

2022-
2026

Strategic Plan

Extending
Knowledge,
Improving Lives



This 2022–2026 Strategic Plan will serve as a road map to success across the entire Alabama Cooperative Extension System. It was first developed by a broad committee of employees and affirmed and finalized after months of input from all corners of the organization. The purpose of the plan is to position Alabama Extension to serve the needs of Alabamians by identifying strategic intent in the form of a small set of action priorities that can be used to guide programmatic, organizational, and budgetary decisions.

Mission

Transforming lives through science-based information, practical solutions, and meaningful experiences.

Vision

Serving communities to grow a better Alabama and a better world.

Values

Service Excellence

We exist to serve and share knowledge. We seek to understand the needs of those who depend on us and to exceed their expectations.

Teamwork

We work as a team. We listen, inspire, challenge, and support one another.

Inclusivity

We value everyone. We celebrate and respect the uniqueness of all people and the communities we serve.

Accountability

We own the results. We meet our personal and organizational commitments.

Integrity

We do the right thing. We are honest, transparent, and trustworthy to our stakeholders and each other.

► **Strategy** is a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim.

Action Priority: Enhanced Educational Capacity

GOAL: Expand our Extension mission and service capabilities to foster greater educational programming and engagement that improve the quality of life and economic well-being in Alabama.

Strategies:

- Assess Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources; Alabama 4-H; Human Sciences; and Federal Nutrition program areas for clarity in program direction, human resource needs, employee success, and leverage of college and university strengths.
- Create a Community Development program area that leverages university strengths to help foster sustainable communities.
- Expand Alabama 4-H STEM education to promote understanding and skill building to enhance youth leadership and workforce preparedness.
- Design an emergency and crisis response educational initiative to proactively prepare citizens and Extension personnel for weather and crisis events.
- Develop a statewide food system plan to ensure the production and accessibility of healthy foods to all citizens.
- Leverage distance learning to support—not replace—face-to-face engagement and increase accessibility to Extension programs.
- Expand Urban Program cooperation with academic departments at Alabama A&M University, as well as at Auburn University.

Action Priority: Exceptional and Engaged Employees

GOAL: Invest in our current and future employees to advance the Alabama Extension mission through enhanced recruitment, development, support, recognition, and retention.

Strategies:

- Implement an employee awards and recognition program as the gold standard to highlight career achievement and success.
- Expand the Alabama Extension internship program to connect and orient college students with rewarding career opportunities.
- Offer in-service training opportunities focused on building the customer service, knowledge, and skill capacity of all Extension personnel.
- Emphasize employee workplace safety and well-being in the office, on the road, and in the field.
- Enhance the onboarding and mentoring experience for new hires to ensure early career success.
- Develop an Extension foundations course at undergraduate and graduate levels to expose students to the Extension mission.
- Organize an internal leadership academy to develop staff interested in career advancement and leadership opportunities.

Action Priority: Stewardship of Resources

GOAL: Implement operational efficiency and effectiveness by using data, insight, and analysis to assist leadership in the financial decisions that fulfill our mission while maintaining a position of financial strength.

Strategies:

- Coordinate fiscal processes across all internal units and Colleges to prioritize expenditures based on organizational goals.
- Assess and adjust organizational structure to improve efficiency and to build a culture that reinforces mutual accountability, community, and organizational values.
- Improve organizational capacity to secure extramural funding through grants, contracts, and appropriate use of fees.
- Hire a development officer to secure gifts and donations in support of priorities and new opportunities.

Action Priority: Strategic Marketing

GOAL: Create and execute marketing strategies that will position Alabama Extension as a go-to source for science-based information, strengthen engagement with our customers, and expand our reach.

Strategies:

- Position Alabama Extension as an efficiently delivered, competitive source of science-based information in the marketplace of ideas to increase awareness, enhance our reputation, and boost engagement with all stakeholders.
- Develop a culture of marketing and enhanced customer service to ensure those promoting Extension are equipped with needed tools and consistent information.
- Communicate efficiently through new media and digital platforms, including social media, to reach new audiences.
- Improve communication with both internal and external audiences to ensure clear messaging and understanding of Extension's purpose and goals.

Action Priority: Innovative Technology

GOAL: Implement technology solutions that optimize operational efficiency and expand Alabama Extension's programmatic reach while ensuring cybersecurity and accessibility.

Strategies:

- Adopt a Customer Relationship Management system as an organizational resource for managing client and stakeholder data, enhancing distributed marketing, and improving efficiencies in event management and reporting.
- Continuously identify options for improving infrastructure, telecommunications services, and related technology in off-campus offices.
- Ensure that employees are knowledgeable about responsibilities and risks related to cybersecurity and data security.
- Establish protocols for adopting innovative and audience-appropriate technology that enhances our program delivery.

Action Priority:

Strengthen Organizational Culture and Policies to Promote Fairness, Respect, and Equal Opportunities for All Employees, Initiatives, and Policies

GOAL: Cultivate a workplace culture where every individual feels valued and has the opportunity to thrive professionally.

Strategies:

- Develop an organizational culture where all people are welcomed into programming, feel a sense of belonging, share in supportive relationships, and engage in all that is offered.
- Utilize U.S. Census and Census of Agriculture data to make informed decisions in programmatic efforts, staffing, volunteerism, and training.
- Increase the diversity of advisory councils and provide annual training to staff on how to recruit and manage advisory councils.
- Ensure that all educational opportunities are available and accessible to all audiences.
- Improve marketing and promotion of programs to underrepresented and underserved groups and urban audiences.



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