



2024 **Report** *to the*
Community

alabamapossible 

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Greetings,

The Alabama Possible Team expresses its gratitude for the tremendous support we receive from loyal supporters like you. Your commitment and generosity have significantly impacted our mission and made 2024 a transformative year as we **forged forward** making remarkable strides towards our mission of removing barriers to prosperity. Your partnership is essential since you understand the importance of creating a more inclusive and thriving Alabama for all.

As we look back on 2024, your extraordinary support empowered us to strengthen our programming, enhance our resources, and connect with more individuals and families throughout Alabama. Together, we have assisted students in accessing higher education, guided communities in changing the narrative, and collaborated with policymakers to drive positive change. Your support facilitated new initiatives, such as the publication of case studies on Alabama's Historically Black Community Colleges and Predominantly Black Community Colleges, highlighting the impactful stories and contributions of institutions that are shaping our workforce and future. Additionally, we engaged thousands of students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) eliminating significant barriers to postsecondary access. These efforts led to us being selected as one of the six organizations nationally to participate in Phase 1 Beta Testing of 2025-26 FAFSA. The experiences of students and families during this testing period informed the launch of a stronger FAFSA on November 18th, ahead of the December date initially set for FAFSA release.

Utilizing data from Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet as the foundation, we conducted several poverty simulations statewide during which citizens experienced the challenges and barriers faced by their neighbors who live in poverty. By immersing themselves in this exercise, participants gained a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers that impact those in poverty, leading to difficult emotional and personal decisions. Facilitating this simulation aligned with Alabama Possible's efforts toward transforming how people talk and think about economic status. Our goal is to challenge perceptions of poverty, shifting the focus from personal failure to a recognition of poverty as a societal issue. Alabama Possible utilizes the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) kit developed by Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN).

Thank you for reading our end-of-year report, which highlights the incredible accomplishments of 2024. We hope you enjoy this journey through the year and feel proud knowing that your support has positively impacted countless lives in Alabama.

As we look forward to 2025, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose and a robust foundation built by your partnership. We are committed to continue addressing the barriers to postsecondary access, workforce preparedness, and community resilience. Your belief in our mission has equipped us to meet these needs and expand our impact with the tools and resources necessary to reach every neighbor across our state.

Thank you, once again, on behalf of our Board of Directors and our *small but mighty team* for your dedication to a prosperous Alabama for all. We could not have done this without you, and we are grateful for your commitment to joining us in charting **pathways to excellence** for our neighbors in Alabama.

Yours in service and gratitude,



Chandra C. Scott
Executive Director



Alabama College Attainment Network (AlabamaCAN) Virtual Spring Conference 2024

On Wednesday, April 10, 2024, the Alabama College Attainment Network hosted its fourth statewide virtual conference focused on *Forging Forward: Enhancing Postsecondary Attainment to Fulfill Workforce Needs*.

Thank you to our keynote speaker, **Liz Huntley**, who used her moving personal story to underline the value of education.

Two hundred thirty-eight people registered for the conference, which included 11 sessions and 28 statewide and national presenters. The sessions included many hard-won personal strategies in building networks and breaking down silos. Our thanks to all of the session presenters who, through their efforts, provided us with strategies that apply to all areas of education and workforce development.



The lunch vouchers were made possible by the support of the Honda USA Foundation.

This conference continues our effort to bring people together and spread the news about the great work happening across our state to meet our workforce needs.

Regional College Attainment Network

We launched Regional College Attainment Networks in the Workforce Regions across Alabama to strengthen collaborations between higher education and workforce.



Alabama College Attainment Network



Our Barriers to Prosperity Data Resources Galvanize Advocacy Efforts

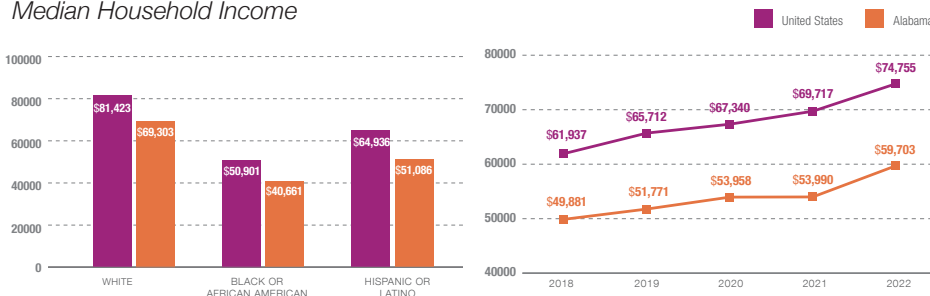
Our 2024 Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet uses the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau to highlight metrics for Alabama’s 67 counties. Alabama ranked as the nation’s seventh poorest state, with 16.2 percent of Alabamians living below the federal poverty threshold. The federal poverty threshold ranges from \$14,880 for one person to \$29,950 for a family of four. Alabama continues to have a much higher poverty rate than the national rate of 12.6 percent.

Key findings include:

- Eleven of Alabama’s 67 counties have a poverty rate higher than 25 percent, which is three more counties than last year. Six counties have a poverty rate higher than 30 percent.
- Alabama’s median household income is \$59,703, which is \$15,052 less than the national median of \$74,755.
- The median household income for Black or African American families is \$40,661, which is \$28,642 less than white families and \$10,425 less than Hispanic and Latino families in Alabama.

We welcomed a highly esteemed panel to discuss how the Data Sheet is being used in their approaches to community programming, grant writing, relationship building, and service learning.

Median Household Income



Panelists included:



Kerra Anthony

Director of Development for Junior Achievement of Alabama



Anna-Margaret Goldman

Director of the Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement (CEOE) at Auburn University Outreach



Terra Mortensen

Grant Writer and Founder of TerraGrants+

Poverty Simulation

Alabama Possible hosts poverty simulations utilizing the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) kit developed by Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN). This hands-on simulation allows participants to experience firsthand the daily challenges faced by individuals living in poverty. By immersing themselves in this exercise, participants gain a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers that impact those in poverty, leading to difficult emotional and personal decisions.

As per CAPS, “It is a simulation, not a game.” Facilitation of this simulation aligns with Alabama Possible’s efforts towards transforming how people talk and think about economic status. Our goal is to challenge perceptions of poverty, shifting the focus from personal failure to a recognition of poverty as a societal issue.

We facilitated 11 poverty simulations in 2024 and had to pivot to a presentation on Poverty in Alabama on two occasions since there weren’t enough participants for a simulation. The participants included high school and college students, high school and college faculty, corporations and many other individuals.

Elevating Our Voices

- Alabama Possible met with leaders at the Office of Federal Student Aid to address the challenges posed by the new FAFSA application. This meeting resulted in **Alabama Possible** being awarded a grant to further our efforts of opening doors for more Alabamians to pursue higher education.
- Alabama Possible served on a panel at the Grantmakers for Education Conference.
- Our Executive Director, Chandra Scott, served as the keynote speaker at the Michigan Community College Association Annual Summer Conference. **1**
- Alabama Possible got the opportunity to share strategies around advocacy efforts at the National College Attainment Network Annual Hill Day. **2**
- Our Deputy Director, Manisha Mishra, served on a panel at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Conference in Washington, D.C. **3**
- Alabama Possible presented on our work at the Alabama Local Government Training Institute.



Alabama Possible Intern

Jadyn Steave, AP Intern




Jadyn Steave is from Fairburn, GA, and is a J.D. Candidate at Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law with plans to practice education and family law. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science with a minor in English from Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University. She is a 2023 Southern Education Foundation Fellow, with a passion for educational justice on every level, and believes education is a human right.



Alabama Goes to College

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; enter the military; or pursue a skilled trade.



2023-24 IMPACT



THE CAMPAIGN REACHED

381

schools

67

Alabama counties



THROUGH ALABAMA COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK,

65

colleges and universities across the country waived their application fees for Alabama students

27,156

high school seniors applied to college



BY THE SUMMER AFTER THEIR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION,

20,000+

seniors completed their FAFSA and leveraged over

\$63.2M

in Pell Grant aid

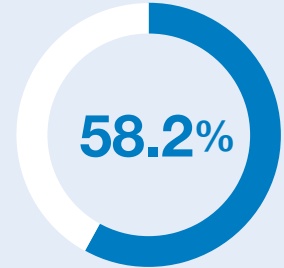
Did You Know?

MAXIMUM PELL GRANT

\$7,395
per year

AVERAGE PELL GRANT

\$5,063 for all Alabama students
\$5,250 for Alabama high school seniors



Around 58.2% percent of Alabama students qualify for Pell Grant aid



Pell Grants do not need to be paid back



Pell Grants can be used for technical and academic education



2023-24 Cash for College Winners

For the 2023-24 school year, we altered our end-of-year awards to account for the delay to the FAFSA opening and technical issues with the form. Rather than measure year-over-year improvement, awards were given to the top two schools with the highest FAFSA completion rates in each of the five size categories.

Winners earned cash incentives to support a college- and career-ready culture.

	MVP		RUNNER UP	
X-LARGE		VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL 59.5% COMPLETION RATE		AUBURN HIGH SCHOOL 55.9% COMPLETION RATE
LARGE		CHELSEA HIGH SCHOOL 53.7% COMPLETION RATE		FAIRHOPE HIGH SCHOOL 53.2% COMPLETION RATE
MEDIUM		RAMSAY HIGH SCHOOL 76.7% COMPLETION RATE		HARTSELLE HIGH SCHOOL 72.8% COMPLETION RATE
SMALL		LOVELESS ACADEMIC MAGNET PROGRAM 78.6% COMPLETION RATE		GUNTERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL 78.3% COMPLETION RATE
X-SMALL		GENEVA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL 89.1% COMPLETION RATE		LAMAR COUNTY HIGH INTERMEDIATE 81.7% COMPLETION RATE

Awards are based on data collected as of May 10, 2024.

Alabama Goes to College partners include



Dinner & Conversation

Alabama Possible hosted its Annual Dinner and Conversation on November 7, 2024, and had the privilege of engaging in a fireside chat with Staci Brooks, President of Alabama Power Foundation and J. W. Carpenter, President of Prosper.

Both speakers left nuggets of wisdom to an inspiring group of individuals united by the shared vision of fostering a more equitable and prosperous Alabama. The evening was truly unforgettable, filled with impactful discussions and reflections on more than thirty years of committed and valuable service provided by Alabama Possible. We celebrated our partners and the collaborations we have established over the years highlighting the profound influence that passionate individuals as well as mission-driven organizations can have on their communities.



HBCC/PBCC

In February 2024, Alabama Possible hosted the first ever **Historically Black Community College (HBCC) and Predominately Black Community College (PBCC) Network Conference, EmpowerED**, in Mobile, Alabama. This conference was a testament to our commitment to the mission of the HBCCs/PBCCs. Our gathering served as a platform for meaningful conversations, collaborative initiatives, and the exchange of innovative ideas. Together, we strive to create an educational landscape that empowers students to overcome challenges, break barriers, and achieve success. With funding from ECMC Foundation, we were able to publish six case studies on the 8 HBCCs/PBCCs (the Great Eight) in Alabama. The topics ranged from student success initiatives at the colleges to “return on investments” as well as the significant workforce development initiatives that are taking place in these colleges.

3rd Higher Education Alliance Presidents’ Luncheon

Alabama Possible hosted the third annual **Alabama College/University Presidents’ Luncheon** at Central in Montgomery on **October 1, 2024**. Over 50 two- and four-year presidents, senior cabinet members, funders, and higher education executives were engaged in a meaningful





celebration for their unwavering dedication in continuing to shape brighter futures for the students and communities they serve. A special thank you to President Kathy Murphy of Gadsden State Community College and President Yolanda Page of Stillman College for enriching the luncheon with their insights during our fireside chat. Their wisdom and thoughtful reflections on the challenges and opportunities faced as educators who forge forward in charting pathways to prosperity for students was invaluable.

Alabama Possible is grateful for the partnership as we **forge forward** in our mission. Chandra Scott, executive director praised the advancements made by both two- and four-year colleges and emphasized Alabama Possible's commitment to supporting these institutions by removing barriers to policy and practice, thereby enhancing postsecondary access and success.

FAFSA Beta Testing

Alabama Possible was selected as one of six organizations in the nation to be a part of Phase 1 of Beta Testing for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This testing aimed to quickly resolve technical issues, which ultimately led to the 2025-26 FAFSA officially opening to all users on November 18, 2024, instead of the proposed month of December. Alabama Possible partnered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham to provide direct support to students and families on campus.

State and Federal Advocacy

Alabama Possible is part of Every Child Alabama Coalition. This group is advocating for modernizing school funding in the state of Alabama, and we meet with our state legislators regularly to share with them the advantage of this restructuring.

In March 2024, Alabama Possible joined National College Attainment Network (NCAN) for their annual Hill Day in Washington, D.C. During our visit, we met with staffers of Alabama representatives and advocated for the expansion of Title IV funding to be used for short-term credentials. We also had the opportunity to meet with key Department of Education officers along with NCAN CEO and staff, and college access representatives from other states to voice our concern regarding challenges around completion of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

In June 2024, Alabama Possible again joined Complete College America for their inaugural Hill Day in Washington, D.C. During our visit, we met with staffers of Alabama representatives and advocated for Postsecondary Success Grant funding to be expanded.



About Alabama Possible

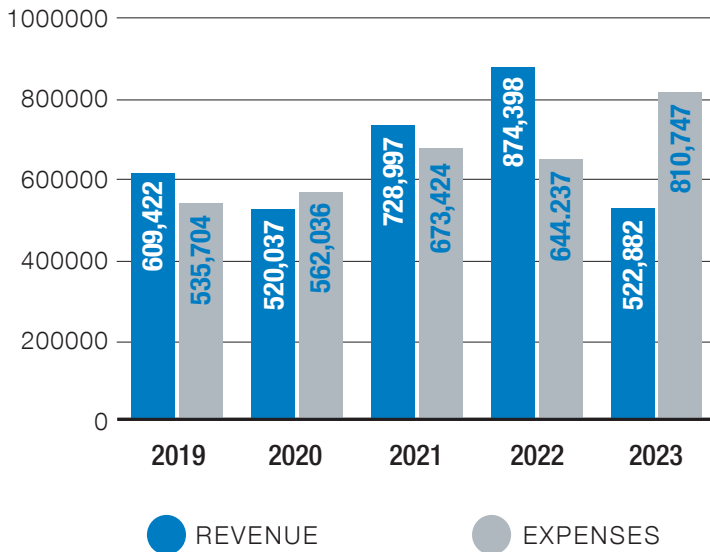
VISION

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.

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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Mae Whiting,
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Strategy Director for Postsecondary Access

Anondo Banerjee,
Strategy Director for Postsecondary Success

Ciomara Angel,
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● *“An investment in knowledge
● pays the best interest...”*

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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