



Annual Report 2018



A better Alabama for all!

Change and persistence.

Those two words, perhaps more than any others, capture the essence of Arise's work. Sweeping change – the realization of our vision for a state where everyone has a voice and a chance to get ahead – is our ultimate goal. Dogged persistence – the years and decades that our members selflessly devote to grassroots advocacy – is how we seek to make that goal a reality.

Change and persistence were recurring themes in the last year. As Arise sought to beat back a series of threats to Medicaid and food assistance, an increasingly large share of our work was on federal issues. At the State House, years of tenacious advocacy led to a breakthrough win on public transportation. Internally, we said goodbye to our longtime executive director, Kimble Forrister, and welcomed a slew of new staffers.

Amid change, your action and financial contributions were constants. Your advocacy helped defeat proposals that would have made life worse for everyday Alabamians. And you sustained our ongoing work to build a better Alabama for all.

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.

Fighting threats to struggling people

“No bad idea ever truly dies,” an Arise staffer said recently. Many actions on Capitol Hill and in the Legislature in the last year



have been unfortunate evidence of that. After another effort to erode the Affordable Care Act's consumer protections failed in September, congressional leaders passed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut that disproportionately benefited rich people and corporations, despite opposition from Arise members and most other Americans.

Now, many in Congress want to pay for that tax cut with deep cuts to education, food assistance, Medicaid and other services that help families make ends meet. Arise has fought cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for much of 2018, and we'll continue that work until a new Farm Bill is enacted. Then we'll continue, as we did this year, to oppose state-level plans to erect unnecessary SNAP barriers.

Protecting health coverage is another effort requiring a two-front fight. Alabama Medicaid seeks to impose a catch-22 “work requirement” that would strip coverage from thousands of parents living in deep poverty. Arise teamed with the Southern Poverty Law Center to drive more than 700 comments against the plan this spring. Even though more than 90 percent of public feedback was negative, the state made only minor changes and still plans to ask for federal approval. When the federal comment period begins, Arise members will stand tall to make the groundswell of public opposition apparent again.

A more inclusive vision for the future

It's been a year of challenges – but also a year of successes. Your determined advocacy led to Alabama's creation of a Public Transportation Trust Fund, setting the stage for future state investment. Your outcry against SNAP cuts helped shape the contours of the Farm Bill debate in the U.S. Senate. And your vehement opposition was the decisive factor in blocking a bill that would have enshrined a new tax break for private school tuition into state law this year.

Every day, your voices are contributing to a movement for change. It's a movement for public policies that help everyone, not just a well-to-do few. It's a movement for a future with opportunity for all and poverty for none. It's needed change – and with your help, Arise will be persistent in working for it.

A letter from Kimble



Dear Arise supporter,

After our budget year ends on June 30, we stop to reflect on a year gone by. For me, June 30 ended a 27-year career at Arise (24 at ACPP), so I'm reflecting on our journey together.

Most years, I start off optimistic and gradually have to adjust to the limits of our political landscape, which seems to tilt uphill. Not everybody is cut out for an uphill struggle. Thankfully, most of you have learned to pace yourselves.

One of my mentors, organizer Kim Bobo, used to quote Mother Teresa: "We're not called to be successful. We're called to be faithful." It's a notion that echoes Isaiah, who was called to pursue justice – and was assured that no one would listen. Sound familiar, Alabama?

Another mentor, Bread for the World founder Art Simon, admitted he wasn't so sure that Mother Teresa's dictum fit Bread's advocacy. He was willing to settle for the middle ground between *faithful* and *successful*. It's part of the bargain of entering a legislative landscape. We're taking on entrenched policies that are hurting people, and they need real-world changes. Simon would urge us to deliver pragmatic results for "the least of these," the people who bear the brunt of bad policies. "Success" in Alabama might mean "Arising" to the level of our neighboring states.

Consider our advocacy on cash welfare. For more than a decade, that policy didn't budge. In 1991, Arise members started calling lawmakers, and we won an increase that moved Alabama off the bottom of the list. In 2003, the monthly benefit for a typical

family on TANF finally reached \$215, the Southeastern average.

Hundreds of Arise members stayed faithful for the long years it took to bring income tax relief to the poorest Alabamians, to win vital protections for tenants, to prevent judges from overriding juries in death penalty cases. You stubbornly believe that one day Alabama will no longer tax groceries or allow payday lenders to trap people in a spiral of debt.

Honestly, what's most encouraging is the growing band of people who catch the Arise vision: more than 700 folks who spoke up against punitive Medicaid work requirements, the 199

people who packed the room for our Legislative Day this year, and the more than 1,200 members whose names fill the following pages.

The fall elections will deliver a new Legislature and new possibilities. As Robyn Hyden takes the helm at Arise, we're stronger than we've ever been. Let's resolve to remember whose side we're on, to give voice to our vision, and to pace ourselves for the uphill climb ahead.

Yours in hope,

Kimble Forrister
Former Executive Director, 1994-2018

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 84 meetings across Alabama this year.

With your help, we continue to expand our online advocacy. It's an effective way to help people learn about our issues, inform others and advocate for policy change. Our email and social media outreach builds on our in-person work and gets more folks 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 13 legislative updates, nine newsletters and 24 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 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 (5,500+ followers) and Twitter (3,000+). We spread the word through traditional media, too. In 2017-18, we issued 38 news releases and advisories, wrote five op-eds and appeared in more than 600 news stories to discuss how better policies can improve Alabamians' lives.

How change happens

Thank you, Arise contributors!

We can't do it without you! Arise thanks the following individuals for their tax-deductible contributions received between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018:

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A note from Brenda



When I shared a report at a recent staff meeting, a colleague noted with some astonishment, “You mean member giving has more than doubled in just three years?” Of course, that is an amazing increase in an exceptionally short period of time for Arise!

The big jump came in budget years 2016 and 2017. The question for 2018 was, “Will these numbers hold up, or were those increases a mere anomaly?” More importantly, we wondered if we could depend on member giving to provide the solid foundation of support needed to sustain our work.

Thanks to you, the answer was a resounding “Yes!” Member giving in 2018 not only reached last year’s record level, but exceeded it by 7 percent. Your generous gifts helped us receive additional funds to support research and organizing on poverty issues. In November, you helped us reach \$50,000 in member giving to match a \$50,000 pledge. And in June, you helped us raise more than \$20,000 that we leveraged to match a \$50,000 Ford Foundation grant. Those months alone brought in a fourth of the amount budgeted for the year.

Your steady support helped us achieve a new level of member giving, the most flexible revenue in our budget. We’re also grateful for the support of local and national foundations who recognize that state-level policy decisions have a huge impact on the lives of low-income Alabamians, and who view our work to improve these policies as a worthwhile investment.

With appreciation and hope,

Brenda Boman
Development Director



P.O. Box 1188
Montgomery, AL 36101
400 South Union St. #340
Montgomery, AL 36104
(800) 832-9060
Website: arisecitizens.org
Facebook: Alabama Arise
Twitter: @AlabamaArise



ACPP financial report Fiscal Year ended 6/30/2018

Carryover from FY 2017 \$320,667

REVENUE

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Dues of member groups* | \$529 |
| Individual contributions | 193,946 |
| Grants and contracts | 602,500 |
| Sponsorships | 3,115 |
| Alabama foundations | 41,000 |
| Other income | 13,413 |
| Total revenue | \$854,503 |

EXPENSES

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Personnel | \$478,230 |
| Office expenses | 114,686 |
| Travel/meeting expenses | 36,580 |
| Contract expenses | 121,758 |
| Total expenses | \$751,254 |

Carryover to FY 2019 \$423,916

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

ACPP Board of Directors, FY 2017-18

Cindy Lowry, President
Alabama Rivers Alliance

William Blackerby, Vice President
Board member at large, Birmingham

Sara Wood, Secretary
Board member at large, Montgomery

Carmen Austin, Treasurer
Mary's House, Birmingham

Norman Baldwin
Grace Presbyterian Church, Tuscaloosa

Carolyn Foster
Board member at large, Birmingham

Sr. Marilyn Graf
Sisters of Mercy of Alabama

Dollie Hambrick
Board member at large, Montgomery

Roger McCullough
Board member at large, Columbiana

Gary Moore
Board member at large, Fairhope

Vera Moore
Women As Strength Program (WASP),
Birmingham

Alice Paris
Board member at large, Tuskegee

Dianne Steele
Bay Area Women Coalition, Mobile

Nancy Francisco Stewart
Board member at large, Anniston

Jim Trumpower
Church of the Reconciler, Birmingham

Ana Valeriano
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama

Kathy Vincent
Board member at large, Montgomery

Chris Wooten
Monte Sano United Methodist Church,
Huntsville

ACPP staff, FY 2017-18

Kimble Forrister, Executive director

Presdelane Harris, Organizing director

Stan Johnson, Contract organizer

Mike Nicholson, Organizer

Debbie Smith, Organizer

David Stout, Special projects organizer

Jim Carnes, Policy director

Carol Gundlach, Policy analyst

Dev Wakeley, Policy analyst

Chris Sanders, Communications director

Matt Okarmus, Communications associate

Brenda Boman, Development director

Wendy Tucker, Bookkeeper

Juliette Thornton, Office assistant

Ron Gilbert, *Daily News Digest* manager