Registered Apprenticeship



Five components of all Registered Apprenticeships:

- Business driven
- On the job learning (OJL)
- Related technical instruction (RTI)
- Rewards for skills gains
- Nationally recognized credential

Registered Apprenticeship is a business-driven model that provides an effective way for employers to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid on-the-job learning with related instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. In addition, apprenticeships allow employers to develop and apply industry standards to high-quality, structured training programs, therefore increasing productivity and the quality of the workforce. Apprenticeships are esteemed opportunities. Apprenticeships afford participants a chance to earn money while they learn in a non-traditional classroom setting. The earn-and-learn model provides apprentices an opportunity to see a direct relation between their increasing skills and increasing wages. Apprenticeship programs are one of the most effective ways to reach our labor force participation and attainment goals and to ensure that Alabamians are on career pathways leading to economic mobility and self sufficiency. Registered apprenticeships are unlike regular training models developed by education and delivered to employers. Instead, they are developed by employers.

2026 WBL Statewide Contenders

Southland Transportation Group - International Trucks

Kimberly Guy

(205) 942-6226

kguy@southlandtransportationgroup.com

Southland Transportation Group partnered with Jefferson County Schools to create a hands-on career pathway for their future diesel technicians. Through this collaboration, high school students are hired directly into Southland's registered apprenticeship program, giving them a head start in a high-demand industry. Apprentices earn while completing structured, competency-based training that blends on-the-job learning with related technical instruction. The program is led by experienced journeymen who are Master Certified Class A Diesel Technicians, ensuring apprentices receive expert mentorship and industry-aligned training. This registered apprenticeship prepares and equips students with practical skills, professional certifications, and a clear pathway to long-term careers in diesel technology.



2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 6

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

Chad Sutton

(260) 410-9290

csutton@lbwcc.edu

LBW's Mechatronics Apprenticeship, in partnership with Shaw Industries, gives students the opportunity to earn while they learn with hands-on experience with industry equipment and processes. Apprentices progress through competency-based training while receiving support from LBW's industrial electronics staff, who work closely with Shaw to support student success. Each year, Shaw hires 4–8 apprentices, providing real-world experience, competitive pay, tuition assistance, and valuable technical skills. The program's impact is strengthening Shaw's maintenance workforce. LBW student Ashton Threatt was recognized as the 2025 Alabama Office of Apprenticeship Region 6 Apprentice of the Year, highlighting the effectiveness of the partnership between industry and education.



Region 3

Mercedes-Benz US International

Brandy Snipes

(205) 340-6976

brandy.snipes@mercedes-benz.com

Mercedes-Benz USI registered the first apprenticeship in Alabama created for high school participants and allowing them to work in automotive manufacturing facilities. Students receive their related instruction through modern manufacturing classes in their high School CTE program. MBUSI rotates the apprentices to different departments, giving them experience in and exposure to Production, Maintenance, and Automotive Repair. After completion, participants can continue working in production or enter the Mechatronics or Mercedes-Benz D.R.I.V.E Academy. Mechatronics allows them to pursue a career and degree in Maintenance (Industrial Electronics). The Mercedes-Benz D.R.I.V.E Academy (diagnostics, repair, and instruction for vehicle excellence) prepares students for a full-time position in Automotive Repair at MBUSI.



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

2026 WBL Statewide Contender

Region 4

ThinkData Solutions

Claudia Powell

(205) 406-7300

claudia@thinkdatasolutions.com

ThinkData Solutions, Inc. provides data education and software development with training that builds practical skills. Its Data Analyst Apprenticeship combines on-the-job experience with structured coursework and mentorship. Apprentices work for participating organizations and complete a 12-week bootcamp preparing for the CompTIA Data+ certification. Over the year-long program, they receive guidance from experienced ThinkData analysts, gaining real-world experience. Registered with the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, the program strengthens workforce readiness, improves retention, and supports economic growth.



2026 WBL Best Practice

Region 2

International Automotive Components

Tina Mitchum

(256) 452-3824

tina.mitchum@iacgroup.com

International Automotive Components (IAC) in Anniston operates a major automotive manufacturing facility producing interior trim systems and related components. To strengthen its talent pipeline, IAC offers Registered Apprenticeships in Industrial Controls, Personnel Systems Management, and Network Technician roles. Apprentices are full-time, paid employees who complete on-the-job learning with mentors alongside technical instruction aligned with industry standards. The program provides a clear pathway into advanced manufacturing and technical support careers.



AT A GLANCE WBL INVENTORY

WBL TYPE	IS THE WORKPLACE ACTIVITY ALIGNED WITH THE JOB SPECIFIC COURSEWORK?	WHAT IS THE TYPICAL DURATION?	IS THERE A PAID OPTION?	IS THERE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN CREDIT?	TYPE OF ACTIVITY?	DOES MY ORGANIZATION OR PROGRAM OFFER THIS?
JOB SHADOWING	NO	1 DAY	NO	NO	A	
CARRER FAIR/EXPO	NO	1 DAY	NO	NO	A	
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING	SOMETIMES	VARIES	NO	YES	A/E	
INDUSTRY TOURS	NO	1 DAY	NO	NO	A	
SIMULATED WORKPLACE	YES	1-2 SEMESTERS	NO	YES	A/E	
EXTERNSHIP	NO	1-2 WEEKS	MAYBE	NO	A/E	
SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE	SOMETIMES	VARIES	MAYBE	MAYBE	A/E/P	
INTERNSHIP	SOMETIMES	VARIES	MAYBE	MAYBE	A/E/P	
CLINICAL/PRACTICUM FIELD EXPERIENCE	YES	1-2 SEMESTERS	MAYBE	YES	E/P	
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION	NO	VARIES	YES	MAYBE	E/P	
ON-THE-JOB LEARNING	YES	VARIES	MAYBE	YES	P	
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP	YES	VARIES	MAYBE	YES	A/E/P	
REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP	YES	1-4 YEARS	YES	YES	P	



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

The Alabama Office of Apprenticeship would like to extend their appreciation to all the state agencies who have committed a great deal of time and energy to this project. The success of work-based learning is a team effort, requiring collaboration among many stakeholders including employers, education institutions, and diverse state agencies. These partners' dedication to expanding work-based learning is a key to success in strengthening our talent pipelines and ensuring that Alabama citizens are on paths to good jobs and promising careers. Integrating work and education increases the value and authenticity of training programs, providing employers with the skilled workers they need to keep Alabama's economy moving forward.



In-State Partnership With



Awareness



Exploration



Preparation

Provided with support of the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA)



It is the policy of the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship (AOA) that no person shall ever be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, employment, or service administered by the AOA, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), genetic information, and disability. The AOA likewise prohibits such discrimination in any registered apprenticeship and approved apprenticeship program.