

The following initiatives are coordinated by **the Shoals Chamber of Commerce's Education / Workforce Readiness department** and are available to all public school students in Colbert and Lauderdale counties, as well as to Chamber-member private schools. These programs would not be possible without the generous support of our Chamber members and Shoals business and community volunteers who get involved &/or support them financially.

For more information or to be added to education / workforce readiness e-mail list and receive notices and information about these initiatives, contact Stephanie Newland (snewland@shoalschamber.com, 256-764-4661) with your name, business & contact information and any particular program interests you have.

CHAMBER WORKFORCE READINESS INITIATIVES

- (proposed) **YouScience – aptitude and interest assessment** ó [YouScience](#) combines objective measures of aptitudes (natural abilities most important to career choice) with interests [what students *think* they want to do according to careers they *currently know* about], to match talent with best-fit, in-demand careers. Aptitudes cut through gender & societal biases that limit visions of opportunities, creating larger, more diverse talent pipelines. Aptitudes cut through gender & societal biases that limit visions of opportunities, creating larger, more diverse talent pipelines. [Case studies](#) show great success using this system in guiding students to areas in which they are skilled AND interested and sometimes to career paths about which they were previously unaware. The science shows that all students, no matter the gender or race, are equal in STEM-related aptitudes / abilities, yet very few show interest in these areas, because they are generally unaware of the careers, nor are they aware of their own aptitudes in these fields. Once made aware, they are more easily guided into career pathways to reach career goals for which they are naturally skilled to excel.

- **Workforce Readiness Institute – Career Education for Educators** ó a 7-day workshop each summer, during which middle and high school math and science teachers, counselors and administrators tour local industries and hear from business representatives concerning the value and need for a technically skilled workforce. The educators also visit the technical programs at Northwest-Shoals Community College to learn about the high level of math & science needed to perform the skills required in each program, as well as the high paying career pathways to which each technical program may lead. The Institute allows educators to better answer students' questions connecting their academic classes to careers, like "When will I ever use this?" and offers up to 56 hours of PD credits! View this video of some of the inaugural year participants' testimonials at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXLAVJP0AXw>. Since we began this program in 2008, the program averages 25 educators who attend annually, who teach or counsel over 5,000 students annually and who submit classroom lesson plans, available on-line for other educators to use.

- **NEW! UNA Student-Teacher WRI** ó a one-day industry tour, mini-WRI event each semester for graduating Sr. students in the College of Education, giving them the long view of why they will be teaching. They are also invited to the summer program for the more in depth program.

- **Shoals Workforce Resources** one-stop website (www.shoalsworkforceresources.com) ó Links to a plethora of helpful workforce resources for Businesses, Job Seekers, Career Education, Skills & Interest Assessments, Training Opportunities, Workforce Incentives, Demographics, Networking, etc.
- **Chamber Member Job Board** ó Chamber members may post job openings for FREE. These opportunities are viewable by the public from <https://business.shoalschamber.com/jobs/>
 - *NEW!* Including video promos of job listings posted on Chamber Facebook page.
 - Student Work-based Learning òjob categoryö to post opportunities for you and your future workforce to get to know each other! If you are willing to host Tours, 1 day or short term Job Shadowing, Internships, Co-Ops, Apprenticeships, Training í be creative í post it under this category so students and schools will know. This can be a great pre-screening and recruiting tool!
- **CHOICES** ó is a dynamic, interactive seminar for 8th graders, presented by business volunteers, to show that every decision (in education, money & time management, life, character, etc.) has consequences and by using self-discipline, they have the power & responsibility to make good choices to affect their futures. We present CHOICES annually to ~1,700 ó 8th graders in all middle schools in Colbert & Lauderdale counties. (www.choices.org)
- **Virtual Tours & Career Profiles** ó employers create virtual tours and career opportunity profile videos for students and educators to learn about local employers, job opportunities, workplace expectations, academic & skills requirements and educational pathways. Tour videos are posted on the Shoals Workforce Resources website (<https://www.shoalsworkforceresources.com/virtual-business-tours>) for easy access.
- **Mock Interviews** ó HR professionals and other business and community volunteers help students prepare for job interviews, either virtually or face-to-face.
- **Virtual Career Chats** ó Business representatives and technical professionals video chat with students about their jobs, what's required, what's expected, Q&A.
- **Addiction Experience Speakers** – a speakers network of volunteers willing to speak to student groups about their experiences with addictions, to explain the reality of addiction, especially concerning careers and personal finances, and to encourage the students not to take that path.
- **Job Fairs** ó as needed, face-to-face, virtual and drive through Job Fairs can be produced for community-wide participation or for a specific business or industry.
- **Job Shadowing** ó (liaison) we encourage students (& teachers) to gain as much job information and experience as possible while in school and will help place those who are interested in job shadowing opportunities.

PARTNER PROGRAMS

- **Shoals Scholar Dollars** ó (partner) a community funded scholarship program to attend Northwest-Shoals Community College and continue to the University of North Alabama, for Colbert & Lauderdale county high school students who have at least a 4-year cumulative 2.5 GPA, 98% attendance rate, no major discipline problems and who are a U.S. citizen. For more information, contact Dr. Randy Pettus, 256-764-4661, randy@shoalsscholardollars.com or go to: www.shoalsscholardollars.com
- **Your Money, Your Life** (formerly *Reality Check*) ó (partner) a hands-on, personal finance & budgeting simulation that teaches students the direct relationship between their educational efforts, career options, future income and lifestyle according to your income. They soon learn that being a responsible adult and paying bills is expensive and not necessarily as much fun and freedom as they thought. *Reality Check*'s simulated society is staffed by business and community volunteers. For more information contact Heidi Tilenius, Lauderdale County Cooperative Extension Service, 256-766-4846, hlt0005@aces.edu, or go to: <http://www.aces.edu/4-H-youth/AL4-H/resources/consumer/reality.php>
- **Robotics & STEM Programs** ó (partners) including:

Northwest-Shoals Community College

- **NW Alabama BEST Robotics Competition** (www.nwalbest.com) is a 6-week engineering design & build (from raw materials) and business-marketing challenge for middle & high school teams. Contact Kim Sheppard, kim.sheppard@nwsc.edu, 256-331-5331 or Greg Springer, gspringer@nwsc.edu, 256-331-8088.
- **VEX Robotics Competitions** (<https://www.vexrobotics.com/competition>) is an engineering design & build (from kit robots) challenge for elementary, middle & high school teams. Contact Greg Springer, gspringer@nwsc.edu, 256-331-8088.

UNA – STEAM Outreach (<https://una.edu/steam-outreach/>)

- **Robotics Competition** ó a programming competition for elementary, middle & high school teams, using their preferred robot. Contact Lee Brownell, lfbrownell@una.edu, 256-765-6907.
- **Rocketry Competition** ó a qualifying launch event for TARC (Team America Rocketry Challenge), a national rocketry competition. Contact Lee Brownell, lfbrownell@una.edu, 256-765-6907

- **WOW – Worlds of Work – Career Expo** ó (partner) an annual career expo for middle & high school students at NW-SCC. Businesses within various industry clusters work together to create hands-on displays for students to *experience* some of the aspects of careers in that industry. For more information, contact Stephanie McCulloch, smcculloch@northalabamaworks.com, North Alabama Works, Region 1 Workforce Council event.
- **Teacher Supply Depot** ó (partner) a free shopping opportunity for educators in Colbert & Lauderdale counties. This is a community project led by Mary Beshears, 256-710-1436, jbeshears@yahoo.com

- ***Shoals Spark*** ó (partner) an entrepreneurship & idea competition for middle school, high school and college students. For more information, contact Dr. Amber Paulk, UNA, apaulk@una.edu, 256-765-4855 or go to: <http://shoalsbigidea.com/>

- ***Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), Shoals Chapter*** ó (partner) provides networking and continuing ed. opportunities for those responsible for human resources duties at their businesses. Go to <http://shoalschaptershrm.shrm.org/> &/or www.shrm.org for more information.