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**Work Based Learning Program Available to Alabama's Youth
*Paid Internships Help Youth Gain Valuable Work Experience***

MONTGOMERY – In conjunction with the Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division, Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington announced today that a youth employment program is available through the Alabama Career Center System for Alabama's 18-24 year old young adults who are not enrolled in secondary school.

The Work Based Learning Program is funded by the Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division through the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act and provides an opportunity for youth to gain valuable work experience, learn basic workforce protocol, and acquire professional employment references. Qualifying youth will work approximately 13 weeks at a rate of \$7.25 per hour.

"This program is designed to help young adults get their foot in the door," said Washington. "Being exposed to proper workplace behavior and gaining valuable soft skills will provide necessary skills and experience for these youth and will definitely help them be better prepared to land a lifelong career."

Mickey Hutto, Supervisor of the Alabama Workforce Investment Area Section of the Department of Commerce, said, "The Work Based Learning program allows young adults to explore occupational areas and feel comfortable with their career choices. Hopefully their participation will lead to full-time employment or further skills development through occupational skills training."

Work based learning is an activity designed to help young adults with limited skills and little to no work experience achieve a state of job readiness.

To apply for the program, please visit your local Career Center. A full listing of Career Centers can be found at www.joblink.alabama.gov.

**Please see attached success story and photos for an example of the impact the Work Based Learning Program can have in a young adult's life.*

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Members of the media needing more information should contact Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.