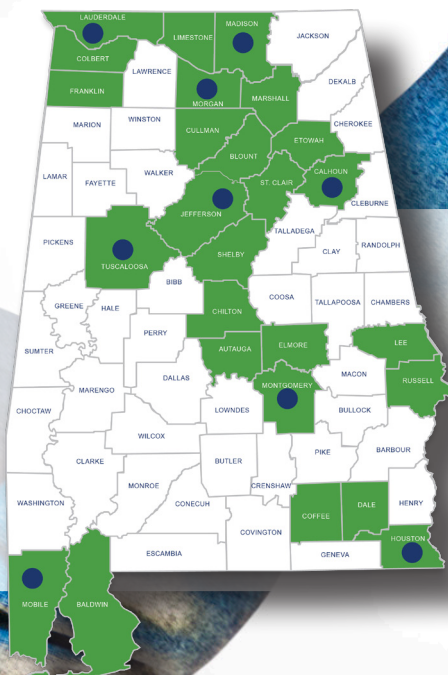


Alabama Cooperative Extension System

The Urban Difference: REPORT 2018



Today, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System serves 1.4 million people or 1 in 3 Alabama residents.



Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University



Dr. Kimberly Sinclair Holmes, Assistant Director; Dr. Allen Malone, 1890 Extension Administrator; Dr. Celia Stovall, Associate Director

From the Administrators

The national landscape of Cooperative Extension has shifted dramatically over the last year. As the needs of our audiences, available funds, and the way in which people learn and gather information changes, so must Extension be ready to adapt and change.

We are proud to say that Alabama Extension at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University is responding to these national trends with renewed enthusiasm for the future of Alabama communities. Our specialists and urban regional agents have expanded outreach beyond the nine Urban Centers to 26 counties across the state. We delivered educational programs and services to more than 1.8 million people in 2018. We also developed 10 new partnerships and submitted 10 major proposals that generated \$1.4 million in new grant funding.

However, our work does not stop there. We have applied for additional funds totaling more than \$2 million that, when approved by the United States Department of Agriculture, will allow us to expand our operations to serve not only state, but global audiences. Our continued expansion is reflected in the data below, and we expect this growth to continue as we progress through 2019.

2018 CONTACTS: 1,878,346

► DIRECT CONTACTS: 186,234

- 80,929 Health & Nutrition
- 58,232 Urban 4-H Youth Development & Volunteerism
- 23,099 Home Grounds, Gardens, & Home Pests
- 10,931 Forestry, Wildlife & Natural Resource Management
- 7,016 Family & Child Development
- 4,916 Consumer Sciences & Personal Financial Management
- 1,111 Business & Community Development

► INDIRECT CONTACTS: 1,692,112

- 962,934 Newspapers
- 440,000 Radio
- 159,419 Social Media
- 117,024 Newsletters
- 12,735 aces.edu/urban



2018 VIP Leadership Training Conference at Alabama A&M University. Photo credit: Extension Staff

Urban 4-H Youth Development & Volunteerism

► **Volunteers learn valuable skills that enable them to solve societal problems and to become great leaders of change.**

Volunteers Make a Difference

Urban communities face many challenges from improving the health of its citizens to preparing young people to be tomorrow's leaders. While Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University addresses societal issues through its staff, programs, and services, it is the work of volunteers that enables the organization to reach wider audiences and to make even greater impacts. In return, Alabama Extension volunteers can fulfill educational requirements. They also learn valuable skills and strategies that positively impact communities, such as promoting tolerance and diversity in Alabama neighborhoods.

In 2018, 534 new and 216 returning volunteers enrolled in Volunteer in Urban Programs (VIP), devoting 11,900 hours of service across the state at a value of \$260,848. These

VIPs learned about Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University and used new knowledge and skills to become better leaders, to improve their community, and to strengthen their technical and office skills. In addition, they enhanced their life skills such as negotiation or conflict resolution, effectively communicating with diverse audiences, and managing emotions when working with people. These skills are readily applied on the job, in the community, or at home when interacting with family and friends.



2018 VIP Leadership Training Conference at Alabama A&M University. Photos credit: Extension Staff

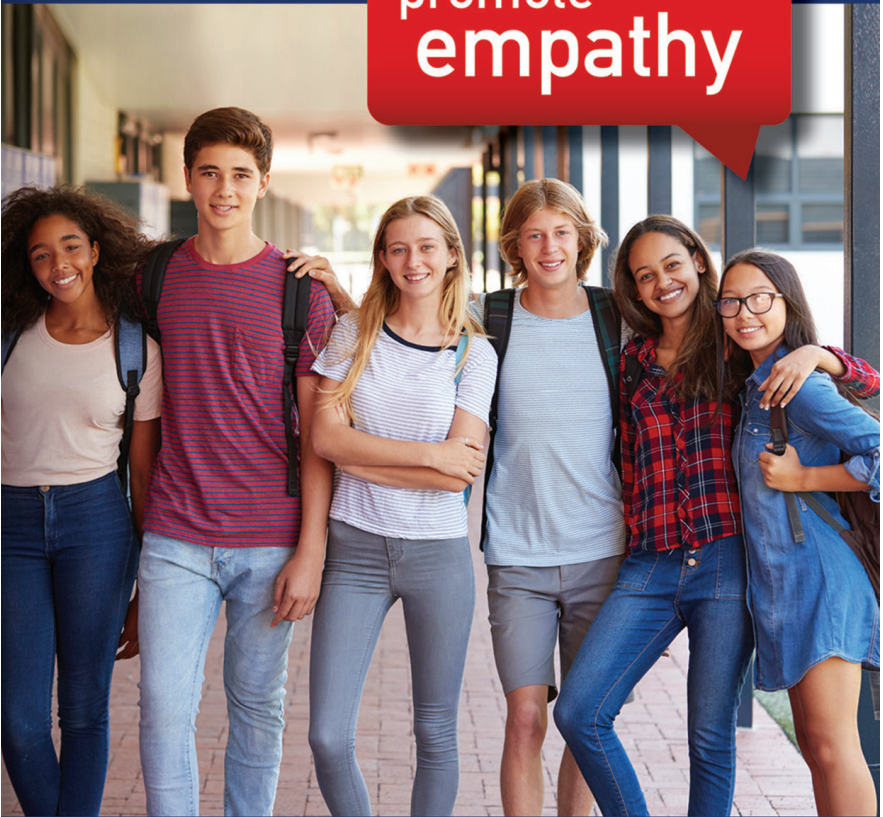
HYPE

Helping Youth Promote Empathy

Bullying causes physical and emotional harm in children.

The HYPE program works by promoting empathy. The sessions identify the 4 types of bullying (verbal, social, physical and cyberbullying) and practice strategies to stop bullying when it happens.

promote empathy



Urban 4-H Youth Development & Volunteerism

► **Educating youth about bullying helps to reduce bullying incidences and the risk of victims being diagnosed with a mental illness later in life.**

Put a Stop to Bullying

Bullying is a very common tale in America whether on school playgrounds, buses, classrooms, hallways, or cafeterias. Young people have been physically, emotionally, or verbally insulted based on what they look like, their race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2017) estimates that 20% of youth ages 12-18 reported being physically or emotionally bullied and 17% reported being bullied electronically during the past year. Unfortunately, youth that are bullied throughout their childhood are more likely to suffer from some form of mental illness as an adult or exhibit violent behaviors.

Through the Helping Youth to Promote Empathy (HYPE) program, Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University now works to educate students and parents about bullying, its adverse effects, and effective ways to address harmful behavior. Last year 878 urban youth completed the program. As a result, 817 (93%) of these youth are able to identify bullying behavior, 729 (83%) believe they could stop a bully, and 500 (57%) believe that bystanders can help a victim by hanging out with them or by disagreeing with negative behavior. Educating youth is the first step to ending the cycle of bullying.



Animal Science and Forages

► Although goat and sheep producers continue to face challenges when it comes to animal health, applying best management practices leads to greater profits and long-term sustainability.

Herd Health is Key to Sustainability

Alabama Extension at Alabama A&M University has spent the last 15 years educating small ruminant farmers about best management practices, particularly when it comes to animal health. Enhanced herd health leads to greater sustainability, and it enables sheep and goat owners to keep more of the money they earn from selling animal products such as fiber, milk, cosmetics, and meat.

Participants in the Alternative Livestock Production and Pet Ownership program, including beginner and experienced producers, veterinarians, and other stakeholders, attended workshops and hands-on demonstrations across the state. These educational activities focused on developing best health management practices such as how to reduce gastrointestinal parasitism, implement biosecurity measures to safeguard sheep and goat herds, and how to properly dispose of unwanted or unused animal medication.

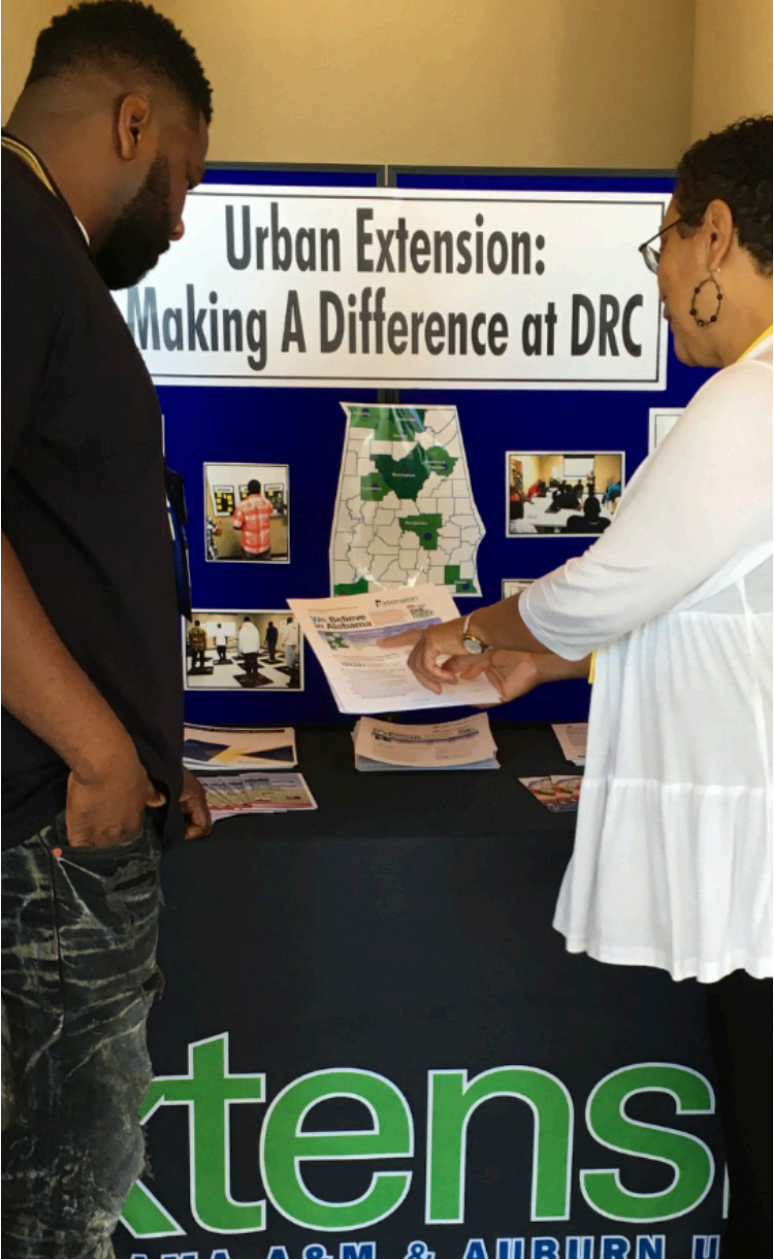
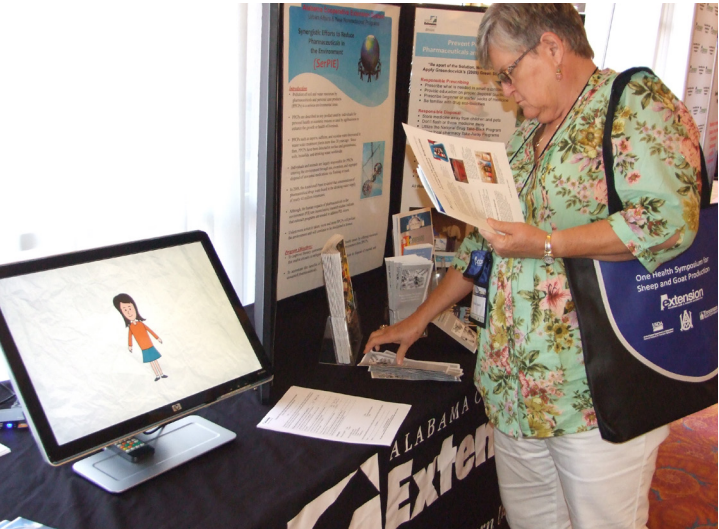
More than half of the producers that participated in these programs returned post-assessment surveys that revealed a decline in animal illnesses and deaths, improved herd health efficiency in their management systems, and increased revenue profits ranging from \$5,000 to more than \$51,000 for the year. In addition, sheep and goat producers indicated a willingness to properly dispose of veterinary medicine.



Follow the QR code to see the full conference agenda with speaker biographies.



USDA Agronomist Tibor Horvath and participant viewing an Alabama Extension exhibit at One-Health Conference in Perdido Beach, AL. Photos credit: Dr. Richard Browning



Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Management

► Sharpening job search skills will help candidates to stand out among other applicants and to position themselves to secure employment.

Ex-Offenders Hone Job Search Skills

Poor resumes, poor interviewing skills, and the failure to adequately research companies are three top reasons why people cannot find a job. The truth is that among hundreds of job applications, only three or four people may be invited for an in-person interview. Therefore, job-search skills must be adequate enough to boost candidates ahead of the competition. This is especially true for ex-offenders who must also overcome the stigma of being incarcerated.

In 2016, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles opened its first Day Reporting Center (DRC) in Alabama. Today, DRCs operate in Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa and serve to reduce crime by helping ex-offenders to reenter society. Since it is mandatory for DRC clients to find employment as they transition from phase one to three in the program, Alabama Extension's Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities (PREP) is the ideal resource to help them create effective resumes, to dress properly for an interview, and to prepare to answer tough interview questions. You could say that PREP offers ex-offenders another chance.

In 2018, 286 individuals completed the 4-lesson series. A sampling post-assessment survey among 126 participants indicated:

- 62 (49%) clients used a resume they created in the program to obtain employment.
- 117 (93%) clients chose the appropriate dress for an interview.
- 107 (85%) clients answered questions appropriately in job interviews.
- 102 (81%) clients completed job applications via paper and 63% electronically.
- 66 (52%) clients revised their resume.

Urban Regional Extension Agent Cynthia Whittaker at Alabama Board of Pardons and Parole. Photo credit: Donna Gullatte

Economic and Community Development

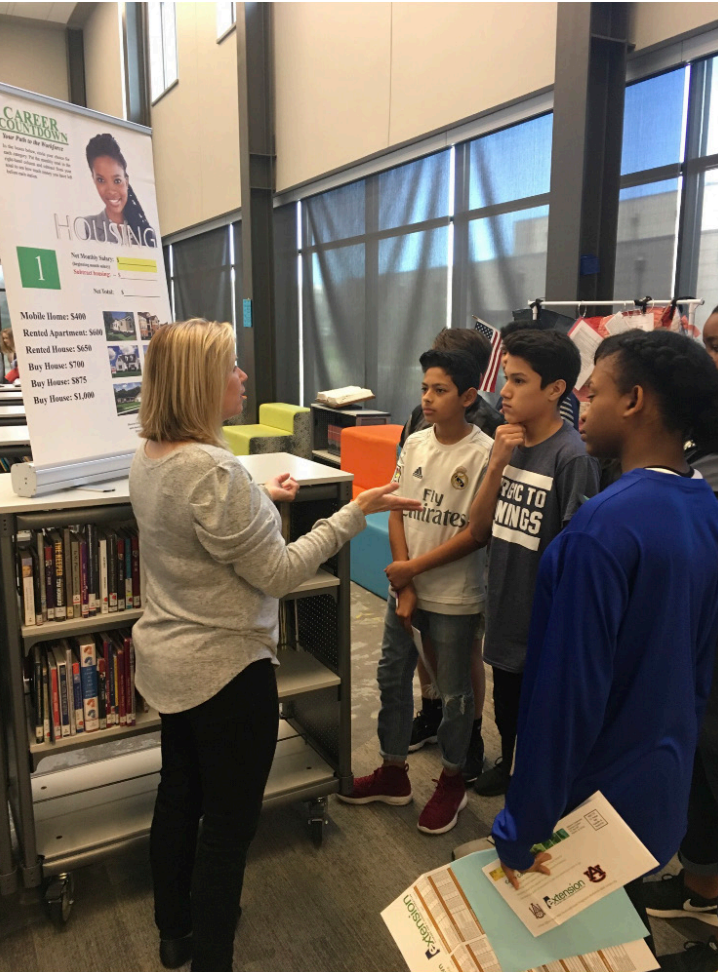
► College and career guidance programs assist students and their parents in making informed and wiser educational and career decisions.

Career Readiness for Alabama Students

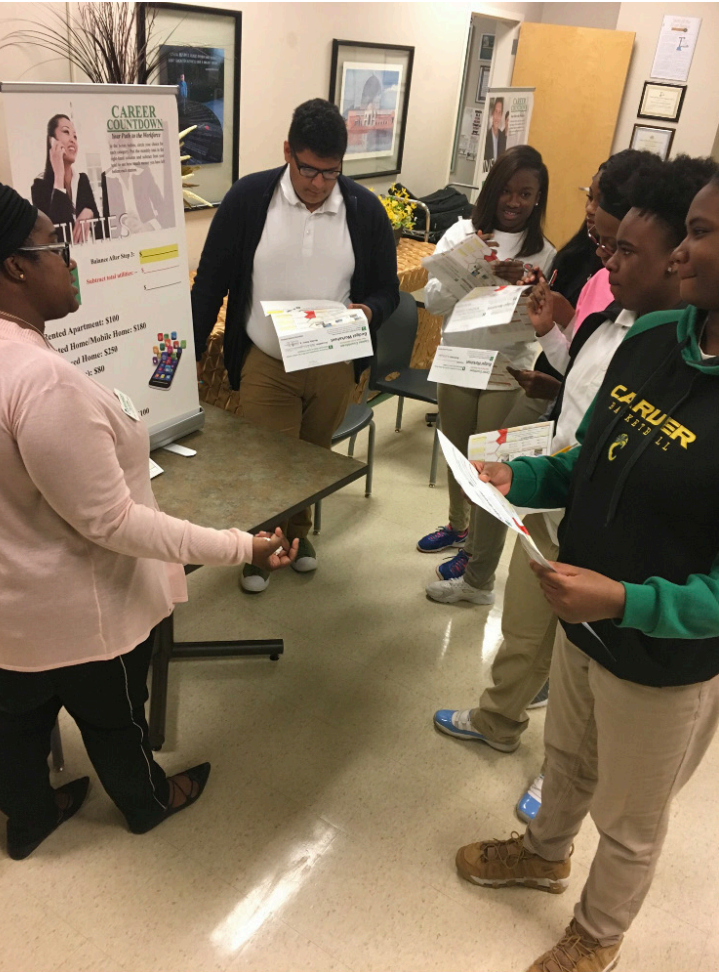
The Alabama State Department of Education has a mission to make “all students career and college ready.” Career planning motivates students to graduate from high school and to pursue college or vocational training that will prepare them to be productive members of society. It also assists students to identify their interests and to find occupations they enjoy. Programs like Career Countdown are vital to making Alabama’s youth *career and college ready*.

In 2018, 1,071 urban youth completed the Career Countdown program that explored career interests but also allowed students to simulate living on their own while working in a chosen career. Following program completion:

- 653 (61%) teens explored new career opportunities.
- 364 (34%) teens increased their average study time from 2 to 4 hours.
- 332 (31%) teens enrolled in standardized testing preparatory courses because of a renewed interest to expand educational goals.
- 728 (68%) teens applied for post-secondary education institutions.



Volunteer with Pelham Park Middle School Students in Shelby County. Photos Credit: Cynthia Whittaker



UREA Ciji Griffin with Carver High School Students in Montgomery County.

Family and Child Development

► Educating seniors about meeting basic home and personal needs improves their chances of living independently with or without help from family members or social services.

Older Adults Respond to Seniors CAN

By 2030 the United States Census Bureau projects that all baby boomers will be 65 years old and will outnumber children for the first time in American history. With the graying of America comes the necessity for educational programs and services to address their primary concern to “age in place.”

Today, older adults want to grow old at home. Among their top fears are the loss of independence, poor health, lack of money, and not being able to live in their own homes (AARP, 2018). Curriculums like Seniors CAN offered through Alabama Extension’s Successful Aging Initiative (SAI) make it possible for older adults to live independently by educating them about issues such as estate planning, health and wellness, managing financial resources, and how to reduce the risk of falls. This information prepares older adults for the future and to face personal and daily challenges at home.

A sampling of post-assessment data among 144 participants indicated the following (three months later):

- 140 (97%) older adults looked for and used cost cutting strategies to save money.
- 138 (96%) older adults checked their environment periodically for things that would increase their risk of falling.
- 132 (92%) older adults looked now look for signs of identity theft, fraud and scams.
- 131 (91%) older adults used different strategies in protecting their identity.
- 114 (79%) older adults tracked their spending.
- 89 (62%) older adults used a written spending plan.

In addition, among 4,898 SAI program participants, 1,040 individuals completed an advance directive, 163 individuals completed a simple will, and 1,288 organized important papers to complete an estate plan that prepares them to face certain life events.



Seniors Can participants at Lawrence County Extension Office. Photos Credit: Darlene Minniefield



Students from Halcyon Elementary School in Montgomery removing trash and looking at aquatic creatures in Jenkins Creek. Photos Credit: Roosevelt Robinson

Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources

► Environmental education helps students to connect with real world environmental issues where they become confident problems solvers and leaders in the fight to protect our natural resources.

Benefits of Environmental Education

Environmental education improves more than a student's knowledge of environmental issues. Researchers at Stanford University reviewed over 100 studies on environmental education over a 20-year period for youth in grades K-12. They discovered that environmental education yielded major impacts such as problem-solving, teamwork, civic interest, leadership, and other character-building skills. These skills are the cornerstone of Alabama Extension youth development education.

The Urban Environmental Science Education Program (UeSeP) was designed to enhance in-school and after-school education using a curriculum and hands-on learning experiences. In 2018, 478 youth learned the impacts of non-point pollution, the importance of pollinators and natural resource conservation, and the long-term benefits of waste management.

As a result:

- 392 (82%) students increased their knowledge of water quality and quantity.
- 373 (78%) students increased their knowledge of natural resource conservation and 344 (42%) youth could name a natural resource like soil and water.
- 359 (75%) students increased their knowledge of forestry and wildlife.
- 349 (73%) students increased their knowledge of energy and waste management.
- 411 (86%) students indicated they wanted to become better environmental stewards.

Student comments further revealed that they had fun while learning and enjoyed interacting with nature.

Home Grounds, Gardens and Home Pests

► Replanting trees after natural or manmade disasters helps a city and its residents to revitalize landscapes and to instill a sense of hope in a community.

Trees Add Value to Disaster-Hit Communities

Trees are one of the greatest gifts of nature. They provide humans and animals with shelter, food, and oxygen. They keep homes cool in warm weather and help to reduce consumer energy bills. Trees also enhance landscapes, improve air quality, manage water runoff during rainstorms, and increase home property values.

In March 2018, the city of Jacksonville, Alabama was hit by an EF3 tornado with hail and winds of 140 miles per hour. The storm did extensive damage to homes, roadways, the Jacksonville State University campus, and it uprooted scores of trees. The ReTree Jacksonville Committee and more than 100 volunteers came to the town's rescue by distributing approximately 2,500 trees and shrubs worth \$50,000 to 723 area residences.



ReTree Jacksonville volunteers – Photo Credit: Hayes Jackson

In addition, Alabama Extension's Urban Green program that revitalizes and enhances urban landscapes, provided educational resources to Jacksonville residents on proper planting and tree selection that included many small native trees. Urban Green was successful in reaching 10,116 individuals across the state last year, including the disaster-hit community of Jacksonville.



Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

► Combining nontraditional learning experiences with leadership opportunities from across program disciplines, aids in promoting healthy youth development practices.

The Right Track to Good Health

The underlying causes of obesity are complex. Factors such as genetics, lifestyle and environment all play a role, particularly in low-income urban communities and among people of color. These communities and populations are less likely to have access to healthy food and recreational green spaces for physical activities. As the adult obesity rate remains consistent in the state, the story is not much different for Alabama youth. Thirty-six percent of children age 10-17 are obese or overweight. That's why organizations like Alabama Extension are working with Alabama residents to turn these numbers around.

The Technology Enhancing Exercise and Nutrition (TEEN) program enables teens to develop healthier lifestyles by eating nutritional meals, increasing physical activity, and using digital technology such as apps, exergames, and websites to engage young people. Survey data among 1,500 youth indicated that tweens (children ages 9-12) and teens (ages 13-19) did not consume enough fruits (10.2%), vegetables (10.4%) and low-fat or fat free dairy (29%). However, 81% drank sodas daily.

As a result of participating in TEEN, 665 youth:

- Increased their knowledge of nutrition, nutrients, food labels, portion control, and chronic diseases by 16% from 406 (61%) to 512 (77%).
- Increased their intake of vegetables by 21% from 140 (21%) to 246 (37%).
- Increased physical activity to 60 minutes, 3-5 days per week.
- Logged 830,000 steps, burning an average of 488 calories.

TEEN participants at AAMU. Photo Credit: Darlene Minniefield Great Fit Day in Lawrence County. Photo Credit: Donna Shanklin



Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

► Alabama Urban EFNEP participants are well on their way to meeting health standards and are less inclined to spend money on junk food and rising healthcare costs.

While TEEN focuses on improving the health of young people, the Urban Expanded Nutrition Education Program (Urban EFNEP) is targeted to low-income individuals and families, particularly Hispanic populations in North Alabama.

Hispanics like other minority populations in America have a high rate of diet-related diseases such as obesity, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. The obesity rate among Hispanic men and women over the age of 20 is 78.4% compared to 68.5% among non-Hispanic whites. The obesity rate among Hispanic children 6-11 years old is 48.8% compared to 40% among non-Hispanic white children of the same age. And 61.3% of Hispanics age 2-17 compared to 56.3% of non-Hispanic whites were directed by a health professional to eat a healthy diet. Programs like Urban EFNEP are available to assist Hispanic families in getting on the right track to good health.

In 2018, Urban EFNEP reached 378 adults, compiling data that revealed the following:

- 359 (95%) adults showed improvement in eating more fruits and vegetables, drank less soda and other sugary beverages, and/or cooked dinner at home.
- 321 (85%) adults exercised at least 30 minutes, built and strengthened muscles, and/or made small changes to become more active.
- 333 (88%) adults either washed hands before preparing food, washed all items and surfaces after cutting raw meat or seafood, did not thaw frozen food at room temperature, and/or used a meat thermometer.
- 352 (93%) adults either cooked dinner at home, planned meals before shopping, surveyed food stock before shopping and/or made a grocery shopping list.



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