



2019

Report *to the* Community



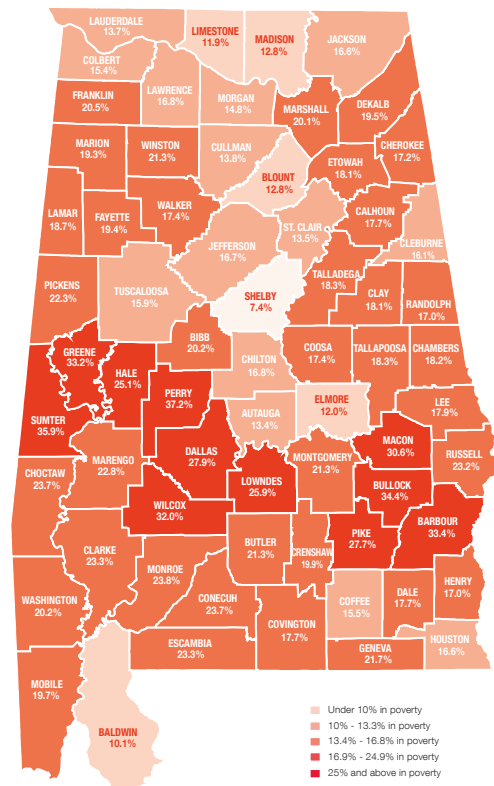
Poverty data sheet builds capacity for education, advocacy, and poverty elimination work

More than 800,000 Alabamians, including 262,000 children, live below the federal poverty threshold. That makes Alabama the sixth poorest state in the U.S., with 16.9 percent of Alabamians living below the federal poverty threshold – a noticeably larger percentage than the national average of 13.4 percent. The federal poverty threshold ranges from \$12,488 for one person to \$25,094 for a family of four.

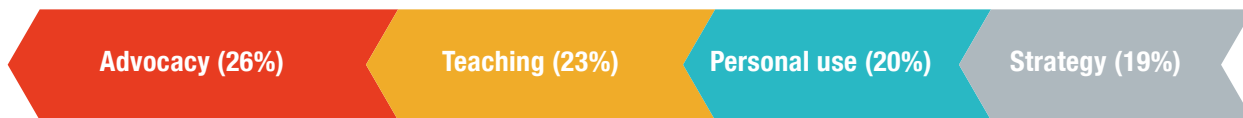
Other key facts include:

- 11 of Alabama’s 67 counties have a poverty rate higher than 25 percent. Seven counties have a poverty rate higher than 30 percent.
- The gap between Alabama’s median household income and the nation’s continues to grow. Alabama’s median household income is \$48,193, or \$12,143 less than the national median of \$60,336.
- Alabama’s median household income for African American families is \$31,183, or \$21,829 less than white families and \$5,593 less than Latino families.

During 2019, you told us how you use the poverty data sheet and how you view poverty as a result.

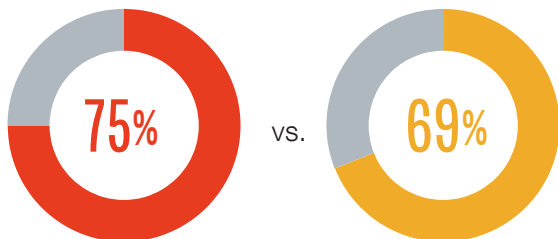


You use the poverty data sheet for:

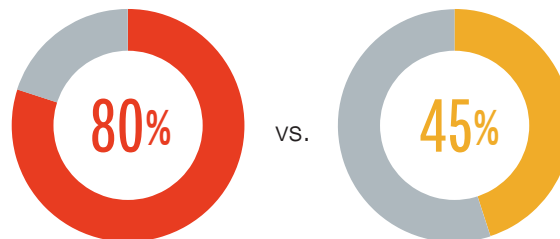


How does the poverty data sheet impact you? Those familiar with it are:

more likely to view poverty as a solvable issue:



more likely to think poverty can be “greatly reduced” in the next 10 years:



“The poverty data sheet is an easy and immediate reference to write grants.”

“It is a quick way to get up to speed on Alabama issues.”

Alabama Possible influences bipartisan effort to simplify the financial aid process

Kristina Scott, executive director of Alabama Possible, testified in March before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. Scott spoke about the need to simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and ease the burden of verification to reduce barriers to enrollment.



The hearing resulted in the FAFSA Simplification Act of 2019, a bipartisan bill sponsored by Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL), which would streamline the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and give students and families early information about Pell Grant eligibility.

During his floor speech introducing the legislation, Sen. Alexander quoted Kristina, who said **“One of the biggest reasons students and families don’t complete the FAFSA is that they don’t think they will be eligible for any financial aid. This is true even for Pell-eligible families.**”

“With the FAFSA Simplification Act’s implementation of simple, clear Pell Grant look-up tables, we will be able to talk with students beginning in middle school about aid which they should be eligible for and how to access it by completing a shorter, simplified FAFSA. These two changes can shift the conversation about postsecondary education from ‘if’ to ‘when’ for low-income and first-generation college-going students and their families.”

Northwest-Shoals Community College students advocate for college access, affordability

Three students from Northwest-Shoals Community College traveled to Washington, D.C., in February to share their stories and discuss the importance of college access and affordability with members of Alabama’s Congressional delegation.

Layne Boyd and Pedro Lucas, both of Russellville, and Fabien Valles of Rogersville joined Alabama Possible and the National College Access Network on Capitol Hill to discuss how Congress can improve postsecondary access and completion and create equal opportunities for all students, including low-income and first-generation college-going students.



“Where I’m from in Russellville, many high school students don’t think they can go to college because they can’t afford it,” Layne said. **“If financial aid was easier to access and the forms were easier to complete, more low-income students would enroll in college and end up with better, higher-paying jobs after they graduate.”**

All three students graduated from Northwest-Shoals in May and earned transfer scholarships. Layne is majoring in biological sciences at Mississippi State University, Pedro is a pharmacy student at Auburn University, and Fabien studies engineering at The University of Alabama.

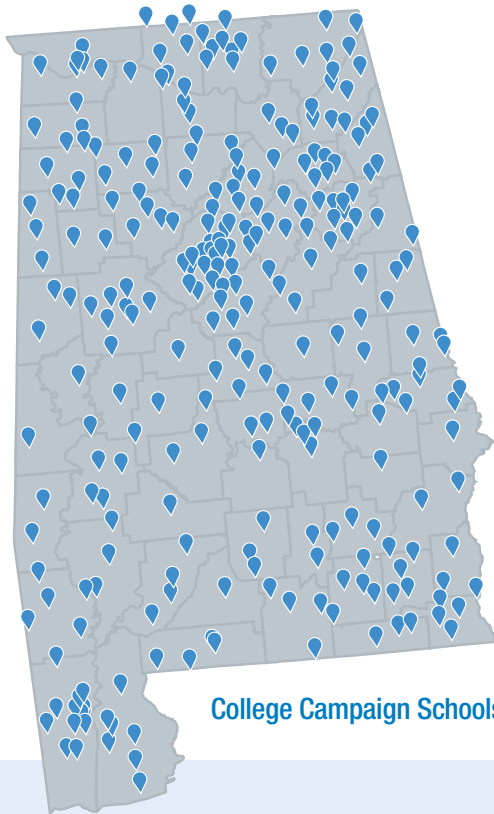
ALABAMA COLLEGE CAMPAIGN



Alabama Possible works to increase the number of Alabama students who pursue and complete a postsecondary education. The Alabama College Campaign combines Alabama College Application Week, Cash for College, and College Signing Day.

We take a three-pronged approach to our work:

- 1 Create early awareness about paying for college and the FAFSA through our partner schools
- 2 Equip educators with tools to lead a college application and financial aid completion campaign at their school
- 3 Increase FAFSA completion with hands-on support for students and their families and a communications and digital outreach campaign



College Campaign Schools

2018-19 Cash for College Winners

The six schools which had the highest and most improved FAFSA completion rates earned cash incentives to support a college-going culture. We recognize winners at small, medium, and large high schools.



Highest Completion Rate

Amelia L. Johnson High School – *Thomaston*
Loveless Academic Magnet Program – *Montgomery*
Pell City High School – *Pell City*

Most Improved

Floral High School – *Floral*
Russellville High School – *Russellville*
Shades Valley High School - *Irondale*

Did you know?

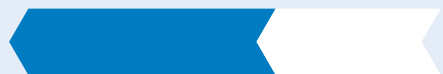
The maximum Pell Grant is

\$6,195

The average Pell Grant is

\$4,016

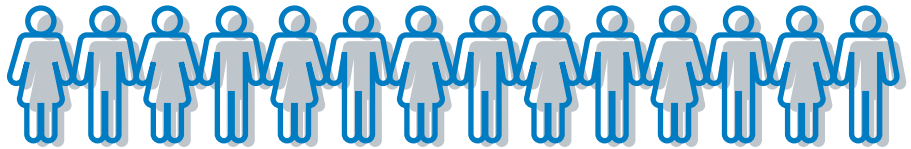
Pell Grants do not need to be paid back



↑ 60 percent of Alabama public high school students qualify for a Pell Grant

ALABAMA COLLEGE CAMPAIGN

2018-19 IMPACT



45,000

high school seniors applied to college

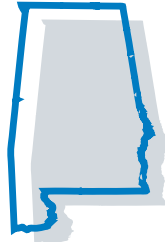
28,566

high school seniors completed their FAFSA



330

high schools



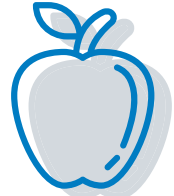
67

Alabama counties



44

Alabama colleges waived their application fees



300

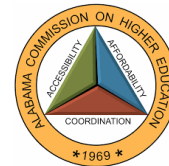
educators trained



\$69.2 million

in Pell Grant aid leveraged for education after high school

Alabama College Campaign partners include



Pell Grants can be used for technical and academic education



80 percent of American college students rely on financial aid earned by completing their FAFSA



About Alabama Possible

VISION

To ensure that all Alabamians have the opportunity to lead prosperous lives.

MISSION

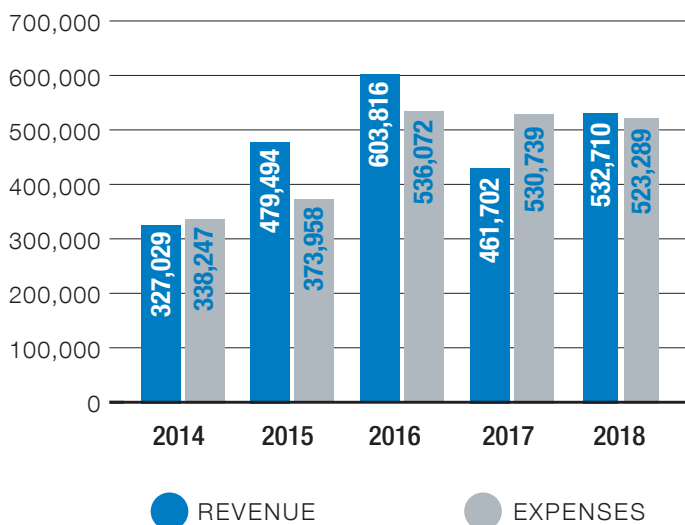
To break down barriers to prosperity in Alabama through education, collaboration, and advocacy.

Kristina Scott recognized with Game Changer award by Vulcan Park and Museum



Photo courtesy Vulcan Park and Museum

Stewarding investments to remove barriers to prosperity



source: Alabama Possible Form 990
Alabama Possible stewards community and organizational sustainability by maintaining an operating reserve fund. Alabama Possible's 990 is available at alabamapossible.org/990

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Poverty simulations build empathy for low-income families' daily struggles

During 2019, nearly 1,500 individuals learned about barriers that low-income families face by taking part in a poverty simulation.

Participants have an opportunity to learn about the barriers faced by low-income families as they try to get to work, get their kids to school, feed their families, and keep their homes safe.

What do Alabamians say about their experience?

- “Systems are in place that makes it difficult to rise from poverty.”
- “I learned that what seems simple to us isn't so simple to those who are struggling to make ends meet.”
- “I am going to talk with my children about this because I think it begins with making them understand about other people's barriers.”
- “After participating in the simulation, I will provide more grace and empathy.”

To host a simulation for your class, workplace, conference, or house of worship, please contact Kristina Scott of Alabama Possible at 205.939.1408 or kscott@alabamapossible.org

2019 Poverty Simulation Partners

Alabama Business Trust	Leadership Alabama
Alabama Power Company	Leadership Birmingham
Auburn City Schools	Madison City Schools
Auburn University	Marion Military Institute
Birmingham-Southern College	Northeast Alabama Community College
Bridge Builders Alabama	River Region United Way
Canterbury United Methodist Church	UAB
First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa	United Way of West Alabama
Houston Academy	YMCA of Greater Montgomery
Judson College	Youth Leadership Walker County
Lakeview Civic Organization	



The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS)—an interactive, immersion experience— is owned by the Missouri Community Action Network. The simulation provides a glimpse into the structural barriers of poverty to transform participants' perspectives about their own communities. These transformed perspectives inspire action toward positive community change. If you are interested in learning more about the Community Action Poverty Simulation or purchasing a CAPS kit license, please visit communityaction.org or povertysimulation.net

“We had one motivated student that wanted to attend community college to earn a degree in automotive mechanics and co-op in a car industry. The student was so relieved when he realized he was eligible for a Pell Grant.”

- RUSSELLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



Break down barriers to prosperity >>>