



BUILDING ALABAMA TOGETHER 2018 **Report** *to the* **Community**



Breaking down barriers to prosperity by increasing college access and success

Alabama Possible works to increase the number of Alabama students who pursue and complete a postsecondary education. We take a three-pronged approach to our work:

- 1 **Teaming** individual high school students with near-peer college student mentors to complete college-going milestones using curriculum materials;
- 2 **Building** a school-wide college-going culture by raising expectations for student success and supporting all students with tools and relationships necessary to pursue their education after high school through activities like financial aid workshops at individual high schools; and
- 3 **Nurturing** cross-sector partnerships with school systems, higher education institutions, and other like-minded community organizations to fill gaps rather than duplicate services.



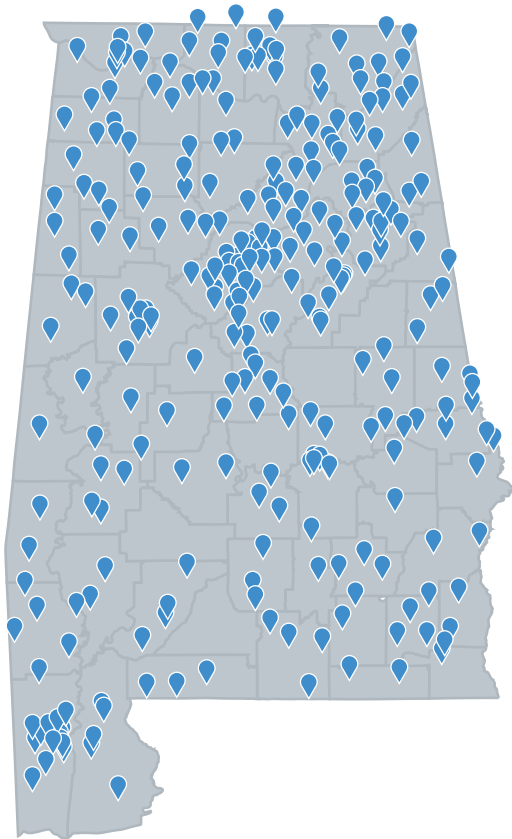
College is the attainment of valuable postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.



Catalyzing statewide change through systems leadership

Cash for College Alabama makes education after high school more affordable and catalyzes a statewide college-going culture by boosting Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion.

- High schools compete to increase FAFSA completion, get media recognition, and win grant prizes.
- Stakeholders use a data dashboard with weekly improvement updates at school and district levels.
- Educators participate in a learning community with best practices, professional development, and weekly newsletter.



FAFSA Fast Facts

- Nationally, 9 out of 10 students who complete the FAFSA attend college the following fall.
- All families seeking federal or state financial aid – including grants, loans and work-study programs – must complete the FAFSA.
- Many colleges require the FAFSA for both merit and need-based scholarships.
- Students should file their FAFSA during their senior year of high school and renew it for each year of college.
- Most Alabama high school seniors qualify for Pell Grants of up to \$6,195 per year.
- Students can use Pell Grants for two-year and four-year technical and academic programs.

**304**

participating
high schools

**29,833**

FAFSAs completed
statewide as of
June 30, 2018

**4th largest**

increase in
FAFSA completions
in the nation

**\$72 million**

available Pell Grants to
pay for postsecondary
education

1371

STUDENTS
SERVED

71

NEAR-PEER
AND PEER MENTORS

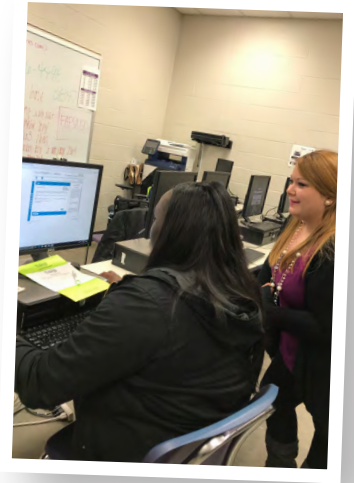
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ADULT
VOLUNTEERS

Opening opportunities by working directly with students and families

Through the Blueprints College Success Initiative and Cash for College, Alabama Possible works with students during their last two years of high school to plan, prepare, and pay for postsecondary education.

Our Summer Drop-In Center helps recent high school graduates actually enroll in college by navigating housing contracts, course registration, and meal plans, and we worked with first-year students at Lawson State Community College to smooth the transition from high school to college.



2017-18 DIRECT SERVICE PARTNERS

Birmingham-Southern College
Central (Tuscaloosa) High School
G.W. Carver (Birmingham) High School
Holt High School
Holy Family Cristo Rey High School
Huffman High School
Lawson State Community College
Northwest-Shoals Community college
P.D.-Jackson Olin High School
Parker High School
Phil Campbell High School
Ramsay High School
Samford University
Shelton State Community College
The University of Alabama
UAB
Wenonah High School
Woodlawn High School

2018 GRADUATES OF OUR DIRECT SERVICES PROGRAMS ATTEND THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

Alabama A & M University
Alabama State University
Albany State University
Alcorn State University
Arkansas Baptist College
Ashford University
Auburn University
Auburn University at Montgomery
Austin Peay State University
Baylor University

Benedict College
Berea College
Bethany College
Bevill State Community College
Birmingham-Southern College
Bishop State Community College
Calhoun State Community College
California State University-Fresno
Clark Atlanta University
Coahoma Community College
Colorado Technical University
Columbia College-Chicago
Cornell University
Delta State University
Dillard University
Dodge City Community College
East Georgia State College
Enterprise State Community College
Estrella Mountain Community College
Faulkner University
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Florida State University
Freed-Hardeman University
Gadsden State Community College
Georgetown University
Gulf Coast State College
Highland Community College
Hinds Community College
Hocking College
Howard University
Huntingdon College
Independence Community College
Independence University
Jackson State University

Jacksonville State University
James H Faulkner State Community College
Jefferson State Community College
Judson College
Kentucky State University
LaGrange College
Lane College
Lawson State Community College
Le Moyne-Owen College
Lincoln University
Lone Star College System
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
Marion Military Institute
Mercer University
Middle Tennessee State University
Miles College
Millsaps College
Mississippi Delta Community College
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Mississippi State University
Mississippi Valley State University
Morehouse College
Murray State University
North Carolina A&T State University
North Central Missouri College
Northwest-Shoals Community College
Oakwood University
Prairie View A & M University
Rust College
Samford University
Santa Fe College
Shelton State Community College

Snead State Community College
South University
Southeastern Community College
Southern New Hampshire University
Southern Union State Community College
Southern University and A&M College
Southern Wesleyan University
Spelman College
Talladega College
Tennessee State University
Tennessee Technological University
Tennessee Wesleyan College
Troy University
Tuskegee University
UAB
UAH
The University of Alabama
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Louisville
University of Memphis
University of Mobile
University of Montevallo
University of North Alabama
University of South Alabama
University of Southern Mississippi
The University of Tennessee
University of West Alabama
Valdosta State University
Vermilion Community College
Wallace Community College-Selma
Wallace State Community College-Hanceville



“I was senior class president and a Bulldog Ambassador. When I had to make a decision about college, it really came down to scholarships and whoever offered me the most financial aid to continue my education. I competed in the national ProStart Competition and it allowed me to get a full-ride scholarship to Jefferson State Community College for its culinary program.

The FAFSA helped me pay for my books and pay for a lot of things that I could not afford on my own. I did not have a computer when I entered college. Financial aid helped me get a computer that is reliable.”

Christopher Mendez, culinary arts student at Jefferson State Community College and Ashville High School graduate



“I started thinking about college through sports. When I recognized I was good at football, and that I could go to another level and play, I started to keep my grades up so that I would be able to keep going and keep playing. When I started to think about paying for college, that’s when the FAFSA came in and the Cash for College team helped me understand it. They explained what it would pay for and why I needed it.

When they first came to me, I was like, ‘I’m going to school on a sports scholarship, so I really don’t need it.’ They said I still needed it, and they explained more to me and helped me understand.”

Keokia Harris, first-year student at Hocking College and Huffman High School graduate



“I had a lot of challenges, including financially, while planning for college. The FAFSA was easy with the help of Cash for College. I didn’t really know anything about it, honestly. A lot of my classmates didn’t either, but we got through it. My mom was the biggest help, because she was with me when I started it and helped anytime I had to fix something. Now, I’m trying to graduate from college.”

Naomi Thomas, junior at UAB, graduate of Lawson State Community College and Wenonah High School, and Alabama Possible AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer

building
(it)
together

WE'RE BUILDING
(MOMENTUM)
TOGETHER.



building
(it)
together

Central Alabama collaborating to transform the region's economy by aligning education and jobs

Alabama Possible and other Bold Goals Coalition partners are focusing on Central Alabama's people, economy, and future. Research conducted by Burning Glass Technologies and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning outlined choices and opportunities for the region to become more competitive in attracting and retaining jobs and workers.

Key Building (it) Together findings include:

- Greater Birmingham is resilient but is falling behind other southeastern cities.
- IT, business and financial operations, and architecture and engineering will experience supply gaps over the next ten years.
- Education and industry are misaligned, and the region lacks skilled and relevant workforce talent.

"There's an urgency. The automation tsunami is coming ... It's time to make sure that our young people understand what the careers of tomorrow look like. And it's up to us to support policies that help make that happen."

-KRISTINA SCOTT, Alabama Possible Executive Director

To learn more about Building (it) Together, visit buildingittogether.com

Key Building (it) Together recommendations include:

- Increase high school and postsecondary education attainment.
- Support existing industry and identify emerging companies and jobs in advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotech, and IT.
- Expand work-based learning.
- Increase equitable employment and income outcomes amongst people of color.

BIRMINGHAM
BUSINESS JOURNAL

Building (it) Together initiative a
"bold new effort to boost
Birmingham's workforce and economy."

Building (it) Together partners





Collaboration builds capacity for community change

More than 200 Alabamians gathered in October for Alabama Possible's dinner and conversation with Kate Nielsen, retired CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, and Sanjay Singh, co-founder of Computer Technology Solutions and advisor at Pack Health.

Nielsen and Singh's conversation focused on two words: "together" and "possible."

"When I looked at cities coming back to life, there was visible change that got the community pumped up. Railroad Park was that visible change in Birmingham," said Nielsen.

"Railroad Park created transformational change. I've seen Birmingham change three times over since moving here. UAB continues to drive much of that change and growth," said Singh.

Nielsen and Singh agreed that additional collaboration is needed to improve education and workforce development outcomes in Alabama. "If we don't invest in education, then we won't solve our workforce challenges," said Singh.

"By examining a broad scope of community issues and successes, Alabama Possible is starting a conversation and inspiring people, because the next Railroad Park or the next Shipt means more local tax funding, a greater population to support a school district and more collaboration for important issues like poverty and education."

-STEPHANIE REBMAN,
Birmingham Business Journal

Alabama prioritizes educational attainment, talent development with Success Plus goal

Alabama aims to add 500,000 with valuable postsecondary credentials to the state's workforce by 2025. Alabama Possible Executive Director Kristina Scott served on the Alabama Workforce Council's Educational Attainment Committee which developed the Success Plus goal and accompanying plan.

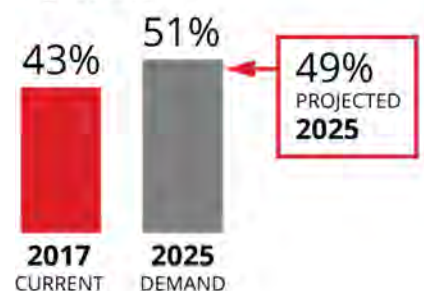
To achieve this ambitious goal, Alabama Possible and the rest of the Success Plus team will collaborate with educators, business leaders, policymakers, and funders to improve access to educational opportunities, create pathways through postsecondary education to the workforce, and encourage collaboration among private and public entities.

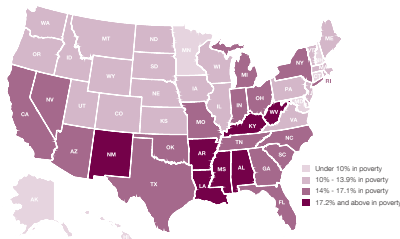
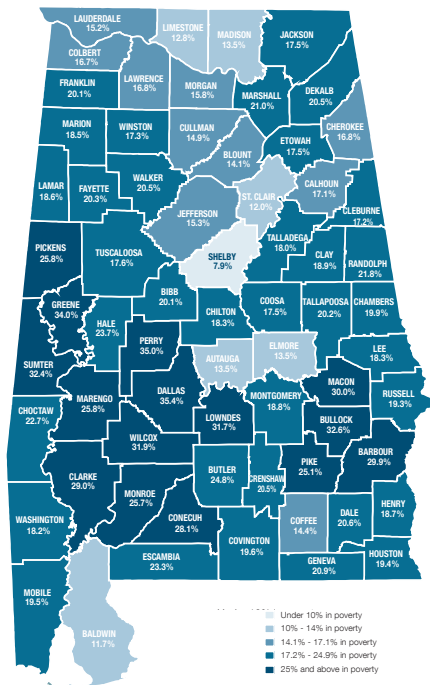
To learn more about Success Plus, visit alabamaworks.com/successplus



Alabama educational attainment rate

gap projected in post-secondary education and training beyond high school.





Alabama is the sixth poorest state. Alabama is more than a number.

While poverty is at its lowest rate since Alabama Possible started publishing the Alabama Poverty Data Sheet in 2010, we remain the sixth poorest state in the country.

More than 800,000 Alabamians live below the poverty line, which is just \$24,257 for a family of four. Poverty continues to impact every corner of the state, and 15 of Alabama's 67 counties have a poverty rate higher than 25 percent. Another eight counties have a poverty rate higher than 30 percent.

Other key facts include:

- 17.2 percent of Alabamians live below the federal poverty line – a noticeably larger percentage than the national average of 14 percent
- 250,000 Alabama children live in poverty
- Alabama's median household income is \$46,309, which is \$11,308 less than the national median of \$57,617
- Alabama's median household income for African Americans is \$21,165 less than white families' median household income

Alabama is more than these numbers. It is full of people breaking down barriers to prosperity for all its residents.



CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2016*



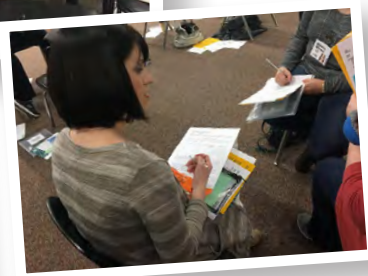
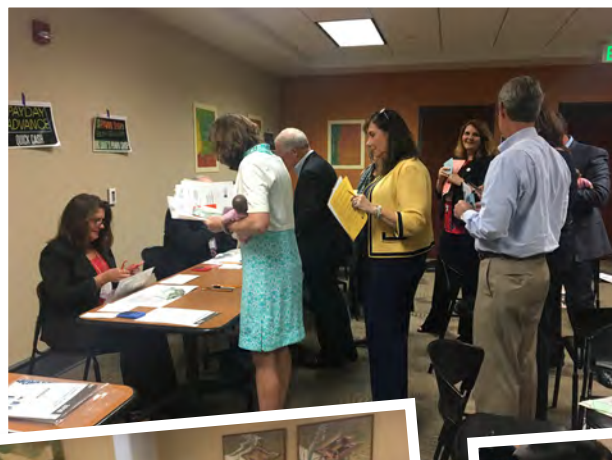
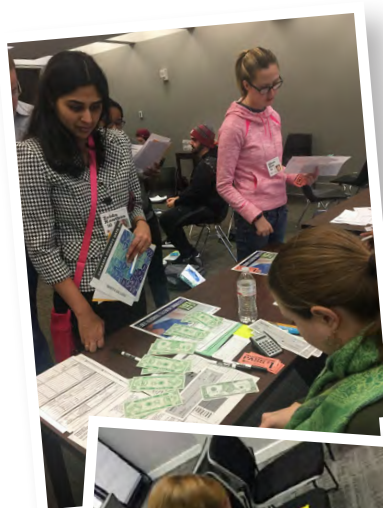
POVERTY THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY SIZE*



"Shelby County as a whole has a low poverty rate. However, pockets of South Shelby County, including areas of Montevallo, experience high levels of poverty. Our vulnerable residents are often overlooked and underserved. Montevallo is committed to growing our economy through innovative means such as the arts; our historic, walkable downtown; and unique sports and recreation opportunities. We are more than just a number—we are Montevallo."

– **HOLLIE C. COST, PH.D.**, Mayor, City of Montevallo





Poverty simulations provide snapshot of low-income families' daily struggles

During 2018, 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 the kids to school, feed their families, and keep their homes safe.

What do Alabamians say about their experience?

"People are going through things that others don't know about and won't ever have to go through. It's an eye opener to be grateful that you are not in this predicament."

"Poverty is a constant struggle, and no one helped one another."

"I have a better understanding of low-income families' daily struggles, the barriers they face, and how I can help them."

"People get desperate at the end of the month."

"After participating in the simulation, I will be more empathetic and won't make assumptions. You never know what someone is dealing with."

"It was much harder to pay bills and get out of poverty than I thought."

To bring a poverty simulation to your campus, civic organization, business, or faith community, please contact Kristina Scott at kscott@alabamapossible.org

2018 POVERTY SIMULATION PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Auburn University
Baptist Medical Center South
Birmingham-Southern College
Calhoun County Schools
Columbia Group
Corporation for National and Community Service
Jacksonville State University
Judson College
Leadership Alabama
Leadership Birmingham
Leadership Sumter County
Legal Services Alabama
Marion Military Institute
United Way of Northwest Alabama
Northwest-Shoals Community College
Samford University
UAB
University of Alabama
University of Montevallo
Welch Hornsby
Youth Leadership Walker County

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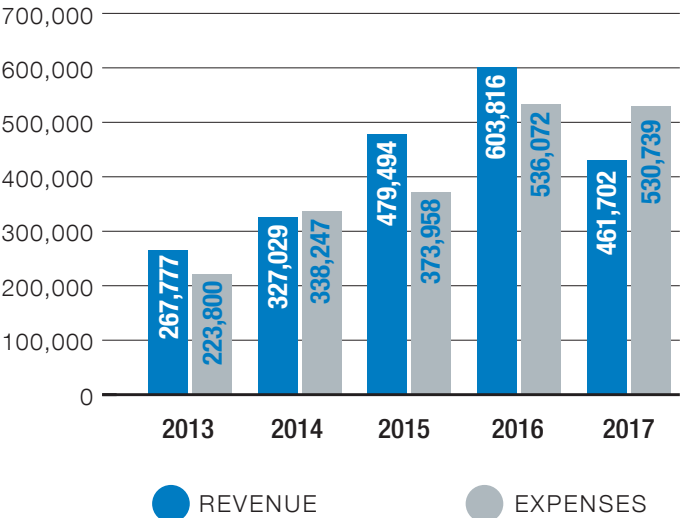
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Stewarding investments to remove barriers to prosperity



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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Many thanks to the foundations, higher education institutions, faith communities, business and community organizations, and individuals who helped break down barriers to prosperity by investing in our work.

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Auburn First Baptist Church
 Canterbury United Methodist Church
 Episcopal Church of the Nativity
 Independent Presbyterian Church Foundation
 First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa
 Southside Baptist Church

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Alabama Commission on Higher Education
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 Alabama State Department of Education
 Alabama Workforce Council
 Birmingham City Schools
 Birmingham Education Foundation
 Birmingham Public Library
 Black Belt Treasures
 Bold Goals Coalition
 Calhoun County Schools
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 Shelby County Schools
 Southern Coalition for Social Justice
 Southern Education Foundation
 United Way of Central Alabama
 United Way of Northwest Alabama
 Walker County Schools
 Walker Area Community Foundation
 Woodlawn Foundation

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 Birmingham-Southern College
 Northwest-Shoals Community College
 Samford University
 The University of Alabama
 University of Alabama at Birmingham

HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE MEMBERS

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 Beville State Community College
 Jacksonville State University
 Jefferson State Community College
 Judson College
 Lawson State Community College
 Marian Military Institute
 Northeast Alabama Community College
 Shelton State Community College
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*Alabama Possible breaks down barriers to prosperity
through education, collaboration, and advocacy.*

OUR VALUES

EQUITY All people have the right to a prosperous and meaningful life.

RESILIENCY Communities are inherently strong, capable, and in charge of their own futures.

PARTNERSHIPS We work together to maximize limited resources.

THE GOLDEN RULE We build relationships based on reciprocity, respect, and compassion.



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