



State of Alabama
Governor's Office on Disability
FY 2016



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Staff

Dr. 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 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 was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1990. He received a certificate in Rehabilitation Leadership and Management from Auburn University in May, 2009. Graham served as an adjunct law professor teaching a disability law course at the Birmingham School of Law and taught a doctoral course in disability law and history at Auburn University. Graham is a 2016 graduate of Auburn University with a PhD in Rehabilitation, Counseling, and Leadership. He has lived with a disability since 1982.

Marlene Word, Deputy Director



Marlene was appointed as Executive Assistant of the Governor’s Office on Disability in July 2013 and was appointed as Deputy Director in December 2016. Marlene attended Huntingdon College. She previously worked at Carr, Riggs and Ingram, Fire Guard Protection Systems, Legislative Reference Service, and Auburn University at Montgomery where she was an adjunct professor in the Communications Department. Marlene served as the Communications Director and Senior Manager of the third largest home health agency in the state, Central Alabama Home Health. Marlene was CEO and President of her publishing company, Dispatch Publishers, producing the weekly newspaper, *Maxwell-Gunter Dispatch* and the monthly national newspaper, *Civil Air Patrol News*. Marlene volunteered at Montgomery’s American Cancer Society, Sunshine Center, and served as the publicity chairman for the Montgomery Civic Ballet. She also served as the charter president of the Maxwell Air Force Base Kiwanis Club. Marlene was appointed to the Alabama Lifespan Respite Coalition in January 2016.



Letter From Executive Director

I would like to thank the Governor and the Alabama Legislature for their continuing support of GOOD. Fiscal Year 2016 has been another year of positive growth and change for the office. GOOD maintains nine local advisory committees around the state which provide grassroots input about unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities and increases the visibility of the office. Likewise, a State Advisory Council continues to provide 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 has been updated to be more user-friendly and includes additional resources. GOOD is available to do training, accessibility surveying, and speaking at meetings or seminars at no cost. To schedule training, speaking engagements, or surveying, call the Alabama ADA Hotline at 800-205-9986. Meetings continue to be held with other state agencies to foster collaboration and maximize state resources for people with disabilities. A special thanks is again given to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for its close partnership with GOOD.

Information about disability issues and training continues to be disseminated throughout the state. Awareness is a powerful tool which leads to greater access for individuals with disabilities. GOOD also 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.

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

Sincerely,

Dr. 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.”

The Executive Order 15 in 2011 re-established the Governor's Office on Disability under the new administration. Because 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, is one tool that is being expanded to facilitate open dialogue and access on disability resources and issues. Additionally, GOOD holds a Disability Summit to bring together leaders of public agencies and non-profit organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.

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, 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's 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's actions and activities when possible.

GOOD Stewards

The Governor’s Office on Disability understands the need for accountability and being good stewards of our State’s funds. Along with this important commitment, we are also committed to being compassionate, responsive, and caring to each caller or contact we encounter. While we do track the number of calls we receive, we strive to make the caller feel they are ‘more than just a number.’ We are proud that we exceeded our actual goal for the number of calls for the first time in the history of the agency in 2015 and met our goal in 2016.

The following are just a few of the many changes made beginning in 2014 and continued in 2015 and 2016.

- Produce GOOD’s Annual Reports using agency staff and distributing electronically
- Produce and print GOOD Agency brochures and other materials using agency staff
- Collaborate with other agencies and companies who provide resources

A GOOD Experience

While we do track the number of calls we receive, we strive to make the caller feel they are ‘more than just a number.’

FY 2016 Budget

Personnel Costs	\$44,600
Employee Benefits	\$19,883
Travel-in-State	710
Travel Out-of-State	0
Repairs & Maintenance	0
Rentals & Leases	0
Utilities & Communications	\$141
Professional Services	\$13,021
Supplies, Materials & Operating Expenses	\$3,259
Grants & Benefits	\$16,279
Other Equipment Purchases	0
Total	<u>\$98,893</u>

FY 2016 Smart Budget

<u>Number of Inquiries</u>		<u>Number responded to within 72 hours</u>	
Projected	1100	Projected	100%
Actual	932	Actual	100%

Governor's Office on Disability

Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2016

I. Disability Summit

Collaboration and Dissemination Initiatives with SACAP's Disability Summit in April of 2016 and The Governor's Disability Employment Summit in October of 2016

II. Convening Disability Consumer Advisory Councils

- 9 Regional Council Meetings during each fiscal year
- State Advisory Council meetings quarterly
- As part of GOOD's partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) on ADA and Effective Communication and Improving the Health of People with Disabilities through State Based Public Health Programs, these topics were discussed at the 9 regional meetings. In addition ADPH provided EMA materials and weather radios to participants at these meetings.

III. Trainings/Disability Awareness

ADA

- In collaboration with the Alabama's ADA toll free information services conducted FY 2016:
 - ◊ 28 ADA Trainings
 - ◊ 26 Accessibility Reviews/Consultations
- Partnership with Alabama Department of Public Health on "Improving the Health of People with Disabilities through State Based Public Health Programs" grant.

IV. Information and Referral

- Number of inquiries on disability issues FY 2016
 - ◊ 932 inquiries

V. Website

- Continuously updating website, resources, and corresponding with members on the GOOD List

VI. Legislation Initiative

- GOOD worked on legislation to address some of the unmet needs of Alabamians with disabilities. This legislation included the following:
 - ◊ **Accessible Parking** - Removal of minimum fine requirements enabling language to deputize trained persons to issue tickets to accessible parking violators. Requiring some form of identification on accessible parking placards.
 - ◊ **New Assistive Devices Warranty Act** - Extend Lemon Law protection to purchasers of assistive devices including but not limited to wheel chairs and hearing aids.
 - ◊ **Voter with Disability and/or over age 70** - Require election official to allow a voter who has a physical disability or over the age of 70 to move to the front of the voting line if requested by the voter.
 - ◊ **Motor Vehicle Disability Parking Placards**
 - ◊ **ABLE Act** - Bill to implement federal ABLE Act. The federal ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act allows certain persons with disabilities to create savings accounts for expenses not otherwise covered.

VII. FAND—Functional and Access Needs in Disasters Task Force

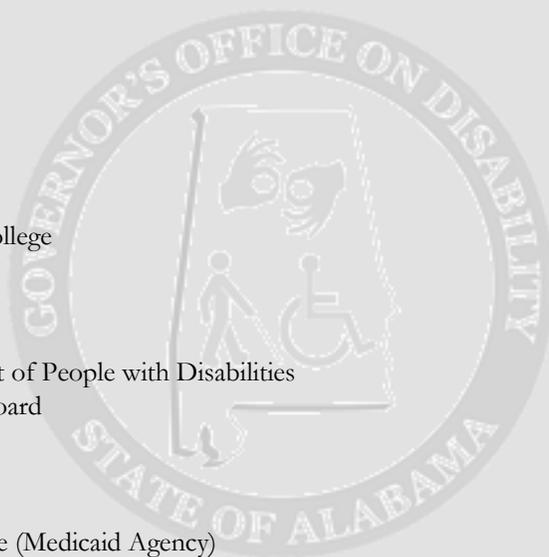
The GOOD took a leadership role in this statewide taskforce in 2013 and continued through 2016. Originally named the Special Populations Taskforce, it was renamed Functional and Access Needs in Disaster to accurately reflect its purpose of ensuring Alabamians with functional and accessible needs are not only considered, but included in all phases of emergency management.

Dr. Sisson co-chairs this group along with Elena Parker-Merriweather from the Alabama Department of Public Health. FAND has developed a strategic plan and subcommittees to create a statewide infrastructure to meet the needs of Alabamians with disabilities in disasters. Dr. Sisson continues to serve as liaison between FAND and the Governor's Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce. Those interested in joining this effort should contact Dr. Sisson at 800-441-7607 extension 7189.

Governor's Office on Disability
Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2016

VIII. Partnerships

Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities
Alabama Department of Public Health
Alabama Disability Advocacy Program
Alabama Emergency Management Agency
Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund
Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum
Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council
Alabama Lifespan Respite Coalition
Alabama Multiagency Feeding Plan
Alabama Statewide Assistive Technology Advisory Council
Alabama State Interagency Transition Team
Alabama State University
Alabama Transit Coalition
Alabaster Career Centers
Auburn University
Birmingham Committee on ADA
Blind Advisory Committee
Camp ASCCA
Central Alabama Community College
City of Auburn
Deaf/Blind Coalition
DSPN Advisory Board, Huntingdon College
Disabilities Rights & Resources
Epilepsy Foundation
Family Voices of Alabama
Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
Home Medical Equipment Licensure Board
Jacksonville State University
Lakeshore Foundation
Lee County Board of Education
Long-term Care Rebalancing Committee (Medicaid Agency)
Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
Mobile Center for Independent Living
Montgomery Center for Independent Living
Montgomery Library for the Blind Advisory Committee
Montgomery Employment Group
National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils
OASIS Advisory Council
People First
RespectAbility
Southeast ADA Network Training Team
Special Education Advisory Panel
State of Alabama Independent Living Council
State Rehabilitation Council
Trenholm State
University of Alabama Birmingham/Civitan-Sparks Consumer Advisory Council
United Way of Birmingham
University of South Alabama



GOOD

Partnering with

Jacksonville State University



On February 1, 2016 Dr. Graham Sisson presented Jacksonville State University with a Governor's proclamation in recognition of JSU's significant efforts to improve ADA accessibility of its campus. Pictured above left to right are Julie Nix, Director of Counseling and Disability Support Services, Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of GOOD, and David Thompson, Director of Capital Planning and Facilities.



Governor's Office on Disability Advisory Council through Fiscal Year 2016

Dr. Dave Martin, Chairman
Auburn, Alabama
Parent Advocate

Jackie Franklin
Vina, Alabama
Person with a disability

Courtney Tarver
Montgomery, Alabama
State Agency/Mental Health Advocate

Kent Crenshaw*
Montgomery, Alabama
Person with a disability

Steve Hamerdinger
Montgomery, Alabama
Person with a disability

James Tucker
Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Statewide Disability Advocacy Program

Michael Davis*
Mobile, Alabama
Person with a disability

Dan Kessler
Birmingham, Alabama
Independent Living Center representative

Karl Wade
Prattville, Alabama
Person with a disability

Christine Fleming
Auburn University
Research Advocate

John Stephenson
Jackson Gap, Alabama
Recreational Access representative

*Minority representative

Local Consumer Advisory Councils

Councils serve as an opportunity for grassroots input from people with disabilities and their families and are located in the following areas:

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

Consumer Advisory Council Meetings



Dr. Graham Sisson, Executive Director of GOOD presents Eugenia Cunningham with a weather radio (provided by ADPH) at the Gadsden/Darden GOOD VR Consumer Advisory Council Meeting.



Marlene Word (on the right) Deputy Director of GOOD presents Beverly Peters with a weather radio (provided by ADPH) at the Muscle Shoals GOOD VR Consumer Advisory Council Meeting.

Civilians Ages Under 5 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama, by Disability Status: 2015

State	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
U.S.	19,792,094	148,609	0.8	19,643,485	99.2
AL	285,122	2,348	0.8	282,774	99.2

Civilians Ages 5 to 17 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama by Disability Status: 2015

State	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
U.S.	53,699,837	2,885,179	5.4	50,814,658	94.6
AL	821,594	51,245	6.2	770,349	93.8

Civilians Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama by Disability Status: 2015

State	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
U.S.	198,521,616	20,411,546	10.4	178,110,070	89.6
AL	2,931,080	435,585	14.9	2,495,495	85.1

Civilians Ages 65 Years and Over Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama by Disability Status: 2015

State	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
U.S.	46,437,022	16,460,994	35.4	29,976,028	64.6
AL	743,274	307,897	41.4	435,577	58.6

Employment—Civilians with Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	20,411,548	7,117,518	34.9
AL	435,585	121,330	27.9

Employment—Civilians with Hearing Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	3,989,691	2,023,945	51.0
AL	75,366	35,510	47.1

Employment—Civilians with Vision Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	3,788,788	1,583,184	41.8
AL	83,744	28,070	33.5

Employment—Civilians with Cognitive Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	8,750,935	2,230,830	25.5
AL	184,333	34,687	18.8

Employment—Civilians with Ambulatory Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and Alabama

State	Total	Employed	
		Employed Count	% [1]
U.S.	10,092,267	2,435,850	24.1
AL	241,439	45,065	18.7



Join The GOOD List

www.good.alabama.gov

The Governor's Office on Disability

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Montgomery, Al 36104

334-293-7228/334-293-7189

Toll Free: 888-879-3582