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**The Workforce Superhighway – Stay Clear of Malfunction Junction**

By Ed Castile, Deputy Secretary of Commerce  
Workforce Development Division, Director of AIDT

As you merge onto the Workforce Super Highway in search of that dream career, don't venture into dead ends or get lost at malfunction junction. Instead, look for signs directing you to AlabamaWorks!

There are several ways to enter the workforce superhighway and get on the right path. On-ramps include the Alabama Department of Labor's Career Center System with offices placed strategically in 50 locations, or via one of Alabama's Community Colleges that are conveniently located across the state. Many will enter the workforce highway via one of the seven regional workforce councils representing Alabama's seven workforce regions. While others will enter through one of Alabama's existing employers through work-based learning initiatives, such as the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship.

The great news is that there are thousands of job openings in all sectors of Alabama's economy including aviation, forestry, chemical, automotive, bio-medical and information technology. Alabama companies are paying premium wages for employees with a positive attitude, good work ethic and the appropriate skill sets. AlabamaWorks! provides a roadmap to these great jobs and it's just two clicks away.

[www.alabamaworks.com](http://www.alabamaworks.com)

Remember when career resource programs were siloed, loaded with government acronyms and frankly, not user friendly? In those days, to the unexperienced eye, all workforce roads led to nowhere. Even harder to understand were the state and federal programs which were designed to help, and yet always seemed to be just out of reach. It was as if one road led to another road, which led to another, and eventually people careened off the highway at "malfunction junction."

To help untangle the malfunction junction, Governor Kay Ivey announced her Success Plus plan mandating that Alabama's workforce programs work together to help citizens find credentials of value that will lead to a self-sustaining career. The goal: 500,000 additional credentialed workers in the workforce by 2025. To succeed, workforce agencies are working towards becoming more user friendly, untying the complicated knots and cross-training staff on multiple programs. Therefore, when a citizen enters from any on-ramp on to the workforce highway, they will find that there are no detours or road blocks. Rather, they will find friendly and helpful workforce professionals ready to assist.

Credentials may be earned as a student completes their K-12 education, during college or as an apprentice. The credential may also be an occupational license or industry recognized certification needed as a job requirement, or to advance to the next level. There are thousands of potential credentials available, and they



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can be stacked, sequenced and aligned in a progression of increasing skill to assist Alabamians as they travel the workforce super highway.

Now that you are successfully navigating the superhighway, how do you know what a credential of value is and if it is legitimate? Governor Ivey has appointed a group of professionals through the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways (ACCCP) to make sure the credentials available in Alabama are truly of value. When you successfully attain your credential of value, then what? You want to make sure your credential is added to the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) being created for you to market your workforce profile online where employers are looking for employees with credentials. The ACCET is a digital resume that helps you find employers and employers find you. The ACCET is currently under development and will be available in the fall of 2020.

The workforce superhighway has many intersections and AlabamaWorks! is the ever-evolving road map. This one-stop online workforce resource will turn malfunction junction into a distant memory. Happy motoring and stop by anytime, [www.alabamaworks.com](http://www.alabamaworks.com) is open 24-7.