



2026

The Urban Difference

*Impacts from Alabama Extension
at Alabama A&M University*





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The Alabama Cooperative Extension System From the Hill to the Community



From the President

Dr. Daniel K. Wims, *President*, Alabama A&M University (AAMU)

I am pleased to recognize the outstanding work of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama Extension), which continues to serve as the primary outreach arm of Alabama A&M University (AAMU). Through its unwavering commitment to service, Alabama Extension extends the University's land-grant mission to individuals, families, and communities across our state—from Huntsville to Alabama's Gulf Coast.

Last year, Alabama Extension delivered impactful programming in 63 of Alabama's 67 counties, responding where needs were greatest and where communities requested assistance. This remarkable reach reflects not only their dedication but also the relevance, quality, and trustworthiness of the programs they provide. In return, I extend my sincere appreciation to the staff and partners of Alabama Extension for their steadfast commitment to improving lives across Alabama. Their statewide efforts exemplify Alabama A&M University's enduring commitment to service, education, and excellence.



From the 1890 Administrator

Dr. Majed Dweik, *Vice President for Research & Economic Development, Interim 1890s Extension Administrator*, AAMU

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama Extension) remains the cornerstone of Alabama A&M University's land-grant mission, serving as the vital bridge between the University and the people and communities of Alabama.

Despite a leaner workforce, we successfully delivered educational programs in 63 of Alabama's 67 counties. This broad reach reflects the dedication, innovation, and resilience of our Extension staff, as well as the trust that state residents place in our programs. For these reasons and more, I am deeply appreciative of the exceptional work that is performed daily. Alongside our partners, Alabama Extension continues to strengthen agricultural systems, advance economic opportunities, improve health and well-being, promote environmental stewardship, and enhance the quality of life for people throughout Alabama.



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Visit www.aces.edu/directory
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Find us Online

Alabama Extension Calendar
www.aces.edu/calendar

@AlabamaExtensionAAMU

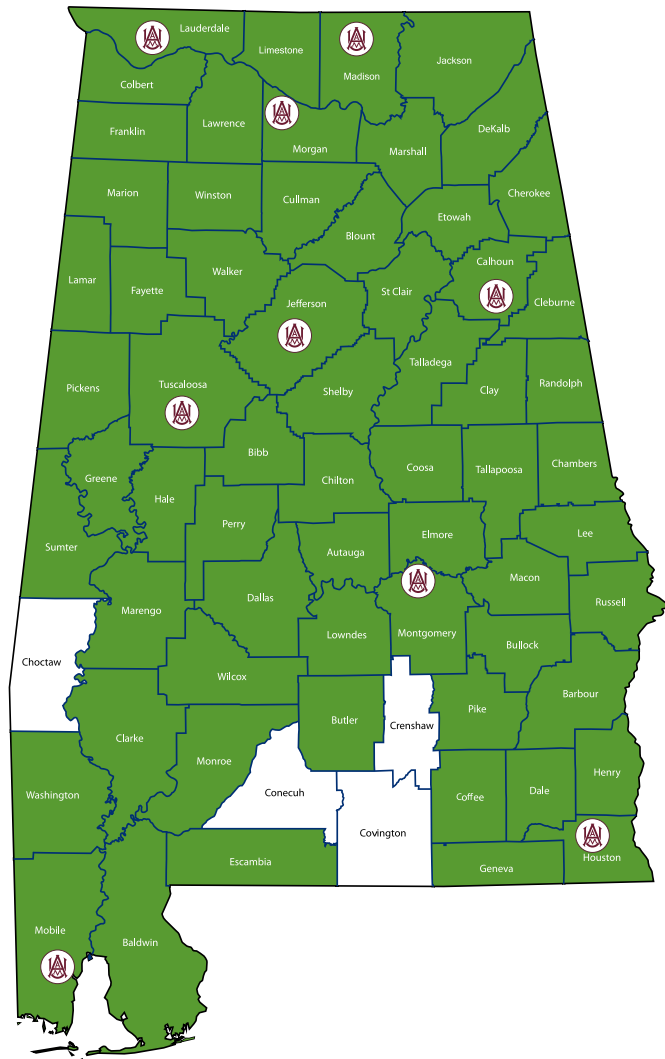
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2025 | At-a-Glance

Operating out of nine urban centers across Alabama, Alabama Extension at AAMU works within a network of experts, educators, and volunteers to impact all 67 Alabama counties. This report includes our latest impacts from reporting year 2025. Alabama Extension reports on the previous year's efforts and implements programming in the current year while planning for the following year.

Today, Alabama Extension at AAMU offers programming activities in 4-H youth development; animal science and forages (goat and sheep management); forestry, wildlife, and natural resource conservation; human health, diet, and nutrition; integrated pest management; family and child development, including older adults; workforce development and personal money management; community resource development, such as entrepreneurship; and home and community lawn and garden care.



Impact Numbers JAN – DEC 2025

- Direct & indirect programming contacts: **264,528**
- Programming Activities: **1,554**
- Urban Extension website views: **153,244**
- Facebook User Reach: **114,060**
- Extension Website Views: **4.5 million**
- Digital Media Contacts: **396 million**

External Funding Comparison

- FY 2023/24: \$10.9 million
- FY 2024/25: \$8.3 million
- FY 2025/26: \$9.8 million

Map Legend

Alabama Extension Urban Centers

- Calhoun County - Anniston
- Houston County - Dothan
- Jefferson County - Birmingham
- Lauderdale County - Florence
- Madison County - Huntsville
- Mobile County - Mobile
- Morgan County - Decatur
- Montgomery County - Montgomery
- Tuscaloosa County - Tuscaloosa

Urban Extension In Person Service Areas

2025 in Review

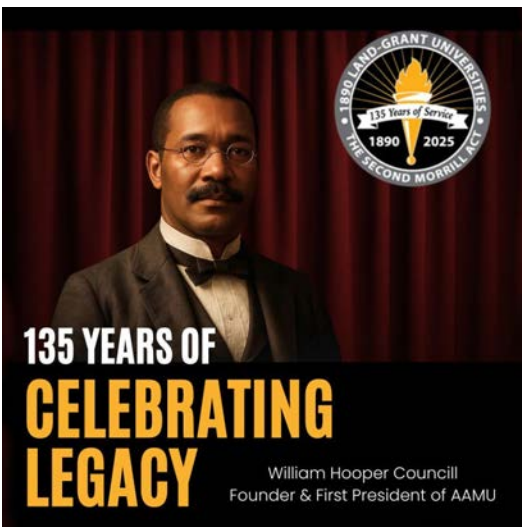
150th & 135th Anniversary Celebrations

In 2025, Alabama A&M University celebrated its 150th Anniversary—Rich Heritage, Bold Future. AAMU concluded the sesquicentennial year-long celebration with a formal closing ceremony on The Hill, highlighted by the lighting of the William Hooper Council Eternal Flame Memorial and the public unveiling of commissioned art by acclaimed artist Charles Bibbs. Dr. William Hooper Council, a former slave, founded AAMU in 1875 and served as its first president.

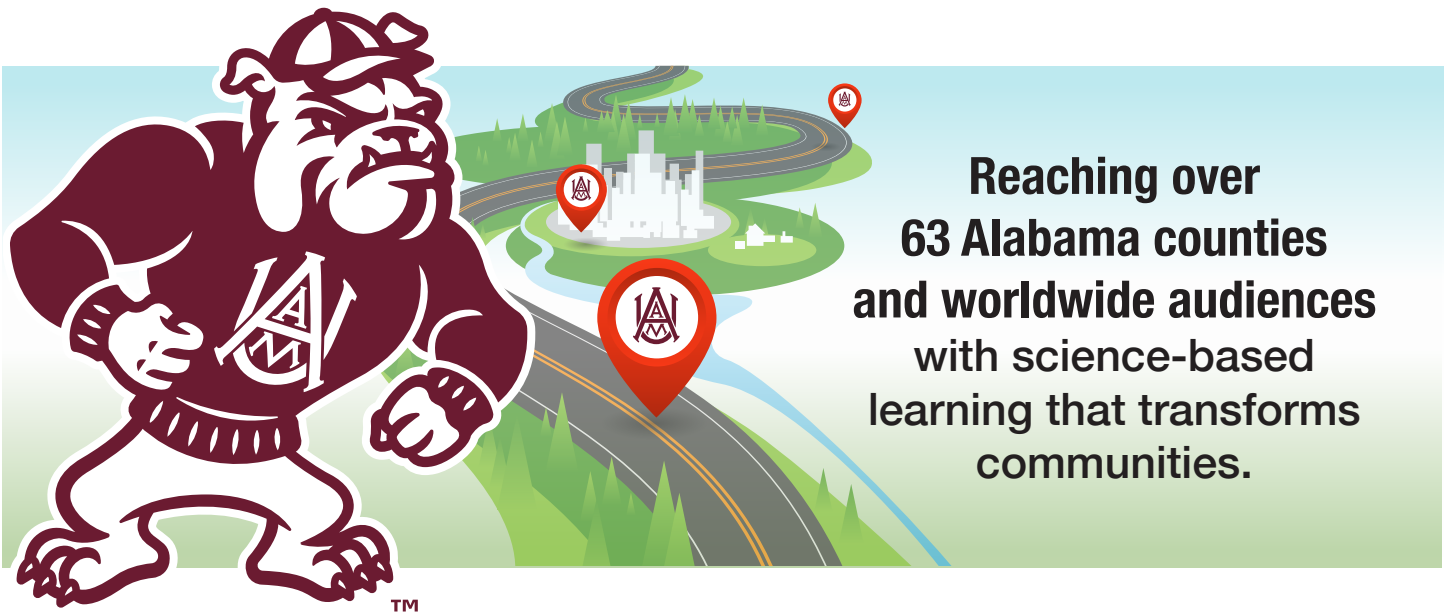
In addition, the 135th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act of 1890 celebrated the legislation that established 19 historically Black land-grant universities, known as the “19-Strong”. Commemorative events occurred on September 9-10, with an HBCU-led Cyber & AI Agriculture competition at the University of the District of Columbia, Capitol Hill briefings, and a rooftop reception at the National 4-H Council Headquarters in Washington, D.C. AAMU’s PlayCyber AI student team 25 Hackstreet won the competition!



25 Hackstreet: (Photo L-R) Sijan Mainali, Charquenta Dishmon, Sydney Fleming, Karyn Rose, and Brandon Ramadan



AAMU Leadership: VP Jamal Ali, Senior Advisor Dr. Jeanette Jones, President Dr. Daniel K. Wims, Provost & VP Dr. John Jones, VP Shannon Reeves, & VP Dr. Majed El-Dweik



**Reaching over
63 Alabama counties
and worldwide audiences
with science-based
learning that transforms
communities.**

The People's Patch Madison County Community Farm

In 2024, AAMU and the Madison County Commission agreed to establish a farm to address food insecurity while strengthening research and local food systems in Madison County. Madison County residents are free to pick fresh produce as it becomes available.

This year, 300 fruit trees were planted as part of an Alabama Extension at AAMU initiative, the Urban. Rooted. Resilient. Urban and Community Forestry Expansion project, award #25-DG-11083150-541, from the USDA Forest Service. Tree varieties included apple, plum, jujube, peach, blackberry, raspberry, and elderberry. In addition, the farm grew an estimated 342,259 pounds of produce, from sweet corn to watermelon.

Note: Based on square footage planted and yield estimate charts



Alabama Extension Week, October 5-11, 2025

Alabama Extension Week was held on October 5-11. The week was kicked off by the signing of a proclamation by Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, followed by week-long Extension activities across the state.



2025 Spring Community Garden Expo

Approximately 116 people attended the 2025 Spring Community Garden Expo, which educated participants on how to establish a community garden. It also featured tree giveaways, vendor exhibits and ended with a tour of The People's Patch Madison County Community Farm.



North Alabama Ag Expo

The Second North Alabama Ag Expo was held on Saturday, November 1, at AAMU's Agribition Center. Approximately 800 people attended the event that featured some of the best that North Alabama has to offer.

Platinum Sponsors: Alabama Farmers Federation, Country Financial, Huntsville Tractor & Equipment, and Madison County Commissioner, District 6. **Silver Sponsors:** Bartley Bridge, Woody Anderson Ford. **Bronze Sponsors:** Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries, Deputy Commissioner Rick Pate, Allstate Insurance-The Hodge Group, LifeSouth Community Blood Centers, and Rebelution Healthcare



SAI Conference

The theme of the 2025 Successful Aging Initiative Conference was Bloom! Don't Wither – Aging Means Living, that celebrated the vitality, beauty and growth that come with aging. Approximately 453 participants attended the conference with 91 percent of surveyed attendees indicating they would use the knowledge they gained from the event to address everyday issues and concerns. In 2026, Alabama Extension and the Virginia Caples Lifelong Learning Institute will observe the event's 25th anniversary in Madison County.



Alabama Goat & Sheep Summit

The 2025 Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit was held on November 15, 2025, at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) and The People's Patch Madison County Farm in Huntsville, Alabama. The free, day-long event featured hands-on demonstrations, expert-led lectures, and youth STEM activities focused on sustainable small ruminant production. The Summit also featured speakers from Auburn University, Langston University, South Carolina State, and the University of Tennessee.



Mobile STEM Lab

In 2025, the Mobile STEM Lab reached more than 3,655 youth in 21 Alabama counties. Students engaged in a variety of hands-on, inquiry-based STEM experiences designed to increase engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. These activities are also designed to foster greater interest in STEM education and future employment opportunities.



Alabama 4-H Youth Development

Preventing Risky Behaviors through Health Rocks!®



2,997
participants
ages 9-16



2,295:1
ROI



96%
know strategies to
avoid risky behaviors



93%
identified
healthy behaviors



89%
will avoid
substance use



Health Rocks!®

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, alcohol continues to be the number one substance used in the United States among young people under the age of 21. Alcohol use is responsible for approximately 4,000 deaths annually among individuals under 21. When young people drink, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviors that can lead to personal injuries and other health conditions. They are also more likely to skip school, have lower grades, drive under the influence, and use more toxic drugs.

The 4-H program Health Rocks!® uses the positive youth development model to empower young people with life and decision-making skills to avoid substances like illicit drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

In 2025, 2,997 youth ages 9-16 completed 10 hours of Health Rocks!® instruction. As a result, they improved their ability to make safe and informed choices regarding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use. Using the Common Measures Survey, 96% reported knowing strategies to avoid risky behaviors, and 93% were able to identify healthy behaviors. In addition, 89% stated they would avoid using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

Healthy life skills education can equip young people with the skills to make wise lifestyle choices.

ROI: 2,295:1

Health Rocks!® may reduce related medical and legal costs by preventing underage substance use.

Other 4-H Programs

HYPE

The HYPE: Helping Youth Promote Empathy program generally delivers a series of six lessons to educate youth on how to reduce and prevent school bullying in elementary, middle, and high schools.

STREAM

STREAM, which stands for science, technology, reading, engineering, agriculture, arts, and mathematics, offers six interactive lessons to foster greater interest in STEM.

More Information

For more information about 4-H programming, contact 4-H Youth Development Specialist Dr. Angela Williams at (256) 372-5713 or arw0033@aces.edu.

Animal Science and Forages

Sustainable Solutions for Small Ruminant Producers



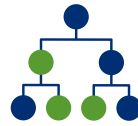
11,688
participants



76:1
ROI



70%
gained parasite
management skills



87%
learned breeding
soundness



79%
gained grazing
strategies



87%
believe skills will
increase farm ROI



To run a profitable small ruminant business, producers are advised to identify a market niche (meat, wool, dairy, or breeding), maintain grazing or foraging land, reduce losses due to parasites and disease, and find a strong buyer's market for their products. Unfortunately, goat and sheep producers often struggle due to poor herd health, inadequate nutrition, ineffective marketing strategies, and limited finances. The Small Ruminant Program helps to change those odds.

Small Ruminant Program

Alabama Extension's Small Ruminant Program educates audiences about effective marketing strategies and environmentally sound, sustainable practices. These best management practices enable landowners, livestock farmers, and small-scale producers to improve animal health and overall productivity of goat and sheep operations.

In 2025, the Small Ruminants Program reached 11,688 participants online and in-person, leading to the following impacts:

- 4,675 (40%) participants increased their knowledge on how to optimize feed and pasture management for flock health, growth, and reproductive performance.
- 7,013 (60%) participants increased their understanding of breeding schedules, abortion risk reduction, lambing/kidding management, and periparturient parasite surges.
- 8,182 (70%) participants increased their knowledge in parasite and overall health management.
- 4,675 (40%) attendees increased their knowledge of feeding and management practices for offspring growth and productivity.
- 4,091 (35%) attendees increased their knowledge of farm management skills.
- 5,844 (50%) farmers gained tools to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and increase profitability.

Educating small ruminant producers on best management practices helps to sustain agribusiness operations and reduce risks that decrease profitability.

ROI: 76:1

Applying small ruminant best management practices helps to reduce animal mortalities.

Other Animal Science Program Impacts

FAMACHA System

The FAMACHA Score Certification and Fecal Egg Count (FEC) training addresses the ongoing challenge of parasite management in small ruminants, particularly gastrointestinal parasites, which can reduce productivity, compromise animal health, and increase treatment costs.

In 2025, 304 participants attended FAMACHA and FEC training, which resulted in the following:

- 176 (58%) increased knowledge of FAMACHA and body condition scoring.
- 204 (67%) increased knowledge of anthelmintic resistance.
- 179 (59%) increased knowledge of performing FECs.
- 207 (68%) increased understanding of refugia.
- 188 (62%) increased knowledge of hoof trimming and care.
- 264 (87%) increased understanding of breeding soundness and synchronization.

Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit

The Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit addresses the challenges faced by small ruminant producers, including reproductive disorders, herd health management, parasite control, and sustainable nutrition. Producers, especially small-scale and youth farmers, often lack access to practical, research-based strategies to improve productivity, animal welfare, and profitability. The Alabama Goat and Sheep Summit also provides hands-on demonstrations, expert-led sessions, and youth engagement to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to overcome these challenges.

In 2025, 120 participants gained practical knowledge and skills they could directly apply to improve their small-ruminant operations.

- 91% gain in the knowledge of managing reproductive disorders.
- 79% gain in the understanding of forage and grazing strategies.
- 81% improvement in knowledge of reproductive management strategies.
- 73% improved knowledge of managing toxic plants.

Overall, 104 (87%) of participants reported that the knowledge gained would directly enhance the return on investment of their goat or sheep operations, and 116 (97%) indicated they would recommend the training to peers.

More Information

For more information about animal science and forages programming, contact Extension Animal Science Specialist Dr. Felix Samuel at (256) 924-0984 or sfu0001@aces.edu.



Community Resource Development

Keys to Community Success



174
venturers



19:1
ROI



863
youth
participants



255
online
participants



185
certificates



115
hours one-on-one
business coaching



Filing for Success

Choosing the wrong legal structure and failing to meet compliance requirements are among the leading causes of business failure. The business structure entrepreneurs select will affect their taxes, daily operations, and legal responsibilities. Noncompliance, on the other hand, can increase the tax burden of businesses and make owners personally liable. If this occurs, personal assets could be at risk. It is possible that missing one requirement can lead to penalties, fines, legal trouble, and even force a business to close.

Alabama Extension's Filing for Success program educates entrepreneurs on how to legally establish a small business in Alabama. It also covers topics such as business structures, insurance, and filing taxes.

In 2025, 174 individuals completed the Filing for Success Series, enabling them to register their

business with the appropriate government entities. It also increased their knowledge of business regulations, taxes, and insurance.

Basic knowledge of business structures, taxes, and other regulations can decrease business failures and personal liabilities.

ROI: 19:1

Extension's free entrepreneurship training eliminates out-of-pocket expenses.

Other CRD Program Impacts

Career Countdown

Career Countdown connects participants to their interests, skills, and abilities that can formulate a career path. The program also guides them in developing an educational plan to reach their career goals. Career Countdown is offered in both single-session and multi-session formats.

In 2025, the program was limited to pilot testing new materials and updating program components due to budgetary constraints. However, in 2025, the team offered eight pilot testing opportunities and reached 863 youth. This pilot received positive feedback from youth, in addition to educators who have been previously involved with the program.

Go Getter Pathways

Go-Getter is a free on-demand educational series for Alabama residents. The program offers workforce credentials or entrepreneurship strategies that participants can complete on any digital device.

This program provided free access to nine workforce development courses on an online platform for 255 participants. As a result, 62 certificates were attained among workforce development participants and 123 certificates among entrepreneurs.

Small Business Cafe

The Small Business Café is an online learning and networking community that provides introductory-level small business education, such as business

marketing, capital access, and budgets. As a Facebook group member, current or aspiring business owners can stay up to date on business and learning.

The target audience for this program was existing and aspiring entrepreneurs with busy schedules and those who needed education to be provided in flexible formats. In 2025, A total of 303 individuals participated in Small Business Cafe Educational Sessions. In addition, the program staff provided 115 hours of one-on-one business coaching.

More Information

For more information about community resource development programs, contact Extension Community and Economic Development Specialist Terence Norwood at (256) 372-5023 or tpn0004@aces.edu.

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.
- 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.



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.

Consumer Sciences and Personal Financial Managements

The Right Resume for the Right Job



1,355
participants



55:1
ROI



89%
gained interview
attire skills



85%
learned interview
question skills



73%
completed job
applications



69%
revised resumes for
specific jobs



Submitting an inappropriate resume is one reason why job candidates are not hired. Using one resume to apply for various jobs can indicate to employers that potential candidates have not given much thought to the job search process. Customizing a resume and even a cover letter for a particular job demonstrates to potential employers that a candidate is serious and enthusiastic about a job. It also increases their chances of making it through the application process and not ending up in an unemployment line.

Promoting Readiness for Employment Possibilities (PREP) is a workforce development program that teaches people how to find a job. PREP has exercises that help participants with existing jobs develop a career plan for future career changes. Specifically, program participants learn how to apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, develop resumes, find enjoyable employment, and use valuable soft skills.

- The program served limited-resource adults of all ages, reaching 1,355 individuals through a variety of

educational activities, with 93 participants completing either one-hour standalone lessons or a four-lesson series. Results from a delayed post-assessment conducted one to three months after program participation demonstrate sustained behavior change among 31 participants.

- Participants reported adopting positive practices that support long-term impact in searching and securing jobs. Specifically, 28 (89%) used skills learned in the program to select appropriate clothing for interviews, and 26 (85%) used newly acquired skills to effectively answer job interview questions.
- Also, participants demonstrated improved job search skills, with 23 (73%) completing job applications, and 21 (69%) revising their resumes to fit specific job positions.

Workforce development education can lead to gainful employment in today's job market.

ROI: 55:1

Effective workforce development training can eliminate the need for unemployment benefits.

Other FCS Program Impacts

FLIP

Financial Literacy in Progress (FLIP) teaches people how to develop good money management skills. Participants learn how to rationally approach buying, recognize irrational buying behavior, develop a spending plan or budget, build and maintain good credit, apply strategies to reduce debt, and avoid financial fraud and predatory lenders.

In 2025, 29,367 participants were reached through various educational activities. Approximately 615 participants completed a one-hour or the entire FLIP series of five lessons.

Results from a post-delayed assessment among 239 participants indicated:

- 198 (83%) avoided using predatory lenders and established a spending plan.
- 189 (79%) used a savings plan and controlled impulsive spending.
- 179 (75%) paid bills on time, tracked spending, and conducted comparison shopping before making major purchases.

PC-FLIPP

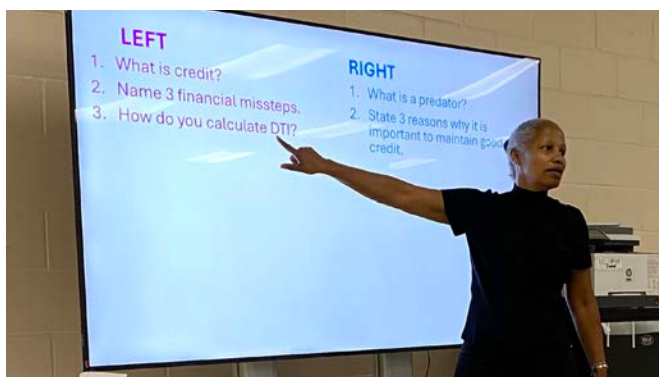
The Parent-Child Financial Literacy in Progress Program (PC-FLIPP) is funded through the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk program of the United

States Department of Agriculture. The program helps parents build financial literacy skills while their children, aged 5 to 9, develop money management skills.

Eighty-eight participants (44 adults and 44 youth) completed the program in 2025. Adult participants initially reported low confidence in performing a spending plan, reducing debt, and building credit. After the program, overall confidence scores increased by 21%, with specific gains of 24% in using a spending plan, 20% for reducing debt, and 17% for building credit scores. These gains involved instructional lessons, hands-on activities, and digital tools (such as debt-reduction software and credit report access) designed to equip participants with the knowledge and practical experience needed to apply financial literacy strategies to their everyday lives.

More Information

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



Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources

Protecting Communities Through Safe Drug Disposal



3:1
ROI



1,429
pounds medication
collected



53,209
pounds e-waste
collected



17,970
pounds critical metals
collected



1,530
pounds toxic metals
collected



Improper disposal of medication and personal care products is harmful to humans, animals, and the environment. Prescription medication like opioids can end up in the hands of children, teens, or even adults. They can be ingested accidentally or used improperly, and the consequences could be severe. These products can further pollute water systems and pose harmful risks for humans and aquatic life, particularly products like antibiotics, antidepressants, and hormones. Luckily, programs like the Synergistic Efforts to Reduce Pharmaceutical Impacts on the Environment (SerPIE) offer helpful solutions.

The SerPIE program offers a one-health approach to minimizing environmental impacts. SerPIE highlights the connection between pharmaceutical drugs, personal care products, and pollution by tackling tough topics like the opioid crisis and giving the public information to safeguard their homes and the environment by properly disposing of unused medication and personal care products for both humans and animals.

2025 Impacts

In 2025, approximately 1,429 total pounds of expired or unwanted medicines were collected through SerPIE efforts, including drug take-back events and permanent drug drop-off boxes. In addition, 386 people dropped off unwanted drugs while 95 participants took the Lock Your Meds pledge, committing to responsible pharmaceutical practices. With proper education, consumers can learn how to safely dispose of medication and avoid harmful drugs entering local water systems.

ROI: 3:1

Proper disposal of medication reduces consumer costs related to pharmaceutical waste.

Other FWNR Impacts

EMEP

The E-Waste Management Education Program (EMEP) educates audiences about the hazards

of electronic waste (e-waste), the importance of recycling, and the benefits of being good stewards of the environment.

- In 2025, ten in-person and virtual special events reached more than 1,035 participants, including seniors, and increased their understanding of e-waste pollution and proper disposal.
- Seven e-cycling drives attracted 1,012 vehicles and diverted 53,209 pounds (27 tons) of e-waste from the waste stream. Volunteers contributed 58 hours of service, representing a value of \$2,017.82.
- An estimated 154 printer cartridges were recycled through the small electronics recycling program, generating \$580.00 in revenue. Collectively, these efforts significantly reduced the volume of e-waste destined for landfills and the environment. The e-waste drives:
- The program diverted 1,530 pounds of toxic metals from landfills, including 1,485 pounds of lead and 44 pounds of arsenic.
- More than 17,970 pounds of critical metals such as copper (2,351 lbs.), aluminum (1,089 lbs.), gold (1.36 lbs.), and steel (14,528 lbs.) were reclaimed for reuse.

UESEP

The Urban Environmental Science Education Program (UESEP) provided 6,705 youths and adults with natural resource conservation strategies to improve environmental awareness and stewardship through 91 in-person and online activities. UESEP's Eco-friendly Fridays series streamed to 210 participants for 1,561 minutes of online views. Live polls among 88 participants indicated the following:

- 86 (98%) of respondents reported increased knowledge of environmental issues.
- 76 (86%) planned to implement at least one newly learned practice.
- 59 (67%) felt the information would help create a safer home; 28% said maybe.
- 84 (95%) believed the series improved their ability to act as better eco stewards.
- 33 (38%) anticipated future cost savings; an additional 33% indicated the possibility.

Eco-friendly Fridays post-delayed surveys among 50 participants revealed the following adoption of best management practices:

- 44 (88%) of respondents had recycled glass, paper, plastic, or aluminum at home.

- 34 (68%) of respondents had assembled an emergency preparedness kit.
- 10 (19%) of respondents had tested their home's drinking water.
- 28 (56%) of respondents had tested the soil in their yard.

In addition, a Camp Conservation educator workshop, Roots of Learning, was conducted with the Alabama Forestry Foundation (AFF) and Project Learning Tree (PLT), providing 27 K-12 teachers with strategies to enhance student learning outcomes. As a result of this training:

- All 27 participants received PLT certificates of completion.
- 5 hours of TEAMS CE credits were awarded to each participant.
- 17 (63%) strongly agreed they felt more confident teaching environmental topics afterward, and an additional 10 (37%) agreed.
- 13 (48%) strongly agreed they planned to use what they learned with their students within the next 6 months, and an additional 44% agreed.
- 27 (100%) planned to share what they learned with a colleague.

More Information

For forestry, wildlife, and natural resources (FWNR) programs, contact Extension Environmental Specialist Dr. Karnita Garner at (256) 372-8331 or kfg0003@aces.edu.



Home Horticulture: Urban Green

School Gardens Enhance Agriculture Literacy



5:1
ROI



228
continuing education
credits earned



98%
learned
new BMPs



65%
will
test soils



63%
will adopt
propagation



60%
will add pollinator
gardens



There is growing concern that urban youth lack basic agricultural literacy. Supermarkets and fast-food restaurants typically surround urban youth, thus confounding their understanding of just where food comes from. Urban farms, community gardens, and, more importantly, school gardens help students understand agriculture by actively engaging them in cultivating fresh fruit and vegetables. Young people also have an opportunity to improve their STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) skills.

Teacher Training

STEM in the Garden is a teacher-training workshop that helps educators establish school gardens and enhance their schools' capacity to provide STEM education. Select schools receive a free turnkey raised-bed garden. In 2025, STEM in the Garden Teacher Workshops offered educators information on topics ranging from propagation to vermicomposting.

Program impacts include the following:

- Extension delivered two in-person, 6-hour workshops to 66 participants.
- 9 partners united to offer \$2,500 in donations.
- Each participant saved an estimated \$85.00.
- 28 curriculum and 63 STEM in the Garden Outdoor Classroom Calendars were delivered.
- 228 continuing education units (hours) were provided to teachers via PowerSchool.

STEM in the Garden surveys among 45 participants revealed that:

- 44 (98%) of respondents agreed they learned something new and plan to implement at least one best management practice they learned.
- 29 (65%) would test soils for nutrients.
- 28 (63%) would adopt propagation techniques.
- 27 (60%) would add pollinator plants.
- 26 (58%) would adopt composting techniques.

ROI: 5:1

Extension programs offer cost savings on training fees and classroom resources.

Other Home Horticulture Program Impacts

Urban Ag: Urban Food Production and Sustainable Communities

Urban Agriculture programming reached 5,383 food producers, small-scale farmers, homeowners, community groups, master gardeners, veterans, beginning farmers, city planners, business owners, and community leaders directly through 81 workshops, live demonstrations and other activities. These educational activities enabled participants to start, manage, and sustain community gardens and small-scale operations, increasing access to fresh, local produce.



Spring Community Garden Expo

The Spring Community Garden Expo reached 116 participants. Survey results among 71 participants indicated the following:

- 49 (69%) of respondents were new to Extension programs.
- 69 (97%) planned to implement a newly learned BMP.
- 39 (55%) found the content extremely useful, and 32% rated it very useful.
- 61 (86%) indicated the recommendations would save them money.

As a result of attending the Spring Community Garden Expo:

- 52 (73%) would add pollinator plants to their landscape.
- 29 (41%) would add pollinator habitat.
- 34 (48%) would alter chemical use to protect pollinators.
- 36 (51%) would add mulch to improve soil and water conservation.

- 29 (41%) would use IPM for more sustainable pest and disease management.
- 45 (63%) would compost to recycle nutrients on their property.

Urban Green

Urban Green offered 104 in-person and online activities, providing 4,979 urban residents with sustainable practices to manage landscapes, urban gardens, and home pests. Urban Green highlights in 2025 are as follows:

- 340 client calls were answered.
- 12 raised-bed gardens were installed.
- More than 65 schools were served through the program.
- \$70,000.00 in extramural funds were obtained, along with \$3,200 in donations to support programming efforts.
- Volunteers completed 260 hours of service valued at \$9,045.40.

Back 2 Basics Webinar Series

Additionally, 846 participants attended 13 Back 2 Basics Webinar sessions, helping Urban Green reach its program objectives. Webinar videos received 3,558 minutes of online views, and the program impacts revealed the following:

- 603 (82%) had previously attended a Back 2 Basics webinar session.
- 294 (40%) of Urban Green respondents also attended Back 2 Basics.
- 669 (91%) agreed they learned something new from the Series.
- 456 (62%) joined to learn a new skill.
- 698 (95%) felt the program was useful in meeting their needs.
- 617 (84%) planned to implement what they learned.

More Information

For more information about home horticulture programs, contact Extension Environmental Specialist Dr. Karnita Garner at (256) 372-8331 or kfg0003@aces.edu.

Integrated Pest Management

Why Integrated Pest Management Matters



84:1
ROI



50+
fruit & vegetable
growers



Without Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs, property owners could face several challenges, including recurring pest infestations, increased pesticide resistance, and the release of harmful chemicals such as pesticides into the environment.

IPM uses a comprehensive, environmentally responsible approach to manage pests and plant diseases. These programs are designed to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides while protecting human health, wildlife, and nature's ecosystems. Additionally, IPM supports beneficial insects, such as pollinators and natural predators, which play key roles in controlling pest populations and maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

Alabama Extension's IPM program at Alabama A&M University works with urban food producers, small-scale farmers, beginning farmers, home gardeners, city planners, community leaders, and academic researchers to provide sustainable solutions to pest and plant disease problems. Although this program was still in development in 2025, it now emphasizes four core areas:

- Statewide surveillance for early detection of invasive insect pests
- Refinement of existing IPM programs, including integration of attract-and-kill strategies with trap cropping to reduce insecticide use
- Development of predictive decision-support tools

using trap data to guide treatment timing

- Establishment of demonstration sites to provide hands-on IPM training.

In 2025, the IPM program provided direct assistance to more than 50 fruit and vegetable growers, including The People's Patch Madison County Community Farm. As a result, implementing IPM best practices led to:

- Reduced environmental contamination and protected beneficial insects and wildlife.
- Lower human exposure to pesticides.
- Cost-effective pest management and reduced production costs.
- Long-term sustainability through reduced pesticide resistance.
- Enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

IPM strategies can minimize pesticide risks to growers and the environment and protect beneficial insects.

ROI: 84:1

Using effective IPM practices limits the use of pesticides harmful to the environment.

More Information

For more information about integrated pest management programs, contact Dr. Clement Akotsen Mensah, Extension Integrated Pest Management Specialist, at (256) 372-4969 or akotscl@aces.edu.

Human Nutrition, Diet and Health

On the Front Lines to Reduce Diabetes



35:1
ROI



1,227
adult
participants



54%
reduced
high-fat foods



55%
exercised 1-3
days per week



2,576
youth (12-17)
participants



10,000
steps
per session



Diabetes continues to be a leading cause of death in Alabama. The American Diabetes Association reported that an estimated 13.7 to 15.1% or roughly 631,400 of Alabama's adult population have been diagnosed with diabetes. Alabama also continues to rank among the states with the highest rates of diabetes, primarily due to its high rates of obesity. At least 49,000 adults are diagnosed with diabetes each year. Programs like the Community Health Aerobic Motivational Program Initiating Optimal Nutrition (CHAMPION) educate adults on how to tackle diet-related diseases such as diabetes.

CHAMPION for adults is designed to improve healthy eating habits, increase physical activity, and encourage participants to become health literate. Participants learn to eat more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, and low-fat dairy products, and to reduce consumption of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt. They are also encouraged to exercise 2.5 to 5 hours a week, understand and manage their health, and use strategies to maintain a healthy weight.

In 2025, among 1,227 participants:

- 675 (55%) exercised 1-3 days per week, 331 (27%) 4-6 days per week, and 110 (9%) 7 days per week.
- 282 (23%) increased fruit consumption, and 319 (26%) consumed vegetables more than three times per week.
- 633 (54%) reduced high-fat food intake, and 589 (48%) reduced high-sugar food intake.

A proper diet and weekly exercise help to reduce chronic diseases like diabetes.

ROI: 35:1

Healthy eating and regular exercise can reduce medical expenses linked to diabetes.

Other Health and Nutrition Impacts

CHAMPION Youth

CHAMPION Youth targets young people aged 12-17. The program educated youths on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity to reduce chronic disease risk factors.

In 2025, CHAMPION Youth and the Nutrition Mobile Lab programs reached 2,576 youth. Program activities included fitness bootcamps and interactive movement sessions that combined traditional exercises such as walking, relay racing, cornhole, and the blender bike with technology-based activities, including boxing and iDance exergaming.

Among the 1,159 youth who completed evaluations:

- 185 (16%) reported being active all the time.
- 498 (43%) were active some of the time.
- 267 (23%) reported not often.

- 209 (18%) reported never, although 603 (52%) reported enjoying participation in the fitness bootcamps.

The 30-60-minute fitness bootcamp sessions promoted sustained movement, with youth averaging 10,000 or more steps and burning approximately 350 or more calories per session.

More Information

For more information about human nutrition, diet and health programs, contact Dr. Tamara C. Warren, assistant director of urban and federal diet, health and nutrition programs, at (256) 372-4981 or tcw0004@aces.edu.

Urban EFNEP

Food Safety Education Works



8:1
ROI



505
participants

Failing to practice food safety can lead to the spread of harmful bacteria, viruses, and even parasites that can result in foodborne illnesses such as food poisoning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that an estimated 48 million people get sick from a foodborne illness each year. Severe cases can even lead to death.

Programs like the Urban Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (Urban EFNEP) educate both youth and adults about food safety.

In 2025, the Urban EFNEP reported improvements in food safety practices among 464 youth, such as washing hands before eating and putting food back in the refrigerator within two hours.

Among 41 adults, 20 (49%) showed improvement in one or more food safety practices, such as washing hands before preparing food, washing all items and surfaces after cutting raw meat or seafood, avoiding thawing frozen food at room temperature, or using a meat thermometer.

Practicing food safety strategies can lessen the risk of food poisoning.

ROI: 8:1

Applying effective food safety methods can reduce medical costs associated with foodborne illnesses.

Other Food Safety Impacts

In addition, 907 individuals were educated about food safety strategies through the Safety Operation Application Program Plan. In this program, participants learn how to clean, handle, and cook food safely, how to identify unsafe foods, and where to find the latest food recall information.

More Information

For more information about UEFNEP and food safety programs, please contact Dr. Terence Martin, food safety and quality specialist and director, Family Life Center, at (256) 372-4983 or tzm0018@aces.edu.



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