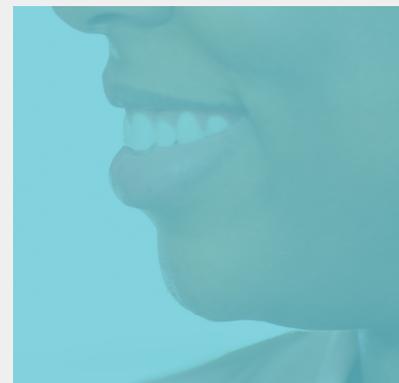




FY 2024

Annual Report



**Empowering Families.
Building Communities.
Creating Opportunities.**



ALABAMA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS FY 2024 THEORY OF CHANGE IMPACT

The Problem

27,482 residents are unable to afford their basic household needs. Primary concerns include housing, childcare, transportation, food insecurity, and physical/mental health.

The Vision

A community where every individual and family has access to the education, resources, and support needed to achieve lasting self-sufficiency, fulfilling their potential and contributing to a thriving, equitable, and inclusive society.

The Mission

Empowering low-income individuals and families in our community to break the cycle of poverty through education, emergency services, and partnerships that foster self-sufficiency and community well-being.

Integrity 🇺🇸 Empowerment 🇺🇸 Equity 🇺🇸 Compassion 🇺🇸 Community

In FY 2024, ACHR assisted nearly 15% of all low-income individuals in the service area.

1 Early Childhood Development

- 416 children demonstrated improved school readiness
- 257 parents increased engagement in their child's development
- 20 pregnant women improved their prenatal health through access to comprehensive healthcare services
- 20 children achieved consistent engagement in extended learning and peer interaction through wraparound care
- 170 children improved food security

2 Community Services

- 3,896 families stabilized their households by preventing or resolving a crisis situation
- 7 households experienced improved economic security

3 Housing Strategies

- 110 households experienced improved home energy efficiency
- Residents accessed over 400 affordable housing units

Welcome

Dear Friends, and Partners,

At the Alabama Council on Human Relations, our work begins with listening—to the needs, hopes, and realities of the families we serve. In FY2024, that guiding principle shaped every decision we made, every service we delivered, and every partnership we pursued.

This year, we faced continued challenges—from the rising cost of housing and food to the growing demand for affordable childcare. Yet, through it all, our team remained focused. We provided early education, strengthened family supports, expanded housing resources, and deepened community partnerships. Most importantly, we stood by the individuals and families working toward a better future.

Thank you for walking with us on this journey. Your trust and partnership make our work possible. Together, we're building stronger families, healthier communities, and lasting opportunity. We are proud of the progress made, and more committed than ever to the road ahead.

Tina Evans

Executive Director



Strong Families

**Healthy
Communities**

**Lasting
Opportunity**



Our Leadership

The Alabama Council on Human Relations is governed by a tri-partite Board of Directors, meaning it includes voices from three key sectors: public officials, private community leaders, and representatives of the low-income community.

This structure ensures that decisions are informed by a diverse range of perspectives —from policymakers to grassroots advocates, as well as professionals with expertise in law, finance, and early childhood education. Together, they help ACHR remain accountable, effective, and deeply connected to the needs of the families we serve.

Board Officers

- George Allen: President
- Suzanne Shaw: First Vice President
- Ruth Cole: Second Vice President
- Rick Ebbinghouse: Treasurer
- Charles Ingram, Jr: Attorney
- Lisa Harrelson: Secretary
- Virginia Transue: Secretary

Board Members

- Kimberly Berry
- Micah Bonner
- Harlee Crowder
- Betyee King
- Cheryl Mason
- Kim Roberts
- Robert Torbert, Jr

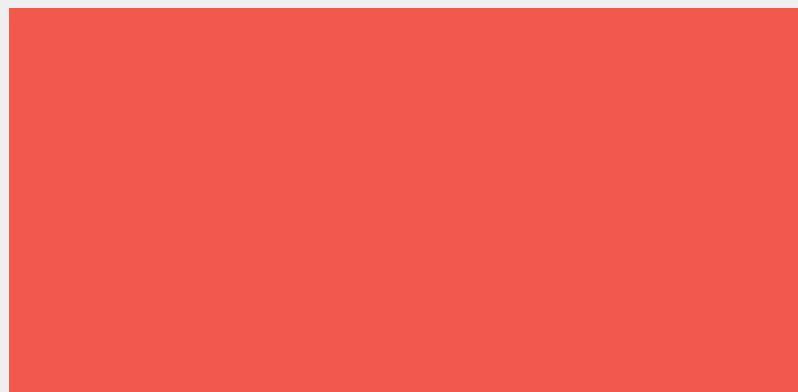
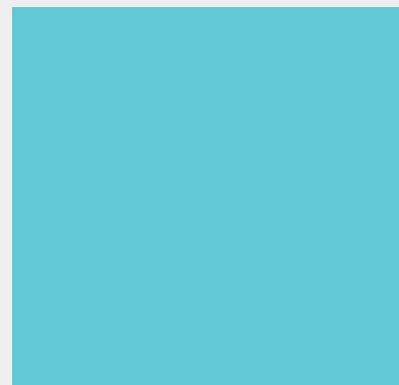


About Us

Founded in 1954, the Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR) is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families and communities thrive. Rooted in the principles of integrity, dignity, and opportunity, ACHR works to reduce poverty and improve quality of life across Lee, Macon, and Russell counties.

Today, ACHR operates a broad range of programs that serve children, parents, and individuals of all ages—providing access to early education, housing support, energy assistance, financial empowerment, food security, and family development. As a designated Community Action Agency and Head Start grantee, ACHR takes a whole-family approach to building resilience, supporting self-sufficiency, and creating lasting change.

70 Years





1954

1965

2024

What Makes Us Different?

- Tri-partite Governance ensures broad community input - from public officials, private sector partners, and low-income families.
- Our team includes professionals with expertise in education, housing, health, nutrition, finance, and more.
- We partner across sectors to meet complex needs with compassion, accountability, and innovation.
- We are part of a national network of over 1,000 Community Action Agencies who work together to reduce poverty and expand opportunities across the country.

Our Footprint

- We serve families in Lee, Macon, and Russell Counties, with a headquarters in Auburn, Alabama.

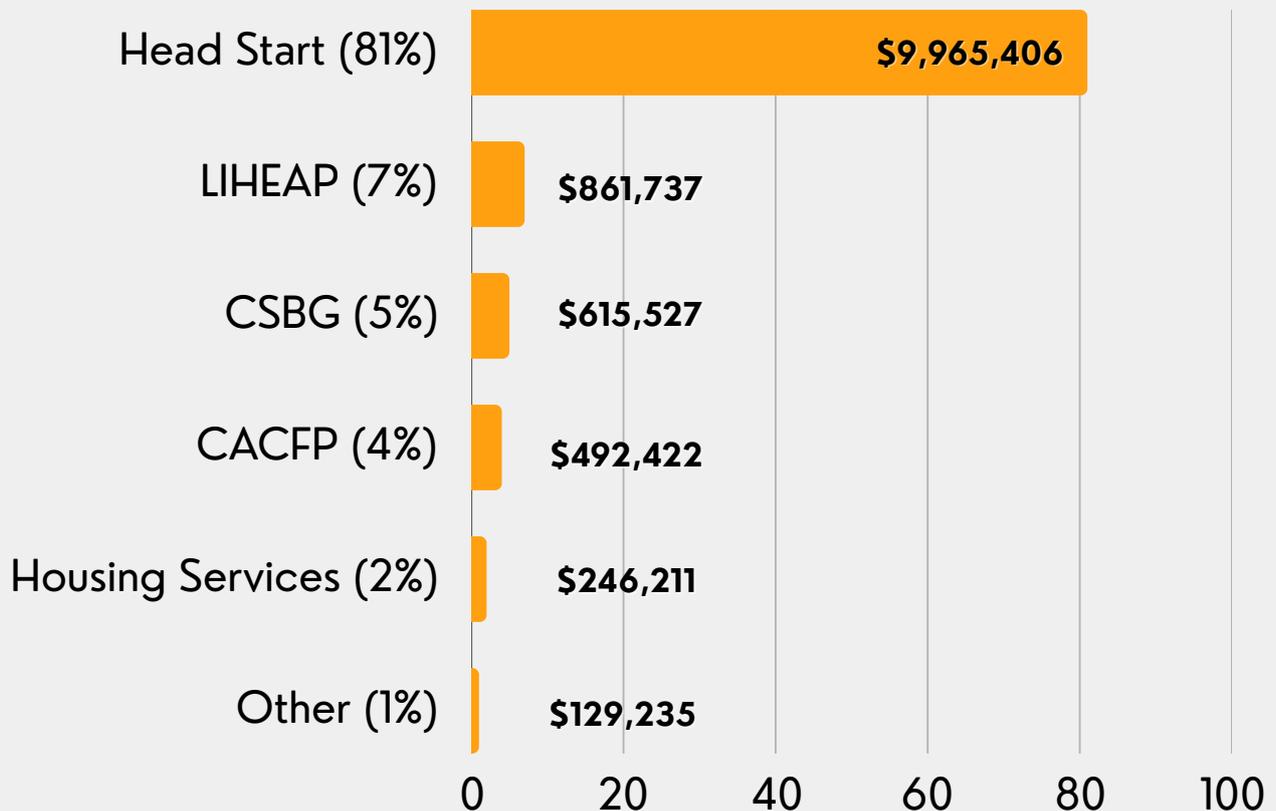
Our Legacy

- 1954: Founded to promote racial equity and human dignity.
- 1965: Became one of Alabama's first Head Start providers.
- 1980s-2000s: Expanded into housing counseling, energy efficiency repairs, and energy support.
- Today: We are a full-service Community Action Agency supporting thousands of families each year with the removal of barriers to economic independence.

Our Finances

In FY2024, the Alabama Council on Human Relations managed a total budget of more than \$12.3 million, funded through a diverse mix of federal, state, and local sources. The majority of ACHR’s revenue (81%) came from Head Start and Early Head Start, which support comprehensive early childhood education, family engagement, and school readiness for children in the service area. Additional funding came from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps families reduce their energy burdens, and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which supports emergency services, case management, and long-term family stability. ACHR also receives support from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide nutritious meals to children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start.

Smaller, yet vital, portions of the agency’s funding came through Housing Services, which include HUD and local grants used for housing counseling and affordable housing programs. The “Other” category includes local donations, in-kind support, and smaller grants that allow ACHR to remain flexible and responsive to emerging community needs.





As ACHR’s largest funding sources, Head Start and Early Head Start offer a clear view of how we invest in early education. These charts show that most funds supported direct service staff, reflecting our belief that well-trained professionals are essential to high-quality care. Additional investments covered benefits, classroom needs, operations, health and disability services, and safe transportation —reinforcing our commitment to whole-child, family-centered support.

Category	Percent of Total	Dollars Expended
----------	------------------	------------------

Head Start/Early Head Start Expenditures

Personnel (salaries/wages)	53%	\$5,282,665
Fringe Benefits	14%	\$1,395,157
Supplies & Operating Costs	13%	\$1,295,503
Facilities (rent, utilities, maintenance)	10%	\$996,541
Training and Technical Assistance	5%	\$498,207
Health, Disabilities, and Family Services	3%	\$298,962
Transportation	2%	\$199,308

In FY2024, ACHR continued its commitment to transparency and accountability in the administration of Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The agency’s independent financial audit for FY2024 was completed by a certified public accountant and formally presented to both the Governing Board and Policy Council in November 2024, in accordance with Head Start regulations. No federal monitoring reviews were conducted during the fiscal year, and all corrective actions from the previous FA2 review, completed in February 2022, were successfully resolved by August 2022. ACHR maintains robust internal oversight systems to ensure ongoing compliance with all applicable performance standards and fiscal requirements.

Our Impact

ACHR doesn't just operate programs—we pursue lasting change. That's why we use proven management systems to make sure every effort leads to real, measurable results for the families and communities we serve.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)

ROMA is the system used by Community Action Agencies nationwide to define success, measure impact, and improve services. It helps us look beyond outputs (like meals served or homes weatherized) and focus on real outcomes—like improved school readiness or increased family stability. ACHR operates under the guidance of a Nationally Certified ROMA Master Trainer with nearly 30 years of experience in Community Action, ensuring that our use of the framework is both rigorous and effective.

The Mission Aligned Data Driven (MADD) Approach

Built on the foundation of ROMA, the Mission-Aligned, Data-Driven (MADD) approach integrates proven business frameworks—including Lean, Six Sigma, Hoshin Kanri, Agile/Scrum, and other results-focused philosophies. The MADD model ensures that every strategy is aligned with the organization's identity (mission, vision, and values), and that every decision is informed by real-time data, not assumptions. From setting goals to evaluating impact, MADD drives ACHR toward organizational excellence—connecting big-picture strategy with day-to-day execution. MADD keeps our agency focused on integrity, transparency, and continuous improvement—while staying grounded in the needs of our region.

School Readiness Domains

In our early childhood programs, success is measured not just by enrollment or attendance, but by how well children are prepared to thrive in school and beyond. ACHR follows the nationally recognized school readiness domains to guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These domains—social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy, cognition, and physical development—are deeply embedded into daily classroom routines, lesson planning, and teacher-child interactions. By intentionally focusing on each area of development, our programs help children build the foundational skills they need for lifelong learning. This approach aligns directly with our broader ROMA and MADD frameworks, ensuring that early childhood strategies are both mission-aligned and data-driven—delivering real, measurable impact for children and families.



Our Strategies

ACHR organizes its work into three primary categories: Early Childhood Development, Community Services, and Housing. These areas guide how we design, deliver, and evaluate programs—ensuring every effort supports measurable progress for families and communities. The following pages highlight each category in more detail.

Early Childhood Development:

Programs that support school readiness, healthy development, and strong families.

- Head Start/Early Head Start Programs
- Parenting Education and Engagement Programs
- Pregnant Mothers Program
- Wrap Around Daycare Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program

Community Services:

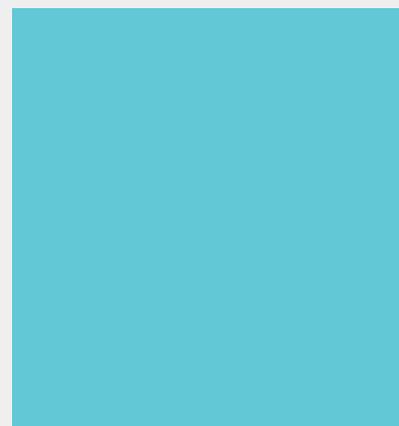
Programs that address basic needs and promote movement out of poverty.

- Emergency Services Program
- Case Management Program

Housing Strategies:

Programs that develop and improve local housing units.

- Home Weatherization Program
- Affordable Housing Initiative





Programs that support school readiness, healthy development, and strong families.



Early Childhood Development

Head Start and Early Head Start

For more than 50 years, Head Start and Early Head Start have delivered early education, health, nutrition, and family support services to low-income children and families. At ACHR, these programs support the whole child—promoting social, emotional, and academic growth while partnering with parents as their child’s first and most important teacher. School readiness is assessed through ongoing observation of progress in literacy, language, math, and social-emotional skills. Since healthy children are better prepared to learn, ACHR invests in strong health partnerships and preventive care. School readiness remains a key priority—because when children enter school ready to succeed, they are more likely to thrive in school, break the cycle of poverty, and build a better future.

 **Impact:** 416 children demonstrated improved school readiness

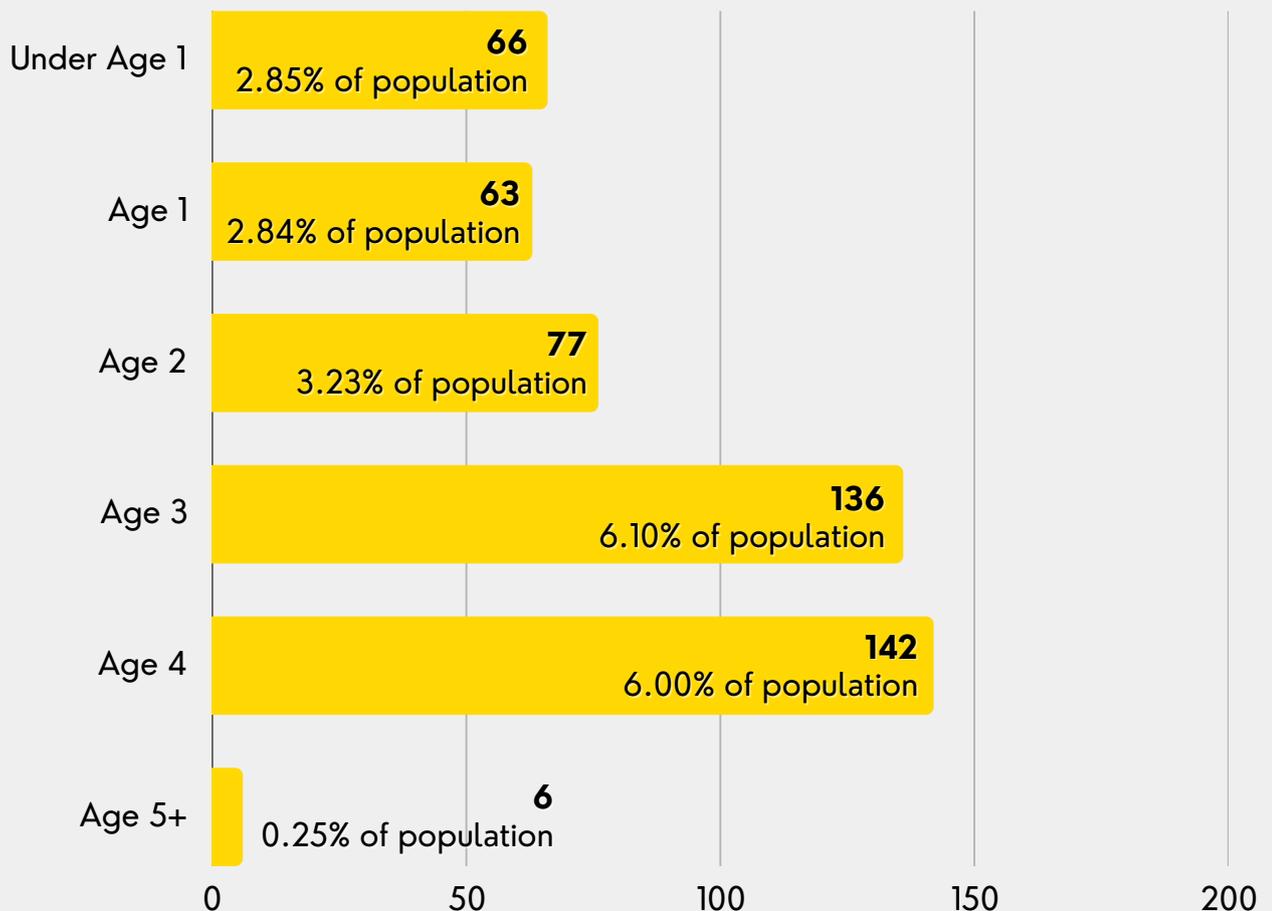
Health Outcomes:

- 474 children (96.73%) were up to date on all age-appropriate immunizations at the end of enrollment.
 - Head Start: 283 children (99.65%)
 - Early Head Start: 191 (92.72%)
- 369 children (75.31%) were up-to-date on a schedule of well-care.
 - Head Start: 173 children (60.92%)
 - Early Head Start: 196 children (95.15%)
- 436 children (88.98%) had continuous access to a dental home.
 - Head Start: 262 children (92.25%)
 - Early Head Start: 174 children (84.47%)
- 117 Head Start children received a professional dental exam
- 96 Head Start children received preventative oral health care
- 46 Head Start children were diagnosed as needing dental treatment, 43 of which received it.
- 33 children had an individualized plan to support developmental or educational needs—ensuring they received the early intervention or special education services they needed. (26 had an IEP; 7 had an IFSP.)



Each year, the federal government allocates a set number of funded slots to support Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment—essentially, the number of children and families a program can serve at any one time. Over the course of the year, more children are often served than slots available due to relocation, eligibility changes, or transitions to other care facilities. ACHR carefully manages enrollment to ensure every available slot supports a child in need. Eligibility is based on federal guidelines, prioritizing children experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, or from families receiving public assistance or living in poverty. These criteria ensure resources reach those with the greatest need—offering early support where it matters most.

Program	Population	Slots	# Served	% Served
Head Start	6,959	267	284	4.08%
Early Head Start	6,923	192	206	2.98%



Eligibility Category

- Public Assistance: 213
- Income Under Poverty: 175
- Homeless: 24
- Foster Care: 6
- Other: 42
- 100-130% Poverty EHS: 9

Parenting Education and Engagement Programs:

Parenting engagement is a key driver in a child’s educational, emotional, and social development, which in turn supports school readiness and sets the foundation for lifelong success. Research consistently shows that when parents are actively involved in their child’s learning, it leads to better academic outcomes, improved emotional well-being, and helps reduce the risk of long-term poverty. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework provides a structured approach to fostering these vital parent-child relationships, emphasizing the importance of parents as the child’s first teacher. This framework ensures that families are equipped with the tools and support needed to create environments that nurture learning. Through initiatives like RAGS, parents engage in meaningful activities—such as grocery store trips—designed to enhance their child’s skill development and learning. These efforts not only help children succeed but also empower families to improve their own lives.

 **Impact:** 257 parents increased engagement in their child’s development.

Key Indicators:

- 246 parents participated in the RAGS program, engaging with their children through learning activities such as grocery store trips that focus on skill-building.
- 69 fathers/father figures were actively involved in their children's early education through family assessments, setting goals, and participating in child development activities.
- 68 families participated in a research-based parenting curriculum, helping parents better support their children's development and school readiness.
- 37 fathers/father figures took part in their children's Head Start development experiences, including home visits and parent-teacher conferences.

257

Parents with
increased
engagement





Pregnant Mothers Program:

For pregnant mothers, Early Head Start (EHS) provides essential prenatal and postnatal care, supporting expectant mothers and their infants to ensure healthy development and positive birth outcomes. The program is designed to address the critical need for prenatal care, which, if not adequately provided, is associated with poor birth outcomes such as low birth weight and preterm births. Research shows that the lack of prenatal care, especially among low-income populations, can perpetuate cycles of poverty and contribute to long-term educational and developmental disadvantages. By providing these mothers with access to health services, education, and nutritional support, EHS promotes both maternal health and the early development of children, ensuring they are set up for success and reducing the risk of entering the cycle of poverty. Funded by the Early Head Start grant, this program ensures that expectant mothers receive individualized care plans and consistent health visits while also offering valuable education on topics such as fetal development, breastfeeding, infant care, and safe sleep practices.

Services provided through the Early Head Start Pregnant Mother Program include prenatal health care, postpartum care, and educational workshops focused on healthy pregnancy practices, infant care, and the importance of nutrition and safe sleep practices. The program also facilitates access to substance abuse treatment when necessary, along with providing connections to healthcare providers and social support services.

 **Impact:** 20 pregnant women improved their prenatal health through access to comprehensive healthcare services.

Key Indicators:

- 14 pregnant women gained a deeper understanding of fetal development through educational sessions focused on healthy pregnancy.
- 12 pregnant women increased their knowledge and preparedness for breastfeeding and infant care through specialized education on the topic.
- 11 pregnant women ensured timely newborn care by scheduling and attending visits within two weeks of delivery.
- 10 pregnant women improved postpartum recovery by obtaining necessary health services to ensure long-term well-being.
- 2 pregnant women improved oral health outcomes through professional assessments and treatment.

Wrap Around Daycare Program:

The Wrap Around Daycare Program strengthens ACHR's early childhood continuum by bridging critical gaps in child supervision during non-traditional hours. Serving as an extension of Head Start and Early Head Start, the program enables working families to sustain employment, training, or education by offering structured, developmentally appropriate care beyond standard hours. Embedded within the Darden Center and supported by the City of Opelika, the program primarily benefits siblings and former participants of Head Start and Early Head Start, ensuring consistency in care and continuity in developmental progress. This alignment supports ACHR's strategic commitment to helping families achieve economic stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

 **Impact:** 20 children achieved consistent engagement in extended learning and peer interaction through wraparound care.

Child and Adult Care Food Program:

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) plays a pivotal role in ACHR's early childhood and community support strategies by addressing food insecurity among young children. Through partnerships with 23 licensed family and group daycare home providers, CACFP supports healthy child development by ensuring consistent access to nutritionally balanced meals aligned with USDA guidelines. This program reinforces ACHR's Early Childhood Development goals, complementing Head Start and Early Head Start by serving children in non-center-based settings and helping family childcare homes remain viable for working families. The program also strengthens economic opportunity for home providers, allowing them to continue serving low-income families despite rising operational costs.

 **Impact:** 170 children improved food security.

170
Children
improved food
security



Sensory Rooms:

In FY2024, ACHR introduced Sensory Rooms in all early childhood centers—creating calming, multisensory environments that support children’s emotional regulation, self-awareness, and developmental growth.

These spaces are thoughtfully designed to reduce overstimulation and help children learn how to manage their feelings, focus their attention, and engage in meaningful learning experiences. Often called Multisensory Rooms, they integrate specialized lighting, sound, textures, and tactile tools to gently stimulate or soothe a child’s senses—supporting social-emotional development, cognitive growth, and physical coordination.

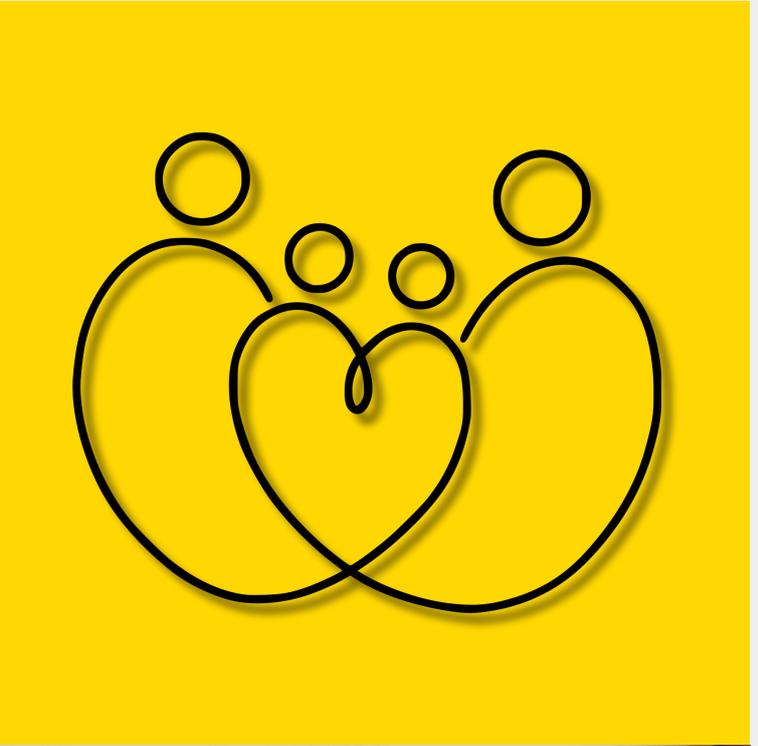


Sensory Rooms are a perfectly curated environment that takes the child's individual needs and requirements into account and allows them to develop at their own pace.

Each room supports:

- Emotional safety for children managing stress or sensory overload
- Self-regulation skill-building critical for classroom success
- Developmental progress through play-based, therapeutic interaction

This innovation is part of ACHR’s commitment to whole-child development, trauma-informed care, and inclusive learning environments. By offering children safe, supportive spaces to reset and recharge, ACHR continues to lead with compassion, creativity, and mission-aligned innovation.



**Programs that address
basic needs and
promote movement
out of poverty.**



Community Services

Emergency Services Program:

ACHR's Emergency Services Program provides short-term assistance to help individuals and families overcome crisis situations and stabilize their households. Funded through a combination of CSBG, EFSP, LIHEAP, ABC Trust, and Dollar Help resources, the program helps income-eligible residents meet essential needs such as food, housing, and utility costs. While the support is temporary, the goal is long-term—restoring stability and preventing deeper hardship. Emergency assistance often serves as a gateway to other services, helping families regain footing and connect with case management, education, or employment resources that promote long-term self-sufficiency. Every intervention is guided by real-time data and client needs, aligning with ACHR's broader anti-poverty strategy to build stronger, more resilient communities.

 **Impact:** 3,896 families stabilized their households by preventing or resolving a crisis situation

Key Indicators:

- 3,873 households achieved greater home stability and safety by maintaining essential utility services, reducing the risk of crisis and displacement.
- 43 households sustained housing by preventing eviction.
- 2 homeless households obtained safe and affordable housing, improving stability and safety.



3,896
families
prevented/resolved
crisis

3,873
households
achieved
stability/safety



Case Management Program:

The Case Management Program, supported through the Community Services Block Grant and other funding sources, helps individuals and families move beyond crisis by addressing root causes of poverty. Unlike emergency assistance, case management requires an ongoing, collaborative relationship between staff and participants—built on trust, coaching, and accountability. Participants complete comprehensive assessments, set realistic goals, and work through barriers to success. While the number of individuals served may be small, the results are transformational. Achieving long-term economic security—whether through increased income, stable housing, or reduced dependency on public support—requires sustained effort, intensive support, and significant personal growth. For many, it marks the turning point toward a better life.

Impact: 7 households experienced improved economic security.



7
households
improved
economic security





**Programs that develop
and improve local
housing units.**



Housing Strategies

Home Weatherization Program:

The Weatherization Assistance Program at ACHR is designed to reduce the energy burden on income-eligible homeowners by improving the energy efficiency and safety of their homes. Through comprehensive home assessments and diagnostic testing, qualified households receive targeted upgrades such as insulation, air sealing, and ventilation improvements. These measures not only lower utility bills but also create healthier indoor environments by addressing conditions that contribute to poor air quality and respiratory issues. The process begins with an application and eligibility screening, followed by an energy audit conducted by certified professionals. Homes are prioritized based on need, and upgrades are performed by contractors trained to meet rigorous state and federal standards. While the program does not cover major structural repairs, it focuses on delivering high-impact, energy-saving improvements that promote long-term stability, comfort, and health for the families served.

 **Impact:** 110 households experienced improved home energy efficiency.

Key Indicators:

- 30 households experienced improved health and safety.
- The average energy savings per household was \$400 annually.





Housing Development Initiative:

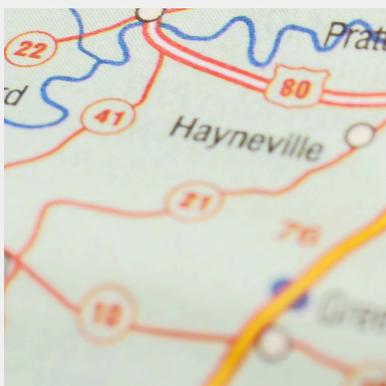
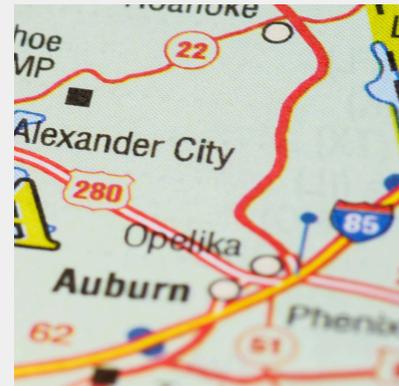
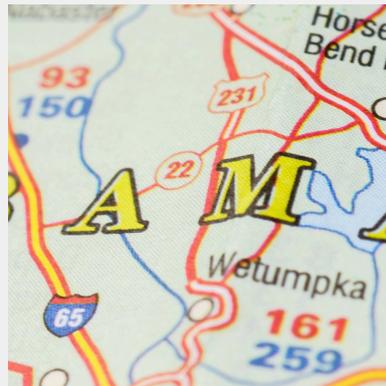
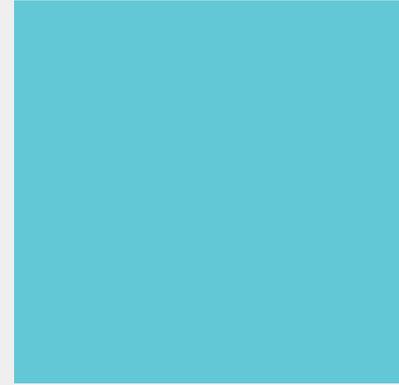
ACHR's Affordable Housing Properties Initiative addresses the urgent need for safe, stable, and affordable housing in the communities it serves. By developing and maintaining housing units across Alabama, the program provides long-term housing solutions for low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. The initiative focuses on offering quality homes that are not only affordable but also built or rehabilitated to meet safety and accessibility standards. Through coordinated outreach, community partnerships, and a network of referrals, eligible tenants are connected to available housing options. ACHR collaborates with private developers and leverages federal programs—including HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships—to increase the supply of affordable housing. Each property is professionally managed and maintained to ensure residents live in dignified, supportive environments that promote stability and self-sufficiency.

 **Impact:** Residents accessed over 400 affordable housing units across 12 properties managed by ACHR.

400+

Affordable
housing units





Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc.

 (334) 821-8336

 950 Shelton Mill Road / P.O. Box 3770
Auburn, AL 36831-3770

 www.achr.com