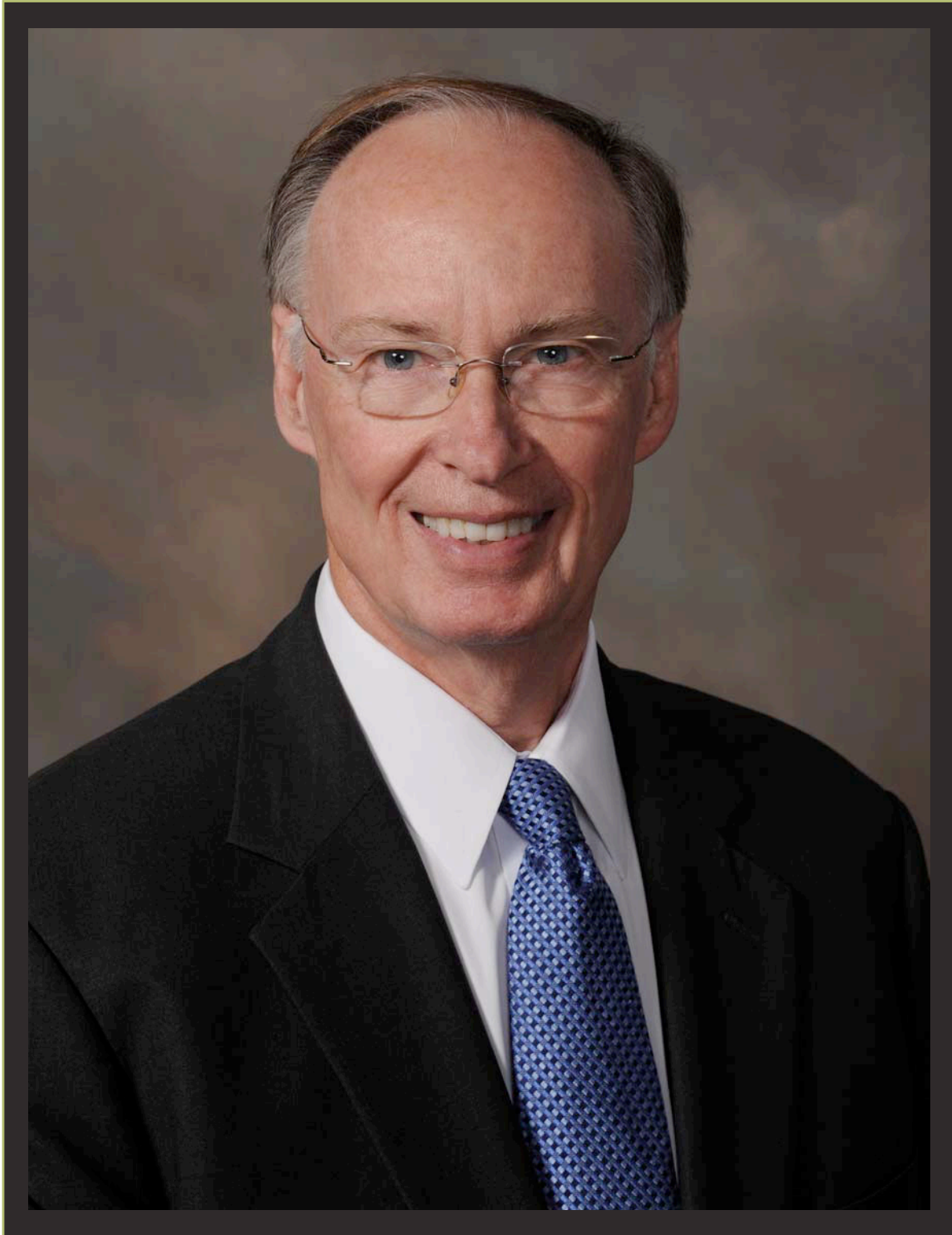


**Robert Bentley**  
Governor



**Graham L. Sisson, Jr.**  
Executive Director

**State Of Alabama**  
**Governor's Office On Disability**  
**FY 2010 & FY 2011**  
**Annual Report**



The Honorable Robert Bentley  
Governor  
State of Alabama

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**Staff**

**Graham L. Sisson, Jr., Executive Director**

Graham was appointed as Executive Director of the Governor’s Office on Disability in October 2007 and was reappointed by Governor Bentley in January 2011. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Alabama in Accounting in 1987. Graham also attended Vanderbilt University and was awarded his Juris Doctorate in 1990. He received a certificate in Rehabilitation Leadership and Management from Auburn University in May, 2009. He was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1990. Mr. Sisson has lived with a disability since 1982.

**Sharon Mitchell Ward, Deputy Director**

Sharon joined the Governor’s Office on Disability in August 2010. She received her Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Psychology, minoring in Sociology and her Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Alabama State University. In May 2011, she received a certificate in Rehabilitation Leadership and Management from Auburn University.

## LETTER FROM GOVERNOR BENTLEY

This annual report documents some of the work done by the Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD) to make life better for our fellow Alabamians with disabilities. Alabama has approximately 945,705 citizens with disabilities, comprising 23.2% of the total population. My administration is committed to increasing the opportunities for those with disabilities and to tearing down any remaining barriers to equality they may.

I depend on the GOOD to provide reliable and helpful information on disability resources and the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities. GOOD is an excellent resource for such information. If you need assistance with disability-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact GOOD.

Sincerely,



Robert Bentley  
Governor



## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to thank the Governor and the Alabama Legislature for their continuing support of GOOD. Fiscal Year 2010 and 2011 have been two years of positive growth and change of the office. Governor Bentley signed Executive Order 15 which clearly sets out the duties of the office. GOOD currently has nine local advisory committees around the state which provide grassroots input about unmet needs of the Alabamians with disabilities and increase the visibility of the office. Likewise, a State Advisory Committee provides overall input to GOOD from different persons with disabilities and disability organizations. GOOD partners with these local advisory groups to facilitate the GOOD mission statement and strategic plan. The GOOD website is currently being reconfigured to be more user-friendly and will include a newsletter, calendar and additional resources. Meetings have been held with other state agencies to foster collaboration and to maximize state resources for people with disabilities. A special thanks is given to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for its close partnership with GOOD.

Information about disability issues and training has been disseminated throughout the state. Awareness is a powerful tool which leads to greater access for individuals with disabilities. GOOD continues its role of dispensing accurate information. Join the GOOD list by accessing the appropriate icon on GOOD's website at [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov).

In 2009, GOOD held its Inaugural Disability Summit. This Summit was held again in 2010 & 2011. GOOD extends its gratitude to the City of Birmingham, Inc. for their partnership with GOOD on the 2011 Disability Summit & Expo. The purpose was to convene major state agencies and non-profit organizations serving people with disabilities to identify resources and top issues. GOOD uses the information gathered from the Summits to facilitate strategies to help persons with disabilities.

We look forward to the progression and inclusion of Alabamians with disabilities in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Graham L. Sisson, Jr.

## GOOD Overview

The Governor's Office on Disability was created by Executive Order Number 43 in 1999. It was formed to serve as a statewide clearing house for information on disability and resources in Alabama. Its other major function is to act as a liaison to the Governor's Office on disability issues.

The Governor's Office on Disability's mission statement was revised in 2008 as follows:

Facilitate the inclusion of Alabamians with disabilities in education, employment, housing, transportation, healthcare, and leisure.

Governor Bentley's Executive Order 15 in 2011 re-established the Governor's Office on Disability under his administration. Resources are scarce in Alabama. The Governor's Office on Disability seeks to maximize disability resources by identifying existing ones and fostering collaboration among public and private entities that serve people with disabilities.

The Governor's Office on Disability actively seeks to engage communication between individuals with disabilities and their families and entities that provide services to them. GOOD's website, [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov), is one tool that is being expanded to facilitate open dialogue and access on disability resources and issues. Additionally, GOOD holds an annual Disability Summit to bring together leaders of public agencies and non-profit organization that serve individuals with disabilities. The 2011 Disability Summit included an Expo with over 50 vendors. GOOD partnered with the City of Birmingham Mayor's Office on Disability in hosting the 2011 Disability Summit. Common issues and resources were identified.

To foster communication even more, GOOD developed a list serve. Anyone interested in issues affecting people with disabilities can join the GOOD list by accessing the website at [www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov), clicking the "Join the GOOD List" icon and entering in personal contact and email information. Periodically, cutting edge information on disability will be shared with list members.

## Strategic Plan

### **(1)Legislation Initiative**

Monitor Alabama's disability related legislation and policies and provide policy analysis to the Governor.

**Objective 1:** Monitor constituent issues with regard to policy formulation and recommendations for legislation.

**Objective 2:** Serve as a liaison to the Governor on all necessary matters of interest related to the GOOD mission.

### **(2)Collaboration Initiative**

Establish a united voice to determine and meet the needs of the GOOD mission.

**Objective 1:** Utilize local advisory committees to determine the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities.

**Objective 2:** Partner with public and private entities, inclusive of state agencies, that advance the achievement of the GOOD mission.

**Objective 3:** To accept and resolve referrals regarding disability issues from the Governor's Constituent Affairs Office and other referral resources.

### **(3)Consultation Initiative**

Serve as advisor on public disability-related issues in Alabama.

**Objective 1:** Provide informal legal opinions on disability issues to the Governor's Legal Office.

**Objective 2:** Provide analytical information to the Governor's Legal Office relative to the GOOD mission.

**Objective 3:** Act as an expert resource regarding the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws.

### **(4)Dissemination Initiative**

Promote public awareness of actions and activities in fulfilling GOOD mission.

**Objective 1:** Increase effective utilization of available resources for Alabamians with disabilities.

**Objective 2:** Establish a website as the primary dissemination method of GOOD actions, activities and publications.

**Objective 3:** Promote local and/or statewide media coverage of GOOD actions and activities when possible.

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ON DISABILITY**  
**GOALS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2010 – 2011**

**I. Disability Summit**

Collaboration and Dissemination Initiatives

- 2010 Disability Summit - 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the American's with Disabilities Act
- 2011 Disability Summit and Expo

**II. Convening Disability Consumer Advisory Councils**

- 9 regional council meetings during each fiscal year
- State Advisory Council meetings quarterly

**III. Trainings/Disability Awareness ADA**

- In collaboration with the Alabama's ADA toll free information services conducted:  
**FY2010** – 39 ADA Trainings and 10 Accessibility Reviews/Consultations  
**FY2011** – 30 ADA Trainings and 19 Accessibility Reviews/Consultations

**Emergency Preparedness**

- Emergency Planning for Special Needs Communities  
June 9-10.
- Emergency Preparedness Training  
FEMA "Getting Real II" Conference  
September 12-14, 2011

**IV. Information and Referral**

Number of inquiries on disability issues:

**FY 2010** 851 inquiries

**FY 2011** 1018 inquiries

**V. Website**

- Continuously updating website
- Continuously updating resources

**VI. Collaboration**

Meeting with State Agencies

- Dr. Cary Boswell, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Mrs. Irene Collins, Alabama Department of Senior Services\*\*
- Mr. John Cooper, Alabama Department of Transportation
- Ms. Zelia Baugh, Alabama Department of Mental Health
- Mr. Jim Byard, Jr., Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
- Dr. Marquita Davis, Alabama Department of Children's Affairs
- Mr. Tom Surtees, Alabama Department of Industrial Relations
- Mr. Guy Gunter, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

\*still in the process of meeting with other agency heads

\*\* brief meeting with Neal Morrison, new Alabama Department of Senior Services Commissioner

## **VII. Partnerships**

Alabama Accessible Parking Coalition  
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities  
Alabama Disability Advocacy Network  
Alabama Disability Advocacy Program  
Alabama Emergency Management Agency  
Alabama Head Injury Foundation  
Alabama Respite Coalition  
Alabama Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council  
Alabama State Interagency Transition Team  
Alabama State University  
Alabama Transit Coalition  
Auburn University Center on Disability Research and Services  
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute/ Hate Crimes Conference Planning Committee  
Birmingham Committee on ADA  
Blind Advisory Committee  
Camp ASCCA  
Deaf/Blind Coalition  
Disabilities Unlimited  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Help America Vote Act Advisory Committee  
Home Medical Equipment Licensure Board  
Long-term Care Rebalancing Committee  
Independent Living Resources of Greater Birmingham  
Individual & Family Support Counsel Region 1  
Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce  
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant  
Mobile Center for Independent Living  
Montgomery Center for Independent Living  
National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils  
OASIS Advisory Council  
State of Alabama Independent Living Council  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Transportation Advisory Committee (Birmingham)  
United We Ride (transportation)  
University of Alabama Birmingham/Civitan-Sparks Consumer Advisory Council  
Youth Leadership Forum

## EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 15

**WHEREAS**, passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") by the United States Congress imposed a requirement that employers not discriminate against people with disabilities in regard to any employment practices or terms, conditions, and privileges of employment;

**WHEREAS**, Congress specifically mandated that state government agencies be subject to the provisions of the ADA;

**WHEREAS**, Alabamians with disabilities and their families, may experience an economic impact due to their disabilities;

**WHEREAS**, people with disabilities have unmet needs in many areas, including but not limited to; transportation, education, employment, housing, transportation, recreation, health care, insurance, leisure and/or personal assistance;

**WHEREAS**, collaboration among public and private organizations serving individuals with disabilities is necessary to efficiently use available resources;

**WHEREAS**, a coordinated centralized effort will ensure all state agencies are in compliance with the terms of the ADA by the most efficient means possible; and,

**WHEREAS**, there is a need of coordination with consumers and consumer-driven organizations regarding state disability policies and services and a clearinghouse for disability-related information in one location.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, based upon these considerations, and for other good and valid reasons thereto, I, Robert Bentley, Governor of the State of Alabama, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Alabama, do hereby establish the **Governor's Office on Disability**, hereinafter referred to as "GOOD," within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services ("ADRS").

The purpose and duties of GOOD include:

1. To serve as point of contact for issues related to people with disabilities.
2. To collect and compile information on Alabama resources for individuals with disabilities and their families.
3. To remain current on matters of interest related to disability issues.
4. To monitor Alabama legislation and policies that affect people with disabilities.
5. To collaborate, where possible, with other Alabama public and private disability organizations and resources to increase efficiency in the use of available resources for Alabamians with disabilities.
6. To accept and handle referrals, regarding disability issues, from the Governor's Constituent Affairs Office.
7. To enter into inter-agency agreements or contracts with public and private entities, including state agencies, to further the purposes of GOOD.
8. To monitor disability constituent issues to the extent of developing, assisting in the development of, or recommending policies and/or legislation to address such issues in coordination with the Governor's Policy and Legislative Affairs offices.



9. To maintain local advisory committees around the state for the purpose of determining the unmet needs of persons with disabilities and otherwise soliciting their input.
10. To provide informal legal opinions on disability issues to the Governor's Legal Office and otherwise assist such office on legal matters related to individuals with disabilities.
11. To serve as the statewide clearinghouse for information on disability issues.
12. To prepare an Annual Report of GOOD'S activities and send a copy of said report to the Governor, Alabama Legislature, and the Commissioner of ADRS, and provide quarterly reports on GOOD activities to the Governor.

**BE IT ORDERED** that GOOD shall be managed by a Director who shall be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED** that the Director shall be assisted by a Deputy Director, who shall be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor.

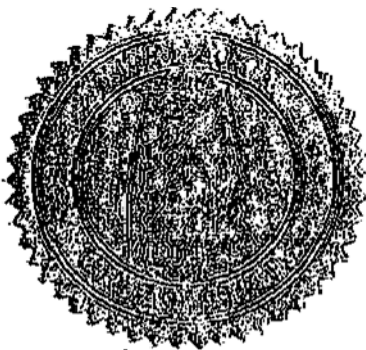
**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED** that all employees of GOOD, present or future, be supervised, managed and answerable to the GOOD Executive Director.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED** that GOOD be housed and located within ADRS and subject to its personnel policies, rules, and regulations to the extent applicable, yet remain a separate agency.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED** that if a conflict arises with regard to any previous or existing Executive Order, the provisions of this Executive Order shall prevail.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED** that this Executive Order shall become effective immediately upon the Governor's signature and shall remain in effect until amended or modified by the Governor.

DONE AND ORDERED this 16th day of May, 2011.



Attested

  
Beth Chapman  
Secretary of State

  
Robert Bentley  
Governor

# GOVERNOR'S OFFICE ON DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dr. Dave Martin, Chairman  
Auburn, Alabama  
Parent Advocate

John Stephenson  
Jackson Gap, Alabama  
Recreational Access representative

Shannon Weston Byrd  
Montgomery, Alabama  
State Agency/Mental Health Advocate

James Tucker  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama  
Statewide Disability Advocacy Program

Kent Crenshaw\*  
Montgomery, Alabama  
Person with a disability

Ron Talley\*  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Disability advocate

Michael Davis\*  
Mobile, Alabama  
Person with a disability

Karl Wade  
Prattville, Alabama  
Person with blindness

Carl Flemons  
Somerville, Alabama  
Veteran with a disability

Ellen Gillespie  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama  
Statewide Disability Advocacy Program

Dan Kessler  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Independent Living Center representative

Phil Klebine  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Person with a disability

Seth Moates  
Wetumpka, Alabama  
Person with a disability

Scott Renner  
Auburn, Alabama  
Person with a disability

## LOCAL CONSUMER ADVISORY COUNCILS

Councils serve as an opportunity for grassroots input from people with disabilities and their families

- Anniston
- Birmingham
- Dothan
- Gadsden
- Huntsville/Decatur
- Mobile
- Montgomery
- Muscle Shoals
- Tuscaloosa

\*Minority representative

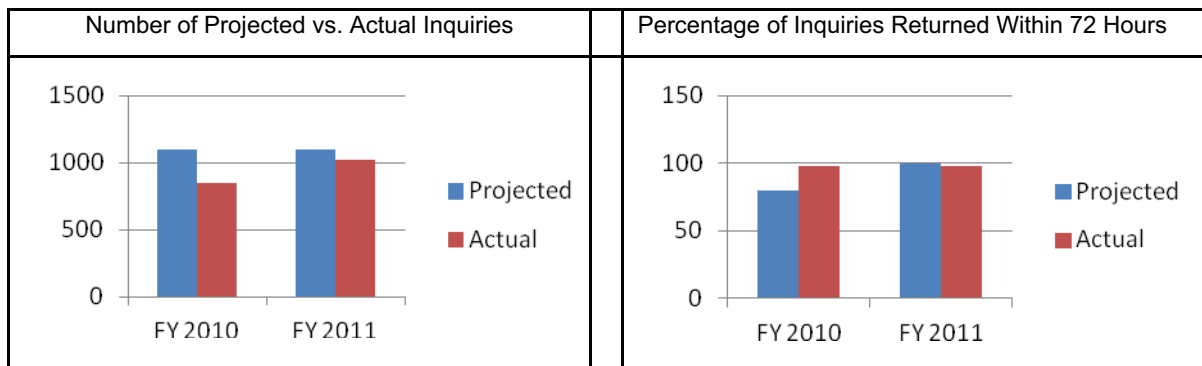
## FY 2010 AND FY2011 BUDGET

	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>
Personnel Costs	39375	54300
Employee Benefits	16827	21158
Travel In-State	1027	2334
Travel Out-of-State	0	0
Repairs & Maintenance	97	0
Rentals & Leases	781	1620
Utilities & Communications	0	700
Professional Services	10,214	962
Supplies, Material & Operating expenses	7644	17655
Grants & Benefits	74044	57134
Other Equipment Purchases	0	0

## FY2010 AND FY 2011 SMART BUDGET

<u># of inquiries</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>
Projected	1100	1100
Actual	851	1018

<u># responded to within 72 hours</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>
Projected	80%	100%
Actual	97.5%	98%





**UNMET NEEDS**

Top ten unmet needs\* based upon the results from the Inaugural Disability Summit 2009

- Transportation
- Housing
- Employment
- Home and Community Based Waivers
- Public Awareness, Information & Training
- Accessibility
- Attitude toward people with disabilities
- Education
- Funding & Assistive Technology
- Medical Access

\* It does not appear that these needs have changed in FY 2010 and 2011.

**2011 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium**

**Population** – Civilians living in the community.

State	Total	Disability Status		Disability as a Pct. Of Total
		Disability	No Disability	
Alabama	4,702,769	760,409	3,942,360	16.2

**Employment** – Civilians *with* disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community for the United States.

State	Total	Employed	Employed as Pct. of Total
Alabama	422,792	116,669	27.6

**Employment** – Civilians *without* disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community for the United States.

State	Total	Employed	Employed as Pct. of Total
Alabama	2,508,744	1,759,482	70.1

**Employment Gap** – Civilians ages 18 to 64 years living in the community for the United States by disability status.

State	Employed as a Pct. Of Total (a.k.a., Employment Rate)	No Disability	Difference of No Disability and Disability (a.k.a. GAP)
Alabama	27.6	70.1	42.5

Join the GOOD list  
[www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov)  
 The Governor's Office on Disability  
 560 South Lawrence Street  
 Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
 334-293-7228/334-293-7189  
 Toll Free: 888-879-3582