

2026

Family and Child Development

Securing Family Legacies



1,200
participants



124:1
ROI



395
estate planning
documents



22
heirs' property
cases resolved



19,426
reach for SAI
program



116%
increase in healthy
aging knowledge

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy reports that asset loss due to heirs' property is estimated at \$325 billion. Heirs' property refers to family-owned land passed down informally through generations without a will or formal probate, prompting families to split the land among remaining family members. Without clear ownership, heirs cannot sell land, secure a mortgage, access governmental aid, or qualify for property tax exemptions. In addition, without a clear, legally documented title (often called a "tangled title"), outside investors can buy a fractional share from a single heir and petition a court to force the sale of the entire property.

Community education and free legal clinics were presented by Alabama Extension's Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute in partnership with Faulkner University Jones School of Law (Faulkner Law), Legal Services Alabama (LSA), Gregory Varner and Associates Law Firm, and the Alabama Heirs Property Alliance (AHPA). The AHPA consists of faculty and staff from all three Alabama land-grant

institutions – Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, and Tuskegee University – who work to address heirs' property issues that impact Alabama landowners, residents, and communities.

In 2025, 22 structured heirs' property community educational sessions and 10 virtual sessions were delivered. In addition, 11 heirs' property and estate planning clinics were offered in 21 Alabama counties. More than 1,200 participants attended VCLLI-sponsored events and 420 partner events. Additionally, 395 planning documents were executed, and 22 families with heirs' property cases were successfully resolved.

Program impacts are as follows:

- 494 (89%) learned how to prevent common heirs' property issues when establishing a will.
- 479 (87%) gained knowledge in the basics of estate and succession planning.
- 484 (88%) learned how to prepare to work with an attorney, and 93% learned the importance of working with other family members.

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- 501 (91%) gained knowledge regarding what steps families can take to address heirs' property.
- 479 (87%) were educated on the legal structures that can hold land owned as heirs' property.
- 473 (86%) gained knowledge on how to determine who owns a particular parcel of land.

Heirs' property and estate planning educates landowners on how to legally consolidate ownership, draft wills, and block below-market sales from predators.

ROI: 124:1 Heirs' property training can prevent land loss in property disputes.

Other FCD Program Impacts



Family Life Center

Approximately 1,770 people participated in programs offered through the Family Life Center (FLC). As a result of this training, Family Life Center staff helped to:

- Increase participant understanding of financial literacy practices to reduce debt and build and maintain good credit.
- Improve container gardening skills and the understanding of how community gardening impacts food insecurity.
- Increase the number of individuals who can model effective caregiving.
- Reduce the number of parents struggling to acquire warm clothes and personal hygiene products during the winter months through community drives.
- Help individuals avoid unsafe food practices and waste.



Successful Aging Initiative

The Successful Aging Initiative (SAI) program helps seniors live as independently as possible during the latter years of life. Older adults are taught life skills that enable them to thrive in their own homes, stay in good health, and function as valuable members of society. This program also covers estate planning, money management strategies, locating aging resources, and interpreting financial information in health care.

SAI reached approximately 19,426 individuals through in-person and indirect educational activities, with 277 participants completing either one-hour stand-alone lessons or a four-session series. Pre-test and post-test assessments among the 277 participants revealed the following:

- 116% increase in knowledge of healthy aging.
- 138% increase in knowing what it means to be proactive about aging.
- 59% increase in being able to identify stressors that impact quality of life.
- 73% increase in knowing what constitutes a fall recovery plan.
- 552% increase in knowing what to do after a fall.

Regarding an increase in knowledge of fraud and scams:

- 36% increase in knowing why older adults are targeted.
- 45% increase in identifying different ways identities can be stolen.
- 30% increase in identifying common scams targeting older adults.
- 40% increase in knowledge of how to report scams.

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VCLLI

The mission of the Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute (VCLLI) is to create and sustain a stimulating, educational, social, and life-enhancing environment for older adults. While the VCLLI focuses on older adults, it is a great resource for caregivers, family members, senior service providers, and the public. Its doors are open to anyone who wants to learn about and resolve timely issues impacting the oldest members of our society.

VCLLI staff coordinate the SAI Conference and reported the following impacts. Post survey data from 87 of the 453 participants of the SAI Conference indicated that:

- 87 (100%) felt that their knowledge of legacy (inheritance & bequests) increased significantly.
- 81 (93%) felt that their knowledge of available community resources increased significantly.
- 79 (91%) felt that they could use the knowledge gained for addressing everyday issues and concerns.
- 76 (87%) felt that their knowledge of fraud and scams increased significantly.
- 72 (83%) felt that their knowledge of activities (gardening and painting) that can improve their quality of life increased significantly.
- 70 (81%) felt that their knowledge of heirs' property increased significantly.
- 44 (50%) felt that their knowledge of strategies to age with grace and vitality increased significantly.
- 59 (68%) of the participants were very likely to use the information gained in making more informed decisions.

The SAI Conference is a one-day event held in several locations across the state for older adults, their families, caregivers, and local service providers. Conference attendees learn the basics from the SAI program. In addition, there are guest speakers, hands-on presentations, and a luncheon to celebrate aging.

More Information

For programming offered through the VCLLI, contact Site Director Dr. Danielle Rudolph at (334) 201-2847 or ddr0007@aces.edu.

For family and child development programs, contact Extension FCS Specialist Dr. Dorothy Brandon at (256) 372-5458 or dpb0010@aces.edu.

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