



DRAKE STATE

COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE



Drake State Workforce Development & STEAM

Creating Pathways to High-Demand Careers

Our History

From 1961 to today — six decades preparing Northern Alabama's workforce

1961

Founded as one of Alabama's original technical institutes for Black students, opening as Huntsville State Vocational Technical School with 27 students across four programs.

1966

Renamed J.F. Drake State Technical Trade School, honoring longtime Alabama A&M University president Joseph Fanning Drake.

1973

Granted technical college status as J.F. Drake State Technical College, adding the Associate in Applied Technology degree.

2013

Becomes J.F. Drake State Community & Technical College, adding university-transfer Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees.

2019

Dr. Patricia Sims is inaugurated as the college's fourth President.

2021

Becomes the first Historically Black Community College to receive a NASA / Marshall Space Flight Center Cooperative Agreement, launching the Frontiers Research Program; celebrates its 60th Anniversary.

2022

Partners with Huntsville Hospital to create the LPN/RN Launch Program.

2025

Opens the Leidos Workforce Training Center and launches Alabama's 14th FAME Program.



Who We Are

*Drake State Community & Technical
College*

Serving Northern Alabama through career and
technical education.

- **Regional Anchor for Rocket City Industry**

Positioned in Huntsville alongside Redstone Arsenal, Marshall Space Flight Center, and a growing aerospace & defense and automotive manufacturing supply chain.

- **Academic Training**

Offers an Associate of Arts Degree that transfers to universities and an Associate of Applied Science Degree with technical training that allows students to enter the workforce immediately upon completion or transfer some of those credits to a 4-year institution.

- **Workforce Development (WFD) Office**

A dedicated office — Dean, Director, and staff — connecting employers, students, and the community. Situated in the 50,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art Leidos Advanced Training Complex, which houses in-demand training programs, including precision machining and welding. It also features dedicated space for additive manufacturing, mechatronics, electrical technology, engineering design, and more.

Three business lines — one mission: fast, relevant, career-connected training.

Why We're Here

Drake State's Role

- ✓ Regional workforce-training leader
- ✓ Bridges K-12 pipelines & employer demand
- ✓ Anchors the aerospace & defense economy
- ✓ Expand Access to Opportunity

What We Bring

- ✓ Fast, employer-responsive training
- ✓ Aerospace & defense partnerships
- ✓ Advanced manufacturing & skilled trades
- ✓ Commitment to Relationships

The Drake Edge

Critical thinking is at the heart of everything we teach

The Diagnostic Mindset

- ✓ Root-cause analysis, not just repair. Why did the component fail?
- ✓ A safe-to-fail environment where mistakes become lessons
- ✓ Scenario-Based Learning anchored in hands-on, high-stakes realities.
- ✓ Woven into every program

Diagnostic thinking isn't a separate course — it's built into how every trade is taught.

How Workforce Development Operates

Three business lines, each built for a different entry point into the workforce

1

Open Enrollment

Courses open to the public (age 16+), self-pay and scholarships: the front door to technical training for any community member.

2

Contracted / Employer Training

100% custom-built curriculum, source material, and expert instructors tailored to the needs of local business enterprises and government partners.

3

Educational Training

Develop a consistent pipeline for the region's workforce needs by offering: (a) support for K-12 school systems, (b) dual enrollment opportunities, and (c) adult education training.

Mission-Ready Workforce Solutions

A custom-built talent pipeline for Aerospace, Defense & Advanced Manufacturing employers

HOW IT WORKS — ONE PARTNER, START TO FINISH



Assess

Define the exact competencies you need trained



Design & Staff

Build curriculum, source materials, hire instructors



Deliver

On our campus, at your facility, or hybrid



Sustain

Ongoing partner for upskilling and your next hiring wave

TWO WAYS WE SUPPORT YOUR PIPELINE

NEW TALENT

Entry-Level Talent Pipeline

Sourced through high school partnerships and community organizations, connecting underemployed individuals and those seeking a better career path.

CURRENT STAFF

Incumbent Workforce Upskilling

Targeted training for existing employees — new certifications, equipment, or processes.

Fueling the STEAM & Aerospace Pipeline

Employer-driven training aligned to Huntsville's space and defense economy

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Leidos

NASA

Boeing

Blue Origin

Lockheed Martin

L3Harris

Strata-G Solutions

Employer partnerships anchor training design, equipment, and hiring pipelines.

SKILLS TRAINING FEEDING THE PIPELINE

Aerospace & Defense Training

Custom “Mission-Ready Workforce Solutions” partnerships for incumbent and new-hire employees.

- Manual Machine
- CNC Machine
- Welding
- Engineering Design
- Basic Electrical
- Soldering
- Cable Harnessing
- Assembly

Creating programs to meet the standards for the new Workforce Pell Grant legislation which took effect on July 1, 2026.

NASA HUNCH

High Schools United with NASA to Create Hardware

About NASA HUNCH

- ✓ 24-year legacy, nationally recognized program
- ✓ Students design & fabricate real flight hardware
- ✓ Supports the ISS and Artemis Moon-to-Mars missions

Drake State's Role

- ✓ Machine Tool program leads production
- ✓ Manufacturing hub for the Southeastern U.S.
- ✓ Hardware used directly by NASA engineers & astronauts

Huntsville Tech FAME

A grassroots, proven, employer-driven pathway to Advanced Manufacturing careers

How It Works

- Attend Drake State Monday–Tuesday; work with a sponsoring employer Wednesday–Friday, 8–10 hours a day.
- Five-semester dual-track program leading to an AMT certification and an Associate of Applied Science in Mechatronics.
- Approximately 1,800 hours of paid, hands-on training, with the potential to graduate debt-free and transfer credits toward a bachelor's degree.

Sponsoring Employers

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama

Bruderer

Blue Origin

Plasma Processes

Runergy

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing

Looking Ahead

Where Drake State WFD can grow alongside the region's space & defense economy

1 **Align with regional and state priorities**

Position Drake State as an implementation partner for state workforce and space-economy policy goals.

2 **Strengthen K-12 & STEAM Feeder Programs**

Build earlier on-ramps with K-12 Schools and regional STEAM initiatives.

3 **Expand Employer Pipelines**

Deepen partnerships with aerospace & defense employers to grow apprenticeship and incumbent-worker training.

4 **Grow Federal & State Partnerships**

Build on Drake State's federal relationships to explore new government and defense-sector opportunities.



Thank You

We look forward to partnering on Northern Alabama's STEAM and aerospace workforce future.



Dr. Patricia Sims
President

Douglas Brazier
Dean, Workforce Development / CTE

Joseph Bevel
Interim Director, Workforce Development

Reginald V. Grayson
Coordinator, Workforce Development