

# UAB - AMERICORPS VISTA STATEWIDE PROGRAM



2021

ANNUAL  
REPORT

**UAB** THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM



# MISSION STATEMENT

To address many of the social issues in Alabama, the UAB-AmeriCorps VISTA Statewide Program places year-long capacity-building volunteers in service positions with community agencies to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement.

These Volunteers In Service to America (VISTAs) develop and complete projects designed to address pressing community needs to transform the Birmingham Metro area and the Black Belt region of Alabama.





# LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Though UAB's first cohort of five AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service to America (VISTAs) started on campus in July of 2014 to increase community engagement opportunities for university students through the Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research-- This is our first annual report. This is not because we have not been completing good work for the last seven years. It is not because we did not believe that there would be interest in the growth and achievements seen each subsequent year. When I reflect on the reason, "Why now?", it is simply because, until now, we have been too busy expanding as we identified community agencies that could benefit from the capacity building offered through the VISTA program; because we have been growing our support staff from one to four; because we had been recruiting, interviewing, selecting, on-boarding, and training incoming VISTAs; and because we have been creating mutually beneficial placements for individuals who are willing to commit a year to serving their communities.

In 2016, when I became the Director for the Office of Service Learning and Undergraduate Research and was given the opportunity to work with five amazing VISTAs, I never imagined that by the end of 2021 that we would have placed 92 VISTAs across the state of Alabama. When we started placing VISTAs beyond campus to address the opioid epidemic and food insecurity, we had no idea where that initial expansion would lead. And when we placed six VISTAs in Wilcox County at BAMA Kids in 2017 based on a 25-year-old relationship between UAB and Camden, we never imagined that that number would triple in five years and that VISTAs would be serving in four Black Belt counties. It has been through saying "Yes" each time AmeriCorps and the community came to us with a request or a proposal that has gotten us to where we are. I am so pleased to report that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, today we, in partnership with 28 community-serving agencies, are a strong unified group addressing issues of food security, environmental sustainability, educational equity, refugee resettlement, workforce development, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, racial restoration, rural health and wellness, leadership, development, and opioid prevention and education across the state.

It is the commitment of each individual VISTA that makes this program successful. And it will be this collective commitment over time that will make Alabama a more equitable and healthy state as we continue to advance our mission to address many of the social issues to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement.

Thank you so much in your interest in the UAB-AmeriCorps VISTA Statewide program.

Best Regards,  
Amy Hutson Chatham, PhD  
Director, UAB-AmeriCorps VISTA Statewide Program



# COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS



**1,651** community volunteers recruited by VISTA members

**2,567** community volunteers managed by VISTA members

**2,397** service hours completed by community volunteers recruited by VISTA members

**2,785** service hours completed by community volunteers managed by VISTA members



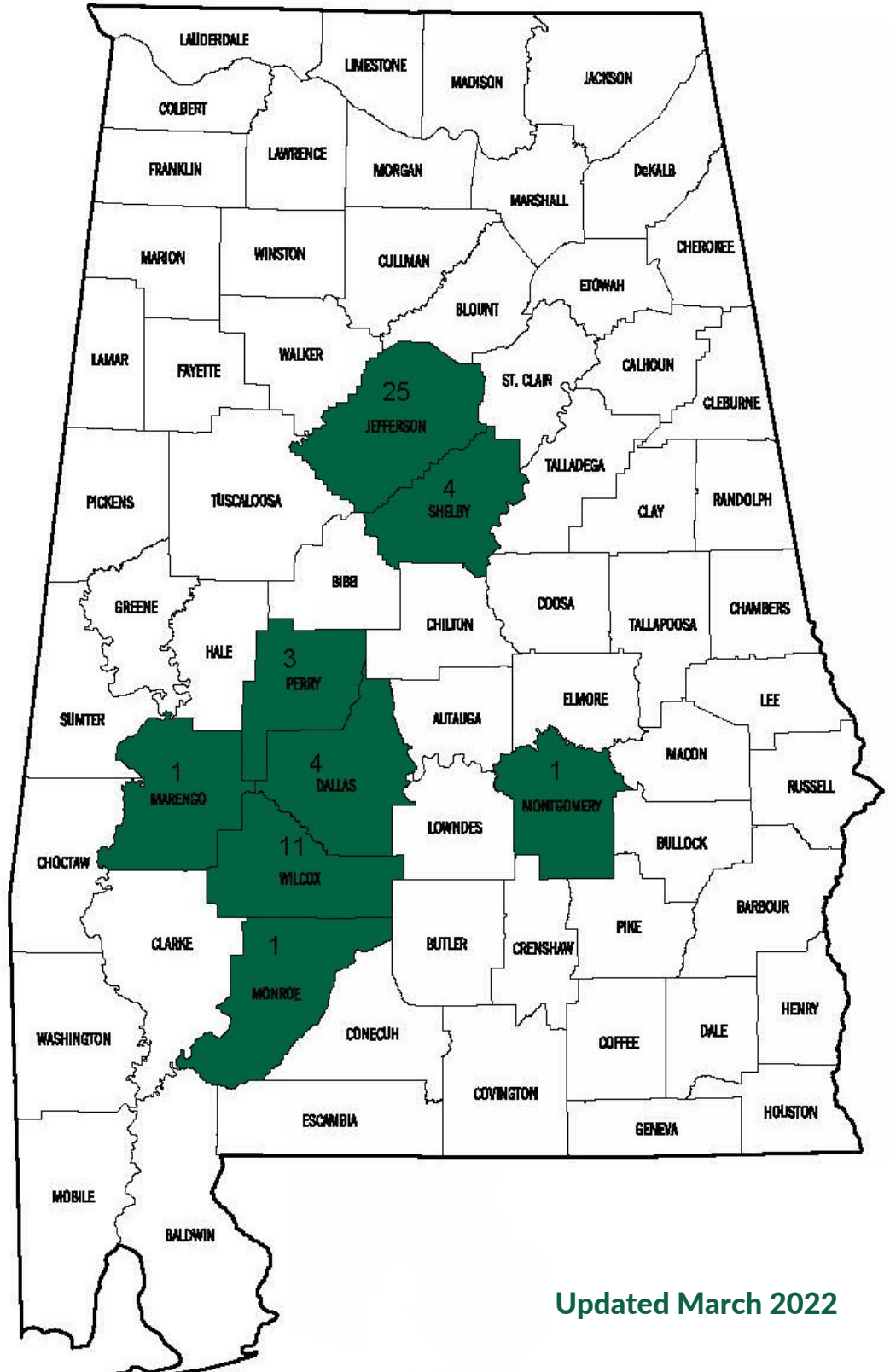
# VISTAS PER COUNTY

## ALABAMA

### What is the Black Belt?

Historically, the Black Belt spans from Virginia to Texas. The UAB AmeriCorps VISTA Statewide program serves 6 of the 17 counties in the Black Belt of Alabama with the intent of expanding.

These rural counties in southern Alabama often have limited access to resources. We prioritize placing VISTAs in the Black Belt who are from the Black Belt in order to serve their own communities through the identification of specific problems and needs.

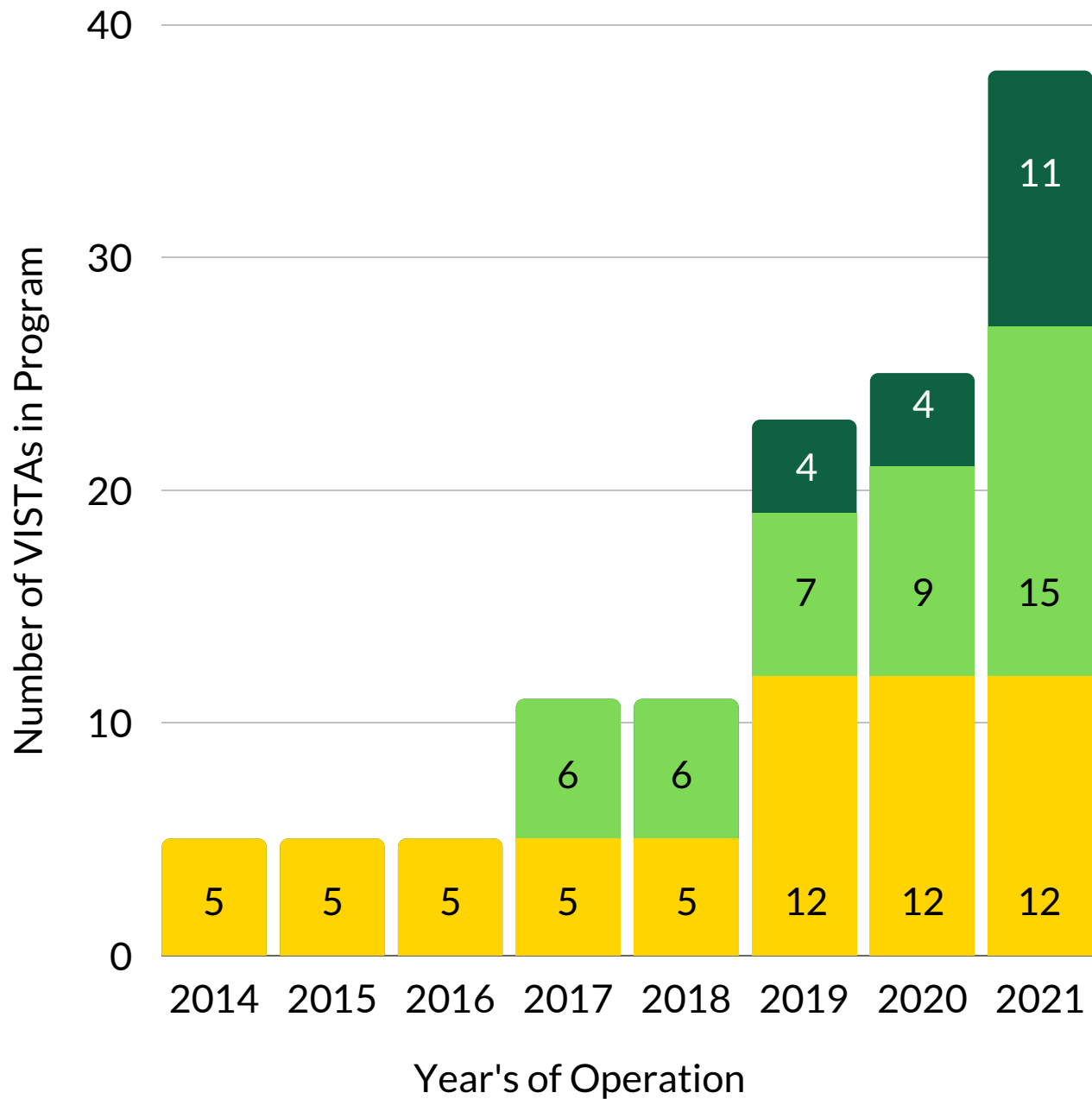


Updated March 2022



# VISTA GROWTH

In the 7 years that the program has been operating, we have expanded the number of VISTAs by 660%.



UAB

Black Belt

Community Org.



# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT/FUNDRAISING

**1,329** hours spent researching and writing grants by VISTA members

**1,204** hours spent participating in systems development by VISTA members

**740** hours spent planning and executing fundraisers by VISTA members

**\$34,469** leveraged by the VISTA members

**\$16,231** was the value of in-kind resources leveraged by VISTA members





# FEATURED HIGHLIGHTS

## BAMA Kids

Jaserica Angion developed several programs and initiatives to build the capacity of BAMA Kids, Inc. through working with young women of color. She developed relationships with young women aged 8-16 and engaged them in innovative programming. Additionally, Jaserica initiated a book club called "Girls, Beauty, and Books" where girls enhanced their reading skills and their self-concept. The young women read culturally relevant books and discussed them over Zoom.



## YouthServe

Amber Somma chaperoned five high school students as they volunteered with Bush Hills Community Garden for her MLK Day of Service project. Amber was amazed at how much land the Bush Hills Community Garden has and how much they had grown in recent years! The students were both organized and excited. Working alongside the youth, she got the chance to listen as they connected with each other by comparing their school's COVID precautions. They discussed how things have changed and how they would like things to change. It was a beautiful Day of Service."



# HOST SITES

Host sites: community partners, non-profits, higher education institutions, and faith-based organizations where we place AmeriCorps members through the UAB AmeriCorps VISTA Statewide program

AlaQuest Collaborative For Education

Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership

BAMA Kids

Black Belt Women Rising

Cahaba Riverkeeper

Central Six

Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

Coosa Riverkeeper

Jefferson County Department of Health

Grace Klein Community

Health Improvement League

LifeCrafters Foundation

Love Is What Love Does

New Awakening Recovery Services

New Life Pantry

Offender Alumni Association

Pine Apple Alumni Assoc.

Recovery Resource Center

Rural Heart and Lung Study

Sanitation Health Study

UAB Blazer Kitchen

UAB Family Clinic

UAB Office Of Service Learning & Undergraduate Research

UAB RURAL Grant

UAB Sanitation Health Study

UAB SOPH-Health Behavior

UAB Student Counseling Services

UAB Student Health and Wellness

UAB Sustainability

Urban Impact

West Central Alabama Community

West Homewood Co

YouthServe





# VISTAS IN ACTION





# VISTAS IN ACTION







# AmeriCorps

## **UAB** THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

