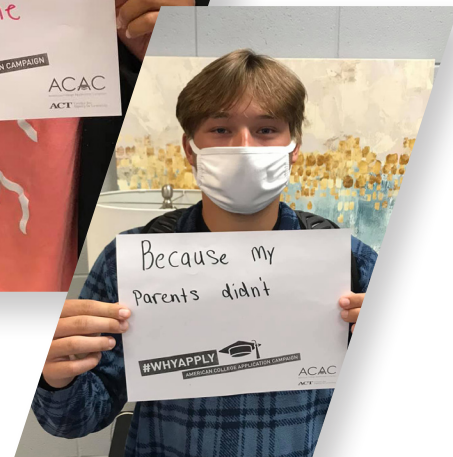
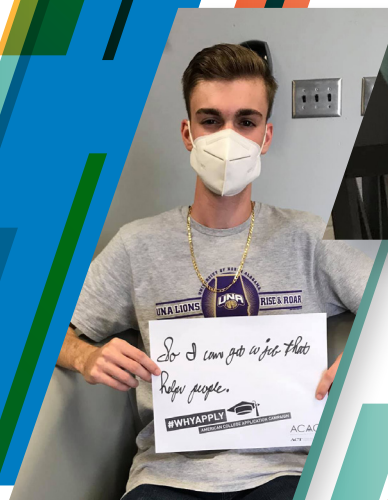
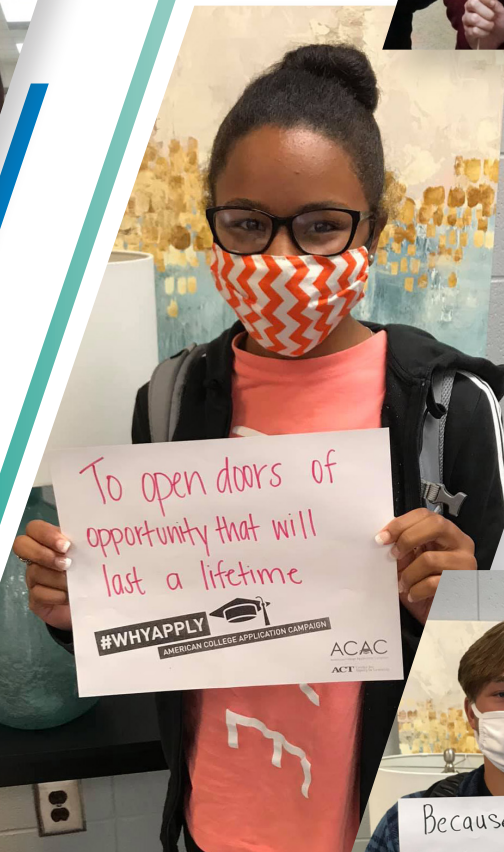


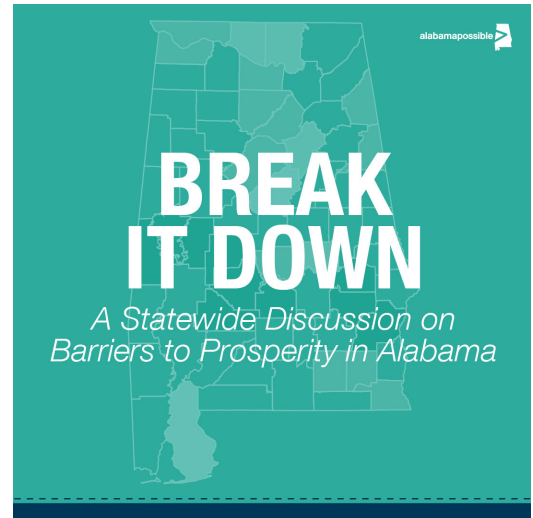
2020

Report *to the* Community



/// Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet Discussion Series

Poverty simulations build empathy for low-income families' daily struggles. Alabama Possible had to cancel all poverty simulations in 2020 because of the pandemic. We did not want to pause the discussions around poverty, so we organized, facilitated, and recorded a statewide virtual discussion series using the Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet 2020 and its discussion guide. The series was entitled, **"Break It Down: A Statewide Discussion on Barriers to Prosperity in Alabama."** Alabama Possible collected quantitative and qualitative data before, during, and after each discussion and has generated a comprehensive report that highlights key findings.



Goals of this discussion series were to:

- Raise awareness of the Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet and its discussion guide with target audiences across Alabama
- Increase rates of social connectedness and civic engagement in Alabama during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Increase shared understanding of poverty in Alabama across different groups and contexts
- Inspire community-based decision-making and local action(s) that will remove barriers to prosperity

The series began on October 6, 2020, and concluded on November 4, 2020. It included six discussions that engaged several counties including Washington County, Colbert County, Madison County, Dallas County, and others. The community partners who supported this project include:

- Washington County Public Library, Jessica Ross
- Troy University's Office of Civic Engagement, Jonathan Cellon and Lauren Cochran
- Phi Theta Kappa Chapter of Northwest-Shoals Community College, Pam Peters
- The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Jim Page
- North Alabama, Archie Tucker and Jason Vandiver
- Dallas County Cooperative Extension, Callie Nelson

If you are interested in exploring the possibility of holding the discussion series in your community, please reach out to Manisha Mishra (mmishra@alabamapossible.org) at Alabama Possible.

“[T]he power of the conversation was invaluable. People from different spheres of influence and life experiences coming together for the purpose of real change is critical. Often conversations around poverty have the ‘group think’ effect vs. a variety of people, as was tonight, exploring what is possible and doable. I care deeply about these issues and appreciated hearing the passion of others. Thank you for an excellent example of hosting a conversation of this type!”

– West Alabama Participant

“The discussion was extremely well organized and productive. It was informative and carefully moderated. Alabama Possible deserves all praises for that.”

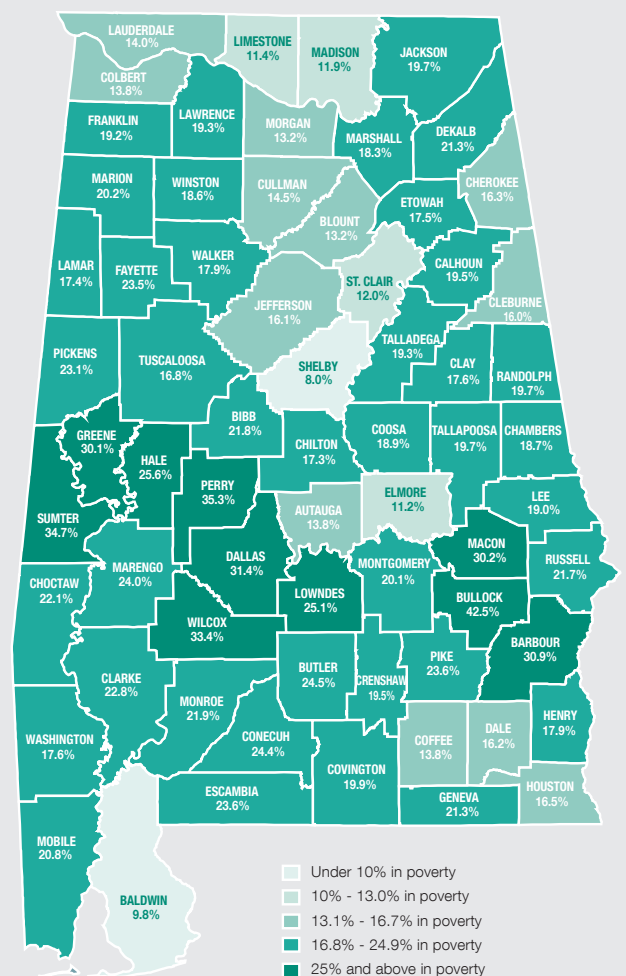
– Northwest-Shoals Participant

Our Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet builds capacity for education, advocacy, and poverty elimination work

Pre-COVID 19, more than 800,000 Alabamians, including 256,000 children, live below the federal poverty threshold. **That makes Alabama the fifth poorest state** in the U.S., with 16.8 percent of Alabamians living below the federal poverty threshold – a noticeably larger percentage than the national average of 13.1 percent. The federal poverty threshold ranges from \$12,784 for one person to \$25,701 for a family of four.

Other key facts include:

- 10 of Alabama's 67 counties have a poverty rate higher than 25 percent. Eight counties have a poverty rate higher than 30 percent.
- Alabama's median household income is \$49,881, or \$12,056 less than the national median of \$61,937.
- The median household income for African American families is \$32,188, or \$23,502 less than white families and \$6,126 less than Latino families.





Alabama Goes to College equips Alabamians with tools and connects them with relationships so that every student can plan for, pursue, and complete valuable postsecondary credentials. Most career pathways require these credentials including technical certificates and academic degrees. Alabama Goes to College provides resources for students and families to explore college options, find financial aid opportunities, and successfully transition from high school to college.

The Alabama Goes to College Campaign combines Alabama College Application Week, Cash for College, and College and Career Decision Day. Through these three initiatives we:

- ✓ **encourage** every graduating senior to complete their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) so they can access federal, state, and institutional aid to pay for their education after high school.
- ✓ **offer** high school seniors in Alabama an opportunity to apply to participating colleges for free.
- ✓ **celebrate** students committing to pursue their education past high school, whether to obtain a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a certificate or industry-recognized credential; entering the military; or pursuing a skilled trade.

DID YOU KNOW?



The maximum
Pell Grant is
\$6,345



The average
Pell Grant is
\$4,303



Pell Grants do
not need to be
paid back



Pell Grants can be
used for technical and
academic education

↑ 57.4 percent of Alabama students qualify for a Pell Grant

Alabama College Campaign
partners include



alabamapossible



2019-20 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.

MVP Award

Amelia L. Johnson High School – *Thomaston*
Ramsay High School – *Birmingham*
Helena High School – *Helena*

Most Improved

Meek High School – *Arley*
Parker High School – *Birmingham*
Huffman High School – *Birmingham*

ALABAMA
COLLEGE
CAMPAIGN

2019-20
IMPACT

33,829

high school seniors
applied to college

26,974

high school seniors
completed their FAFSA



346 schools

67 Alabama
counties



56 Alabama Colleges
waived their
application fees

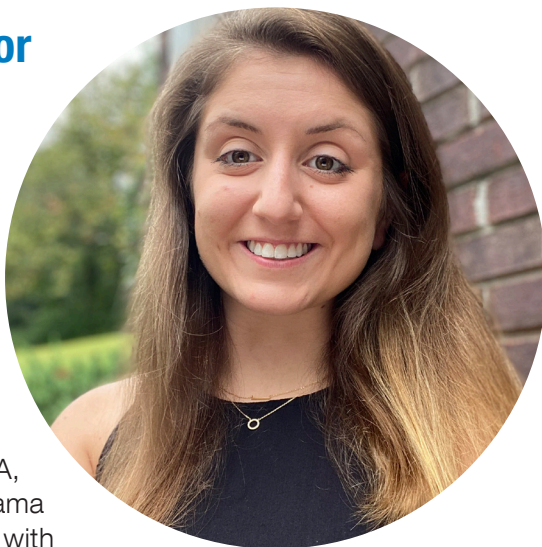


\$66 million

in Pell Grant aid leveraged for
education after high school

Troy University student serves as peer advisor

Troy University senior Brittany George is pursuing a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with minors in American Sign Language Interpreter Training, Criminal Justice, and Civic Engagement. Her search for an internship that would involve community engagement led her to Alabama Possible. While here, she served as a peer advisor to high school seniors who were seeking to attend college post-graduation. “I enjoyed being a resource for the students and assisting them any way I could,” said George. “Prior to working at Alabama Possible, I knew little about the FAFSA and the true impact it has on students and their families.” The COVID 19 pandemic posed new challenges to the already complex process of filling out the FAFSA, but Brittany was able to be a support to students safely through Alabama Possible’s Help Desk, where students could call or text for assistance with financial aid and college application questions.



While she joined the team at Alabama Possible partly to fulfill graduation requirements, Brittany said her experience exceeded her expectations. “I didn’t know how complex it is working for a nonprofit. I loved being there for the students. This experience expanded my knowledge of the importance of education and advocacy. I am incredibly more thankful and aware of my privilege of having access to higher education with the assistance of financial aid.”



Auburn student elected mayor of Camp Hill, Alabama

As an Alabama Possible Student Advocacy Fellow, Messiah Williams-Cole traveled to Washington, D.C., right before the pandemic hit for the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Hill Day to advocate for policies that support low-income and first-generation college students. When asked to recollect NCAN Hill Day, Williams-Cole said, “It was a whole-circle moment when I saw how communities were affected by education.”

Williams-Cole is an Auburn University senior and Interdisciplinary Studies major focusing on political science, business, and civic/community engagement. Auburn professor Dr. Mark Wilson was familiar with Alabama Possible’s work and knew of Williams-Cole’s eagerness to be engaged in his community. He encouraged Messiah to apply for the Student Advocacy Fellow role.

Williams-Cole has a long history of advocating for students in his community, even offering free ACT tutoring sessions to fellow high schoolers to improve their test scores, which gave them more opportunities for postsecondary success. Shortly after Messiah returned from Washington, D.C., he ran for mayor in his hometown of Camp Hill, Alabama, and won in the runoff against the incumbent. As the youngest mayor in Camp Hill history, he aims to uplift his community and Alabama citizens. “I wish others were aware that college affordability is a universal problem, and that college encompasses more than your studies...I feel as though an excellent education is necessary in pursuit of the American Dream.”



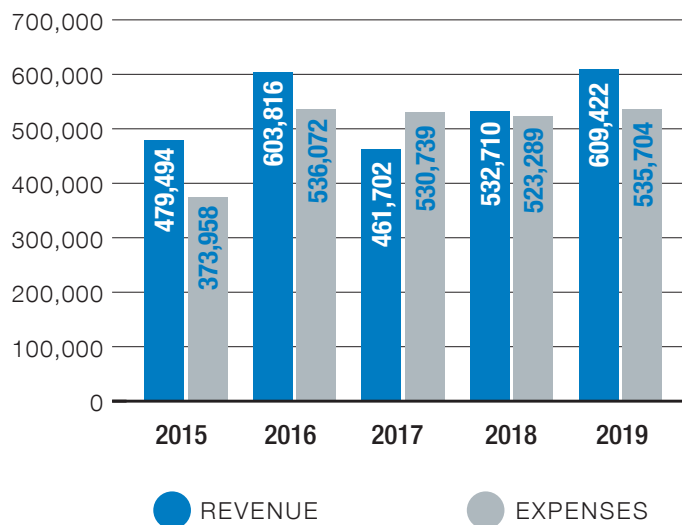
About Alabama Possible

Alabama Possible welcomed new executive director, Chandra Scott.

Chandra brings a wealth of experience from her role as Director of Strategic Outcomes for the Mobile Area Education Foundation in Mobile, Alabama. In 2017, she led the launch of the state's first postsecondary attainment goal which earned a Talent Hub designation from the Lumina Foundation in 2018. She has provided strategic direction and branding as an advocate for education equity for more than 18 years. Chandra believes that Alabama Possible is the catalyst to bridging resources and talents essential to the success of all postsecondary learners in Alabama.



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

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.

Board of Directors

Virginia Patterson, <i>Chair</i> <i>Bradley, Arant, Boult,</i> <i>Cummings LLP</i>	Ron Houston <i>Houston Resource Group</i>
Kent Anderson, EdD <i>Birmingham Southern</i> <i>College</i>	Edward Wilson, MD, PhD, <i>Pathologist (ret.)</i>
Christian Becraft <i>Auburn University</i>	Chandra Scott <i>rolled off October 2020</i> <i>Mobile Area Education</i> <i>Foundation</i>
Tommy Bice, EdD <i>Michael and Gillian Goodrich</i> <i>Foundation</i>	Houston Smith <i>Alabama Power</i>
Natalie Bolling <i>Vulcan Materials Company</i>	Jim Spearman <i>Spearman Associates, LLC</i>
Wendi Boyen <i>Regions Bank</i>	Charles Taylor <i>The University of Alabama</i> <i>System</i>
Wayne Flynt, PhD* <i>Auburn University (ret.)</i>	Stacey Torch <i>Torch Communications</i>
Ralph Foster <i>Auburn University (ret.)</i>	Archie Tucker, II, PhD <i>Alabama A&M University</i>
Leon Frazier, EdD* <i>Alabama State University</i>	Jason Vandiver <i>PNC Bank</i>
Nicole Hampton <i>Rosen Harwood</i>	Libba Vaughan <i>Leadership Birmingham</i>
Krysten Holloway <i>Blue Cross Blue Shield</i>	*emeritus

Staff

Chandra Scott, *Executive Director*
Kristie Nix Moorer, *Development Director*
Manisha Mishra, *Program Director*
Mae Whiting, *Data and Research Manager*
Keila Lawrence, *College Transitions Peer Advisor*
Brittany George, *Intern*

National College Attainment Network Student Advocacy Fellows

Kaila Pouncy, *The University of Alabama*
Savannah Berryman, *Northwest-Shoals Community College*

“For every one of us that succeeds, it’s because there’s somebody there to show you the way out. The light doesn’t always necessarily have to be in your family; for me it was teachers and school.”

- OPRAH WINFREY



alabamapossible

www.alabamapossible.org

