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## COUNTY COMMISSION

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For Immediate Release

### **Tuscaloosa County Commission Unanimously Approves Youth-Employment Initiative**

Tuscaloosa County, Alabama – In Wednesday’s County Commission meeting, the Commission unanimously approved a contract to partner with West AlabamaWorks! to develop a unique, youth-employment jobs portal and other workforce and community development services.

While the youth-employment jobs portal is in the conceptual stage, once completed, West AlabamaWorks! will work with community leaders and schools to build on the traditional summer jobs program and connect students with part-time jobs throughout the year. Expanded apprenticeship opportunities through programs like Modern Manufacturing and West Alabama Skilled Trade Center will be available, in addition to connecting students to other career paths and resources. West AlabamaWorks! will also hold outreach events to reach those in rural areas and communities negatively affected by the pandemic.

In addition to the youth-employment portal, the contract also provides funding for the Brookwood Workforce Center, which is the hub for workforce development in eastern Tuscaloosa County. The facility is used by local businesses for training and job interviews, and includes free access to high-speed internet, computers, and fully equipped training and conference rooms.

“This will be an invaluable resource for our youth to develop skills needed to succeed in the workforce” said Probate Judge Rob Robertson. “The Commission recognizes the workforce challenges faced nationwide and believes this will help bridge that gap. We are looking forward to the official launch of the site and begin connecting our youth to jobs in Tuscaloosa County.”

“West AlabamaWorks! is uniquely positioned to make great strides in helping young people in our community. Our goal is to particularly target populations who have

been most impacted by COVID, and to point them in the right direction for educational support, while connecting them to meaningful job opportunities,” stated Donny Jones, COO of the Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of West Alabama Works. “The youth job portal will also focus on connecting students with part-time and full-time summer employment as well as helping students gain pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship opportunities in the West Alabama community.”

Once launched, the portal will be available on the County’s website at [www.Tuscco.com](http://www.Tuscco.com) and West AlabamaWorks’ at [www.westalabamaworks.com/](http://www.westalabamaworks.com/). The contract, approved for \$175,000, is expected to be paid for by the County’s American Rescue Plan allocation.

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