



2024 Annual Report

Building a Better Alabama for All



About Us

MISSION

Alabama Arise is a 501(c)(3) statewide, member-led organization advancing public policies to improve the lives of Alabamians who are marginalized by poverty. Our membership includes faith-based, community, nonprofit and civic groups, grassroots leaders and individuals from across Alabama.

Alabama Arise Action is the 501(c)(4) partner organization of Alabama Arise. Alabama Arise Action connects members directly with lobbying resources at the state Legislature.

VISION

Arise envisions an Alabama...

...where all people have resources and opportunities to reach their potential to live happy, productive lives, and each successive generation is ensured a secure and healthy future.

...where all government leaders are responsive, inclusive and justice-serving, and the people are engaged in the policy-making process.

...where all people live with concern for the common good and respect for the humanity of every person.

To learn more about who we are, visit
alarise.org/about/who-we-are



Table of Contents

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....	2
OUR AGENDA AT THE STATE HOUSE.....	4
WHAT WE DO	5
POLICY ANALYSIS	6
STATEWIDE ORGANIZING	8
CITIZEN ADVOCACY.....	10
FINANCIAL REPORT (ARISE ACTION)	12
FINANCIAL REPORT (ARISE)	13
OUR MEMBERSHIP	14
ARISE LEADERSHIP	15

Letter from the Executive Director



SUMMARY

Alabama Arise faced tough legislative roadblocks on many of our priorities in 2024. But together, we made meaningful progress toward our vision of an Alabama where everyone has the resources and opportunities they need to survive and thrive:

- ★ We secured funding for Summer EBT!
- ★ We created major waves fighting for worker power and public transportation.
- ★ We expanded our work on maternal health to protect and support new parents and people giving birth.

Dear Arise members and partners,
2024 was a tough year, one in which we faced some of our hardest legislative roadblocks yet.

Despite hardline resistance from policymakers, together we were able to lift up the needs of working families and secure new resources to keep our communities safe.

In more personal news, I took time away for maternity leave after my child was born earlier this year. I am grateful to work for an employer that provides 12 weeks of paid family leave and access to generous health insurance coverage. These are two basic rights that should be extended to all Alabamians. I'm so proud of the issues you championed to keep all families protected and supported, as you all have supported and uplifted me during this time. Arise's staff and our acting executive director Jacob Smith did an exceptional job keeping our vital work moving forward during the session while I was away!

STATE HOUSE VICTORIES

Thanks to Alabama Arise members, more than 500,000 Alabama children will receive Summer EBT nutrition benefits in 2025! It was a tough advocacy fight that went down to the wire, and we know it would not have happened without your vocal support.

Arise members also spoke out loud and clear for Alabama workers, successfully supporting a bill to **increase penalties for child labor violations**. Legislation to support paid parental leave for state employees also almost achieved final passage. We expect our work to support worker power at the State House to grow in the coming years.

STANDING WITH ORGANIZED LABOR

In November, **Arise released our *State of Working Alabama* report looking back at 30 years of our tax dollars investing in the auto industry.** On the same day, the United Auto Workers launched a historic organizing push across the South. We saw unprecedented levels of labor action across our state. Arise also elected to stand with organized labor by announcing the **voluntary recognition of our own staff union**, Alabama Arise Workers United, highlighting our commitment to democratic leadership within our organization.

BUILDING POWER FOR BIG FIGHTS TO COME

We also suffered some tough policy losses this year. Legislators focused more on banning diversity, equity and inclusion education and limiting free speech in libraries than supporting the basic dignity and rights of all Alabamians. **We hired a new maternal health fellow** to work on protecting maternity care coverage for new moms, as we also saw large procedural disenrollments from health coverage as unwinding of Medicaid's continuing coverage requirement ended in May. And despite our vocal opposition, lawmakers passed the CHOOSE Act, a historically large tax giveaway diverting public money to private schools.

In the face of these facts, we are doubling down on our commitment to community organizing and power building. These activities are the heart of our mission to engage and empower everyday Alabamians to stand together and speak out for our shared values.

THE POWER OF MEMBERSHIP

Our forward momentum on so many fronts is only possible with your sustaining investments. Did you know that almost 15% of all our work is funded by membership contributions alone?

Your support gives us the freedom to continue pursuing a broad, intersectional and responsive member-driven agenda. Thank you for your support, this year and every year, to help us realize our vision for a better Alabama for all!

With gratitude,
Robyn Hyden

Our agenda at the State House

As a member-led organization, we work year-round on legislative priorities decided annually by our membership base. Last year, Arise members across Alabama came together at our Annual Meeting and voted on our 2024 policy agenda. We know that, together, we will build a more inclusive future for our state.

Learn about the progress we made on your legislative priorities below, and make sure to keep an eye out for these icons throughout the report for more information.

Progress on our legislative priorities



Adequate state budgets

Arise membership played a crucial role in securing a \$10 million appropriation in the General Fund budget for Summer EBT! In 2025, more than 500,000 Alabama kids now will have greater access to food over the summer because of the advocacy of members like you.



Tax reform

Our 1-cent grocery tax cut went into effect on Sept. 1, 2023 - a major victory for Alabama families struggling to make ends meet! Arise was seated on the state Grocery Tax Commission to advocate for solutions to remove the rest of the state's sales tax on food. We successfully supported the passage of the Alabama Workforce Housing Tax Credit, which incentivizes affordable workforce housing developments and benefits working families.



Voting rights

Voting rights had a tough year at the Legislature, but Arise members played a key role in advocating for more free and fair elections. Despite incredible efforts from members like you, lawmakers voted to criminalize certain forms of assistance with absentee voting. But we're ready to come back strong next year! And thankfully, we have a good place to start: A bill requiring notifications about voting rights restoration won committee approval this year and is well-positioned to move ahead next year.



Criminal justice reform

We helped pass a bill to improve access to an attorney for defendants who cannot afford one. We also were glad to see movement on a bill to allow limited resentencing for people convicted under the Habitual Felony Offender Act. Though this bill died on the House floor, we're hopeful for next year!



Comprehensive maternal and infant health care

Last year, Arise members proposed that we take on this issue for the first time. We have since hired a maternal health fellow, who has connected with more than 2,000 women and providers with outreach materials related to keeping their Medicaid benefits during the end of the public health emergency and the Medicaid unwinding period. We built new partnerships to expand our work in this area and joined the Maternal Health Task Force and coalition work related to reproductive justice.



Public transportation

We built momentum to fund public transportation this year! It's been years since the Legislature has considered funding the Public Transportation Trust Fund, but this year, a bill received bipartisan support in a Senate committee. The bill came one vote short in committee, but we plan to capitalize on this progress next year.



Death penalty reform

We supported a bill that would have retroactively applied Alabama's ban on judicial override of jury sentences in capital cases, as well as a bill that would have required unanimous jury verdicts to sentence someone to death. Though they didn't pass, we continue to push for reforms to our state's racist and oppressive death penalty system.

To learn more about our legislative priorities, visit alarise.org/issues

What We Do



POLICY ANALYSIS

The Arise policy team studies state policies and proposals and analyzes their impact by race, gender, age, place and income.



STATEWIDE ORGANIZING

Arise organizes people across the state to speak out on the development of public policies that affect their lives.



CITIZEN ADVOCACY

Arise works to equip our members for active participation in the democratic process, including legislative advocacy.

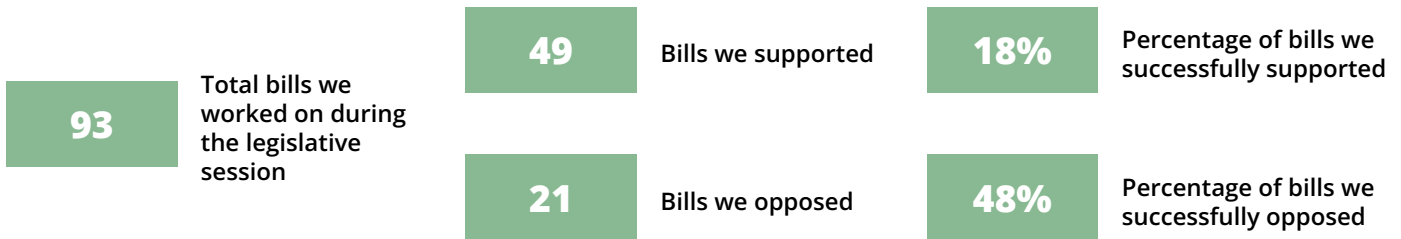


Together we accomplished

- Ensuring that more than half a million Alabama children receive meals** while school is out next summer. Advocacy by Arise members secured the necessary \$10 million appropriation for Summer EBT in the General Fund budget.
- ★ **Strengthening child labor protections.** We successfully supported SB 119, which increases penalties for companies that break child labor laws.
- Bettering defendants' access to an attorney,** even if they cannot afford one, by supporting the passage of SB 83.
- Improving public records access through SB 270,** which improves our state protocol by requiring a response to record inquiries and setting a timeline for that response.
- ★ **Bringing Alabama's workers to national attention.** We released our *State of Working Alabama* report in November, detailing 30 years of inequities in Alabama's auto industry. And our work to empower workers reached a national audience. In June, Arise staff and members met with acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su during a worker listening session and roundtable meeting in Birmingham.
- ★ **Launching a campaign for paid parental leave for state employees.** We supported HB 309, which would have provided state employees with eight weeks of paid parental leave, and SB 305, which would have provided teachers with paid parental leave. We hope to continue this work next year.

By the numbers

In May, we ended a tough legislative session for Arise and our supporters. However, through timely and persistent advocacy, Arise members still helped build a better, more equitable Alabama. To learn more about the bills we worked on during the 2024 legislative session, visit our Bills of Interest page at alarise.org/get-involved/bills-of-interest.



Providing accurate, easily digestible information about issues impacting people with low incomes is one way we work to build a better Alabama for all. When you share Arise's information, tools and events with your community, you help us reach more people!



 POLICY ANALYSIS IN ACTION

Prioritizing workers on the path to economic justice

You made worker power a major focus for lawmakers this past year! Organized labor can raise wages and improve the lives of workers and their families. Thanks to your advocacy, a new state law is in place to protect children by increasing the penalties for companies that violate child labor laws. When a bill to prohibit tax incentives to companies that voluntarily recognize unions made its way through the Legislature, Arise advocates and our coalition partners packed the Senate hearing in opposition. We also were on the ground meeting with and listening to autoworkers, which resulted in our comprehensive *State of Working Alabama* report on Alabama’s auto industry: *A Wheel in the Ditch: A Closer Look at Alabama’s Big Bet on the Auto Manufacturing Industry*. The report highlights pay disparities, inequities across racial and gender demographics, and the overall decline in job quality in Alabama’s auto industry. This report has had a significant impact: It’s been mentioned more than 100 times in local and national media, and it’s been cited by the U.S. Department of Labor!



“Policymakers, employers, workers, unions and community partners all have vital roles to play in strengthening our state’s auto industry and economy. By working together, we can build an inclusive economy that ensures every Alabamian has the resources they need to thrive.”

Dev Wakeley
Worker policy advocate



Together we accomplished

- ★ **Growing our membership diversity and benefits to strengthen Arise’s connection to the community** and those most impacted by state policy. We continued our gift membership program, and gift members made up more than 22% of Arise’s 2024 individual membership.
- ★ **Ensuring our work stays focused on the issues Alabamians care about** with record-high engagement in choosing our legislative priorities. More than 500 members voted to select our 2024 legislative priorities, and hundreds of members attended our Annual Meeting either online or in person.
- ★ **Making our voices heard at Legislative Day.** More than 230 members came together, making this our largest Legislative Day since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- 📄 **Running Cover Alabama’s first statewide paid media campaign for Medicaid expansion.** Our coalition’s efforts were seen or heard more than 13 million times across the state, delivering a strong message in key legislative districts in support of getting Alabamians the health care they deserve.

By the numbers

Arise’s power is in our people. We believe people experiencing poverty should be the leading voice in the development of public policies that affect their lives. Because of this core value, we are a member-led organization, and our staff organizes people across the state who are living in poverty. We also have been working to increase membership among people living in poverty, young people and BIPOC Alabamians through our gift membership program. Even though the fight is hard, our members’ persistence for more than 30 years allows us to achieve our many wins.



STATEWIDE ORGANIZING IN ACTION

Member advocacy drives Alabama transportation progress

Thanks to the advocacy of members like you, we saw significant movement to fund public transportation for the first time in years! Arise members know public transit creates jobs, improves lives and keeps people connected to their communities.

In 2018, your advocacy created the Public

Transportation Trust Fund. This year, we worked closely with our partners at Action Coalition for Transit (ACT) to advocate for SB 91, which would have brought in millions of dollars to build and support public transportation across Alabama. Alongside ACT, hundreds of Arise members called and emailed their legislators in support of an Alabama where people have a way to get to their doctors, jobs and grocery stores. With your efforts, this became the first public transit funding bill heard in committee in years! We are excited to build on this momentum next year and continue our efforts to fund public transportation in Alabama.





“Investing in public transit benefits anyone who needs to get from one place to another, but especially people with low incomes. We will continue to champion this issue until we achieve more robust public transit options.”

John Northrop
Action Coalition for Transit coordinator



Together we accomplished

-  **Expanding our portfolio to support maternal health and hiring our maternal health fellow.** This has empowered us to educate maternity Medicaid members on program updates and deepen our work to improve maternal health outcomes. We also have worked to link the Alabama Maternal Health Task Force’s work to concrete policy changes.
-  **Pushing the conversation about Medicaid expansion.** This year, Alabama’s speaker of the House came out in support of closing the coverage gap. Legislators heard solutions to close the coverage gap during a joint meeting of the House and Senate health committees with lawmakers from Arkansas and North Carolina. Because of your persistence, legislative opposition to Medicaid expansion is softening. We will continue to push until we close the coverage gap!
- ★ **Showing up and speaking out for workers in Alabama.** Working alongside Jobs to Move America and our labor allies across the state, we turned out more than 60 advocates to push back against SB 231, which prohibits tax incentives to companies that voluntarily recognize unions. Though the bill unfortunately passed, we continue to speak up for workers’ rights.
- ★ **Working to reduce Medicaid coverage losses for eligible enrollees** through our community outreach efforts during the Medicaid unwinding process. We provided vital information to partners and enrollees and ensured consumer voices were heard while building the unwinding plan.

By the numbers

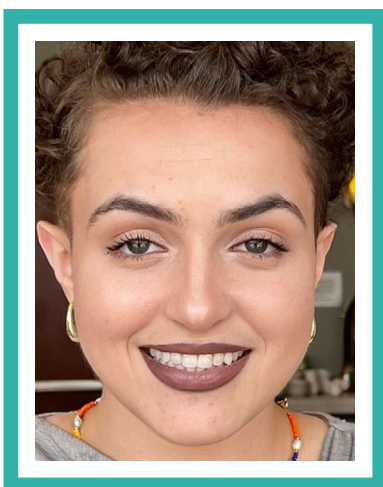
Arise values connection. We connect people with their lawmakers, organizations with organizations, and neighbors with neighbors. We must actively engage and include all of us to build a better Alabama.

11,003	Calls, emails and postcards sent to lawmakers	44	Action alerts sent to members	3,598	Grassroots participation in Arise legislative events and alerts
30	Coalitions and working groups of which Arise is a member	52	Hunger Free Alabama coalition members	130	Cover Alabama coalition members

 CITIZEN ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Summer EBT is a win for Alabama's children

Your advocacy this past spring ensured that more than 500,000 children will have access to food next summer! Fighting hunger has been a longtime priority for Arise members because too many families in Alabama struggle to put food on the table. After winning a grocery tax reduction last year, Arise saw an opportunity this year to relieve hunger for more children by funding Summer EBT. And our members were up to the task, sending more than 2,400 messages to legislators. We generated dozens of media stories to increase public pressure on the issue, and we advocated until we couldn't be ignored. Our legislators let us know in the State House hallways that they heard our message loud and clear! Late in the session, we were able to secure the necessary \$10 million of administrative funding for Summer EBT starting in 2025. More than 500,000 eligible children in households with low incomes now will continue to receive access to nutritious food when school is not in session. Your advocacy made this important investment in child nutrition possible!



“Thanks to Arise members, more than half a million Alabama children will gain access next summer to the nutritious food they need. This is what collective advocacy can do.”

LaTrell Clifford Wood
Hunger policy advocate

Alabama Arise Action

TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT

Total revenue & support	\$83,109
Member groups	\$42,751
Individual donations	\$11,033
Other support	\$18,500
Operating reserves	\$10,825

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Total expenditures	\$82,298
Advocacy & outreach	\$40,791
Legislative advocacy	\$41,507

FUNDING PARTNERS

We're so grateful for all of our member groups, which are the primary funders of Alabama Arise Action. You can find a list of our member group partners on our website at alarise.org/about/member-groups.

Alabama Arise

TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT

Total revenue & support	\$2,465,125
Grants & contracts for FY 24	\$2,144,144
Member giving.....	\$307,153
Other support	\$13,828

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Total expenditures	\$2,465,125
Organizing	\$584,612
Policy	\$486,269
Advocacy	\$1,394,244

FUNDING PARTNERS

Foundations

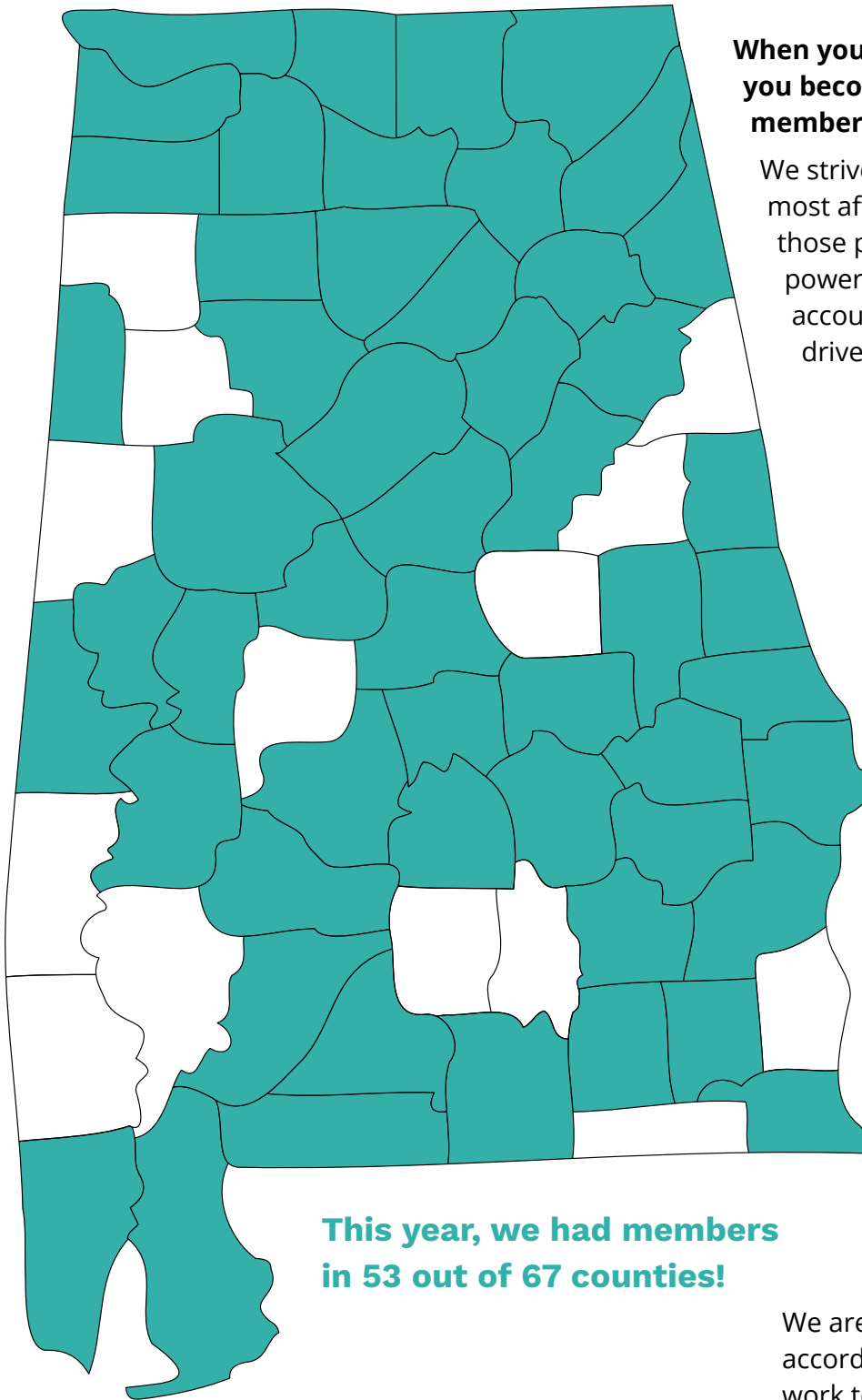
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
Families USA Foundation
Ford Foundation
The Gratitude Foundation
The Kresge Foundation
The Leonard Davis Health Initiative
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation
The Rockefeller Foundation
Rx Foundation

Organizations

Alabama Forward
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association*
American Lung Association
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Community Catalyst | Coverage and Care
Community Catalyst | Together for Medicaid
EBSCO Industries
Economic Policy Institute | EARN in the South
Economic Policy Institute | Southern Mindshift
The Just Trust
The Lift Fund
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
TOPOS | Think Big Alabama
University of Alabama at Birmingham | Maternal Health Task Force

**funder for Alabama Arise Action*

Our Membership



This year, we had members in 53 out of 67 counties!

When you donate to one of our organizations, you become a member of both. Thank you to our members for being the driving force of our work!

We strive to create a state where those who are most affected by public policy influence and shape those policies. Our membership is our people power, and their financial contributions hold us accountable to doing the work our membership drives.

155

Member Groups

1,559

Individual Members

Because members are so critical to our mission and vision at Arise, we are working to diversify our membership. Our short-term goals are to reflect the demographics of Alabama:

- 17% people with low incomes
- 10% young people
- 32% people of color

We have made progress from when this project began, according to survey data from our members. More than 32% of our membership has taken our survey. The data shows that our membership in 2024 was:

- 27% people with low incomes
- 6% young people
- 32% people of color

We are glad to have reached two of our goals according to the survey data and will continue to work toward these membership goals in 2025. If you haven't taken our membership survey yet, you can do so at alarise.org/membership-survey.

Arise Leadership

Half of the Arise boards of directors must represent low-income member groups or constituencies. This ensures we are governed by the people closest to our issues.

ALABAMA ARISE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October 2023 – September 2024

Rev. Clyde W. Jones, Jr., President

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
Daphne, Alabama

Benga Harrison

Community Volunteer
Birmingham, Alabama

Shakita Brooks Jones, Vice President

Central Alabama Alliance, Resource and Advocacy
Center (CAARAC)
Wetumpka, Alabama

Kenneth Tyrone King

Church of the Reconciler
Birmingham, Alabama

Benard Simelton, Treasurer

Alabama State Conference of the NAACP
Harvest, Alabama

Audrey Noel

Community Enabler Developer
Anniston, Alabama

Hon. James Scott Sledge, Secretary

Community Volunteer
Gadsden, Alabama

Tiearra Pettway

Bay Area Women Coalition
Mobile, Alabama

Carmen Maria Austin

Mary's House Catholic Worker Center
Hoover, Alabama

Judith Taylor

Grace Presbyterian Church
Northport, Alabama

Ashley Edwards

First Christian Church
Montgomery, Alabama

Tari Williams

Greater Birmingham Ministries
Birmingham, Alabama

Susan Ellis

People First of Alabama
Vestavia Hills, Alabama

Dr. Carole Zugazaga

Auburn University Department of Anthropology,
Sociology and Social Work
Auburn, Alabama

ALABAMA ARISE ACTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

March 2023 – February 2024

Kathy Vincent, President

Community Volunteer
Montgomery, Alabama

Kenneth Tyrone King

Church of the Reconciler
Birmingham, Alabama

Shakita Brooks Jones, Vice President

Central Alabama Alliance, Resource and Advocacy
Center (CAARAC)
Wetumpka, Alabama

Audrey Noel

Community Enabler Developer
Anniston, Alabama

Benard Simelton, Treasurer

Alabama State Conference of the NAACP
Harvest, Alabama

Tiearra Pettway

Bay Area Women Coalition
Mobile, Alabama

Ashley Edwards

First Christian Church
Montgomery, Alabama

Hon. James Scott Sledge

Community Volunteer
Gadsden, Alabama

Ana Delia Espino

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Baileyton, Alabama

Judith Taylor

Grace Presbyterian Church
Northport, Alabama

Susan Ellis

People First of Alabama
Vestavia Hills, Alabama

Tari Williams

Greater Birmingham Ministries
Birmingham, Alabama

Rev. Clyde W. Jones, Jr.

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
Daphne, Alabama

Dr. Carole Zugazaga

Auburn University Department of Anthropology,
Sociology and Social Work
Auburn, Alabama

Benga Harrison

Community Volunteer
Birmingham, Alabama

ARISE STAFF

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Robyn Hyden

Executive Director

Akiesha Anderson

Policy and Advocacy Director

Presdelane Harris

Organizing Director

Chris Sanders

Communications Director

Jacob Smith

Advancement and Operations
Director

Natalie Bishnoi

Development Associate

McKenzie Burton

Development Associate

Malee Galloway

Finance and Operations Associate

Carol Gundlach

Senior Policy Analyst

Jennifer Harris

Senior Health Policy Advocate

Stan Johnson

Organizer for Northwest Alabama

Adam Keller

Organizer for Northeast Alabama

Mike Nicholson

Senior Policy Analyst

Matt Okarmus

Communications Associate

Victoria Enyinda Petty

Maternal Health Fellow

Whit Sides

Cover Alabama Storyteller

Debbie Smith

Cover Alabama Campaign
Director

David Stout

Legislative Affairs Coordinator

Juliette Thornton

Office Manager

Formeeca Tripp

Organizer for Southeast Alabama

Dev Wakeley

Worker Policy Advocate

Whitney Washington

Communications Associate

LaTrell Clifford Wood

Hunger Policy Advocate





Thank You!

In 2024, you helped Alabama Arise and Alabama Arise Action make major progress on our legislative agenda through policy analysis, statewide organizing and citizen advocacy. Together, we advanced toward a better state and increased dignity, equity and justice for all. All of us at Arise are grateful for your continued partnership and support.



P.O. Box 1188
Montgomery, AL 36101

(334) 832-9060
alarise.org
alariseaction.org
info@alarise.org

@AlabamaArise

