

# 2022 Annual Report

Building a Better Alabama for All



## About Us

### MISSION

Alabama Arise is a 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.

### 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](https://alarise.org/about/who-we-are)

## Letter from the Executive Director



After more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 has been the year of a “return to normalcy.” But we simply can’t accept a new normal that looks, in many ways, just as bad as the old one.

**2022 has been a year of leaning into the challenges we face to shift the balance of power in our state and nation.** Alabama Arise expanded our Cover Alabama coalition to include even more grassroots members across the state. We deepened our commitment on racial equity and inclusion to speak out against racist bills at the State House. We set ambitious goals for growing our membership with directly impacted communities. And we deepened our relationships across the state. In all these ways and more, Arise continues to grow into the full vision and mission outlined for us by our founders and by you, our membership.

**We just  
won’t  
accept  
the ‘new  
normal.’**

**Responding to the double whammy of COVID-19 and ongoing attacks on our democracy has made us more nimble.** We have grown from a staff of 14 in 2019 to a staff of 22 today. 2022 saw us expand our policy advocacy team to include three policy advocates. Our worker policy advocate now will lead a research agenda supporting worker power with our partners in the labor movement. Our health policy advocate will continue to build and grow our work to engage Medicaid consumers in improving health outcomes via community-led Medicaid reforms. And our hunger policy advocate continues to lead our Hunger Free Alabama coalition in child nutrition outreach and implementation with school districts.

**Our work together gives me hope.** When our board met last year to discuss our theory of change and our vision for the world we hope to build together, we reaffirmed our commitment to focusing our work around you: our grassroots membership, and people directly experiencing poverty. You are the people on the front lines of working to make Alabama better and envisioning what could be.

To build the world as we wish to see it – one that rejects the dreadful norms of today – we must continue to stand unified in purpose, in promise and in hope for the world to come.

Thank you for your leadership and your hard work in this moment of crisis – and in this moment of opportunity.

With gratitude,  
Robyn Hyden

# Our Agenda at the State House

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

## 2022 Policy Priorities



### Tax Reform

A better tax system can help struggling people make ends meet. Alabama should untax groceries and ensure fair, sustainable funding for vital services.



### Adequate State Budgets

Strong public services broaden opportunity for all. Alabama must expand Medicaid, protect funding for public schools and help people facing hunger and hardship.



### Voting Rights

Everyone deserves a say in our democracy. Alabama should pass automatic voter registration and lift barriers to voting rights restoration.



### Criminal Justice Reform

Our justice system must ensure fairness and equity for all. Alabama should repeal the Habitual Felony Offender Act and reduce punitive fines and fees.



### Death Penalty Reform

All Alabamians deserve equal justice under the law. Lawmakers should require juries to be unanimous in any decision to impose a death sentence.



### Payday/Title Lending Reform

Borrowers in a sea of deep debt need a lifeboat, not an anchor. Alabama should reduce interest rates and strengthen consumer protections on payday and title loans.



### Public Transportation

Community connection is vital. Alabama should fund the Public Transportation Fund so everyone can get to work, school, medical care and more.

# What We Do



## POLICY ANALYSIS

The Arise policy team studies current state policies and legislative proposals and analyzes their impact on people living in or near poverty.



## STATEWIDE ORGANIZING

Arise organizes members and people with low incomes to speak out on the development of public policies that affect their lives.



## CITIZEN ADVOCACY

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



## POLICY ANALYSIS IN ACTION

### Working for a More Connected Alabama



This year, Alabama received billions of dollars of federal COVID-19 relief money through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and you helped advocate for these funds to be used for lasting change in our state. Funding public transportation would create jobs, improve lives and keep people connected. And we worked throughout the year to build momentum for this investment. We released an online ARPA toolkit.

We met with the finance director and legislators about using ARPA funding for public transportation. And 81 Alabama organizations joined us in this call in a sign-on letter to our state leaders. Our recommendations are directly informed by those most impacted. In June, we released *Alabama's Road to a Better Public Transportation Future*, a report where we identified Alabama's transportation needs and solutions by surveying those who administer public transportation every day.

**“Decrease in funding has affected the ability for us to transport individuals who have been using services for years. With many, this has large consequences – like dialysis patients, because they have to get to appointments.”**

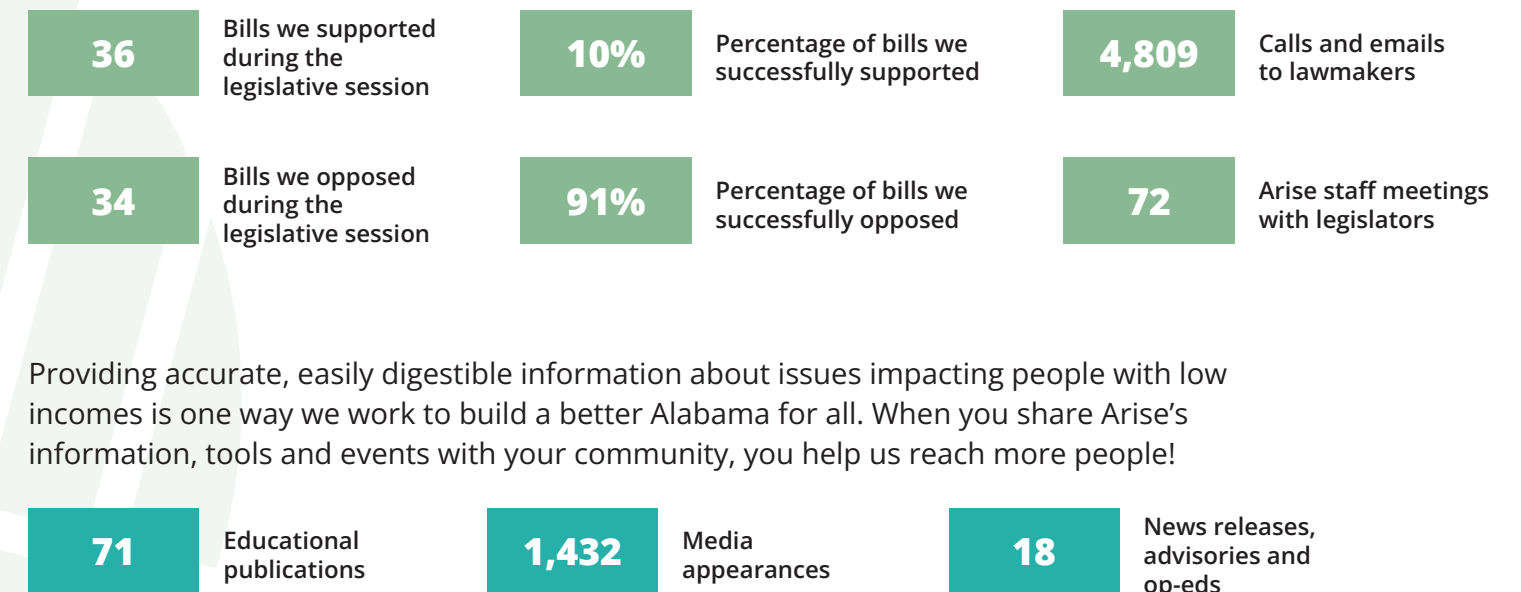
Central Alabama Public Transit Director

## Together We Accomplished

- **Passing criminal justice reforms**, including HB 95, which extended the grace period to begin paying court fines and fees after release from incarceration. We also helped pass HB 230 to ban routine shackling of incarcerated people during pregnancy.
- **Protecting the safety net and passing tax reforms**. We helped stop SB 156, which would have limited SNAP eligibility for many parents struggling to make ends meet. We also helped pass HB 163, which cut income taxes for Alabamians with low and moderate incomes.
- **Blocking racist bills**, such as HB 312 and SB 292, which both sought to ban the teaching of “divisive concepts” related to race in public classrooms. We also helped stop HB 2, which would have chilled free speech by threatening many peaceful protesters with incarceration.
- **Defending voting rights**, such as putting a stop to HB 63, which would have further limited absentee voting.

## By the Numbers

In the 2022 legislative session, lawmakers began looking toward their fall elections, and national issues became local. Arise pushed our representatives to focus on the issues impacting everyday Alabamians to create a more equitable state.



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!



## STATEWIDE ORGANIZING IN ACTION

### Progress in the Midst of Chaos

You helped to decrease child hunger in Alabama. Pandemic supports to sustain school feeding programs began to end this year, making the registration process more complicated and cumbersome for the parents and children who rely on these free meals to survive. Working with state agencies and communities across the state, Alabama Arise helped ensure that child nutrition benefits were widely available. We worked to equip parents with the guidance and resources they needed to reenroll in school meal programs. We also continued our efforts to increase Pandemic EBT benefits, which support families with children who can no longer rely on free school meals by helping parents buy food at home. And we continued to recruit schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP empowers schools to provide free lunches for every student if a large share of students live in households with low incomes.



**“The pandemic protections for school feeding programs are waning, but the harsh impacts of COVID-19 still rage on. People are having a really hard time figuring out ways to feed their families. We’ve worked to register them for programs that can offer support to families who struggle with getting food on their tables.”**

Celida Soto  
Hunger Policy Advocate

### Together We Accomplished

- **Launching a community-driven produce prescription program as an outcome of community listening sessions with Medicaid members in Mobile.** Fifty patients received boxes of fresh produce and ongoing opportunities for nutrition support to combat health disparities. We will continue to advocate for Medicaid to fund innovative programs like these to improve health outcomes and food security for its members.
- **Establishing the Medicaid Unwinding Public Health Emergency (PHE) task force** to work with the Alabama Medicaid Agency on outreach best practices to lessen coverage losses when Medicaid’s continuous coverage requirements end.
- **Supporting the New Flyer Community Benefits Agreement**, which will improve the environment for workers at the Anniston bus manufacturing facility. The agreement will add programs such as standards for hiring and promotion and on-site clinics of community and legal services to assist workers.

### 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 newly launched gift membership program.





## CITIZEN ADVOCACY IN ACTION

# Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

Thanks to support from members like you, Alabama is on its way to reducing maternal mortality and improving health for families across the state. This year, lawmakers and Gov. Kay Ivey approved a budget that extends postpartum Medicaid coverage from only 60 days to one full year after childbirth. Alabama Arise worked in a variety of ways to help make it happen. In our Cover Alabama coalition, Arise provided extensive policy and data analysis, people power, and a place to connect. And in March, we joined with the American Heart Association, March of Dimes and American Academy of Pediatrics to hold a press conference on the State House steps calling for this extension. We are humbled that this decision came after years of hard work from partners and advocates across the state. And we plan to keep building on the momentum of this life-saving success.



**“Before postpartum Medicaid coverage was extended to a full year, people were left without solutions. If you had a woman who was four months postpartum and struggling with severe postpartum depression, there was nowhere she could turn. Now, she has access to help.”**

Jane Adams  
Cover Alabama Campaign Director

## Together We Accomplished

- **Expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year after childbirth for new moms.** This policy change in the General Fund budget will save lives and improve post-birth maternal and infant health outcomes.
- **Achieving bipartisan support for untaxing groceries,** with both Democratic and Republican lawmakers championing legislation last session. Dozens of Arise members gathered for our Untax Groceries Rally at the State House in April.
- **Improving the quality of health care by expanding Medicaid’s dental coverage** for pregnant Alabamians with low incomes.
- **Adding a health policy advocate and a worker policy advocate to the Arise team.** These additions will help us expand our work in consumer-centered Medicaid reform and build worker power with our partners in the labor movement.

## By the Numbers

Alabama 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.



**TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT**

<b>Total revenue &amp; support .....</b>	<b>\$2,010,097</b>
Grants & contracts for FY 22.....	\$1,736,976
Member giving .....	\$255,425
Other support .....	\$17,696

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES**

<b>Total expenditures .....</b>	<b>\$1,791,074</b>
Personnel.....	\$1,470,798
Communications .....	\$158,762
Subgrants.....	\$65,000
Office & administrative .....	\$79,384
Meetings & memberships .....	\$17,130

**FOUNDATIONS**

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Callaway Foundation
- The Caring Foundation
- Community Foundation of South Alabama
- The Gratitude Foundation
- Marguerite Casey Foundation
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
- Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation
- Ratliff Charitable Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Rx Foundation
- Women’s Foundation of Alabama

**ORGANIZATIONS**

- Alabama Forward
- CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Community Catalyst | Together for Medicaid
- Economic Policy Institute |
- EARN Southern Worker Power Project
- Economic Policy Institute |
- Southern Mindshift Project
- Institute for Policy Studies
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- No Kid Hungry
- Topos | Think Big
- Voices for Healthy Kids

# Arise's Leadership

## ALABAMA ARISE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

### **Kathy Vincent, President**

Retired, Alabama Department of Public Health  
Montgomery, Alabama

### **Shakita Brooks Jones, Vice President**

Executive Director, Central Alabama AIDS  
Resource & Advocacy Center  
Wetumpka, Alabama

### **Gary Moore, Treasurer**

Retired U.S. Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice  
Fairhope, Alabama

### **Rev. Carolyn Foster, Secretary**

Faith in Community Coordinator,  
Greater Birmingham Ministries  
Birmingham, Alabama

### **Ana Delia Espino**

Executive Director,  
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice  
Baileyton, Alabama

### **Susan Ellis**

Executive Director, People First of Alabama  
Vestavia Hills, Alabama

### **Rev. Clyde Jones**

Associate Minister,  
Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church  
Daphne, Alabama

### **Benga Harrison**

Executive Director, United Way Hands On  
Birmingham, Alabama

### **Kenneth Tyrone King**

Community Volunteer, Church of the Reconciler  
Birmingham, Alabama

### **Roger McCullough**

Retired CEO, Cooper Green Mercy Hospital  
Birmingham, Alabama

### **Audrey Noel**

Office Manager, Community Enabler Developer  
Anniston, Alabama

### **Benard Simelton**

President, Alabama State Conference of the NAACP  
Athens, Alabama

### **Hon. James Scott Sledge**

Retired Federal Judge, Community Volunteer  
Gadsden, Alabama

### **Judith Taylor**

Community Volunteer,  
Grace Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### **Dr. Carole Zugazaga**

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

## ALABAMA ARISE STAFF

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Robyn Hyden  
Executive Director

Jim Carnes  
Policy Director  
*(retired January 2021)*

Rebecca Howard  
Policy and Advocacy Director

Presdelane Harris  
Organizing Director

Amber Haywood  
Development Director  
*(through 2021)*

Jacob Smith  
Development Director *(2022)*

Chris Sanders  
Communications Director

Jane Adams  
Cover Alabama Campaign Director

McKenzie Burton  
Development Associate

Carol Gundlach  
Senior Policy Analyst

Jennifer Harris  
Health Policy Advocate

Stan Johnson  
Organizer for North Alabama

Jilisa Milton  
State Policy Fellow

Mike Nicholson  
Policy Analyst

Matt Okarmus  
Communications Associate

Whit Sides  
Story Collection Coordinator

Juliette Singleton  
Office Manager

Debbie Smith  
Organizer for North Alabama

Celida Soto  
Hunger Policy Advocate

David Stout  
Legislative Affairs Coordinator

Formeeca Tripp  
Organizer for Southeast Alabama

Dev Wakeley  
Worker Policy Advocate

Whitney Washington  
Communications Associate





# Thank You!

Your support helped Alabama Arise grow our policy analysis, statewide organizing and citizen advocacy in 2022. You advanced progress toward a better state and increased dignity, equity and justice for all. All of us at Alabama Arise are grateful for your continued membership and advocacy.

A large group of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered outside the entrance of a building. The word "ALABAMA" is prominently displayed in large, dark letters above the entrance. The people are dressed in a variety of casual and semi-formal attire, including jackets, sweaters, and hats. Some individuals are looking towards the entrance, while others are engaged in conversation. The scene suggests a public event or a significant gathering.

ALABAMA

P.O. Box 1188  
Montgomery, AL 36101

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

@alabamairise

