

Annual Report 2016



A better Alabama for all!

We'll keep moving forward.

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” With those words, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that change does not always happen overnight, and that progress does not always move in a straight line. But history has shown, time and again, that when advocates with a vision for a brighter future keep speaking out and keep on believing, their efforts pay off in a better world. Building a better Alabama for all is important, long-term work, and Arise members like you are playing a crucial role in carrying that work forward.

Lives are getting better because you're speaking up.

Your advocacy helped protect health coverage for vulnerable families this year. When state lawmakers weighed Medicaid cuts that would have hurt more than 1 million Alabamians – mostly children, seniors, and people with disabilities – Arise members like you leapt into action, flooding the State House with calls and emails demanding new revenue to stop cuts to life-saving services like

prescription drugs and outpatient dialysis. Your generous support also allowed Arise to partner with Alabama Children First to launch #IamMedicaid, a social media campaign to show the real human faces behind the Medicaid debate.



Your support helped turn the tide and save health coverage for struggling Alabamians. As more of you spoke out, legislators who claimed they hadn't heard from constituents about Medicaid quickly dropped that argument. Though the Legislature settled on just a short-term solution, your voices were necessary reminders of how much Medicaid matters to communities across Alabama.

We celebrated other notable landscape changes together this year, too. Alabama eased the path to voting rights restoration for thousands. Birmingham enacted a “ban the box” policy to make it easier for people to rejoin the workforce and rebuild their lives after leaving prison. More than 200,000 Alabamians signed up for Marketplace health coverage under the Affordable

Care Act, and the vast majority got financial help to pay for it.

Our push to rein in high-cost lending in Alabama keeps gaining momentum thanks to you. Arise enjoyed yet another breakthrough this year when the Alabama Senate voted 28-1 to cut interest rates on payday loans and give borrowers a more realistic path out of debt. (Sadly, the bill never got a House vote.) New proposed federal rules on payday and title lending drew further attention to the problem and gave Arise members yet another way to speak up for consumers. Each year, more and more Alabamians across the political spectrum agree on the need for change. These gains are a tribute to your dedication and persistence.

Together, we'll keep working to make our vision a reality.

Arise's movement for a better Alabama is getting stronger because of you. You helped us shatter our old records for individual membership and giving this year. Once again, we had more attendees at our annual meeting than ever. Our social media followings keep growing, and your words of support online and in person are helping us draw even more members to our cause.

There's so much work to do, and we need you with us every step of the way. The road to a better Alabama for all may be long, but Arise is in it for the long haul. We'll keep moving forward until we get there together.

Arise at a glance

Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP), founded in 1994, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of congregations, organizations and individuals promoting public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. ACPP analyzes state policies, educates the public on poverty issues and equips members to advocate for a better Alabama.

A letter from Kimble



Dear Arise supporter,

Thank you! Thank you! A thousand times thank you! Literally. In this report, you'll see the names of more than 1,000 people who supported this venture with money. That's a record.

But what's most important is this: More than 1,000 people are committed to speak up for a better Alabama. We would rather have 1,000 donors giving \$15 than one donor giving \$15,000, because broad support strengthens our advocacy. You're folks who understand that people are suffering because of decisions made in Montgomery – *and that we can do something about it.*

Thankfully, not all 1,000 of us give just \$15. Together, we gave nearly \$125,000 in the budget year that ended June 30. That's money that sustains Arise staff to equip our members for advocacy. It's the baseline budget that protects us from the whims of foundations that can decide not to fund health work (or tax and budget work or even Alabama) anymore. It means you and I and 1,000 other folks have taken ownership of this vision and this organization we've built.

This year, we seriously reconsidered parts of this model. We got a grant to explore whether we should become more like our sister organizations. After all, we're kind of an outlier. Most groups like ours in other states are policy shops. Some are organizing groups. Most are governed by a strong executive director or board of directors who make the decisions. Many aren't so sure that a membership should call the shots (and place the dots).

Our board and staff members did phone interviews with our sister organizations across the state and across the South. We brought all those

stories to our April board meeting and discussed whether we should continue to be a member-led organization that combines organizing and policy and advocacy to create change. The answer at that meeting was a solid Yes. We think our homegrown model works!

So what *does* need to change?

Arise's top priorities, when it comes to building an organization that remains true to its vision and mission, are financial sustainability and leadership development. With more money and more skilled and committed people, we can make the most of our network of advocates across the state. We're up against lobbyists with lots of money, but we're building the power of

committed, informed constituents like you in every legislative district.

We won't stop here. In June, it was fun to watch our number of individual members grow from 850 to 900 and finally top 1,000 as our deadline approached. Now, with your help, we've got to equip and organize our larger membership into an advocacy force that fulfills its promise to make Alabama a better home for all of us.

Yours in hope,

Kimble Forrister
Executive Director

Arise's organizing work

As an Arise member, you understand that decisions made in the State House affect all of us. You support Arise because you believe that low-income Alabamians deserve a voice in developing the policies that affect their lives and livelihoods. Arise organizers work closely with low-income communities to help make their voices heard about unfair state policies and the attitudes that produce them.

We strengthen our coalition by deepening member involvement. Your support allows us to host workshops, listening sessions and other meetings where the public can discuss poverty issues and consider policy solutions. Arise organizers held 136 meetings across Alabama this year.

With your help, we continue to expand our e-advocacy network. It's a quick and effective way to help people learn about our issues, inform others, and advocate for policy change. Our online outreach builds on our in-person work and gets even more people involved in the democratic process.

Arise's policy analysis

Policy analysis is an essential part of our work, and your support helps us keep it going. Our policy team analyzes current

and proposed laws to assess their effects on low-income Alabamians. Arise produced 16 legislative updates, nine newsletters and 19 fact sheets and issue briefs during our most recent budget year.



Arise's communications

We provide timely, accessible policy information at our website, arisecitizens.org. There you'll find all our fact sheets, handbooks and other resources. You can get the latest news on poverty issues through our *Daily News Digest* and stay connected with Arise through our email alerts, Facebook and Twitter. We also spread the word through traditional media. In 2015-16, we issued 24 news releases and advisories, wrote nine op-eds, and appeared in more than 200 news stories to discuss how better public policies can improve Alabamians' lives.

How change happens

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We can't do it without you! Arise thanks the following individuals for tax-deductible contributions received between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016:

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*(Note: Most member groups
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Twitter: [@AlabamaArise](https://twitter.com/AlabamaArise)

A note from Brenda



You made this a phenomenal year for Arise! Our 2016 budget year began with record-setting member contributions in July 2015, and the records just kept falling. By the time June 30 rolled around, we had an amazing 32 percent increase over the previous year.

The most exciting news is that we also saw a 37 percent increase in membership, with our individual donor list surpassing 1,000 for the first time. It was the realization of a goal we had been working toward for four years. Thanks to all of you who reached out to friends and neighbors to share Arise's mission and invite them to join!

You may have received a phone call this year from an Arise board or staff member, reminding you to renew your membership. We don't mean to bug you, but we consider our members to be the lifeblood of Arise, and we look forward to these opportunities to hear your voice — the voice of the people who make up this organization.

We had fun this year, too. Folk singer-songwriter Tom Neilson put on a three-city benefit concert tour in January that drew new members to our cause. And our social media fundraising campaign in June had our heads spinning as new members poured in to Arise.

We appreciate all our supporters — large and small — because, in the words of my young daughter years ago, "Without the money, you can't do the work." Thanks for helping us do the work!

With appreciation and hope,

Brenda Boman
Development Director



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Montgomery, AL 36104
(800) 832-9060
www.arisecitizens.org
Facebook & Twitter:
@AlabamaArise



ACPP financial report Fiscal Year ended 6/30/16

Carryover from 6/30/15	\$253,921
INCOME	
Dues of member groups*	\$300
Individual contributions	123,900
Grants and contracts	792,750
Sponsorships	5,200
Alabama foundations	61,000
Deepwater Horizon settlement	168,668
Other income	36,346
Total income	\$1,188,164
EXPENDITURES	
Personnel	\$632,998
Office expenses	95,371
Travel/meeting expenses	32,238
Contract expenses	148,312
Total expenses	\$908,919
Carryover to 7/1/16	\$433,166
Reserve Fund	\$100,000

* Most member groups give to Alabama Arise, not ACPP.

Board of Directors 2016

- Cindy Lowry, President**
Alabama Rivers Alliance
- Nancy Francisco Stewart, Vice President**
Board member at large, Jacksonville
- Sara Wood, Secretary**
Board member at large, Montgomery
- Cynthia Brown, Treasurer**
Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama
- Carmen Austin**
Mary's House, Birmingham
- Norman Baldwin**
University Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa
- William Blackerby**
Church of the Nativity, Episcopal, Huntsville
- Yazmin Contreras**
Adelante Alabama Worker Center, Hoover
- Sr. Marilyn Graf**
Sisters of Mercy of Alabama
- Andrea Hudson**
Bay Area Women Coalition, Mobile
- Susan McAlister**
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Birmingham
- Vera Moore**
Women As Strength Program (WASP), Birmingham
- Alice Paris**
Board member at large, Tuskegee
- Isabel Rubio**
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
- Jim Trumpower**
Church of the Reconciler, Birmingham
- Zarius Walker**
Disability Rights & Resources, Birmingham
- Chris Wooten**
Monte Sano United Methodist Church, Huntsville

Staff

- Kimble Forrister**, Executive director
- Presdelane Harris**, Organizing director
- ***Dollie Hambrick**, Health reform organizer
- Robyn Hyden**, Organizer
- Stan Johnson**, Contract organizer
- Shakita Jones**, Organizer
- David Stout**, Special projects organizer
- Jim Carnes**, Policy director
- ***M.J. Ellington**, Health policy analyst
- Carol Gundlach**, Policy analyst
- Stephen Stetson**, Policy analyst
- Chris Sanders**, Communications director
- Rebecca Jackson**, Communications and development associate
- Brenda Boman**, Development director
- Wendy Tucker**, Bookkeeper
- Juliette Thornton**, Office assistant
- Ron Gilbert**, *Daily News Digest* manager

* Retired in September 2015