

# END CHILD HUNGER

# IN ALABAMA

EVERY MEAL MATTERS

Five Years of Growth

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# ECHA TASK FORCE

	Action for Healthy Kids		Auburn University Hunger Solutions Institute
	Alabama Arise		Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama
	Alabama Cooperative Extension System Urban Affairs New and Nontraditional Programs Unit at Alabama A&M University		Children's of Alabama
	Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries		Family Child Care Partnership
	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education		Feeding the Gulf Coast
	Alabama Department of Human Resources		Governor's Office of Minority Affairs
	Alabama Department of Public Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity Division		Jason Dufner Foundation
	Alabama Extension at Auburn University SNAP-Ed		Jones Valley Teaching Farm
	Alabama Food Bank Association		Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement, Inc. (SAFE)
	Alabama Obesity Task Force		The Dairy Alliance
	Alabama Partnership for Children		University of Alabama at Birmingham Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research
	Alabama Possible		VOICES for Alabama's Children
	Alabama State Department of Education		West Alabama Food Bank
	Alabama WIC Program		Wright's Market

## foreword

In 2012, the College of Human Sciences, in partnership with the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, established the Auburn University Hunger Solutions Institute (HSI) to advance Auburn's nationally and internationally recognized best practices model for addressing food and nutrition insecurity. With more than 300,000 of Alabama's children food insecure, the HSI leadership team unanimously made the decision that ending child hunger in our home state should and must be HSI's first outreach priority.

With that directive, we invited an outstanding group of Alabama leaders from government, the non-profit community, education, and the corporate sector to serve as charter members of the End Child Hunger in Alabama (ECHA) task force with Lt. Governor (and now Governor) Kay Ivey assuming the role of campaign spokesperson. The ECHA campaign was officially launched at a press conference on April 20, 2013 at Ware's Ferry Road Elementary School in Montgomery. In her opening remarks, the Lt. Governor emphatically stressed, "We are not talking about hungry children in foreign countries. We are talking about hungry children in Alabama, right here in our communities, both urban and rural. This is a real need that simply has to be addressed!"

***Lt. Governor Ivey went on to add, however, the hopeful words that are the heart and soul of the ECHA campaign: Hunger is preventable if we take collective action!***

After five years of intense, collaborative effort and networking, End Child Hunger in Alabama has become a catalyst for transformative change. This is due to the many individual stakeholders and partnering organizations, including Governor Ivey, who are deeply committed to the work at hand and to the power of collective action which builds capacity and serves as a multiplier for reaching increasing numbers of food insecure children, as well as their families who need a hand-up.

With ECHA's five major goals serving as the framework, this five-year review highlights major accomplishments achieved by ECHA partners as we progress toward our ultimate goal of ensuring that all of our children have healthy food access and proper nourishment needed for optimal growth and productive citizenship. While we all acknowledge our work will never be complete as long as one child in Alabama goes hungry, we know we are on the right path. ECHA's outreach continues to expand, and our resolve is growing ever stronger.

In closing, we want to thank all of our ECHA partners for contributing to the information contained in this document. We also want to express gratitude to Dr. Alicia Powers, HSI director of strategy and policy, and her assistant Brytni Emison, for compiling the data and writing the review. In addition to providing a five-year retrospective, we hope this report will set the stage for the next five years of ECHA in action.

JUNE HENTON | Executive Director, Hunger Solutions Institute

HARRIET GILES | Managing Director, Hunger Solutions Institute, and Chair, ECHA Task Force



# CHILD HUNGER IN ALABAMA

## FOOD INSECURITY.

According to the USDA, food insecurity occurs when people lack access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food due to a lack of money or other resources.

## CONSEQUENCES.

A hungry child is two and a half times more likely to get sick.

Food insecure students can be two years behind their peers in school.

Hunger overall costs our nation \$100 billion annually due to lost economic productivity and increased healthcare costs.

Although it affects children uniquely, food insecurity is a household problem.

**1 IN 4 OF ALABAMA'S CHILDREN DO NOT KNOW** where they will get their next meal.

# END CHILD HUNGER IN ALABAMA

End Child Hunger in Alabama (ECHA) is a public movement addressing critical issues of hunger and food insecurity facing Alabama's children and youth.

In 2013, ECHA launched with the goal of moving Alabama into the top 25 percent nationally in child food security.

*ECHA's mission is to ensure every child in Alabama has access to nutritious foods, so they can develop into healthy, educated, and productive adults.*

To accomplish ECHA's mission, the Hunger Solutions Institute at Auburn University assembled and facilitates a network of key state leaders representing both public and private sectors.

Each partnering organization has made incredible strides in ending child hunger in Alabama, and as a network, ECHA stakeholders and organizations have been able to exponentially increase their reach and effectiveness through collaborative efforts.

**ECHA, through its network of stakeholders and organizations, is working toward accomplishing its mission using these five goals:**

- 1 - Improve the food assistance safety net for Alabama's children.**
- 2 - Cultivate a strong regional food system.**
- 3 - Build public will to end childhood hunger.**
- 4 - Increase Alabama families' economic stability.**
- 5 - Support community action to enhance children's health and prevent obesity.**



312  
45  
goal

— Improve the Food Assistance Safety Net for Alabama's Children —

## ECHA WORKS TO EXPAND ACCESS AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ACROSS THE STATE.

Expanding access to the food assistance safety net and improving the quality and quantity of food assistance programs across the state, particularly those that feed children, will have a direct impact on combating child hunger in Alabama.



Currently, Alabama provides an array of federal and state food assistance programs focused on children.

The *National School Lunch Program* is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and non-profit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day.

The *School Breakfast Program* provides cash assistance to states to operate non-profit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions.

The *Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)* is a non-pricing meal service option for schools

and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

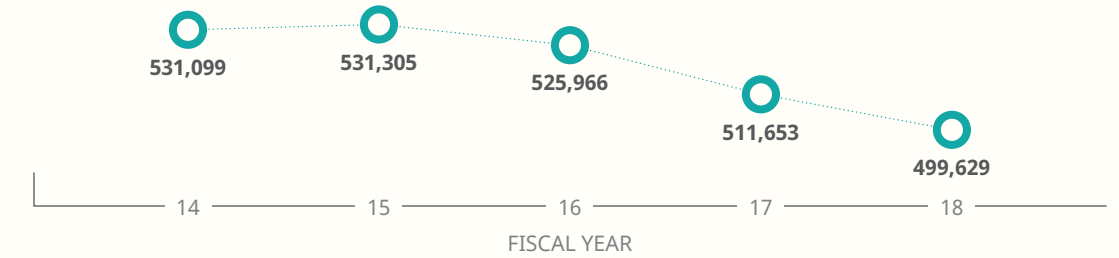
The *Summer Food Service Program* ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session.

The *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)* provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods. One particular CACFP program, the At-risk Afterschool Meal Program, provides meals and snacks to children, including teenagers through age 18, in eligible afterschool programs in low income areas in every state.

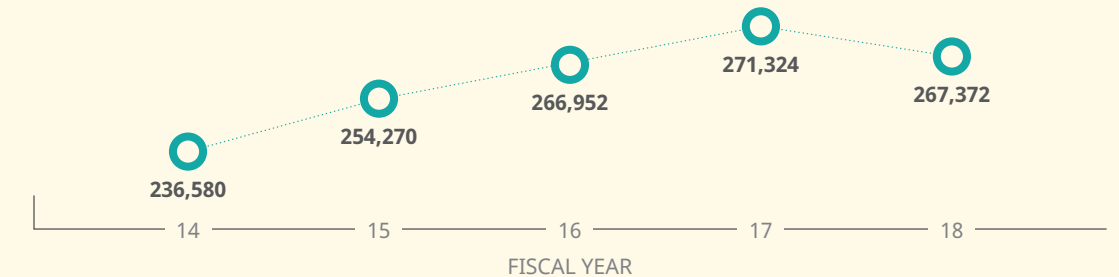


Ensuring access to these federal and state programs in all areas of Alabama by increasing the quantity of schools, sponsors, and sites participating in these programs is important. Additionally, high quality, innovative programming is key to ensuring all Alabama children have access to nutritious foods.

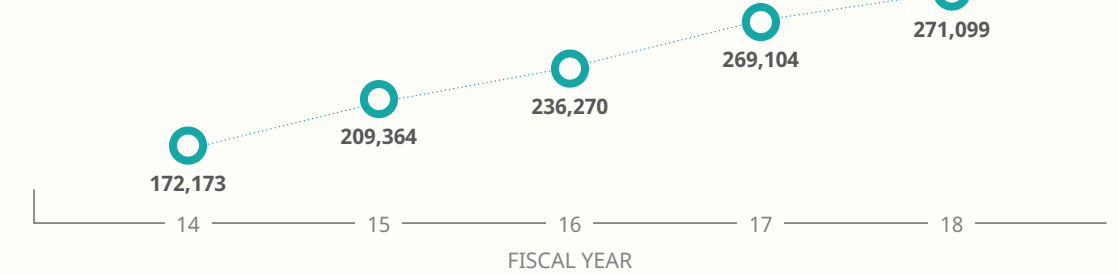
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION — average monthly participation



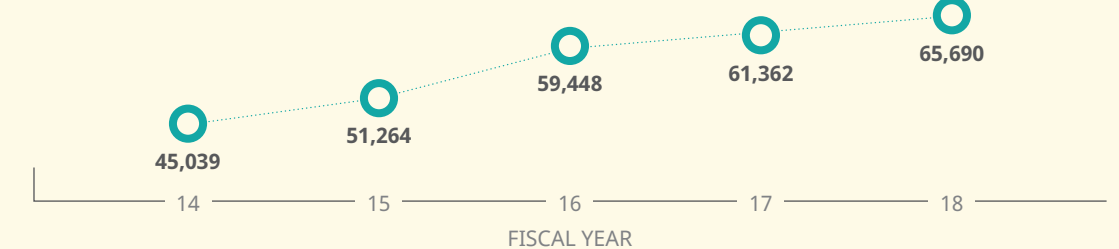
NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM PARTICIPATION — average monthly participation



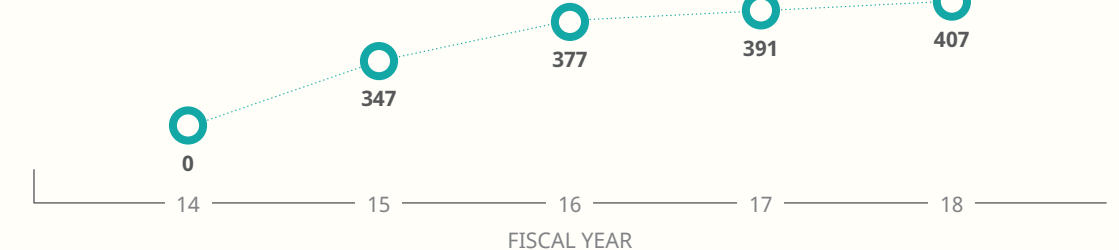
SUMMER FEEDING SERVICE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION — children served



CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATION — average daily attendance



COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION PARTICIPATION — school sites



## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

### *WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAMS SUPPORT HUNGER-FREE WEEKENDS*

The Jason Dufner Foundation and Knapsacks for Kids were leaders in establishing and expanding weekend backpack programs in Lee and Cullman Counties, respectively. In 2017, the Jason Dufner Foundation provided weekend food bags to 1,300 Lee County children, and Knapsacks for Kids reached more than 1,000 Cullman County children. A weekend backpack is a bag of food that is child-friendly, nutritious, nonperishable, and easy to eat. Food bags are typically delivered discretely to at-risk children at school on Friday before a weekend or a day before a long holiday break. Both foundations partnered with county leaders and school administrators to ensure successful backpack feeding programs.

### *CAMPUS FOOD RESOURCES WORK TOWARD HUNGER-FREE CAMPUSES*

Much work has been accomplished in institutions of higher education, where typical food assistance programs for children are not provided. In its first year, the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Blazer Kitchen distributed 64,304 meals and served more than 500 shoppers with 3,548 shopping visits at the pantry. Blazer Kitchen, UAB's on-campus food pantry, serves fresh and non-perishable foods, toiletries, and paper products to UAB students, employees, and certain patient populations in need of assistance. Many other colleges and universities throughout Alabama are providing similar resources for the college population.

### *ALABAMA'S SUMMER FEEDING SERVICE PROGRAM PROMOTES A HUNGER-FREE SUMMER*

Through ECHA's collective action, the state's Summer Feeding Service Program dramatically increased during the last five years. From the summer of 2013 to 2018, the number of meals served to children in need almost doubled from 1.65 million to 3 million. This was due in large part to an increase in number of sponsors providing meals and sites where meals are served; both roughly doubled over those five years. The expansion in the food assistance safety net for Alabama's children was due to the large-scale, coordinated efforts and campaigns of the Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Program and other ECHA partner organizations.

Alabama Food Bank Association was a key partner in the expansion of Alabama's Summer Feeding Service Program. Alabama Food Bank Association partnered with almost 90 community organizations, such as local YMCA facilities and Boys and Girls Clubs, to provide meals throughout the summer months.

From 2014 until 2018, Feeding the Gulf Coast sponsored 162 sites serving more than 1 million summer meals to almost 11,000 children. An integral component of this growth was receipt of Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry Pipeline grants in 2017 and 2018 to organize community events. These grants supported expansion of the Summer Feeding Service Programs in Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, and Jackson counties by providing food, games, and music for the kids to enjoy during the summer months.

In 2017, the Tuscaloosa County School System launched an innovative and highly successful mobile Summer Feeding Service Program, Nutrition Ignition. Nutrition Ignition, Tuscaloosa County's renovated, reinvented school bus turned mobile feeding unit, served nearly 5,800 meals at five locations in its first year and rapidly grew in its second summer, serving nearly 19,000 meals at eight locations. Nutrition Ignition 2.0 will launch summer of 2019 to serve even more children. The Tuscaloosa County School System Child Nutrition Program was recognized as a National Innovator of the Year for 2019 by Food Management Magazine.



# 312 45 goal

— Cultivate a Strong Regional Food System —

**ECHA ADVOCATES FOR AN ACCESSIBLE, NUTRITIOUS REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM.**

A strong regional food system in Alabama promotes economic development of communities, growth and expansion of family farms, and access to nutritious foods and better health for Alabama residents.



A food system includes all processes and infrastructures involved in feeding a population, including growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, distributing, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food and food-related items. A food system operates within and is influenced by social, political, economic, and environmental contexts.



Cultivating a strong regional food system involves innovative systems and participation of multiple partners across the state, many of which are ECHA partnering organizations.

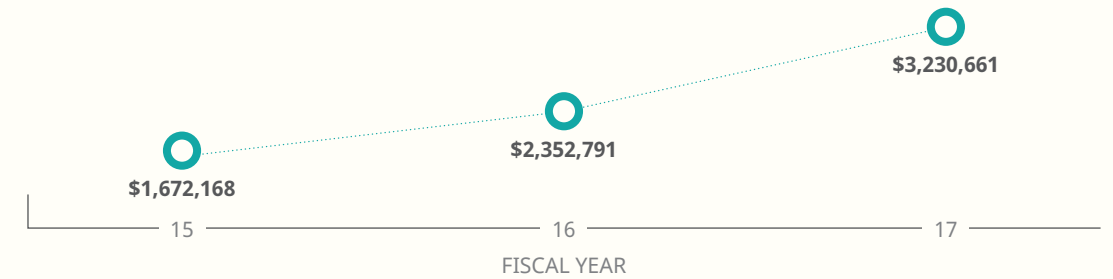


**NUMBER OF GROCERY STORES**  
supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores  
FY16 - 757

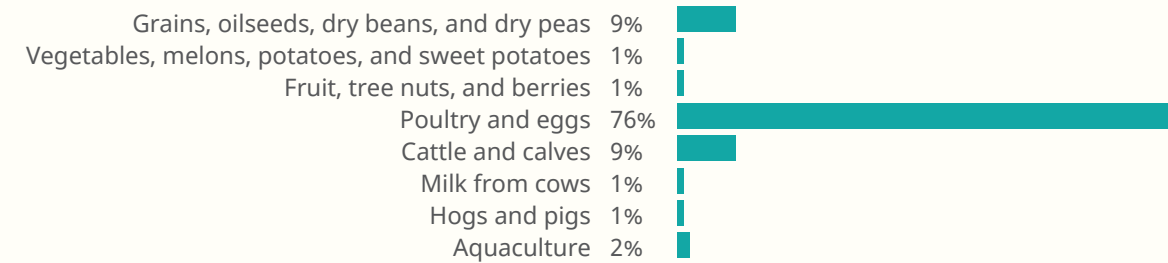


**NUMBER OF FARMERS MARKETS**  
FY99 - 17  
FY18 - 176

TOTAL DOLLARS SPENT ON LOCAL FOOD BY SCHOOLS



PERCENT OF SALES BY CROP





## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

### *ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES PROMOTES LOCAL FOOD*

Efforts by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama State Department of Education have led to an increase in the total dollars spent on local food by Alabama K-12 schools. School spending on local food has nearly doubled from \$1.6 million to \$3.2 million in just two years, and the number of farmers providing local produce to schools almost tripled in five years from eight farmers in 2013 to 23 farmers in 2017.

In 2017, the Farm to School Act was amended allowing federal school nutrition funds to be used to purchase unprocessed agricultural products and exempting those purchases from the competitive bid process. The original Act, passed in 2012, created the Alabama Farm to School Program and designated the State Farm to School Coordinator be housed in the Department of Agriculture and Industries. The Alabama Farm to School Program promotes locally grown foods, school gardens, and nutrition and agriculture education in K-12 schools.

Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries' Farmers Market Authority also promoted local food by facilitating exponential growth of farmers markets and the number of farmers selling direct to consumers at these markets. In 1999, there were 17 farmers markets in Alabama with 234 farmers selling produce. In 2018, a total of 176

farmers markets were operating in Alabama with nearly 1,000 farmers selling direct to consumers in these markets. Estimated sales at Alabama farmers markets are \$25 to \$30 million annually.

### *ALABAMA'S HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE PROMOTES ACCESS TO FOOD*

More than 1.8 million Alabama residents, including nearly half a million children, live in areas with limited access to grocers and other fresh food retailers. But that is changing with recent progress in funding the Alabama Healthy Food Financing Initiative (ALHFFI).

In 2014, ECHA partner VOICES for Alabama's Children and the Alabama Grocers Association, joined forces to convene the first Alabama Grocery Summit. Following the meeting, The Food Trust worked with VOICES for Alabama's Children to develop and disseminate a report, Food for Every Child: The Need for Healthy Food Financing in Alabama.

With strong bipartisan support, the Alabama Healthy Food Financing Act was signed into law in 2015. The legislation created a structure for a statewide fund, administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), to provide incentives to develop, renovate, or expand grocery stores in communities with limited access to fresh, healthy food.

In 2017, ALHFFI received a commitment for an initial state investment of \$300,000 to fund projects and communities across the state.

In 2018, Governor Ivey awarded the first ever ALHFFI grants to seven recipients in areas with limited access to healthy food retail. The recipients were:

- Africatown Community Development Corp.; Mobile
- Children of the Village Network, Inc.; Sumter County
- City of Birmingham
- Jones Valley Teaching Farm; Birmingham
- Peoples Piggly Wiggly; Cherokee
- West Alabama Food Bank; Northport
- Wright's Market Inc.; Opelika

Jones Valley Teaching Farm (JVTF) was awarded \$17,500 from the ALHFFI to construct a permanent, open-air produce stand. The farm's newly constructed produce stand gives Woodlawn community residents, school staff, and students access to fresh, affordable, sustainably-grown produce five days each week. Jones Valley Teaching Farm boasts a 2-acre production farm located at Woodlawn High School, and a select group of Woodlawn students participate in JVTF paid internships. Interns stock the stand, greet and help customers, and implement the marketing and business plan. Interns also grow the food being sold – including sowing seeds, transplanting, cultivating, harvesting, and packing the produce for sale.

Wright's Market, Inc., was awarded \$60,000 from the ALHFFI to purchase a refrigerated van. As a result of this grant, Wright's Market launched Freshmobile, a mobile grocery store and rural delivery service. In 2019, Freshmobile will serve Loachapoka and Hurtsboro with plans for expansion to other rural areas of East Alabama. Freshmobile complements other programs Wright's Market implements to increase access to fresh foods. In 2018, Wright's Market launched Double Up Food Bucks. SNAP participants at Wright's Market can ask the cashier for Double Up Food Bucks and swipe their EBT card for 50% off fresh fruits and vegetables, up to \$10 a day. In 2017, Wright's Market was invited to pilot online SNAP acceptance. Once the pilot launches, shoppers can use their SNAP benefits on Wright's Market website to purchase groceries. Purchases can be picked up curbside or delivered via Freshmobile. Double Up Food Bucks also will be available for eligible online purchases. Freshmobile, Double Up Food Bucks and online SNAP acceptance are key efforts to making fresh food more accessible in East Alabama.

West Alabama Food Bank in Northport utilized ALHFFI funding along with additional funding to launch a nearly \$100,000 mobile food pantry, Mobile Market. West Alabama Food Bank purchased a truck, trailer and refrigeration equipment for the client-choice mobile pantry. Currently, Mobile Market serves 50 to 80 families per day with one to two routes per week. Plans are underway to expand the number of families served, as well as an increase in days and routes.



312  
45  
goal

— Build Public Will to End Childhood Hunger —

### ECHA STRIVES TO MAKE CHILD HUNGER A PRIORITY ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA.

Hunger deprives Alabama’s kids of more than just food. To build a hunger-free Alabama, all Alabamians must be aware of the magnitude of child hunger in Alabama and support efforts to ensure no child goes hungry.



In addition to the quarterly task force meetings held since the launch of ECHA in 2013, ECHA also builds public will to end hunger through a social media campaign available to all Alabama residents.

ECHA’s website provides information about child hunger in Alabama, ECHA’s mission and goals, resources to address child hunger in Alabama, ways to get involved in ending child hunger in Alabama, Every Meal Matters campaign materials, and ECHA task force members.

End Child Hunger in Alabama Facebook and Twitter pages raise awareness of child hunger in Alabama and promote partnering organizations’ activities fostering a hunger-free Alabama.



From the words of Governor Ivey, “Hunger is preventable if we all take collective action.”



**FACEBOOK ANALYTICS**  
48,765 impressions from 2017 until 2018



**TWITTER ANALYTICS**  
313,700 impressions from July 2014 until 2018



## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

### *END CHILD HUNGER IN ALABAMA BUILDS PUBLIC WILL TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER*

ECHA began in April of 2013 with a press conference in Montgomery, urging the public to place child hunger and nutrition at the forefront of their minds. From its outset ECHA was building public will to end hunger, but with the launch of Every Meal Matters in 2016, ECHA widened its reach and was able to inspire more and more people across the state. The Every Meal Matters campaign launched as a formal public campaign with Alabama's then Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey serving as campaign spokesperson. The campaign included a Public Service Announcement which aired on eight television stations across Alabama reaching thousands of Alabamians.

As part of the Every Meal Matters campaign, ECHA partnered with Auburn University's Athletics Department. Auburn's former Athletic Director Jay Jacobs, declared ending child hunger in Alabama one of Auburn Athletics' strategic priorities for 2016. This partnership reached tens of thousands of

Alabamians, Auburn alumni, and Auburn sports fans, informing them not only about child hunger, but also about ECHA partnering organizations and programs on the front lines fighting against hunger in Alabama.

### *LIVE WELL ALABAMA BUILDS PUBLIC WILL TO EAT BETTER, MOVE MORE, AND MAKE A CHANGE*

In 2017, Alabama Extension at Auburn University SNAP-Ed launched an original, creative, and engaging social marketing initiative, Live Well Alabama: Eat Better, Move More, Make a Change. In its first year, the social media campaign resulted in a total of 370,000 Facebook impressions, almost 100,000 Twitter impressions, almost 4,500 average monthly Pinterest visits, , and 4,000 website views. Live Well Alabama messages also blanketed the state through a billboard campaign. For 12 weeks from January through March 2017, 93 billboards in 51 counties encouraged Alabamians to Eat Better, Move More, and Make a Change. Billboards resulted in more than 55 million impressions on Alabamians.

### *BREAK FOR A PLATE BUILDS PUBLIC WILL TO END SUMMER HUNGER*

Break for a Plate expanded summer feeding by almost one million meals in just three years. In 2014, Break for a Plate supported 76 sponsors of summer feeding sites who served almost two million meals. Those numbers jumped in 2017 to 114 sponsors serving almost three million meals. Break for a Plate is a federally funded, state administered Summer Feeding Service Program. It reimburses sponsors who serve free, healthy meals to children and teens age 18 and younger during the summer months when school is not in session.

To build public will to end summer hunger, Break for a Plate holds annual rallies to educate community organizations about the summer nutrition gap and encourages these organizations and community members to take steps to address this gap. For the past six years, Break for a Plate rallies have kicked off summer feeding. In 2017, the Alabama State Department of Education declared May 10th as the statewide "Break

for a Plate Kickoff Day" to urge schools, faith organizations, governmental agencies, colleges and universities, and private non-profit organizations to sponsor summer feeding sites. In addition to rallies, Break for a Plate also provides digital and print-based resources. Because of Break for a Plate's success, the United States Department of Agriculture uses Break for a Plate as a national example on best practices to expand Summer Feeding Service Programs.



312  
45  
goal

— Increase Alabama Families' Economic Stability —

**ECHA SUPPORTS PROGRAMS THAT STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.**

Financial self-sufficiency is instrumental in the fight against child hunger, because a financially self-sufficient family is food secure.



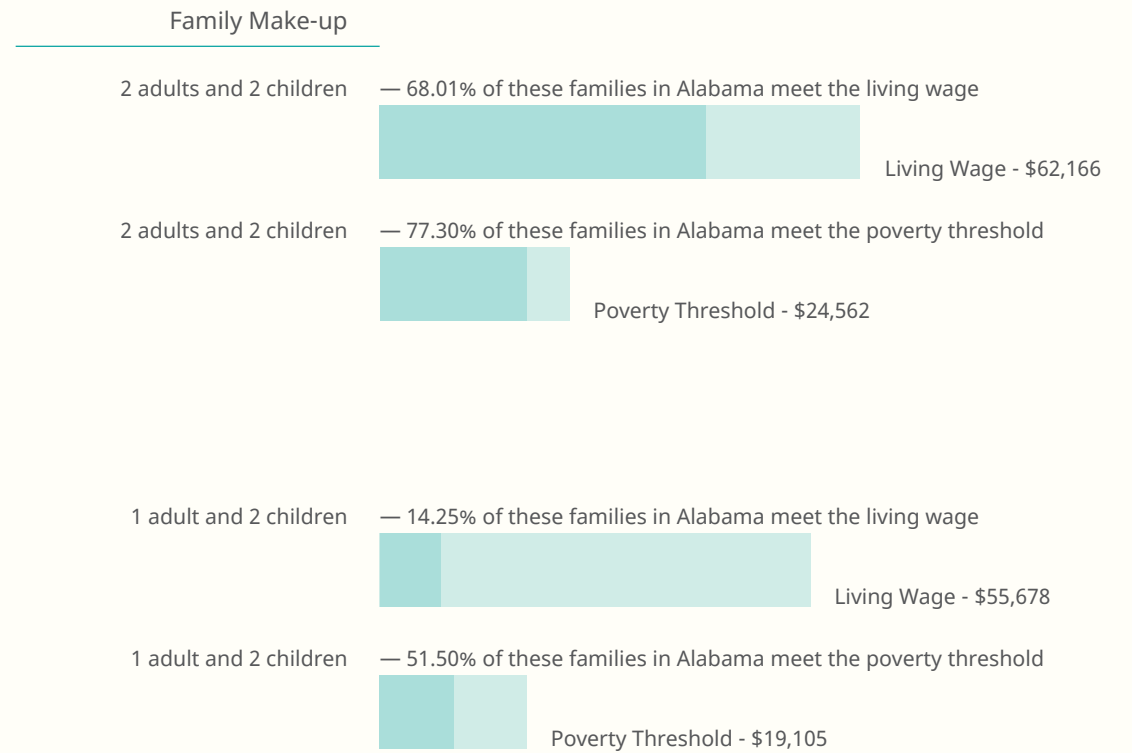
For the purpose of this report, financial self-sufficiency is defined as an individual or family meeting the living wage, which is the income needed for a family of a particular size in a specific place to adequately meet basic needs – without public or private assistance. Basic needs include the cost of minimum food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items, etc.).

A self-sufficient income, living wage, is drastically higher than the poverty threshold. Although poverty threshold reflects individual and family needs to a degree, poverty threshold is not intended as a complete description of what individuals and families need to meet basic needs.



Successful public and private assistance should aid individuals and families in becoming financially self-sufficient.

**LIVING WAGE AND FEDERAL POVERTY THRESHOLDS FOR SPECIFIC FAMILY SIZES AND MAKE-UP**



## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

### *ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORTS FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY*

A recent infusion of \$40.7 million, authorized by the Omnibus Bill, bolstered the Alabama Department of Human Resources (ALDHR) mission to improve financial self-sufficiency of Alabamians. The funding increased child care subsidies paid by the ALDHR to infant and toddler care providers throughout the state. Specifically, subsidy rates increased to the 70th percentile of the market rate in each region, which resulted in an increase from \$98 million for child care subsidy reimbursements in Fiscal Year 2018 to \$112 million in Fiscal Year 2019. ALDHR Commissioner Nancy Buckner recognizes the importance of these subsidies in fostering financial self-sufficiency for many Alabamians. "This will make it easier for low-income working parents to find quality child care while they work to improve their family's financial situation," said Buckner. ALDHR is committed to providing for the protection, well-being and self-sufficiency of children and adults. The Child Care Services Division of ALDHR is dedicated to relieving the cost burden of childcare for low to moderate-income families and monitoring and licensing child care centers and homes.

### *ECHA PARTNERS' PROGRAMS, DATA, AND POLICIES SUPPORT FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY*

Alabama Possible is a statewide, nonprofit organization that removes barriers to prosperity in Alabama through education, collaboration, and advocacy. Alabama

Possible implements a variety of programs, such as Blueprints College Success Initiative, Cash for College, and poverty simulations.

For the past eight years, Alabama Possible has compiled and summarized research on an annual basis through the Poverty Data Sheet, a comprehensive graphic resource highlighting statewide poverty rates and data related to education attainment, employment, and food security. These data are key in prioritizing ECHA efforts and determining progress of these efforts.

VOICES for Alabama's Children was the first, and remains the only, statewide child advocacy organization to research and document state trends and county level data on the conditions of children in each of Alabama's 67 counties. For more than 25 years, the Alabama Kids Count Data Book has been published and distributed throughout the state to provide both a benchmark and a roadmap to improve child well-being. These data are key for ECHA and many others throughout the state to make well-informed policy and programming decisions.

Alabama Arise is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of congregations, organizations, and individuals promoting public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. The Alabama Arise policy team analyzes proposed and current laws to assess their effects on low-income Alabamians. In the past five years, Alabama Arise produced 107 legislative updates, 43 newsletters, and 68 fact sheets and issue briefs.





312  
45  
goal

— Support Community Action to Enhance Children’s Health and Prevent Obesity —



**ECHA PROMOTES INVESTMENT IN HEALTHY, LIVABLE COMMUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION LINKING FOOD INSECURITY TO OBESITY AND CHRONIC DISEASE.**

Low-income individuals are at increased risk for both food insecurity and obesity. Low-income individuals often live in communities with few grocery stores and limited affordable, healthy food options. Food available in low-income communities tends to be less expensive food options, such as processed or fast foods, which are calorie-dense but low in nutrient content. Working alongside ECHA partner organizations to ensure all Alabama communities are healthy, livable communities is an important step to a hunger-free Alabama.



Childhood weight status is determined using body mass index (BMI) for age percentiles. Body mass index is calculated based on a child's height and weight. Body mass index and age is then plotted on a gender specific chart to determine BMI percentile. Children between the 85th and 95th percentile BMI-for-age range are categorized as overweight, and children at or above the 95th percentile BMI-for-age are characterized as obese.



Many ECHA partnering organizations are working with communities to change policies, systems, and environments to make it easier to access healthy, affordable foods while also educating community members on ways to eat healthy and be active.



**CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT & OBESITY (10-17 YEAR OLDS)**  
 2015 - 35.0%  
 2016 - 35.5%



**NO FRUIT CONSUMPTION (HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS)**  
 2013 - 8.1%  
 2015 - 10.2%



**NO VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION (HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS)**  
 2013 - 7.5%  
 2015 - 10.4%



## PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

### *ALABAMA PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN PROMOTES HEALTHY YOUNG CHILDREN*

Since 2016, Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) trained more than 100 early care and education providers, including center- and home-based programs, on environmental strategies to foster healthy growth and development. Alabama Partnership for Children provided in-person trainings and customized technical assistance on nutrition, physical activity, and screen time policies and procedures. As a result, 85% of the 2017 cohort of early care and education providers increased the number of best practices related to promotion of healthy growth and development.

In 2018, APC in conjunction with ECHA and six other statewide organizations supporting young children hosted more than 120 professionals with 49 organizations at the inaugural Early Childhood Nutrition Summit. The Summit provided a space for organizations to discuss issues the state of Alabama faces in ensuring young children in child care receive the necessary nutrition to support optimal development, and to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. As a result of this summit, three working groups focused on nutrition, breastfeeding, and physical activity in early care and education settings are working to identify specific goals to guide activities for the next three years.

### *GET HEALTHY TALLADEGA COUNTY NETWORK PARTNERS WITH SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING*

Get Healthy Talladega County developed and implemented a six-session video series, Seed to Plate, Choose My Plate, to promote healthy eating among second through sixth graders in Sylacauga City Schools, Talladega City Schools, and Talladega County Schools. Each video supports objectives from the Alabama Math and Science Standards through teaching about gardening, fitness, nutrition, and making good food choices. This effort contributes to Get Healthy Talladega County Network's strategy to achieve a sustained culture of health and wellness within Talladega County and a larger mission to develop a collaborative network to promote health and wellness in Talladega County through education, engagement, and implementation of strategic health and wellness initiatives.

### *CHILDREN'S OF ALABAMA ADVANCES THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN*

In 2015, ECHA partnering organization, Children's of Alabama, alongside the Brookings Institution and Princeton University, sponsored the Future of Children Conference in Birmingham in conjunction with the release of the Brookings Institution's Future of Children publication on child health and nutrition. Presenters included ECHA chair and executive directors of ECHA partnering organizations Jones Valley Teaching Farm and Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancements (SAFE).

### *ALABAMA EXTENSION AND ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH MAKE IT EASIER TO LIVE WELL IN ALABAMA*

Alabama Extension at Auburn University's ALProHealth (Alabama Preventing and Reducing Obesity: Helping to Engage Alabamians for Long-term Health) supports community action counties hardest hit by obesity. ALProHealth engages with community coalitions to implement and evaluate strategies to decrease obesity in Alabama counties with obesity rates greater than 40 percent. In just four years (2014-2018), ALProHealth developed and sustained 16 coalitions with almost 125 partners and leveraged more than \$7 million to improve access to healthy, affordable foods and safe, affordable places to be physically active.

Some of the grassroots changes included establishing or enhancing community, school, or raised bed gardens; establishing or enhancing farmers markets; supporting convenience stores in stocking healthy choices; and increasing food storage capacity at food banks.

Alabama Extension at Auburn University SNAP-Ed implements Body Quest, an innovative childhood obesity initiative empowering third graders and their parents to make healthy choices. In 2018, Auburn University SNAP-Ed educators provided Body Quest to 6,580 third graders in 54 Alabama counties, 117 schools, and 346 classrooms. Students participating in Body Quest ate vegetable and fruits more times per day and ate a greater variety of vegetables and fruits compared to before Body Quest and students not receiving Body Quest. Impact evaluation also noted students participating in Body Quest drank fewer sugary beverages and more water compared to before Body Quest and students not receiving Body Quest.

Alabama Department of Public Health launched Good Choice, a statewide campaign identifying and prompting individuals to make healthier choices when choosing foods and beverages. During the past five years, almost 60 worksites and/or community-based organizations have implemented Good Choice reaching more than 25,000 Alabama residents.



# CONCLUSION

**AFTER FIVE YEARS OF INTENSE, COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AND NETWORKING, ECHA HAS BECOME A CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED BY ECHA PARTNERS ARE NUMEROUS AND FAR-REACHING.**

**DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, ECHA'S OUTREACH WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND OUR RESOLVE TO ENDING CHILD HUNGER WILL GROW EVEN STRONGER. ECHA'S FIVE MAJOR GOALS OUTLINED IN THIS REPORT WILL CONTINUE TO GUIDE NETWORK PRIORITIES.**

***GOAL 1: IMPROVE THE FOOD ASSISTANCE SAFETY NET FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN***

ECHA will develop a working group focused on expanding access to the food assistance safety net and improving the quality and quantity of food assistance programs across the state with specific attention toward the School Breakfast Program, Community Eligibility Provision, and Child and Adult Care Food Program.

***GOAL 2: CULTIVATE A STRONG REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM***  
ECHA will facilitate collaboration of multiple partnering organizations in developing and implementing innovative solutions necessary to develop an accessible, nutritious regional food system in Alabama.

***GOAL 3: BUILD PUBLIC WILL TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER***  
ECHA will improve its website, increase its presence on social media outlets, and continue to expand the Every Meal Matters campaign.

***GOAL 4: INCREASE ALABAMA FAMILIES' ECONOMIC STABILITY***  
ECHA will support partnering organizations who are developing data important to understanding financial self-sufficiency and promote networking of ECHA partnering organizations with state organizations leading efforts in financial self-sufficiency.

***GOAL 5: SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION TO ENHANCE CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND PREVENT OBESITY***  
ECHA will promote networking of ECHA partnering organizations with state organizations facilitating community action and providing education.

# CONNECTING, CONVENING, & MULTIPLYING BEST PRACTICES

*A foundational principle of the HSI is that hunger is a solvable problem, but only when the relevant knowledge from all academic disciplines is combined with the abilities and strengths of all sectors. By creating partnerships at the community, state, and global levels, HSI shares knowledge and best practices and facilitates multi-sector coalitions to leverage the power of collective action.*

In 2004, the United Nation's World Food Programme and Auburn University partnered to create Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH), a coalition that has expanded to nearly 300 campuses since its inception. With sustainability as a framework, the comprehensive UFWH best practices model outlines a short-term grassroots student advocacy and action campaign, as well as an academic agenda focused on long-term solutions that are suitable for adaptation or replication by participating universities.

The Hunger Solutions Institute (HSI) was established by the College of Human Sciences and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn University in 2012 to further Auburn's nationally recognized efforts in food security domestically and globally.

In addition to End Child Hunger in Alabama and UFWH, the HSI also administers Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH), which launched in 2014.

PUSH is a consortium of universities from around the world that have the collective mission to end hunger and poverty, both locally and globally. More than 100 university presidents from five continents have signed the Presidents' Commitment to Food and Nutrition Security signifying an agreement to make food and nutrition security a priority through teaching, research, outreach, and student engagement - making ending hunger a core value of higher education institutions worldwide.





[WWW.ENDCHILDHUNGERAL.ORG](http://WWW.ENDCHILDHUNGERAL.ORG)