Annual Report 2013

ARISE
CITIZENS’ POLICY PROJECT

Your voice builds the future
Laying a foundation

Rome wasn't built in a day. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. There’s no such thing as an overnight success. Whatever your standby saying, the underlying message is the same: Great accomplishments require time and persistence. However small the things we do today may seem, they can play a huge role in shaping the tomorrow that later generations will know. The work we do now lays the foundation upon which our children and grandchildren will build a stronger, more inclusive Alabama.

Change, one person at a time

ACPP members have long understood the importance of building toward the long term. Two of ACPP’s seven annual issue priorities – tax reform and adequate state budgets for human services – have a permanent place on the policy agenda. It’s a nod toward their significance to virtually every other proposed public policy in the state. It’s also a recognition that change usually does not come quickly or easily, and that it almost never comes all at once. ACPP members know that the seeds of change planted today, given enough time and dedication, eventually will bear fruit.

One way you’ve made your dedication to the long term apparent is by sheer numbers. Nearly 200 of you turned out for our state policy conference at Auburn University Montgomery in February, and ACPP ended this year with nearly 50 percent more individual members than it had at the start. Your support is crucial to helping us maintain and expand our organizing and analysis, but your contributions go far beyond just financial backing.

A growing membership means more Alabamians are better equipped to educate their friends and neighbors about poverty issues. It means higher turnout and livelier discussion at the annual meetings where members select our issue priorities. It means an ever-larger chorus calling ever more loudly for a better Alabama.

ACPP at a glance

Arise Citizens’ Policy Project (ACPP), founded in 1997, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan statewide coalition of 145 congregations and organizations that promote public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. ACPP analyzes state policies and educates its members on poverty issues. ACPP has 501(c)(3) status, so contributions are tax-deductible.

Speaking up for all Alabamians

Your voices helped lay the foundation for a stronger consumer voice in Alabama’s health care system. When Gov. Robert Bentley assembled the Medicaid Advisory Commission to recommend more cost-effective ways to deliver health care services to the state’s neediest residents, policy team leader Jim Carnes was the lone consumer representative appointed to the 25-member commission. Arise assembled a coalition of 18 health consumer advocacy organizations to provide input on the proposed changes to the Medicaid care structure and to urge stronger opportunities for consumer feedback every step of the way.

The Legislature hewed closely to the commission’s recommended Medicaid reforms, approving a plan to provide Medicaid services through regional care organizations (RCOs), community-based provider networks that will manage the care of Medicaid patients in five geographic regions in Alabama. Lawmakers also agreed that consumers need a voice on the governing board and advisory committee of each RCO. The law empowers Alabama Arise and the Disabilities Leadership Coalition of Alabama to recommend those consumer representatives.

One part of Alabama’s health care system is under construction, but work continues elsewhere. Too many of our friends and neighbors still lack access to quality, affordable health care, leaving many of them one bad diagnosis away from bankruptcy. By making your voice heard, you can bring Alabama closer to the day when low-income people facing a medical emergency no longer have to worry that a financial emergency will accompany it.

The mightiest oak was once an acorn. Your support has helped ACPP rise from the grassroots to become a reliable, trusted voice in meeting halls and news media across the state. And your ongoing work to keep the interests of our most vulnerable friends and neighbors at the forefront of the public debate is laying a foundation for a stronger Alabama for everyone.
Dear ACPP Supporter,

Alabama has developed a reputation for outstanding collaboration among health care stakeholders. Among providers, consumer advocates and state department staff, we have seen cooperation and good will to create and carry out policy for the common good. It was how Alabama got the nation’s first approved SCHIP plan to create ALL Kids. And it was evident in preparation for implementation of the Affordable Care Act. All parties joined in designing a state Health Insurance Marketplace under the leadership of the commission appointed by Gov. Robert Bentley.

We were astonished when Bentley said in November that he would stop implementation of a Marketplace for insurance to cover middle-income people and Medicaid expansion to cover low-income workers. We were disappointed, but we sought reassurance in Bentley’s statement that he would not expand “a broken system.” We took it to mean that if lawmakers approved a Medicaid restructuring plan, Bentley could say his condition for expansion had been met.

Bentley named policy team leader Jim Carnes to the commission to reform Medicaid. But just as we said about the 1991 tax reform panel, we found this commission lacking in representation of citizens or consumers. If we were to be the only consumer advocate, we were determined to leverage that seat as a platform for the input and values of a spectrum of groups. I hope it’s a preview of our emerging role on utility issues and consumer debt.

We’re emerging as a source of leadership and vision for health care reform implementation. When we asked stakeholders how they would like us to spend a grant for outreach on health coverage, they said they wanted us to be the “go-to” group for how the entire effort fits together. I take that as a compliment to our staff, to our reputation for credible analysis, and to our base of members who create the groundswell of support for fair and progressive policies.

As we look to 2014, we must redouble our commitment to policies that support the common good. With wide collaboration, we can change Alabama.

Yours in hope,

Kimble Forrister
Executive Director

ACPP’s organizing work

As an Arise Citizens’ Policy Project member, you understand that people are hurting because of decisions made in the State House. You support ACPP because you believe low-income Alabamians deserve a voice in developing the policies that affect their lives. ACPP organizers work with communities to identify unfair state policies and change the attitudes that produce them.

We strengthen our coalition by deepening the involvement of our member groups. Through educational workshops and other meetings, we facilitate discussions about poverty issues and policy alternatives. ACPP organizers this year held 148 meetings across Alabama, including 85 events focused on health care reform.

Our e-advocacy network helps members and supporters learn about our issues and inform others, as well as advocate for policy changes. Technology is no substitute for direct relationship-building, but it enhances that work and gets even more people involved in the democratic process.

Providing quick and accessible policy information is the goal of our website, arisecitizens.org. Here you’ll find all our fact sheets, handbooks and other resources, along with the latest news coverage of poverty issues through our Daily News Digest and special sections on issues like health care reform and “untaxing groceries.”

ACPP’s policy analysis

Our policy team analyzes both proposed and current laws to assess their potential effects on low-income people in Alabama. ACPP’s analysts also work year-round to monitor broader poverty and economic trends at the state and national levels. The policy team produced five fact sheets and 15 issue briefs this year, as well as nine member newsletters. They also produced a report on the initial provisions of a new state law that creates income tax credits to help parents transfer children from “failing schools” to another public or private school.
We couldn’t do our work without you! Arise Citizens’ Policy Project thanks the following individuals and groups for their tax-deductible contributions received between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013:

Ellen Abell
Pippa Abston
Mattland Adams
Celeste Agan
Chet Alexander
Ruth Alford
Greg Allen
Jim Allen
John Allen
Rev. Diana Jordan Allende
Mary Beth Allison
Phyllis Alston
Sara Altherr
Charlotte Alvarez
Johanna Alvarez
Richard E. & Anne Amacher
William Anders
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Nancy Anderson
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Laura Atkinson
Carmen Austin
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Ntam & Bernice Baharanyi
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Don Coker
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Susan Colburn
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Dan & Kathleen Dunne
We appreciate your 2012-13 support!
Thank you, ACPP contributors —

We appreciate your 2012-13 support!

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Latham United Methodist Church
Prudential Foundation
Matching Gifts
Tuscaloosa’s One Place
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Birmingham

Arise Citizens’ Policy Project thanks the following foundations and organizations for their generous grants and contracts in 2012-13:

AARP
Alabama Asset Building Coalition
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
Page-Broughton Family Advised Fund
Community Foundation of West Alabama
WinterHill Advised Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Ford Foundation
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Pushback Network
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Stephens Foundation
Have you noticed that our 2013 donor list is almost 50 percent longer than last year’s? That’s phenomenal growth in one year! How did ACPP achieve this? The credit goes to our long-time supporters. Many of you extended a personal invitation to friends who share the vision of a better Alabama for all — for the rich and the poor, for the sick and the healthy, for those with deep roots and those newly arrived in the U.S.

Some helped spread our name by sponsoring an event. The June screening of the documentary film *A Place at the Table* at Monte Sano United Methodist Church in Huntsville produced many new members. Others learned about us as our organizers fanned out across the state to talk about the Affordable Care Act.

ACPP appreciates every name on this list, the first-time contributors and the loyal supporters who give generously year after year. Your contributions support the research and popular education that lay the groundwork for change. As ACPP grows statewide, our voice in Montgomery grows stronger, as does our capacity to educate citizens and lawmakers.

We extend a sincere thank you as well to our foundation partners, without whose support this work could not be done. Fair policies toward low-income people will have far-reaching outcomes. The Alabamians whose lives will be changed for the better may never know their benefactors, but they’ll feel the benefits for generations.

With appreciation and hope,

*Brenda Boman*
Development Director

ACPP financial report
Fiscal Year ended 6/30/13

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