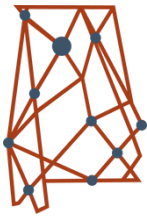


April 2024



**ACCS**  
INNOVATION  
CENTER

# PULSE CHECK



# 16,000+

ENROLLED



**Skills for  
Success**

## >>> NEW PILOT: CARPENTRY HELPER

Gadsden State Community College recently piloted the newest Skills for Success Carpentry Helper course, which took place on April 17th and 18th at the college's campus. The course was instructed by Mr. Heath McDaniel and featured two Subject Matter Experts: Alan Smith, Dean of Workforce Development at Gadsden State Community College, and Chad Sutton, Director of Workforce Development at LBW Community College. Designed to accommodate students of varying skill levels, from beginners to those with some experience in carpentry, the pilot program attracted a diverse group of participants, including a Coast Guard Veteran and an individual with an M.A. in Emergency Management Science preparing for missionary work.

## NEW COURSE!



**Carpentry Helper**

## AVAILABLE COURSES

TrainForAlabama.com 

## >>> FROM GENERAL LABORER TO SKILLED PROFESSIONAL: THE SUCCESS STORY OF NAKIA THOMPSON

### CDL A Success Story

Nakia Thompson's journey epitomizes remarkable growth. From a general laborer with the city of Birmingham, Nakia participated in the Skills for Success CDL A training program at Lawson State Community College. Immersing himself, he earned his license and secured a position specializing in roads and transportation in Jefferson County, with a pay increase and promising opportunities in the future.

**Lawson State**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE





April 2024

## &gt;&gt;&gt; ANNOUNCEMENTS

**COMMERCIALS**

ACCS Innovation Center/Skills for Success Commercials will begin airing through WTVM 13 in the following college services areas: Bevill State, Central AL Community College, Gadsden State, Jefferson State, Lawson State, Southern Union State, and Wallace State - Hanceville.

**APPAREL OPPORTUNITIES**

If you are interested in purchasing ACCS, ACCS Innovation Center or Skills for Success Apparel email [kailah.dozier@accs.edu](mailto:kailah.dozier@accs.edu) and request apparel information and next steps.

**JOB POSTING OPPORTUNITIES**

Are you an employer looking for a place to post job opportunities? Let us help you!

[Post your job here through Career Coach.](#)

## &gt;&gt;&gt; REMINDERS

**BRANDING GUIDELINES FOR SKILLS FOR SUCCESS COURSES**

As we continue to advance our shared mission of providing top-quality training opportunities, it's crucial to remember the pivotal role that proper branding plays in our initiatives. The "Skills for Success" courses, made possible through funding from the Alabama Legislature, are a cornerstone of our commitment to accessible education and training statewide.

**To ensure the ongoing support and visibility of these programs, we ask each community college to adhere to the following branding guidelines for every course offered:**

1. **Include Your College Name:** This highlights local impact and connects the community directly to your college.
2. **Skills for Success:** This aligns our collective efforts and emphasizes the program's scope.
3. **Specify the Course Title:** This provides clarity and attracts the right participants.

Effective branding not only enhances the recognition of each course but also showcases the depth and reach of the impact we can achieve together. This visibility is vital for continuing to secure the necessary funding that allows us to offer these invaluable resources at no cost.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to excellence. Together, we are making a significant difference across Alabama.

**OPPORTUNITIES YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS!**

- Academic Partners (Wiley) - need help with outreach? [Submit your request HERE!](#)
- Submit any success stories you'd like to share here: [TELL US THE GOOD NEWS](#)



# CURRICULUM TEAM SPOTLIGHT



**Brandi Merrill**

Director of Curriculum Design

What excites me about my work at the ACCS Innovation Center is the opportunity to pioneer engaging, interactive learning experiences that resonate with Alabama's unique culture and workforce needs. As a key player in this innovative approach, I bridge industry expertise with educational creativity to develop courses that aren't just about learning but are direct pathways to employment and economic growth. My involvement in shaping these transformative educational tools, alongside experts across various fields, aligns perfectly with the Center's mission. It's incredibly rewarding to contribute to a project that not only redefines effective learning but also prepares our community for the future.



**Rachael Lusco**

Manager of Curriculum Development and Strategic Initiatives

Meeting new people and witnessing their enthusiasm to support our team is incredibly rewarding. It's exciting to see people light up when they hear about what we do and realize how our Skills for Success courses could potentially transform their lives. I don't believe our titles or roles define our mission or purpose, but rather the attitude and drive of everyone on our team that really shape what we're here to do.



**John Mullins**

Senior Project Coordinator for Course Development

What excites me most about working in Workforce education is helping to enrich the lives of others and assisting them in meeting their goals to achieve a better future. Growing up as someone not destined to attend college, I had mentors who pushed me to strive for a better future than I initially thought I could achieve. My goal is to help others realize they can achieve a better future than they realize. Workforce education can serve as that launching pad to help individuals learn a new skill, progress in their current job, obtain a new career, or gain the confidence to pursue a higher education degree.

Recently, after moving to Alabama from another state, I was amazed at how effectively the ACCS Innovation Center can help individuals achieve their goals. I instantly knew that I wanted to be a part of what they were trying to achieve. These courses give students flexible options to learn on their own time in a hybrid format, participate in an in-person lab, and quickly earn a certification that can change their lives. The best part is that they are able to eliminate many of the financial barriers students face by giving options that allow students to receive training with little or no cost in a high-demand field.

My role is to support these goals by developing additional courses that appeal to a large demographic and support the local industry and economy of Alabama. By continuing to widen our available courses, we can support local colleges in helping deliver training to individuals who may have never considered college or these opportunities an option for them.



# CURRICULUM TEAM SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Sharon Alley**

Senior Project Coordinator for Course Development

Workforce training changes lives and communities! As a career and technical educator at an Alabama community college for 15 years, I was able to provide education and training to hundreds of students. It has been one of the greatest blessings of my life!

The ACCS Innovation Center is one-of-a-kind! I decided to join the ACCS Innovation Center team because of their passion, creativity, and the impact they have made and will continue to make in Alabama. In just two years, the ACCS Innovation Center has helped thousands of people in Alabama receive valuable workforce training through Skills for Success and in collaboration with the community colleges. I am excited to contribute to the ACCS Innovation Center by coordinating projects that provide skills and training to Alabamians. The knowledge and skills gained will help individuals secure meaningful employment, positively impacting their families and communities.



**Jon Catrett**

Curriculum Manager

I am excited to work with groups of experienced professionals across the state to meet Alabama's needs. As a native of rural Pike County, I recognize the need for skills-based workforce development. Within the Innovation Center, I enjoy utilizing technology to enhance student learning, blending e-learning with hands-on training in an engaging and impactful way. The skills and credentials earned change lives, empowering the Innovation Center's commitment to business and industry training.



**Amber Morgan**

Senior Curriculum Coordinator

I am excited to be a part of an organization that directly impacts individuals' lives. Knowing that we're providing opportunities for learners from all educational and socio-economic backgrounds to acquire valuable skills that they can leverage to expand their employment opportunities is immensely rewarding. Making education accessible to anyone who seeks it and contributing to workforce development is what excites me most about this position.