

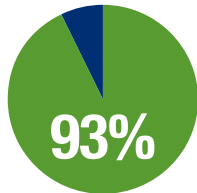
More In Our Cities



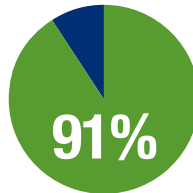
The Urban Difference: 2022 IMPACTS



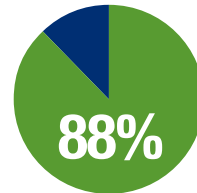
2022 IMPACTS



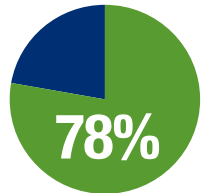
*people learned new
eco-friendly practices*



*adults changed
aging behavior*



*adults learned 4 ways
to conserve water*



*youth gained new
STEM skills*





From the Administrator

Dr. Majed Dweik, Interim Extension Director & AAMU Vice President for Research & Economic Development

It is always a pleasure to highlight the work the Alabama Cooperative Extension System at Alabama A&M University (Alabama Extension at AAMU) is doing across the state. Our mission—*serving communities to grow a better Alabama and a better world*—reflects who we are today as we move beyond the COVID pandemic. We serve our communities by delivering timely science-based information that helps to make people, communities, and ultimately, the world better. People's lives and the communities in which they live are destined to be transformed by the work we do each day!

I invite you to read through this report and discover how Alabama Extension at AAMU:

- ▶ Allows underserved youth to gain skills that employers seek today.
- ▶ Improves agribusiness revenue.
- ▶ Helps small businesses to sustain economic growth.
- ▶ Empowers youth and adults to make wise money decisions.
- ▶ Removes unused drugs from the environment.
- ▶ Helps consumers to conserve water – a precious natural resource.
- ▶ Prevents the spread of common diseases.

2022 Impacts

Direct (Face-to-Face) Contacts: 74,308

Indirect Program Contacts: 362,041

- ACES Total Website Views: 3,670,589
- Urban Extension Website Views: 155,976
- 2022 Broadcast Media: 192,000
- Facebook User Reach: 176,971

Formal MOUs: 43

External Funding Comparison

FY 2020/21: \$10 million

FY 2021/22: \$10 million

FY 2022/23: \$9.8 million



Alabama 4-H and Youth Development

► **STEM activities allow students to gain science and technology-related skills that employers seek in today's job market.**

Changing the Narrative with STREAM

The United States Deputy Secretary of Education Cindy Marten stated that the US Department of Education is “*challenging narratives about who belongs in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning and careers that, over generations, left out millions of girls and young women, students of color, students living in poverty, Native American and Alaska Native students, students with disabilities, and other marginalized students.*” Alabama Extension at AAMU is also challenging those narratives through STREAM.

STREAM is the acronym for the Science Technology Reading Engineering Arts/Agriculture Mathematics program

that empowers students with reading skills while introducing them to STEM content material and practices. In 2022, for example, Alabama 4-H at AAMU enabled 3,028 youth from 31 school districts to attend Virtual STEM Day. Youth used the engineering design process and created catapults that accurately and consistently launched a projectile into a target or as far away as possible.

In addition, 862 youth ages 5 to 18 were introduced to the Mobile STEM Lab and other educational activities. As a result of these hands-on learning activities, 78 percent of these youth gained STEM skills, such as problem-solving, analyzing, reasoning, and drawing conclusions.



Animal Sciences and Forages

► Urban agricultural forums expose producers and landowners to key issues and practices that improve agribusiness operations.

Goat and Sheep Summit 2022

The demand for goat meat continues to rise due to ethnic and immigrant populations and the desire to eat lean meat. Goat meat provides another meat alternative with less fat than chicken, beef, or pork. In addition, the meat goat inventory in Alabama remained steady for 2021-2022 even during a pandemic as Alabama Extension works to satisfy the growing interest in sheep and goat production across the state.

With continuous requests and interest in goats and sheep, the second annual Alabama Sheep and Goat Summit was held at AAMU's Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station in September 2022. The event allowed 110 participants to learn about emerging topics in goat and sheep production. Participants also learned best management practices in goat and sheep reproduction, parasite detection and management, biosecurity measures, and how to increase farm revenue.

Speakers included Extension educators, USDA program officers, and a veterinarian. Additionally, Alabama 4-H team members engaged youth in fun interactive agricultural and animal science-related activities to inspire the next generation of producers and agricultural professionals.

Photos

Top: Extension Animal Scientist Dr. Valens Niyigena with Summit participants

Center: Livestock Consultant and Veterinarian Dr. Bob Omontese discussing biosecurity measures

Bottom: Extension Transportation Coordinator Taris Martin, Urban Regional Extension Agent Anthony Davison, and a young STEM participant in Mobile STEM Lab.



www.aces.edu/go/smallruminantprogram

Community Resource Development

► Business startup incubators help small businesses to sustain economic growth.

Helping Small Businesses to Succeed

According to the Small Business Administration, 49.7 percent of small businesses fail within the first five years of operation. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics further reports that 20 percent of businesses fail within the first year due to money problems, bad business partnerships, poor marketing strategies or because owners simply do not know their industry. Business incubators, however, improve the odds of business success. In fact, 87 percent of incubator businesses make it past the five-year mark.

Typically, business startup incubators ensure that entrepreneurs start off on the right foot. They provide basic training, help entrepreneurs to fine tune their business concept, and identify hidden issues. Incubators also pair entrepreneurs with mentors and allow them to network with other business owners.

The Birmingham Community Incubator (BCI) program in partnership with the Salvation Army Command Center, The East Lake Initiative, and the City of Birmingham, Alabama, was established in 2022 as a startup incubator. Initially, over \$6,000 was provided by The East Lake Initiative and the City of Birmingham to support program participants through the 6-week BCI course. To date, 14 business owners have completed the program.

As a result of the BCI's program success, \$15,000 in additional funds was awarded to reach 24 to 36 new and emerging business owners in the East Lake and Woodlawn Burroughs of Birmingham, Alabama.

Alabama Extension is also collaborating with the Alabama Economic Diversity Council's Phase II programming, funded by the Kellogg Foundation, to train women, black, and Hispanic business owners. Over 500 participants had enrolled in the initial training program.



www.aces.edu/go/CRD



Left to Right: Jehan Quinn, Director of Salvation Army Workforce Development; Shonda Johnson, Assistant Director East Lake Initiative; BCI graduate Josilyn Drake; and Urban Regional Extension Agent Jon Jacobson



Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Management

► Financial literacy skills enable consumers to better manage debt and credit.

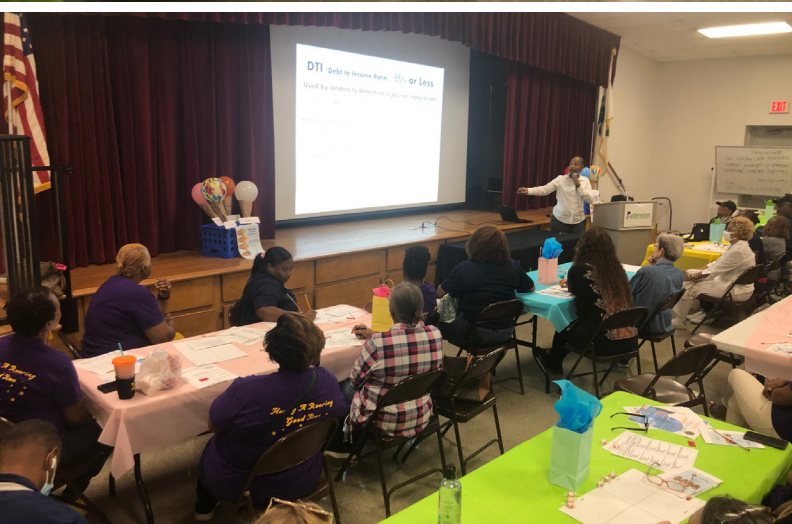
Alabamians Learn Financial Literacy Skills

Alabama has joined other states in requiring that financial literacy and money management strategies are taught to students before graduating from high school. Starting in 2024, students will take the Career Preparedness course that focuses on technology, academic and career planning, and now financial literacy. According to the global financial services giant Experian, consumer debt levels rose 7 percent from \$15.31 trillion in 2021 to \$16.38 trillion in 2022, making money management and financial literacy skills more important than ever among youth and adults.

Alabama Extension at AAMU has also joined the ranks in teaching Alabama residents financial literacy and money management skills. Through its course Financial Literacy in Progress course, consumers learn such skills as how to build and maintain good credit, how to manage and reduce debt, how to develop a spending plan, and ways to avoid financial scams.

In 2022, 2162 individuals completed the program. Two months after the initial course, participants were applying what they learned in class as indicated in a delayed post-assessment survey among 166 participants. The results revealed the following:

- 139 (84%) did comparison shopping before purchasing expensive items.
- 133 (80%) tracked their spending.
- 128 (77%) paid their bills on time.
- 118 (71%) used a spending plan.
- 88 (53%) requested their credit report.



Photos: Dr. Dorothy Brandon & Urban Regional Extension Agent Pam Irby with participants at The Many Flavors of Finance ice cream social event in Mobile, Alabama.



www.aces.edu/go/FLIP



Participants at Successful Aging Conference in Calhoun County, Alabama.



Family and Child Development

► Estate planning enables people to avoid costly probate court costs and family strife.

Estate Planning Basics

While only a third of the United States population has an estate plan, the good news is that this number is increasing, and 2 out of 3 people believe a will is important. Yet a 2022 Gallup poll reveals that only 53 percent of adults aged 50 to 64 currently have a plan, although estate planning is important for older adults to ensure their final wishes and personal property are handled with care after death.

Educational services offered by the Alabama Extension's Successful Aging Initiative (SAI) and the Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute ensure that older adults and their families learn the importance of estate planning.

In 2022, 2,143 people attended a SAI Conference that educates audiences about issues related to older adults,

including estate planning.

A post-evaluation completed by 187 attendees indicated the following:

- 156 (84%) could use the information provided to address everyday issues and concerns.
- 117 (63%) significantly increased knowledge of estate planning.
- 145 (78%) of participants indicated using the information to make informed decisions.

This information was reinforced through activities offered by the VCLLI among 1,323 participants. For example, VCLLI participants gained a greater understanding of the purpose and need of estate planning, including how to handle their property to avoid potential losses.

Successful Aging Initiative
Helping Older Adults Thrive



Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources

► Drug take-back events lessen the harmful effects of PPCPs on ecosystems.

Removing Drugs & Saving Lives

As much as 29 percent of pharmaceuticals (prescription and over-the-counter) and personal care products (PPCPs) enter the environment each year untreated through human waste and improper disposal. Many water treatment plants are incapable of removing all the harmful chemicals from water systems. Although considered a fairly new area of study, PPCPs are known to have adverse effects on ecosystems, including human and aquatic life. Drug take back events are an effective way to remove drugs from the environment.

Alabama Extension in partnership with law enforcement and other organizations host drug take-back events each year. In 2022, nine drug take-back events were held

offering consumers the opportunity to drop off unwanted prescription, over-the-counter, and personal care products for both humans and animals.

Approximately 846 people dropped off 1,575 pounds of medication. In addition, 1,160 pounds of PPCPs were collected from 18 permanent drug drop boxes and 374 people took the Lock Your Meds pledge to keep drugs out of the hands of small children and teens.

The harmful effects of PPCPs on the environment, humans, and animals can be reduced through drug take-back events.



www.aces.edu/go/SerPIE



PPCPs collected from drug take-back event in Madison County.



Urban Regional Extension Agent Marcus Garner using Water Wheels to teach students about water conservation.

Home Grounds, Gardens and Home Pests

► Educating audiences about wasteful water practices helps to conserve water usage in homes, gardens, and businesses.

Water: Our Valuable Resource

The Earth's surface is 71 percent water, yet only 3 percent is freshwater that helps to sustain life. This makes water one of the most valuable natural resources in the world. Yet according to the Environmental Protection Agency, an American family wastes about 180 gallons each week or 9,400 gallons each year.

Alabama Extension's Water Wheels Outdoor Conservation Laboratory and its urban agricultural programs educate consumers on how to conserve water for home, gardening, and business use.

In 2022, programming results revealed the following water conservation practices among 7,373 participants:

- 4,940 (67%) youth and adults improved their knowledge of water availability.
- 6,193 (84%) participants now understand the impact of irrigation systems.
- 5,456 adults (74%) learned four ways to conserve water in the garden.
- 5,014 adults (68%) learned how to use timers for drip irrigation.
- 4,129 (56%) purchased or built a rain barrel for use.
- 5,898 (80%) used plasticulture and drip irrigation as management practices.

Home
Grounds





Top: Children learning about germs during a hand washing activity.
 Bottom: Program Support Associate Shavita Warren teaching a child about proper hand washing in Mobile Nutrition Lab.

Human Nutrition, Diet and Health - Urban EFNEP

► Proper hand washing can prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Reducing the Spread of Germs

A global study by James Cook University researcher Santosh Jatrana on handwashing among teens across 90 countries revealed that only 30 percent used proper handwashing methods. Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die each year from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, and another 125,000 children die from germs that cause foodborne illnesses. Many of these diseases, which include airborne and viral diseases, as well as *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) and salmonella, could be prevented by proper handwashing techniques.

While the Urban EFNEP: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program focuses on eating healthy, it also educates young people about handwashing and food safety practices.



In 2022, 534 youth underwent Urban EFNEP training. Post-evaluations revealed that 192 students (36%) improved handwashing techniques and food handling practices. In addition, 150 students (28%) improved physical activity practices, and 278 (52%) improved their ability to choose healthy foods.



Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

► Vaccine education reduces public fear associated with vaccine use and disease outbreaks.

EXCITE COVID Vaccine Project

Vaccine hesitancy, which is described as the unwillingness to receive a vaccine although available and easily accessible, was never more prominent than with COVID-19. In African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities, the COVID mortality rate doubled compared to White populations. Although vaccines became available, people, particularly minorities and rural communities, were hesitant to take the vaccine. Therefore, the Extension Collaboration for Immunization, Teaching, and Engagement (EXCITE) project was created.

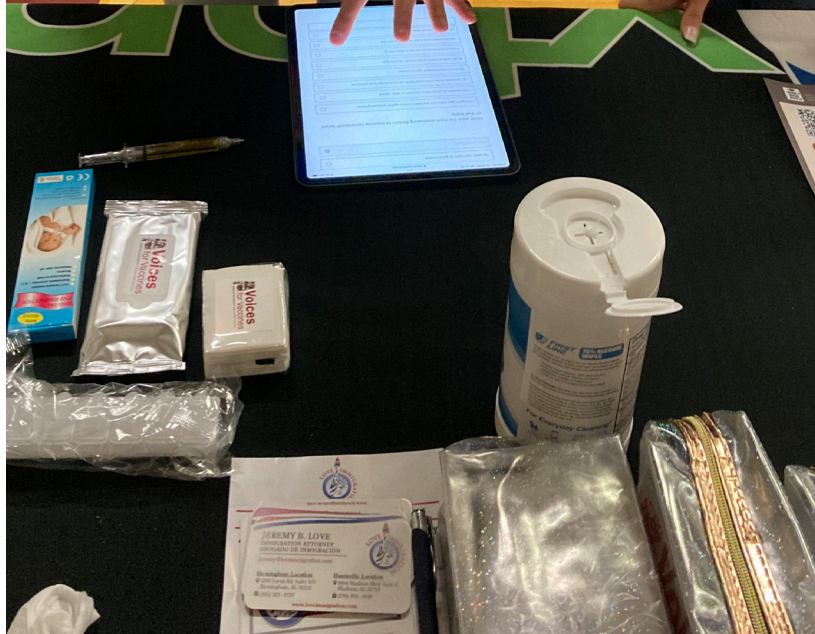
EXCITE was established through an interagency agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture (National Institute of Food and Agriculture), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a cooperative agreement with the Extension Foundation in partnership with the ECOP Health Program Action Team.

Alabama Extension at AAMU received an EXCITE grant and focused on educating 18–55-year-old adults about COVID-19 and its vaccines with the help of partners, such as doctors, nurses, faith-based leaders, the Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Extension and the Harrison College of Pharmacy at Auburn University, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Southeast Health Medical Center in Dothan, Alabama.

When the project launched in 11 Alabama counties (Houston, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Madison, Mobile, Montgomery, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Marengo, and Perry), the statewide vaccination rate was only 48%, and only 25% in communities of color. To help change those odds, the public was invited to take a survey to evaluate vaccine hesitancy and to identify access barriers to COVID-19 vaccines.

As a result of this project in 2023, 25,988 people were reached through articles, websites, social media streams, radio interviews, and educational events. An additional 1,350 completed the survey revealing that participants were hesitant to take the COVID-19 vaccine and to get tested due to politics, limited knowledge, religion, family, and peer influence.

At the close of the project, among a population of 5,024,356, 60 percent of Alabamians have received one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine; 49 percent have completed an entire series of doses, and 20 percent of the population has received additional doses.



Participants taking vaccine survey.

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► Special thanks to program partners, participants, Alabama Extension staff, and other valuable stakeholders who make our work possible.



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Author & Editor, **Wendi Williams**, *Communications & Marketing Coordinator*, Alabama A&M University. Design/layout, **Shannon Schmalfeldt**, *Technology Media Coordinator*, Alabama A&M University.

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This work is supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

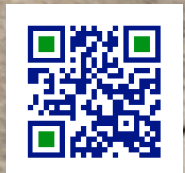
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