

## A National Initiative: Work Force Preparation

Our special thanks to the National Work Force Preparation Initiative for the use of some resources.

### The National WFP Mission

A work force is envisioned that is comprised of motivated individuals who continually renew their knowledge and skills and are productive and effective. A shared mission of the National WFP Initiative and Work Force Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment is essentially to create opportunities for learning so that adults can facilitate the employment transition that develops future job opportunities.



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## Employment Changes

As we approach the next century, Alabamians face new and different employment challenges. Job competitiveness is increasing, as more women seek work outside of the home. Changing family structures and limited resources force many females to find employment in order to provide adequate support for their families (Alabama Urban Review, 1994). Additionally, changing labor forces, changing technology, global competitiveness, and changing salaries and wages are driving forces that help shape the new work environment. Individuals who do not have the necessary skills and mindset are at a disadvantage.

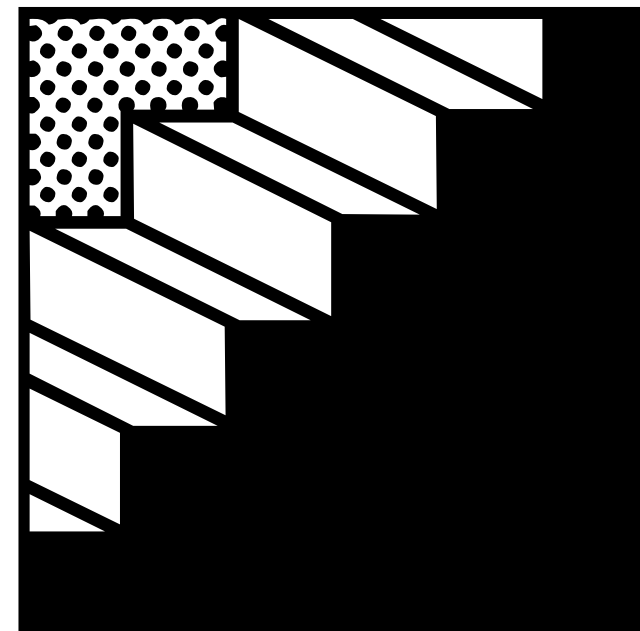
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## WORK FORCE PREPARATION: FINDING AND SECURING EMPLOYMENT

UNP-1



# GOING PLACES

ALABAMA  
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## Work Force Preparation: Finding and Securing Employment

Since the 1990 U.S. census report, the Alabama unemployment rate has undergone a significant decline, from 6.8 percent in 1990 and 6.3 percent in 1995 to 4.1 percent in January 1998. What do these figures mean? The figures do not indicate the underemployment that may occur when workers are low-skilled and low-wage earners. If we want to move people forward in life, we need to give them enhanced skills that will assist them in their aspirations to increase employment opportunities. Economic indicators may show a drop in unemployment, but has the economic quality of life measurably improved for those included in the tallies?

There is a dire need for viable programs that address job strategies for tough times. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System's ETP project "Work Force Preparation (WFP): Finding and Securing Employment" responds to this need. County Extension agents, specialists, and community workers will present educational and training support to workers who are seeking opportunities for employment advancement.

### Project Goal:

- To deliver a multiphased training program, over a four-year period, that includes a three-part work force preparation reference manual to be used to assist newly trained and nonskilled workers into the work force.

### Project Objectives:

- To initiate survival skills programs to prepare citizens to respond to and function in environments of stress and change.
- To identify and respond to critical areas of work force preparation by adapting, developing, and delivering basic employment and job enhancement programs that increase opportunities for advancement.

## Targeted Participants and Geographic Areas

The program will be available to urban and rural citizens. Urban citizens are those living within the 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) of Alabama, which include the city limits of Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Dothan, Anniston, Gadsden, Decatur, and Florence. Participants living in rural areas will be determined by identified Cable Access Television (CATV) and distance learning centers capabilities.

### What WFP Can Offer?

#### The Community:

When a community utilizes the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the residents, individuals take initiative and responsibility and are better able to adapt in the face of constant change. By focusing on what they can offer rather than what they need to receive, citizens become active in the process of social change.

#### The Low-Skilled Workers:

As we approach the next century, many employers are identifying the need for skills enhancement among employees. Individuals committed to renewing or to advancing must broaden their possibilities for successful job placement and promotions. Utilizing survival skills programs that prepare citizens to respond to and function in environments of stress and change may increase opportunities and abilities to keep pace with employment needs. Success, motivation, and commitment to prepare oneself further may mean enhanced financial security, improved quality of life, economic opportunities, and stability.

## Work Force Preparation Project Activities

A summary of the WFP project activities for 1998-2001:

### 1998

- Develop Work Force Preparation partnerships in Alabama
- Develop a WFP training curriculum
- Deliver in-service training to professionals assisting with the delivery of the WFP curriculum

### 1999

- Deliver training to targeted audiences
- Initiate surveys of industry and skills centers to identify specific employment needs
- Develop training for distance learning capabilities

### 2000

- Identify audiences for distance learning, especially in rural areas
- Implement distance learning training program

### 2001

- Develop WFP reference manual with self-help information on Work Force Preparation
- Deliver three-part reference manual to the identified audience



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