## Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

### Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth Services (DYS):</td>
<td>Alabama has a Department of Youth Services. This Department is established to work with delinquent youth. The expectation is that the services of DYS will prevent delinquent youth from eventually advancing to the adult correctional system. ADRS has a specialist who is very actively involved with DYS. This individual receives referrals on a regular basis from DYS and forwards those referrals to the appropriate field staff. ADRS has a written agreement with the ADYS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Mental Health (DMH):</td>
<td>The Agency maintains an ongoing relationship with DMH. ADRS serves numerous consumers with mental illness. ADRS works on cooperative initiatives to ensure services are provided to eligible consumers. ADRS maintains a relationship with the DMH Division of Substance Abuse and a network of residential aftercare service providers. ADRS is working extensively with the DMH to expand and improve the ADRS supported employment program. This includes efforts in the areas of Employment First, extended supports, and collaborating on grants. ADRS has a cooperative agreement with ADMH.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to stay abreast of national issues regarding community rehabilitation facilities through its attendance and participation in conferences of state and national significance including Alabama Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (AARF), Alabama Association of People Supporting Employment First (AL-APSE), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). Collaborative efforts between ADRS Computer Services and the CRP section have recently developed computer-generated reports that assist the CRP section in tracking targeted CRP goals and outcomes such as numbers of individuals successfully employed, cost per successful closure, and average wage.

The Alabama Department of Education, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of the Department of Veterans Affairs. This training is currently being offered twice a year in a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. APSE (Association for People Supporting Employment First) is sponsoring, and our state Chapter of APSE are also participating in CESP National Certification (National Certification for Employment Support Professionals). Project SEARCH, a statewide initiative to improve transition services for students with most significant disabilities began in Alabama in FY 2012 with two pilot sites. Alabama now has 11 Project SEARCH sites and we will continue to work to expand this transition program in our state. All sites have a state team member assigned to them to help...
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

with implementation and fidelity. Trainings take place throughout the year and the teacher and job coach both attend national SEARCH training as well. Cooperative Agreements between the Local School Systems (LEA’s) or Post-Secondary education (for youth programs) Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation Program and the local employer supporting the program are in place for all 11 sites. (Page 187) Title II

Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post—Secondary Education continue to work towards Employment First legislation. Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment is an evidence-based approach to supported employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS, based on zero exclusion, competitive employment in the community, mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, benefits planning is included, job search occurs rapidly, employment specialist develop relationships with employers in their communities, job supports are continuous, and consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among 7 states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at 2 sites in the state. The grant is for 5 years during which time we will be looking at sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and Alapointe in Mobile County (urban site). (Page 187) Title II

Certificate Based Job Coach Training is collaboration between our agency, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First). This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University’s Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We offer this training twice a year to SE Job Coaches, School Job Coaches, Job Coaches employed by the Department of Mental Health and other community job developers and job coaches. This year, job coaches specializing in sensory impairments also participated in this training as we work to collaborate more closely with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) and their AIDB regional center staff located throughout the state. • Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post—Secondary Education have been working to secure Employment First legislation and continue to participate in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to support the concept of Employment First. Additionally, several partners are participating in the Vision Quest training, offered through ODEP, to assist Alabama with options to infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid waiver, State Plan Options and
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

increased collaboration to better serve consumers as they move towards integrated, community-based employment options. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to improve transition services; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to community based Supported Employment providers while still in high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community-based assessments or begin the Discovery Profile before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services. 2. The GATE program (Gaining Access to Employment) is a training program that takes consumers from sheltered work or day habilitation and fully immerses them in industry training. This collaboration between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Alabama Department of Mental Health began in North Alabama and now has 5 sites. The GATE program braids funding utilizing from both ADRS and ADMH (Medicaid waiver). Adults, who are long term consumers of day programs are trained in competitive integrated employment settings using job coaches for support during their internships. Consumers are paid wages while they intern, primarily in manufacturing settings. (Page 220) Title II

The agency has a state specialist overseeing the expansion and effectiveness of the agency’s supported employment efforts. Two additional specialists have been hired to assist with the growth and expansion of supported employment in Alabama in the last 2 years. This growth includes eleven 11 project SEARCH sites, the continuation of the GATE Project, IPS SE for individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, and expansion of the Connections program for individuals with Autism. We are currently collaborating with the LEAs and training rehabilitation transition counselors on provision of services to students at an earlier age while in the secondary setting. This should increase participation of students with more significant disabilities and provide those services earlier. We currently have jointly funded pre-ets specialists contracts with secondary education for students with most significant disabilities. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community—based assessments before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition. Many students with most significant disabilities are participating in our summer JET program which includes work-based learning emphasizing social skills acquisition, career exploration and paid work experience.

Training on Certificate Based Job Coach Training in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, and the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First), The Network on Employment continues. This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University’s Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. (Page 226) Title II
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

ADRS continues to seek methods to increase participation of individuals with all types of disabilities in supported employment programs. Initiatives for improving transition services for students with more significant disabilities are being implemented. Since WIOA students with more significant disabilities are being referred and receiving services at a much earlier age, SE providers are providing Pre-Employment Transition Services to these students with an emphasis on work-based learning. We are procuring additional pre-employment transition specialist (jointly funded) to increase the likelihood of competitive integrated employment for students with more significant disabilities and expansion of innovative opportunities and collaborations including student led enterprises, participation in work-based learning at a younger age, and successful programs like Project SEARCH. We will continue to work with career and technical education to develop innovative programs that address internship and apprentice opportunities as well as certifications in employment areas, especially in high demand areas for our state. We will continue to work with Workforce development to identify and provide services to youth in the area, especially underserved youth and those with more significant disabilities. All these identified entities are a part of our Employment First efforts in Alabama. We are currently submitting 3 RFP’s for collaborations with Workforce Boards, Post-Secondary Education, and Alabama One-Stop Centers for internships and services to youth through expansion of Project SEARCH to youth in their areas. (Page 241-242) Title II.

Efforts continued to collaborate closely with Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First)—The Network on Employment, Alabama Department of Mental Health, and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), to provide training to staff, pre-employment transition specialist, skills training instructors, SE providers, IPS staff and other employment staff in Alabama that serve individuals with disabilities. Customized employment and Discovery are included in this training. ADRS continues to expand services within the state to increase opportunities for individuals to access supported employment services. All counties in Alabama all have trained supported employment providers to serve consumers in their area. Many of our community rehabilitation programs provided paid summer work experiences that include job exploration, work place readiness, instruction in self-advocacy, in demand jobs in their areas, and paid work place paid work experience with employers in their local areas. Two additional staff members were hired as Rehabilitation Specialists for Supported Employment to assist the counselors and providers with quality supported employment and to provide training as needed to both groups. Additionally another state office specialist was hired to assist the statewide transition specialist. The addition of these specialists will help to assure that we are providing quality services to students, youth, and adults with more significant disabilities that require supported employment. We continue to include Discovery and customized employment in our bi-annual training with staff to assure better job matches, and more opportunities for internships and training to consumers requiring SE. The following initiatives have been implemented:

Continual training and consultation by state office staff on Supported Employment, Milestones, Discovery, Person Centered Profile Development, WIOA, IPS Supported Employment, Self-Employment, Pre-Employment Transition Services and Project SEARCH for transition students. (Page 242) Title II
Collaboration continues with Alabama Association of Persons Supporting Employment First (AL—APSE) and Alabama Department of Mental Health to offer bi-annual job coach training to new job coaches, job developers, pre-employment transition specialists, skills training instructors, IPS staff, mental health staff and case managers. This training is conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University and provides instruction on best practices, innovative strategies and customized employment. For the last two years Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind sent local and regional staff personnel who serve those with sensory impairments.

We continue to provide the GATE Project for provider agencies who have consumers in sheltered work who are seeking employment in their communities. GATE was recognized by ICI (Institute for Community Inclusion) as an innovative strategy to move consumers from segregated employment to competitive integrated employment. It is a partnership with our agency, the Department of Mental Health and local employers. This program is embedded in the workplace and gives the opportunity for those who will require extra time and additional supports and training to learn a job. This unique program braids funds from the two agencies to secure the supports and training needed. (Page 243) Title I

**Customized Employment**

Supported Employment (SE) is available in Alabama for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services, and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. These services are provided in all regions of the state by 38 approved community—based organizations. Supported Employment services are available to individuals regardless of their disability. Currently, the primary disabilities served include persons with significant intellectual disabilities, severe mental illness, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, visual and hearing impairments, severe orthopedic impairments, traumatic brain injury, and other most significant disabilities. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services currently utilizes a Milestones service and payment process. Milestones, a service and outcome-based payment system, has significantly improved the quality of supported employment throughout the state, while proving to be more cost effective for the Agency. Providers of supported employment are paid for successful outcomes achieved by individuals participating in supported employment. The Milestones program segments the rehabilitation process into four distinct areas: (1) Determination of Needs/Person Centered Profiles (including Assessments) and the Discovery Process, (2) Hire, (3) Job Retention/Coaching and (4) Closure. Extended supports including natural supports are available at the job site, and are provided for the duration of the employment. Providers of long-term supports are required to document twice monthly contact with each consumer successfully working in the community, and to maintain this documentation in case files for the duration of that consumer’s job. ADRS can fund extended supports to youth for up to 4 years or until they reach the age of 25 and are no longer considered a youth. If VR is funding extended services the case must remain open until the individual is receiving these supports funded through another source. To ensure the highest quality of services, training is provided throughout the year to address issues related to supported employment, including the provision of extended services, customized employment and supported self-employment. In this
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix
coopera\ntive arrangement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama
Department of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with AL---APSE/ the Alabama
Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education training and
educational activities continue to be offered twice a year to improve the consistency of service
delivery by job coaches, pre-employment transition specialist, skills training instructors, AIDB
staff, IPS staff and others in the community that offer employment services to individuals with
most significant disabilities. Customized employment training is also provided. This training is
coordinated by ADRS and the ADMH and offered by Virginia Commonwealth University’s
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We currently have a
cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health that includes both the
DD Division of the Department and the MI/SA Division. This agreement gives and Overview
of both Departments including their purpose, changes reflected in WIOA, the Legal basis for
the agreement, Overview of the Departments and the Responsibilities of the Partners,
Eligibility, Plan Development, Referral Process for the Departments, State level shared
objectives, Responsibilities and Implementation including extended services to individuals
with most significant disabilities. (Page 186) Title II

Yet another perspective on the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities was
available by examining the services most often anticipated for MSD individuals by counselors
during the eligibility determination process. From 2014 to 2016, 24,122 individuals were
determined eligible and assigned an eligibility category using the agency’s Functional
Limitations Priority Assessment (FLPA). 5,681 of these individuals were determined to the
Most Significant Disability group. More often than those in other eligible categories, persons
deemed MSD were anticipated to require Supported Employment Services, Customized
Employment Services, Job Readiness Training, and Rehabilitation Technology and/or
Devices. Supported Employment was anticipated for 3,181 of the 5,681 individuals in the
MSD category, 56%. (Page 204) Title IV

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) remains committed to the
provision of quality services to individuals with the most significant disabilities through the
provision of supported employment services. ADRS provides supported employment services
through a collaborative/partnership effort with 38 service providers statewide in FY 2017.
These providers cover all counties in the state. These providers offer services to individuals
with a variety of significant disabilities without restrictions regarding disability type. The SE
providers are distributed throughout the state in order to ensure maximum availability to those
in need of supported employment to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment or
advancement in employment. Service providers receive funds for the provision of supported
employment through an outcome based payment system. Providers must submit evidence that
each milestone has been achieved. Some milestones include consumer and employer
satisfaction surveys. Consumer satisfaction is designed to reflect satisfaction with the job or
identify any consumer concerns or issues. The employer satisfaction survey is designed to
reflect the consumer’s job performance, stability and training needs. Supported employment
funds are distributed to each provider agency based on the milestone achieved by each
individual served. Job skills training is provided to individuals on site at the work setting.
Supported employment services include placement in competitive integrated employment
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

settings for the maximum number of hours possible and is based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. In FY 2017, the SE program: had 1019 consumers’ complete situational assessments and/or the Discovery process. We closed 541 consumers in competitive integrated employment. These consumers worked an average of 23 hours a week and made an average of $8.30 an hour. This represents an increase of 15% from the previous year in consumers served. (Page 241) Title II

Each supported employment provider operates under a milestone/outcome—based program to ensure quality outcomes and appropriate employment options based on individual choice. Consumers are offered the opportunity to participate in community—based assessments to facilitate an informed decision regarding their employment goal. Job development is provided on an individual basis to locate employment based on the consumer’s interests, skills, limitations and community living needs. Job coaching is also provided at the work site to ensure that the individual has the necessary training, skills and supports to work. Once the consumer is stable in the workplace, extended services are planned and implemented to protect the long—term success of the job. Consumer and employer satisfaction regarding the services provided are measured at the time of employment and again before case closure. Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These extended supports are provided at the completion of stabilization, during the successful rehabilitation Milestone and beyond ADRS case closure. The option for Discovery and Customized Employment, or for Person Centered Profiles along with assessments are available to consumers to maximize success for individuals in supported employment. Supported Self—employment is also available for individuals wanting to start their own business. (Page 244) Title II

Braiding/Blending Resources

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

Extended service provision is provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in a variety of ways. This includes the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support youth in Project SEARCH, contract service provision to SE vendors, grant dollars for IPS and DEI, fund raising, and private pay. Extended services not to exceed four years.

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services entered into this agreement to mutually serve students with disabilities in the Pike County and Troy City Boards of Education through cooperatively funding the professional services of one full-time nine- month instructor, housed at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike Center for Technology. Instruction will be provided in an integrated classroom setting with peers who are not identified as students with disabilities, and will focus on the area of pre-employment transition services. These pre-employment transition services, which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA, will be provided in a group setting in a classroom or the community. The instruction of pre-employment transition services provided will be in the areas of: job exploration counseling,
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. This instruction is designed to prepare students with disabilities to enter long term competitive integrated employment in high demand careers by identifying and exploring career interests, as well as, increasing individual independence, self-sufficiency and inclusion of students with disabilities in their communities. Students served by this program include any student with a disability enrolled at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike Center for Technology, who is in the 11th or 12th grades, is eligible for or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and has received a referral from the VR Transition Counselor, Special Education Teacher and/or school administrator. Course curriculum will consist of instruction in the following areas Basic Computer Skills, Financial Literacy, Problem Solving, Manufacturing, Job Acquisition. Course curriculum will also include discussion of local high demand careers, labor market information and activities that may include community-based experiences. (Page 173-174) Title II

**School to Work Transition**

The yet to be determined workforce development areas provide career services, client assessment, case management, referral to Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work-based learning. They also provide specialized employment and training activities for youth, including basic education, GED programs, occupational skills training, and work-based learning activities. The Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes the following programs and entities operated through the following agents. (Page 50) Title I

- **PROJECT SEARCH:** Project SEARCH is a one—year internship program for students with disabilities in the last year of high school or with out of school youth. It is targeted for students and youth whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government, or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three (3) internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, special education teacher and skills training instructor to create an employment goal, and to support the student during this important transition from school to work. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the employer, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Council for Development Disabilities the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the local school systems (or post-secondary education for youth) and most importantly the employers. The program is currently available in the following counties: Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Shelby, Etowah, Marshall, Baldwin, Calhoun and two (2) programs in Mobile. When participating in Project SEARCH, the student actually goes to the employment site each day as opposed to going to the school. The LEA provides a classroom teacher(s) to provide employment instruction in the morning, and the students go to assigned internships the remainder of the day. Internships include patient escort, food service, central sterilization, pharmacy, maintenance, grounds keeping, and other settings at the business. No funds from other participating agencies are used
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency’s approved State Plan.

(Page 174) Title II

Referrals for transition services and pre-employment transition services are carried out in a number of ways. Students can be referred by the LEA’s, special education teachers, 504 coordinators, doctors, mental health professionals, parents, teachers, transition counselors assigned to the schools, or can be self-referred. Once referred to the VR counselors assigned to the school, the counselors work with educational officials to obtain pertinent documentation necessary for pre-employment transition services or transition services. Students may receive pre-employment transition services beginning in the 9th grade or age 16-21 (or younger if decided in the IEP). Students can be served as eligible or potentially eligible consumers. Students who require intensive services will require an application, be determined eligible within the required 60- day period (unless for specific, documented reason an extension is necessary) and a plan for transition services will be written within 90 days. It is expected that all students requiring VR services to be successful in competitive integrated employment will have a plan before they exit high school. We anticipate that many of our students served under potentially eligible will apply for services and become VR consumers in their 11th grade year. All pre-ets services for students ages 16-21 or in the 9th grade (younger if stipulated in their IEP) that are not served under potentially eligible, will have pre-ets services included in their IPEs. (Page 179) Title II

Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) — SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program. • Jointly—Funded Pre-Employment Transition Specialist — ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded Pre-ETS specialist in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre—employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS pays 75% LEA pays 25%). The jointly funded pre-employment transition specialist provide pre—employment transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre—employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for long term competitive integrated employment. (Page 180) Title II

Team (SITT). SITT is a multidisciplinary group of 37 representatives from 22 state agencies (ADRS, ALSDE, Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education) and organizations providing services for students and young adults with disabilities. The purpose of this group is to develop a better understanding of each agency’s role and responsibilities in service delivery for Alabama’s students and young adults with disabilities, and to seek and implement new and better ways of providing secondary special education and transition services. At the local level, the ADRS has procedures in place to ensure the agency is actively involved in the transition of students with disabilities from school to work. The agency has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition
The counselor visits the school on a regularly scheduled basis to meet with teachers and guidance counselors in order to provide vocational rehabilitation information and to receive referrals of students with disabilities in need of rehabilitation services. The VR counselor meets with the student and parents in order to explain rehabilitation services to enable a student’s informed choice regarding these services. School records and other information needed to serve a student as a potentially eligible consumer or needed for eligibility determination is obtained. Once eligibility is determined efforts are made to begin determining rehabilitation needs and a vocational goal. (Page 181) Title II

The new MOU between ALSDE and ADRS addresses transition planning and development of the IEP under scope of services for both ALSDE and ADRs collaboratively and individually. A revised agreement has been sent to SDE and is awaiting the new superintendent’s signature. This replaces the agreement on file dated 5/6/2016.

ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities. As stated earlier, ADRS has transition counselors designated to each LEA who work closely with the special education and career and technical education teachers in the development of the IEP for those students/consumers with whom the ADRS is involved and attend IEP Team meetings and/or provide input that will assist in making decisions about services that will be provided by the ADRS, such as assistive technology, career exploration or work experience opportunities. ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities. (Page 182)

The MOA clarifies that nothing under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reduces the obligation of the LEA to pay for, or provide transition services that are considered special education services, or related services necessary for assuring a free and appropriate education for students. The agreement also states that all expenditures identified by the LEA and VR for provision of pre-employment transition services that are new, having a VR focus of preparing students with disabilities to access careers that will lead to long term competitive integrated employment, and are not duplicative of services provided by the LEA, be the responsibility of ADRS. It also clarifies in the memorandum of agreement, that expenditures approved by the VR Counselor for transition services that are provided to VR students with disabilities, eligible for VR services, that are vocational in nature and support and lead to the achievement of the employment goal in the IEP, will be the financial responsibility of the DSU. (Page 183) Title II

Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals with intellectual disabilities were: Community Inclusion, Fair Wages, Employment Supports and Benefits. Agency outcomes in FY 2014 through 2016 for persons with intellectual disabilities for both rehabilitation rate and weekly wage were significantly lower than the agency norm. VR program data examined over a six- year span indicate that the majority of VR consumers with an intellectual disability were in need of supported employment services. Many publications acknowledge the importance of school to work transition outcomes, that early exposure to a wide range of work-based learning experiences
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

plays a large part in later outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Regarding those who have already made the transition from secondary education, it will be important for VR to monitor and address the need to offer VR services to those individuals who are currently being served within day programs. (Page 207)  

Findings from the 2017 CSNA indicate that Alabama’s Youth with Disabilities are affected by disproportionately high dropout rates, markedly lower rates of enrollment and completion of postsecondary education, and significantly higher rates of unemployment or underemployment. These observations are borne out by data from the Alabama Department of Education, the Census Bureau, as well as ADRS’s own program statistics and survey research. Recently published findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study demonstrated that Youth with an Individualized Education Plan are more likely than their peers to be socioeconomically disadvantaged, experience difficulty completing typical tasks independently, and find themselves the object of bullying. Youth with an IEP were found to be suspended at higher rates and to lag their peers in planning and taking steps to obtain postsecondary education and jobs (Lipscomb et al., 2017). Furthermore, Youth with autism, deaf-blindness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and orthopedic impairments appear to be at highest risk for challenges making a successful transition from high school. (Page 209)

It is fortunate that prior to new WIOA requirements for students with disabilities, ADRS had enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). ADRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with the ALSDE for the provision of transition services. At the state level, ADRS participates as an equal partner in the Alabama State Interagency Transition Team. At the local level, the ADRS has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition counselor. Furthermore, ADRS has for years been committed to the financial support of jointly funded positions, i.e. Pre-Employment Transition Specialists, in local education agencies to assist with the provision of transition services. Shortly after the final WIOA regulations were released in August of 2016, however, ADRS recognized the need for a comprehensive effort to build upon existing capacity and foster greater connections between ADRS staff and their Department of Education counterparts at the local level. (Page 211)

Additionally, we are continuing to collaborate with all our state entities to improve services for students and youth with most significant disabilities. We are working with the State Department of Education on improving Assistive Technology access in order to improve the transition from school to work, and entry to Post Secondary settings. We are working with Career and Technical Education to increase participation for students with more significant disabilities. (Page 218)

Extended services for youth are included in policy and in the counselor resource manual however this has not been necessary. State office has been contacted in regard to several cases of youth needed extended services, but in these cases, we were able to access waiver services for extended supports. We do anticipate that extended services for youth will be necessary for individuals who do not receive waiver services, but to date we have not had to use this provision and have been able to access the waiver. ADRS’s allotment for FY 2018 for
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

| supported employment services for youth will include post-employment services and extended services for youth. VR currently spends about 3 million on supported employment and almost 1 million additional dollars through contracts for all individuals with most significant disabilities so easily expends its allotment requirements for youth. Additionally, this year we will be adding 3 new youth programs through Project SEARCH for out of school youth with more significant disabilities. (Page 220) Title II

Engage Alabama is a collaborative effort of the ADRS, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program to develop and provide an app for students with disabilities to improve the student’s knowledge of transition services; assist the student in identifying and utilizing strategies to improve transition services and increase the student’s capability to better advocate for transition service through the student led IEP process. Students may access Engage Alabama via the internet at engageal.com, or by going to the Apple Store or Google Play store where students can download the app at no charge. Once all questions in the app are answered a transition plan will be generated that the student may print and share with his/her family and IEP case manager prior to the IEP meeting. This plan will serve as a self-advocacy tool to assist the student in successfully leading his/her IEP meeting, in discussing transition goals and what is needed for the students to reach those goals. Students may access this app as often as need during the school year to make any necessary changes, but it is recommended that students access the app on an annual basis prior to his/her IEP meeting. It is important to note that while the Engage Alabama application was designed for use by students who are receiving services under an IEP, any student with a disability (including those that would meet the requirements for 504 services) may access the app to assist with identification of needed pre-employment transition services and to develop transition goals. (Page 230) Title II

The agency maintains an excellent service delivery system to consumers who are blind or have low vision. This service delivery system includes a network of Rehabilitation Counselors specializing in blindness, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Assistive Technology Specialists, Pre-Employment Transition Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Assistants who provide a wide range of services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Additionally, there is a State Coordinator of Blind Services who oversees these services. (Page 223) Title II

ADRS, in Partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, offers a Summer Work Experience Program. During the summer, students who are in high school or college have the opportunity to participate in this program. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Business Relations Consultants, Job Coaches, and Pre-Employment Transition Specialists partner with local businesses to provide students with a paid work experience. Students who participate in the Summer Work Program can work up to six weeks, a maximum of 40 hours a week, and earn a minimum wage salary which is paid out of counselors’ case services budgets. The goal of this program is to offer students who are blind or have low vision a real-world work experience.

ADRS, in partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind and Central Alabama Community College, offers a Dual Enrollment Program. The Dual Enrollment Program is a...
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

A comprehensive approach which provides a support system for students who are blind or have low vision or deaf or hard of hearing who are interested in earning a college degree. This Dual Enrollment Program involves the campuses of the Alabama School for the Deaf, the Alabama School for the Blind, and the EH Gentry Rehabilitation Facility. Students can attend classes on various Central Alabama Community College campuses. The goal of this program is to provide students with the appropriate assistance to ensure college success. (Page 224) Title II

Funded Pre-Employment Transition Specialist — ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded pre-ets specialists in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre—employment transition services. The jointly—funded specialists provide pre—employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre—employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 31 jointly funded pre-ets specialists in place through third—party cooperative agreements. (Page 229) Title II

ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to ensure students who are appropriate for supported employment services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. Supported employment providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs and services to parents, students, and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in work—based learning and/or community—based assessments before they exit school in order to facilitate a seamless transition from school to employment. (Page 227) Title II

ADRS has committed additional staff to address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities in order to improve access to services. Additional staff members have been added to expand and improve supported employment services for this population. Pre-employment transition specialists have been added to serve students and youth for the general program and for the blind and deaf program.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services strives to ensure that there is equitable access to the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program for all potentially eligible and eligible consumers. For participating in VR services all forms of auxiliary aids, as defined by the ADA, are provided to consumers based on individual needs including assistive technology. Our counselors for the deaf are required to possess an intermediate rating on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) ensuring that deaf consumers are commuted to in their native language. In addition, we have 11 full-time nationally certified sign language interpreters located in our offices statewide, as well as access to additional sign language interpreters through our partners and vendor network. Counselors and staff have access to language interpreters through a language line service, as well as language interpreters through our vendor system. In addition, correspondence and other print materials are provided in the consumers format of choice to include large print, braille, electronic, etc. (Page 236) Title II
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

State Grantee will work collaboratively to address issues ensuring host agency assignments are truly providing skills training to meet the needs of both participants and employers. Sub-grantees will continue to utilize the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), in partnership with the participant and host agency supervisor, ensuring community service employment assignments are providing skills training that meet the needs of the participant and host agency. Sub-grantees will monitor participants at least once every six months at their community service employment assignments. During those visits, sub-grantee staff will review and update the IEP with both the participant and host agency supervisor. Sub-grantees will continue to monitor the training to ensure participants will be prepared for unsubsidized employment through the acquisition of transferable skills in demand by local employers. In addition, where applicable, sub-grantees, in partnership with participants, will develop IEPs that combine community service employment with other permissible training (e.g., classroom training or on-the-job experience (OJE) in the private for-profit sector) as funding permits. (Page 302) Title II

### Career Pathways

Alabamians with disabilities must make informed choices regarding their vocational goal selection and subsequent career pathways in order to minimize barriers to employment and maximize success on the job. There are times when an individual with a disability may pursue a job goal for which, according to Alabama’s labor market demand, little opportunity of job growth exists. To address this issue, ADRS will provide professional staff with a labor market “dashboard” that will make it clear and easy to recognize which occupations within the state show the most promising future. Training will be provided to staff to enhance their ability to use current labor market information to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities into higher demand jobs. (Page 48) Title I

### Apprenticeship
### Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

Consistent with the findings of the 2017 comprehensive statewide assessment, the established goals and priorities of this plan, and collaborative efforts between the SRC and SILC, innovation and expansion funds will be targeted to the following:

1. Ongoing support of the efforts of the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council.

2. Expansion and innovation of Work Based Learning opportunities for Students with Disabilities

3. Expansion and innovation of Individualized Placement Supports for persons with significant mental illness.

4. Expansion and innovation of participation in formalized apprenticeship among all VR consumers. (Page 235-236) Title IV

Center for Technology, who is in the 11th or 12th grades, is eligible for or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and has received a referral from the VR Transition Counselor, Special Education Teacher and/or school administrator. Course curriculum will consist of instruction in the following areas Basic Computer Skills, Financial Literacy, Problem Solving, Manufacturing, Job Acquisition. Course curriculum will also include discussion of local high demand careers, labor market information and activities that may include community-based experiences. (Page 174) Title II

### Work Incentives and Benefits

- **Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA):** ADRS has an ongoing partnership with the ADECA. The agency has worked cooperatively to pursue grants to serve people with disabilities.  
- **The Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP):** ADAP is the Alabama arm of the Protection and Advocacy program for people with disabilities. ADAP makes referrals to Alabama’s toll-free number for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through ADRS which coordinates the service.  
- **Statewide Independent Living Centers:** ADRS is represented on the State Independent Living Council and works closely with Alabama’s three Independent Centers to coordinate services and referrals.  
- **Governor’s Office on Disability (GOOD):** GOOD serves as a clearinghouse for resources related to people with disabilities. ADRS maintains an ongoing relationship with the Governor’s Office in order to provide resources as needed.  
- **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP):** ADRS partners with OFCCP to provide affirmative action training to employers on issues related to hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. ADRS hosted a major conference for employers in conjunction with OFCCP staff to provide information to employers on the 503 Federal Hiring mandates.  
- **Social Security Administration (SSA):** The Agency maintains an excellent working relationship with the SSA. The ADRS employs a Social Security Specialist that stays abreast of Social Security issues and has given numerous presentations on the Ticket to Work, Work Incentives Improvement
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

Act, and other SSA initiatives to ADRS staff, consumer groups, and partner organizations. (Page 177) Title II

DVR coordinates with Human Resource Development (HRD) and Business Relations (BR) to determine the information and training needs for professional and para-professional staff to assist in obtaining and disseminating professional information. HRD meets with and/or surveys staff to identify areas directly and indirectly related to the field of vocational rehabilitation. Based on the information obtained from staff and administration, DVR seeks training programs, webinars, and presenters demonstrating expertise knowledge in disabilities, technical issues, and federal and state policies, procedures and guidelines. In turn, DVR, BR, and HRD utilize the gained knowledge to develop instructor-led training programs and videos and to evaluate/offer appropriate webinars to staff. DVR administration and staff attend national and state conferences, search professional internet sites, and review professional magazines, articles and federal and state guidelines to stay abreast of current trends in the field of vocational rehabilitation. Trainings, both formal and informal, are developed and presented regarding current trends to ensure that staff has up-to-date knowledge to provide services to consumers. Some of the topics of vocational rehabilitation knowledge provided to professional and para-professional staff include orientation for new counselors, orientation for new DVR supervisors, ethics in relation to vocational rehabilitation services and practices, social media/technology and ethics, WIOA guidelines, HIPPA, different aspects of various disabilities, mental health issues, (i.e., suicide, substance abuse, etc.), assistive technology, Social Security Administration and Work Incentives, labor market and work force trends/data, and leadership. (Page 200) Title II

Individuals with Disabilities who receive Social Security: To be eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a person must be deemed unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA) due to a significant and long-lasting health condition. Because of this requirement, once receiving benefits, those who may be willing and able to work are often afraid of losing their benefits if they earn too much. Others are confused by the complex program rules governing benefit receipts for beneficiaries who work. Still others are unaware of the various incentives that SSA provides to encourage beneficiaries to return to work. VR Customers on the roles of SSI/SSDI need guidance tailored to their unique circumstances. This guidance should come with persons who possess a deep knowledge of the relationship between SSA work incentives and the VR process. (Page 208) Title II

Benefits counseling services are provided to all eligible individuals. Services are provided based on the Social Security Administrations (SSA) prioritization protocol. Highest priority is given to those individuals currently working or have job offers pending. Individuals actively seeking employment with specific vocational goals are served followed by those in the early information gathering contemplative phase of employment goal development. Additionally, ADRS places individuals served through either SEARCH or DISCOVERY in the top priority. Individual of the highest priority are provided full intensive work incentive planning services, while others receive Information and Referral Services. At present, ADRS and SSA are in year 3 of the joint funded WIPA benefits counseling program and has provided information and
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

referral services to 3,627 individuals — 786 have been referred for intensive long-term work incentive benefits counseling services. (Page 228) Title IV

ADRS began received grant funds from the Social Security Administration in 2000. The initial program the Benefits Planning and Outreach (BPAO) program provided basic Information and referral services to SSDI and/or SSI beneficiaries and recipients. The BPAO program eventually expanded to include intensive and long-term work incentive planning services in 2007—the Work Incentive Planning and Assistant (WIPA) program supported 2.5 staff serving 29 central and southern counties. A break in SSA funding for WIPA nationally in 2012. ADRS utilized SSA reimbursement funds to continue services to individuals in Alabama. When SSA funding returned nationally in 2015, ADRS and SSA entered into an agreement that utilizes joint funding to expand and continue WIPA benefits counseling services. This braided funding supports 6 SSA trained and certified benefits specialist providing services to all 67 counties. Benefits counselors provide both Information and Referral as well as intensive Work Incentive Counseling Services to all individuals receiving SSDI and or SSI. Counselors assist individuals with disabilities, their families and other team members in the development and maintenance of a variety of work. (Page 228) Title II

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Additionally, as a result of the expansion of the WIPA benefits counseling program, a cooperative program was developed with the Alabama Department of Mental Health in 2017 to support 5 additional benefits specialists specifically charged with serving individuals on the Intellectual Disabilities (ID) or the Living at Home (LAH) waivers. The staff supported by the ADRS DMH cooperative agreement are not bound to the SSA prioritization protocols and therefore, individuals in pre-vocational or contemplative phases of employment goal setting are all eligible for intensive work incentive planning as well as Information & Referral services. (228) Title II

Employer/Business

Alabama Business Leadership Employment (ABLE) Network: The 501c3 conglomerate of Alabama businesses that advocate for the employment of individuals with disabilities uses the ADRS business relations program as their lead resource for disability in the workplace issues, while co—sponsoring numerous training events for employers. They also serve as an advisor to ADRS on disability issues and resources for employers. • Federal Office of Personnel
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

Management (OPM): Representatives from a variety of Federal agencies throughout Alabama that function under the OPM work directly with the ADRS business relations consultants to implement Federal hiring mandates, Schedule A recruitment, accommodations, and employee retention impacting workers with disabilities in the Federal sector. • Department of Veterans Affairs: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. ADRS collaborates with the VR&E program at the national and state level to serve and place into employment veterans completing the VR&E program, providing customized services through ADRS specialty counselors, rehabilitation technology specialists for accommodations, and for return to work assistance. ADRS does not have a written agreement with the VA. (Page 177-178) Title II

ADRS is committed to a “dual customer” approach in working with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for the consumers we serve. While doing so, ADRS also focuses on developing effective working relationships with business to address their disability related issues in the workplace from outreach and recruitment, to accommodations, to education, to resources linkages and more via the development and delivery of appropriate products and services to meet the needs of business as specified in the WIOA proposed regulations and beyond. To accomplish the above, ADRS has a business relations unit, “READI-Net” (Resources for Employment and Disability Information Network), led by a State Office Administrator of Business Relations and staffed by specially trained Business Relations Consultants (BRCs), in a classification separate from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The Administrator serves as the ADRS representative with full oversight of collaborative relationships with businesses developed by any VR staff or other VR agencies in The NET (VR’s National Employment Team) that wish to establish or grow their partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation in Alabama. At the state level, the Administrator is the lead liaison to workforce partners, community organizations and other agencies that establish partnerships with business and is the “reviewing supervisor” of the business relations consultants. At the local level, the BRCs are charged with establishing and maintaining effective relationships with business to create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities or to assist business with retention of workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability. BRCs develop and deliver other disability-related services needed by business and are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of those services. They simultaneously assist consumers (youth and adults) with job readiness preparation (through group or one-on-one sessions), job development, job search, job retention and follow-up. In addition, ADRS works with a network of community-based organizations on customized placement services for consumers, necessitating coordination with employers. (Page 188-189) Title II

Through the above - mentioned programs, employer services and partnerships, ADRS will also coordinate with employers in order to facilitate the provision of transition services for students and youth with disabilities. ADRS will also coordinate with employers to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. ADRS will accomplish this by working with employers to arrange work-based learnings experiences for students with disabilities. These work-based learning experiences will include setting up worksite tours, job shadowing and mentoring opportunities, paid and unpaid internships, apprenticeships and
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

other learning experiences within business and industry sectors. ADRS will also involve employers in informational interviews and other mentoring activities in order to provide instruction in self-advocacy for students receiving pre-employment transition services. Lastly, employers will be used to provide information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations as well as labor market information, which can be used in providing job exploration counseling to students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transition services. (Page 190) Title II

Expand and leverage new employer and state agency partnerships to achieve Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act common performance measure outcomes. ADRS should build upon the existing business engagement activities, as well as state partnerships facilitated by the Alabama Workforce Development Board, to promote labor exchange between ADRS participants and employers seeking talent; with an emphasis on in-demand occupations.

- Enhance career guidance competencies of VR counselors by fostering knowledge of local labor-market information and in-demand careers. Having access to accurate and up-to-date labor market data, as well as information and guidance about career and training opportunities, can help individuals make better decisions about training and lead to better outcomes. (Page 234) Title II

These services are centered around Career Exploration, Work Base Learning, Counseling on Post-Secondary Education opportunities, Workplace Readiness, and Self-Advocacy. The agency will increase opportunities for College Preparation training and the agency will work with public schools statewide in order to plan vocational services and increase VR counselors’ presence in the schools. In order to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to services offered through career centers, we will collaborate with workforce partners by having regular workforce meetings and by assuring the agency is represented on all local workforce boards. The agency will continue to assist consumers with gaining the skills necessary to compete for in demand jobs through collaboration with technical schools, universities, and partnerships with agencies such as the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT).

3. EFFECTIVELY SERVING EMPLOYERS The agency will effectively serve employers through business services provided through its long-standing Business Relations Program called READI-Net. In order to improve the performance of the state in respect to this performance accountability measure, the READI-Net program will continue to provide disability resources, information and services to businesses in order to meet their disability and employment-related needs. The READI-Net program will also continue to develop new and innovative services for businesses. These new and innovative services will be driven by specific input from long-term ADRS business customers who serve as advisors to ADRS through the VR State Rehabilitation Council’s Business Relations Committee, through the ABLN - Alabama Business Leadership Network, which is the state chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network, and through Business Roundtable Events. The input gained from these business customers will be used to develop strategic plans with businesses which will facilitate the customization of business services in order to assist businesses with their outreach, recruitment, hiring and retention needs, as well as, staff training needs, affirmative action planning, metric and record keeping, and customized, company specific, disability-
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

related services. The agency will work in collaboration with the Core Workforce Partners to record and report on the required measurements of Retention and Repeat business. (Page 232) Title II

Services provides a Supported Employment Administrator and two Supported Employment Specialists to monitor supported employment services and provide training and technical assistance. Each supported employment provider operates under a milestone/outcome—based program to ensure quality outcomes and appropriate employment options based on individual choice. Consumers are offered the opportunity to participate in community—based assessments to facilitate an informed decision regarding their employment goal. Job development is provided on an individual basis to locate employment based on the consumer’s interests, skills, limitations and community living needs. Job coaching is also provided at the work site to ensure that the individual has the necessary training, skills and supports to work. Once the consumer is stable in the workplace, extended services are planned and implemented to protect the long—term success of the job. Consumer and employer satisfaction regarding the services provided are measured at the time of employment and again before case closure. Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These extended supports are provided at the completion of stabilization, during the successful rehabilitation Milestone and beyond ADRS case closure. The option for Discovery and Customized Employment, or for Person Centered Profiles along with assessments are available to consumers to maximize success for individuals in supported employment. Supported Self—employment is also available for individuals wanting to start their own business. (Page 244) Title II

Data Collection

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

511

• Regulations on Section 511 and Limitations on Use of Sub-Minimum Wage

The process of re-allocating our resources with the CRP program has already begun with Pre-Employment Transition Services and so far is considered a success. Of the total CRP set-aside dollars authorized to date in FY 17, 33% is for Pre-ETS service. Of all the consumers who had an authorization in the set aside, 44% of these were students with disabilities. The provision of Pre ETS through CRPs is an essential component of the department’s plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In order to continue at this pace and to provide the services our consumers need to become better equipped to work, the method of payment for services provided by the CRP needs to transition from a performance or outcome based system as in STEPS I, II, and III to a service based system as we have done with Pre-ETS. It is proposed that these services be phased in as the CRP becomes prepared to provide them and meet the demands of the counselors. However, most of the CRP’s are already equipped to or are providing these services.

Very strict guidelines have been included in WIOA related to the definition of competitive integrated employment. While VR and its CRP partners have had a focus on competitive
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

employment for many years, this new interpretation states that persons who do not have a goal of competitive integrated employment are not eligible for VR and we cannot provide services which will lead to employment in a non-integrated environment. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has gone further to define a non-integrated setting as employment with organizations that exist to employ persons with disabilities, including Ability One and other programs under the Javits—Wagner—O’Day Act. While VRS has no choice but to adhere to the current federal interpretation of this new definition, there remains an understanding of the value of a work experience on future vocational success. While not suitable any longer as a long-term rehabilitation goal, utilization of such opportunities for transitional employment, skill attainment, and work adjustment remain a viable option for person with disabilities. (Page 210) Title II

The restrictions placed on access to sub-minimum wage and the expansion of supported employment opportunities are significant but not particularly new in the VR program. Sheltered employment at below minimum wage has not been a suitable outcome for VRS for almost 20 years. WIOA simply made it much more difficult for a person to by-pass VR and select sub-minimum wage employment. Most of the traditional community rehabilitation partners in the state have relinquished their Department of Labor (DOL) sub-minimum wage certificates in favor of paying at least the minimum wage in what was traditionally called “sheltered employment”. With supported employment, the law places an emphasis on providing services to youth with disabilities and for providing extended supports for a longer period of time before the ongoing support is transitioned from VR to another provider. (Page 210) Title II

ADRS works very closely at ADMH and we have been able to access their waiver for youth seeking employment requiring extended supports, through this collaborative effort. ADMH set aside reserve waiver slots for youth in project SEARCH who needed extended supports beyond what was typically provided. We seek their assistance and work closely with their department, when we have individuals (including youth) seeking employment that will need extended supports. Because of this relationship, we have not yet needed to fund extended supports. Additionally, because our secondary systems are no longer referring to 14Cs, we are getting more referrals for students at a younger age that we feel like will need extended services. We do anticipate that we will use extended service funded by VR dollars. (Page 239-240) Title II

Continued collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health on moving consumers from facility-based services to community based, competitive integrated employment. This includes making sure counselors have a better understanding of Medicaid waivers, SS implications, including work incentives and providers who don’t contract with VR know about our application and eligibility process, supported employment services, the availability of benefit planners and section 511 of WIOA. SE Specialists have been working with providers known to VR to provide career counseling, information and referral, and benefits counseling to those in subminimum wage employment. This includes information on the supported employment providers in their area. We have also worked with school systems in our state to provide documentation and instruction on limitations and requirements for
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

Youth entering subminimum wage employment. VR, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, developed procedures and documentation for both the LEAs and VR. This in addition to efforts to reach students at a younger age should greatly encourage competitive, integrated employment as a first option for students and youth with more significant disabilities. Documentation collected from individuals currently in sub-minimum wage employment suggests the median age is over 50. (Page 242-243) Title II

Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188

In 2005, a team of persons with disabilities and others reviewed each Alabama Career Center for physical and programmatic accessibility using a survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIA. A re-survey of Career Centers (including satellite centers) is being done in FY 2016 to check physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, services, technology and materials using a DOL survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIOA and a policy checklist. (Page 110) Title I

This requirement provides some assurance that CRP’s address issues like ADA accessibility, accountability, safety, staff qualifications, accommodations, and affirmative action in hiring persons with disabilities and address any special communication needs of consumers. Currently, the CRP Administrator meets with CRP staff to discuss services and formulate an agreement that establishes agreed upon fees, referrals, and employment goals for each CRP. This information is shared with local counselors so that appropriate referrals and service authorizations can be made to the CRPs. The department continues to work cooperatively with CRPs statewide to improve services at the local level. There is a continuous need for services. The development and establishment of new programs will change with the assessment of consumer needs. Based on an assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services currently provided by CRPs statewide, a number of trends appear to be taking place:

• Increased emphasis on serving individuals that are considered underserved, individuals with the most significant disabilities, and individuals residing in rural areas of the state. (Page 184-185) Title I

Individuals with Major Physical Impairments: The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals with major physical impairments were: Accessibility, Transportation, Assistive Technology, Housing, and Medical Care & Supplies. Many persons with physical limitations made their voices heard in the 2017 SRC Unmet Needs Survey and also at SRC Public Forums held around the state. Transportation and accessibility remain formidable barriers for wheelchair users, often presenting a more daunting challenge than work itself. Many told us of ongoing health care needs that are expensive and impossible to manage without proper medical benefits. Others emphasized the challenges they face finding accessible, affordable housing. (Page 207-208) Title II

The agency maintains a very productive relationship with the Workforce Development System of Alabama. First, the Commissioner of the agency sits on the Statewide Workforce Development Board. Consequently, the agency has a voice at the table to advocate for the
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

needs and issues of individuals with disabilities. The agency has counselors stationed on a permanent basis in One—Stop Career Centers in several of the larger cities in the state. These staff members receive referrals and also provide advice and information to other staff in the One—Stop Career Centers on how to serve individuals with disabilities. The agency will have numerous staff participate in the state Workforce Conference, when conducted, involving all partners and other service providers related to the Statewide Workforce Investment System.

The agency sits on the planning council of this conference so that various breakout sessions related to the needs of individuals with disabilities are included on the agenda. The agency is currently working in collaboration with the Career Centers and Workforce Development Partners on assessing all of the Career Centers in the state for accessibility. Recommendations will be made by the agency and the Workforce Development Core Partners will work together to ensure that the Career Centers continue to be accessible for all individuals with disabilities.

(Page 233) Title II

Vets

Department of Labor — Veterans Employment Training Service (VETS): ADRS collaborates at the state and local level with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff to assist wounded warriors in return to work or obtaining employment with Federal contractors and other businesses. This includes vets’ access to the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program. • Alabama Industry Liaison Group (ALILG): Represents Federal contractors’ compliance issues to include those tied to disability (Section 503 of the Rehab Act). ADRS is the lead provider of information, training and resources related to outreach, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities to ALILG businesses and ALILG routinely trains ADRS business relations consultants and participates in local, regional and state conferences sponsored by ADRS. Cooperative Agreements. (Page 177) Title II

Alabama will move ahead with plans under the Accelerate Alabama initiative that will include the services provided by Alabama Career Centers affiliated with the Americans Job Center network to include veterans and eligible persons with resources and emphasis for technical training and higher education. 2. Increase business services outreach to Federal defense contractors and subcontractors, such as URS Group Inc. of Mobile for work on the Air Force’s KC—46C; Northrop Grumman of Huntsville for research and development services in support of integrated missile defense; Boeing Co. for work on Army helicopters; L—3 Coleman Aerospace of Huntsville from the Missile Defense Agency. 3. Expand the AIDT training and job opportunities listing on the Alabama Job Link (AJL) https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/ to increase priority referral of veterans and eligible persons to jobs and job training. 4. Increase employer outreach in the automotive manufacturing sector which employs many Recently Separated Veterans and pays the highest average wages of any manufacturing industry in Alabama — nearly $75,000. 5. Encourage more veterans to enroll in the State’s workforce Job—driven training, in trade, manufacturing, and shipbuilding apprenticeship programs offered through the Alabama Industrial Development Training to increase the entered employment rate of Recently Separated Veterans and long term unemployed, older veterans. 6. Expand innovative partnerships such as the initiative of the Alabama Career Center in Mobile,
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

American Job Center affiliate that is training veterans in the welding training and certification program under a joint—venture by AIDT with the ship building industry. Historically, veterans who complete training are placed in well—paying and stable jobs. (Page 284) Title II

DVOPs will facilitate intensive services under a strategy of case management to veterans with special employment and training needs due to a SBE, as defined by current VPL guidance. These services may include any combination of services listed below, but at a minimum, an assessment of employability and a written employment plan are required in a program of case management. All services are to be documented including, assessment, career guidance, and coordination with supportive services, referrals to job training, and referral of “Job Ready” clients to career center job placement specialists. • DVOPs prioritize services to veterans with SBEs who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, veterans enrolled as clients in a program of vocational rehabilitation administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans who are homeless, and other veterans identified as needing individual assistance and case management as determined by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training Services. • DVOPs develop and promote apprenticeship and OJT positions for veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide technical assistance to community—based organizations for employment and training services to veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide vocational and career guidance to veterans with SBEs. • DVOPs provide ES case management to veterans with significant obstacles and challenges to employment. (Page 286) Title II

Development Training (AIDT) program, and other training providers to locate and refer veterans to job—driven training and apprenticeship programs AIDT program. Veterans having a SBEs will be referred to DVOPs for intensive services. DVOPs will also be assigned to orientation sessions hosted by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) to assist potential VR&E clients to make good choices in their Chapter 31 occupational and career training.

LVER Staff
LVER duties will be assigned in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4104, as amended by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112—56, the Special Grant provisions of the JVSG, and VPL 03—14 and 04—14, to exclusively benefit veterans and eligible persons by promoting the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups, as well as those duties that facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans through the career center within the American Job Center (AJC) network of providers. (Page 287) Title II

The Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center network as a key member in the Alabama Veterans Executive Network (AlaVetNet) will assist in the implementation of the Long Range Plan with the Alabama Business Council, Small Business Administration and the Alabama Community College System to consolidate and streamline job—driven training for veterans and separating military service members based on the needs of business and industry and the recommendations from employers, veteran employee mentoring programs, and feedback from a series of Regional Employer Summits being planned for 2015.
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

The statewide American Job Center network as a partner with public and private agencies in the AlaVetNet will encourage bridge training with community colleges and will work with the Alabama National Guard to offer all veterans to participate Alabama National Guard’s Civilian Job Training program. (Page 294) Title II

This award is for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and the State’s workforce development employees who provide services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner—Peyser Act. As defined in the Alabama Labor Administrative Code, § 480—2—1—.03, the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor is responsible for the awarding of cash awards only to eligible recipients, and for the administration of the awards program, pursuant to law and the Special Provisions of the JVSG. (Page 294) Title II

Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans’ Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans’ Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons. All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans’ Priority in the State WIA and Wagner—Peyser Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans Program Letters addressing DVOP—LVER Roles and Responsibilities. (Page 298) Title II

• AJCs will promote job—driven apprenticeship training to veterans under the GoBuildAlabama initiative offered through unions and the Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute. Established by the Alabama Legislature to increase outreach to unemployed and under—employed, and expand the involvement of community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and veterans’ organizations, the GoBuildAlabama program is an excellent opportunity for veterans to enter OJT and apprenticeship in the trades, in addition to employment and training programs funded under WIOA. • LVERs will maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. • LVERs will plan and participate in job fairs and employer summits to promote veterans. • LVERS will encourage streamlining of credentialing and licensing for veterans with military training comparable to the requirements of credentialing agencies and entities.

Outreach to Employers on Behalf of Veterans
• LVERs as team members of Business Service Units will develop employer relations contact plans for career centers in the AJC network, to include identifying federal contractors and recruit jobs for all veterans from local employers. • LVERS will establish, maintain, or
facilitate regular contact with employers to develop employment and training openings for all veterans. • LVERS will monitor job listings by federal contractors and encourage the referral of qualified veterans who may not have been referred to those job by the Alabama Job Link automated notification/referral system. (Page 288) Title IV

Veterans with SBEs will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual’s employability planning.

Locating Priority Group Veterans
Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

Employment Service Case Management by DVOP Specialists

Standard DVOP case management practices will include: 1. Assisting veteran—clients in development of job objectives and a resume. 2. Identifying significant barriers or challenges to employment. 3. Referring or assisting veteran—clients to appropriate supportive services. 4. Determining veteran—clients’ economic need. 5. Identifying training or educational goals. 6. Documenting contacts with employers on behalf of individual clients. 7. Maintaining current contact information. 8. Documenting job referrals and job development for employment, internship, or on—the—job—training (OJT) opportunities for individual clients. (Page 296) Title II

Mental Health

One industry sector that is not addressed in the Accelerate Alabama plan is Health Care. The fact that the baby boomers are hitting retirement age, and also that people are living longer, is beginning to have a large impact on the health care system. Additionally, there are many more specialized jobs in health care, than in the past, due to the fact that health care costs have risen and so has demand for health care. While hospitals have experienced small, but steady, growth every year since 2000, most of the growth in health care employment comes from industries that provide more focused care. Industries such as outpatient care centers, home health care services, and specialized health practitioners have doubled in employment since 2000. In addition, employment in residential disability, mental health, and substance facilities have grown 226.0 percent since the turn of the century. (Page 16) Title I. The Agency has considered this recommendation and rejects it at this time as peer employment specialists are employed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and their provider agencies and trained and certified through the Department. Additionally, ADRS has partnered with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to provide Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment, which is an initiative to reach out to individuals with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, and provide an integration of services, including peer support services, in order achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.
**Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix**

Recommendation: The VR general consumer satisfaction survey should include SAIL clients. Agency Response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible. (Page 171) Title I

Alabama Department of Mental Health is responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities, and ADRS works collaboratively in our state to increase competitive integrated employment, particularly for individuals with more significant disabilities. Initiatives such as Project SEACH, that currently serves over 100 individuals with significant disabilities at ten different locations throughout the state, the GATE project which is a collaborative effort to move individuals served through the waivers in day programs into community based, integrated employment opportunities through development of training sites embedded in employment opportunities in the communities, and conjoint trainings for job coaches working through both entities, community based rehabilitation partners, school personnel, jointly funded school personnel, skills training instructors, IPS staff and other community providers. We have a current cooperative agreement in place that outlines the roles and responsibilities of partners, over view and function as well as the state level shared objectives. This agreement is for both the DD and MI/SA divisions of the department. In 2017, ADRS entered into a cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to provide benefits counseling services to individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are currently being served or on a waiting list for either the Living at Home (LAH) or the Intellectual Disabilities (ID) waivers. Information and Referral as well as intensive benefits counseling services are provided by trained certified benefits specialists to any individuals whether the individual is currently employed, has a job offer or is in the contemplative stages of employment planning. Staff supported through the ADRS DMH cooperative agreement work in collaboration with other ADRS WIPA benefits counseling staff. The cooperative agreement targets 100 individuals annually. (Page 191) Title II

Continued collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health on moving consumers from facility-based services to community based, competitive integrated employment. This includes making sure counselors have a better understanding of Medicaid waivers, SS implications, including work incentives and providers who don’t contract with VR know about our application and eligibility process, supported employment services, the availability of benefit planners and section 511 of WIOA. SE Specialists have been working with providers known to VR to provide career counseling, information and referral, and benefits counseling to those in subminimum wage employment. This includes information on the supported employment providers in their area. We have also worked with school systems in our state to provide documentation and instruction on limitations and requirements for youth entering subminimum wage employment. VR, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, developed procedures and documentation for both the LEAs and VR. This in addition to efforts to reach students at a younger age should greatly encourage competitive, integrated employment as a first option for students and youth with more significant disabilities. Documentation collected from individuals currently in sub-minimum wage employment suggests the median age is over 50. (Page 243) Title II
Alabama (AL) WIOA Matrix

RTW/SAW

These services have been identified by our business customers and ADRS received input from our business customers in developing these services so that their needs would be met. One area is customized, but varied training related to disability issues, for example, Disability etiquette and Disability bias training; Awareness of specific disabling conditions; and Emergency Preparedness for employees with disabilities. With Federal legislation and specific mandates for compliance around disability matters, ADRS also provides relevant training on the successful methodology and resources for implementation. Retaining valued workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability has been a major concern by business and ADRS has customized stay-at-work and return-to-work services to increase the likelihood of that worker with a disability keeping their job. And finally, in looking at generic personnel issues related to the workforce, ADRS provides services to address personnel processes, job descriptions, website accessibility, targeted recruitment, and the use of the ADRS rehabilitation technology specialist team and, of course, the statewide Business Relations Consultants that provide all those services at the local level. (Page 76) Title I

*All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of June 30, 2019

Find your local state plans here:

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html