



*Why Alabama Industries Make
It a Top Business Climate*

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Always a powerhouse of industry, Alabama has continually evolved to attract new commerce and keep its existing businesses thriving. As entrepreneurs and professionals begin or further their business careers, the state makes an excellent option in terms of education and opportunity thanks to Alabama industries.

In Business Facilities' [14th annual rankings report](#), Alabama was named the state with the best business climate. Business Facilities stated, "It's all about remembering how the game is supposed to be played, the little things as well as the big ones. In Alabama, they've nailed the economic development fundamentals."

The publication went on to highlight that Alabama is maximizing resources, has a diverse growth strategy and top-notch workforce training. All these factors led to Toyota and Mazda choosing Huntsville, Alabama, as the home for a joint-venture manufacturing plant that is expected to bring 4,000 new jobs with production starting in 2021. The new plant is just one of the many major developments taking place in Alabama's industries. Others include a [\\$115 million project](#) at GE Appliances to expand its already existing factory and the opening of an Amazon fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama.

Initially known for coal mining and steel production, the state's economy has progressed, pulling from its historic industries and encouraging growth in others to build a business climate that is hard to rival. While blue-collar work was once the staple of the state's job market, business experts are in high demand. A wide range of talent is needed to

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manage the incredible output that industries in Alabama produce. Furthermore, entrepreneurs are discovering that Alabama's welcoming business environment is a great place to grow a prosperous business.

Alabama takes pride in its ability to attract talent and businesses to the state. "Increasingly, high-performing companies from around the world are discovering that Alabama offers a great [business climate](#) and a support system," said Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce.

What's leading to the incredible growth of business in Alabama? Quite a bit!

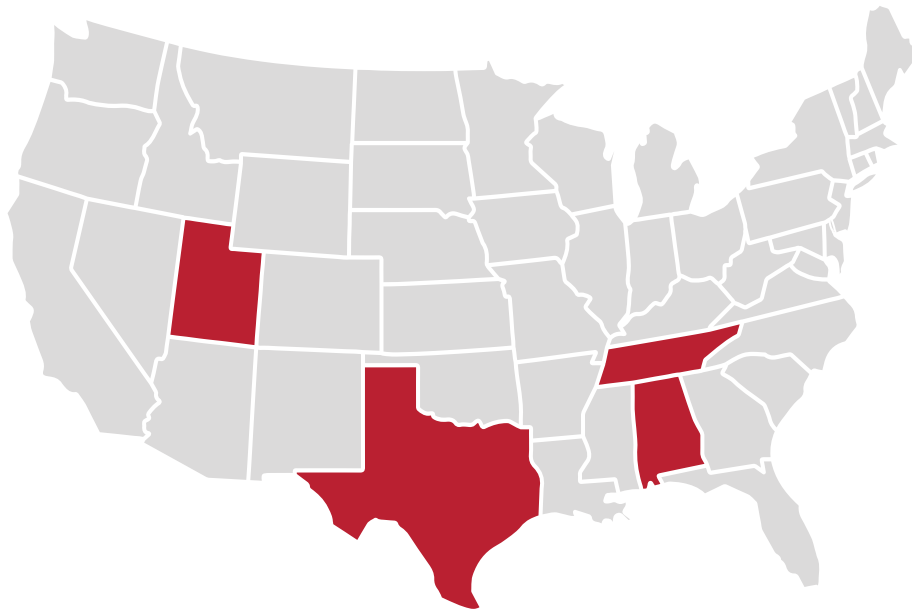
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Why Alabama Industries Are Booming

*It can be easy to picture states with big cities like New York when you imagine a rich business environment, but the truth is most of the best business climates are not states you'd consider urban. The top four best business climates in Business Facilities' most recent report were **Alabama, Texas, Tennessee and Utah**, proving world-class business is being done all over the country. The South is certainly pulling its weight in job creation and innovation with Alabama leading the charge.*



The Alabama Department of Commerce highlighted why Alabama is suited for business achievement and stated, “Our state offers thousands of available sites, a proven track record of success and a pro-business attitude that allows us to develop custom incentive packages tailored to a company’s individual needs.”

Here are just a few other major reasons why Alabama is a top business climate:



GEOGRAPHY: Alabama is one of the most geographically mixed states in the country. It features mountains, beaches, riverbanks and more.



MINERALS: A plethora of accessible minerals, such as limestone, salt, quartz and iron ore, are all available in Alabama.



METROPOLITAN AREAS: Families can live and work within a reasonable distance to everything they'll need in Alabama's more than [10 metropolitan areas](#).



TOURISM: Alabama boasts beautiful scenery and plenty of history, which is why 20 million people from around the world visit every year.



EDUCATION: The Heart of Dixie has many top colleges, including large research universities and small colleges throughout the state. For businesses looking to hire, top talent is educated right in the heart of Alabama.



INFRASTRUCTURE: The state has six interstates, the ninth largest deep-water seaport, 90 airports, including five cargo airports, and more. Furthermore, the state continues to invest in [ports and intermodal facilities](#) to accommodate export growth.



TAXES: Businesses in Alabama benefit from one of the most competitive [tax structures](#) in the nation, helping the decrease the tax burden of companies wishing to open in or relocate to the area.

Alabama is a great place to start a business or look for work. Industries in Alabama are as diverse as the people and landscape that make the state great, and they continue to adapt to new models of business and trade as the years pass.

Top Alabama Industries

No one industry is responsible for making Alabama a top business climate. Thanks to the diversity of industries and skills needed, there's something for everyone looking to prosper in the business sector.

Here are just a few of the top Alabama industries that help make the state a great place to live and work and have earned Alabama the title of top business climate in the United States. Some Alabama industries have been around for generations while others are just starting to take off, but all are playing their role.

Aerospace and Aviation

Alabama has a rich history in the aerospace and aviation industry and plays an integral role in space and defense production. It's also home to many aviation companies including Airbus, Boeing and more.

Aerospace accounts for thousands of jobs and billions in salaries, and it continues to gain new investments. Companies such as Leonardo, a global aerospace and defense firm, and BlueOrigin, a space flight company started by Jeff Bezos, have plans to produce major equipment in Alabama. These investments, along with many others, ensure that the industry will continue to grow and create diverse jobs in Alabama communities.

“In addition to major industry clusters in Huntsville and Mobile, we now have aviation and aerospace-related companies providing advanced manufacturing and engineering jobs in

communities throughout the state,” said Steve Sewell, executive vice president of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama.

Boeing alone is always on the hunt for business experts and stated on its [careers website](#), “Boeing can offer you business challenges on a scale few companies can match.” That seems to be true of the entire aerospace and aviation industry, making it an interesting and exciting area for those looking to build business careers.

Bioscience

According to the Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama is home to 780 bioscience companies. The state proudly has made many breakthroughs in the realm, including important research in the treatment of polio and AIDS. Cummins Research Park is the second largest research and technology park in the United States, contributing to the success of many Fortune 500 companies.

Alabama received [\\$280 million in funding](#) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2015, as well. The industry creates thousands of jobs in Alabama and will likely be creating more. Pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing continues to grow in the state with new facilities opening and expanding in major metropolitan areas.

More importantly, the work is making a difference. Southern Research, based in Birmingham, discovered seven cancer treatment drugs, including two that are on the World Health Organizations [List of Essential Medicines](#). The [HudsonAlpha Institute for Bioscience](#) is a leader in research into the human genome that is used worldwide in genomic medicine and education.

Business majors are in high demand in the bioscience realm to help manage the development, outreach and financials of such a large industry. Those who couple their business education with science degrees are uniquely suited for this Alabama industry.

Agriculture

The Alabama agriculture industry boasts more than [43,000 farms](#). One out of every 4.6 jobs in the state has ties to agriculture and food production, exporting an array of products, including:

- Cotton
- Soybeans
- Peanuts
- Poultry
- Eggs
- Wheat
- Catfish
- Quail

Forestry also makes up big part of the state's industry. Alabama has the third-most timber acreage in the United States. All told, the economic impact of agriculture in the state of Alabama is about \$5.5 billion a year according to the [National Agriculture Statistics Service](#).

Urban farming is also on the rise in Alabama. According to the [National Association of Conservation Districts](#), a grant allowed for a greenhouse to be built in southwestern Birmingham. Produce from this urban farm and others provide for local hospitality businesses, linking local agriculture to the tourism industry in Alabama. This is just one example of how agriculture continues to evolve and thrive in the state.

With all the money tied up in Alabama agriculture, the industry has created the need for a surplus of business majors, including appraisers, policy analysts, farm managers, buyers and marketers. Many farms turn into major operations that need well-educated staff to run efficiently.

Beverage Production

According to the American Beverage Association, the [non-alcoholic beverage industry](#) in Alabama plays a notable role in its economy. In 2018, it created 4,879 jobs in the state and provided more than \$480 million in wages. The ABA went on to point out that, in addition to its direct impact, the beverage production industry also supports thousands of restaurants, grocery stores and more in Alabama.

The success of the beverage industry continues to grow. Sweet tea and lemonade manufacturer [Southern Visions](#) broke ground on a \$24 million production plant in Alabama in late 2018.

The plant will be completed in about three years, and the company referenced Alabama's infrastructure when discussing why they chose the location for the new production facility.

While it's not the largest industry in Alabama, beverage production offers a great opportunity for business experts to offer their knowledge in Alabama as more companies expand and relocate to the state. The need for human resources professionals, marketing specialists and management personnel is likely to grow as the industry develops.

Automotive

Vehicles rank number one when it comes to Alabama exports, with \$10.7 billion in automobile exports in 2016. Many major automotive manufacturers make the booming state the home of much of their production with more looking to join. Because of the presence of major automobile manufactures in the state, many suppliers also call Alabama home, including Kamtek and SMP.

Mercedes-Benz, Honda, Toyota and Hyundai all found success doing business in Alabama. According to the Alabama Department of Commerce, in 2018, Alabama produced roughly 1 million cars and light trucks, along with 1.6 million engines. The state exported vehicles and parts to more than 85 nations. This production has created almost 40,000 jobs in the industry, and more will come when the joint venture between Mazda and Toyota opens. The facility plans to hire 4,000 workers.

With all this growth comes the need for managers, marketers, human resources professionals and more, making a business degree in Alabama's business sector increasingly valuable.

Chemicals

Chemicals are a major source of jobs and income for the state and are, in fact, Alabama's second largest export.

Along Alabama's Gulf Coast are almost 25 chemical companies, with more than 200 throughout the state, employing more than 10,000 people. Some chemical companies in the state of note are Bayer CropScience, Dupont and 3M Company, among many others.

According to Amazing Alabama, \$2.3 billion in chemical exports came from Alabama in 2017. That said, the United States also depends on Alabama's chemical production for oxidants, light stabilizers, chlorine and more. Like bioscience, the chemical industry is a great way to combine a love for science with business acumen for a challenging and lucrative career in the state of Alabama.

Metals

Pivotal to the economic history of Alabama, metals are still a major industry and the number three export of the state. Amazing Alabama stated, "Given Alabama's mineral rich history and wealth of iron ore, coal and limestone, it is no surprise that Alabama is now home to more than 1,100 metal firms and counting."

After the Civil War, Alabama became one of the country's leading [iron and steel producers](#), with the Birmingham District becoming the largest iron and steel producer in the South. In the early 20th century, southern entrepreneurs and northern investors continued industrial development in the state. Despite many trials and some declines, the metals industry continues to boom in Alabama. In fact, U.S. Steel, who has been making steel in Birmingham for more than a century, plans to invest \$215 million into [technology](#) to advance the state's steel manufacturing.

The Alabama metals industry exported \$1.5 billion worth of primary metal in 2016 and employs more than 16,500 workers. Aside from the need for workers with trade skills, like welders

and machinists, the industry also has a need for business professionals for accounting, management, project management, policy advising and more.

Tourism

With varying landscapes and rich history, the state entertains more than 20 million visitors a year, making it a great place to open a business related to the tourism industry.

In 2017, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey said, “Every part of the state saw dramatic growth, from the mountains of the Tennessee Valley to the beaches of the Gulf Coast.” No doubt Alabama’s diverse landscape offers a little something for everyone.

The 2017 Alabama Tourism Department’s [economic impact report](#) estimated that travelers spent more than \$14.3 billion in the state, a 7.1% increase over the previous year.

This spending generated more than \$879 million in tax revenue. This expenditure in the state on tourism related activities makes Alabama a great place for entrepreneurs to start restaurants, shops, inns and more.

It’s clear that industries in Alabama are adapting and prospering through major economic changes, offering residents job opportunities at an incredible rate. Alabama boasted an [unemployment rate](#) of just 3.7% in March of 2019, lower than the rest of the country.



Every part of the state saw dramatic growth, from the mountains of the Tennessee Valley to the beaches of the Gulf Coast.

Specialties Helping the State Thrive

Some segments of prosperity and opportunity in Alabama aren't necessarily their own industries but integral to most business. Occupational specialties help Alabama's major industries succeed. Here are some incredible areas of business that make up huge parts of the state's job economy:

Cybersecurity

Alabama is playing a leading role in cybersecurity research and job growth. Because the state is the site of major aviation, defense, automotive and biochemical companies, the need for cybersecurity experts in Alabama is high. The state also has seven government agencies that are involved in cybersecurity research, as well as 10 cybersecurity start-up companies, according to the state's Chamber of Commerce.

Corporate Operations

With all the growth in the state, it should come as no surprise that the need for corporate operations professionals is high. The headquarters of major corporations like Regions Financial and Protective Life make their homes in Alabama, meaning business majors wishing to work in a corporate setting have plenty of opportunities there.

Distribution

Alabama has a rich infrastructure that ships multiple exports globally. Major companies have distribution centers in Alabama, including Dollar General, CVS Pharmacy and Walmart. Sales representatives, supervisors and distribution experts are needed to help these businesses thrive.

Technology

Alabama information technology companies employ tens of thousands of professionals, according to Amazing Alabama. Stated on its website, “The Alabama IT sector employs over 15,000 Alabamians and generates more than \$1 billion in annual revenue.” Those business professionals interested in information technology could find a home across multiple industries in the state.

Entrepreneurship

Alabama’s tax structure, a plethora of graduates from top colleges and many affordable metropolitan areas make it a great place to start a business. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, in the third quarter of 2016 alone, [2,512 businesses](#) with at least one employee were started, and they accounted for 12,647 new jobs in Alabama.

A top business climate needs people with business backgrounds to help it continue to grow. For those considering furthering their educations and careers in business, Alabama offers plenty of perks and opportunities that are unmatched by other states.

Join Alabama Industries with A Business Degree

With these growing and established Alabama industries, it's easier than ever to earn your degree in Alabama and stay in the state to advance your career. Alabama is also a great state to migrate to as you consider your next move in a business career.

To enhance your business skills to market yourself in these Alabama industries, consider an [online business administration degree](#) from the University of West Alabama. UWA is one Alabama's oldest colleges with a culturally and intellectually diverse environment that mirrors the rich diversity of the state. Designed for students seeking a strong foundation in business fundamentals, our BBA creates opportunities in multiple areas of business.

Already have a bachelor's degree? Our [online MBA program](#) offers many areas of focus for those looking to further your business knowledge. They include:

- **ACCOUNTING**
- **COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS**
- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION**
- **FINANCE**
- **GENERAL BUSINESS**
- **MANAGEMENT**
- **MARKETING**
- **SPORTS MANAGEMENT**

With UWA, you'll earn your degree entirely online at one of the state's most affordable institutions. Our flexible structure allows you to challenge yourself while still fitting education into your busy lifestyle. We proudly provide all our students with personal support from application to graduation.



If you wish to work in the top business climate in the country, UWA offers you the skills you need right in the heart of these Alabama industries.