



Kay Ivey  
Governor



Graham L. Sisson, Jr.  
Executive Director

# State of Alabama Governor's Office on Disability FY 2017



It's All GOOD



**The Honorable  
Kay Ivey  
Governor  
State of Alabama**



KAY IVEY, GOVERNOR  
STATE OF ALABAMA

This annual report contains some of the work the Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD) has done in FY 17 to help the 4,863,300 individuals with disabilities in Alabama (based on the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau). I rely on GOOD to provide reliable and helpful information on disability resources and the unmet needs of affected Alabamians. My administration is committed to increasing opportunities for people with disabilities in Alabama as well as increasing employment opportunities through Governor's Disability Job Fairs.

GOOD is an excellent resource. If you need assistance with disability-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact the Governor's Office on Disability.

*Kay Ivey*



## Letter from Executive Director

I would like to thank the Governor and the Alabama Legislature for their continuing support of GOOD. Fiscal Year 2017 has been another year of positive growth and change for the office. GOOD continues to maintain 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 and obtain information at the grassroots level.

The GOOD website has been revised to be even 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](http://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.

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*Featured Left to Right: Marlene Word, Deputy Director, Governor’s Office on Disability, Dr. Graham L. Sisson, Jr., Executive Director, Governor’s Office on Disability, The Honorable Kay Ivey, Governor of Alabama.*

## 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.

## 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](http://www.good.alabama.gov), is one tool that is being expanded to facilitate open dialogue and access on disability resources and issues. 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'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 like 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 2017.

The following are just a few of the many changes made beginning in 2014 and continued in the years that followed:

- 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 like they are ‘more than just a number.’

### FY 2017 Budget

Personnel Costs .....	\$50,293
Employee Benefits .....	\$20,820
Travel-in-State .....	\$516
Travel Out-of-State .....	0
Repairs & Maintenance .....	0
Rentals & Leases .....	0
Utilities & Communications .....	\$110
Professional Services .....	\$2,946
Supplies, Materials & Operating Expenses .....	\$2,113
Grants & Benefits .....	\$14,398
Other Equipment Purchases .....	\$2,992
Total .....	\$94,188

### FY 2017 Smart Budget

<u>Number of Inquiries</u>		<u>Number responded to within 72 hours</u>	
Projected	1100	Projected	100%
Actual	805	Actual	100%

# **Governor's Office on Disability**

## **Goals and Accomplishments for FY 2017**

### **I. Disability Summits, Conferences and Job Fairs**

The Governor's Disability Employment Summit in October of 2017  
Collaboration and Dissemination Initiatives with SACAP's Disability Summit in April of 2017

### **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) Improving the health of people with mobility limitations and intellectual disabilities by promoting inclusion and accessibility in public health programs and healthcare services. This topics was 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 2017
  - ◊ 15 ADA Trainings
  - ◊ 17 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 2017
  - ◊ 805 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** - Authorize police to tow vehicles illegally parked in accessible parking and to ticket vehicles parked on access aisles
  - ◊ **New Assistive Devices Warranty Act** - Extend Lemon Law protection to purchasers of assistive devices
  - ◊ **Volunteer Transportation Provider Good Samaritan Act**- protect these transportation providers from simple negligence
  - ◊ **Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund**- make \$100 fine for the trust fund mandatory to protect it from diversion programs

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

GOOD took a leadership role in this statewide taskforce in 2013 and continued through 2017. 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 2017**

**VIII. Partnerships**

Amarex Corporation  
Alabama Association of Regional Councils Conference  
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities  
Alabama Community College Association  
Alabama Department of Public Health  
Alabama Department of Human Resources  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Alabama Disability Advocacy Program  
Alabama Emergency Management Agency  
Alabama Fire College Medical Needs Shelter  
Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund  
Alabama Governor's Office  
Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum  
Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council  
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind  
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 Career Center  
Birmingham Committee on ADA  
Blind Advisory Committee  
Brewton Career Center  
Calhoun Community College  
Camp ASCCA  
Camp McDowell, Jasper  
Central Alabama Community College  
City of Auburn  
Dallas County EMA  
Deaf/Blind Coalition  
Demopolis Career Center  
DSPN Advisory Board, Huntingdon College  
Disabilities Rights & Resources  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Family Voices of Alabama  
Foley Career Center  
Governor's Preparedness Conference  
Governor's Summit on Disability Employment  
Gulf State Park  
Home Medical Equipment Licensure Board  
Jacksonville State University  
Jefferson County Workforce Development  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lee County Board of Education  
Limestone County DHR  
Long-term Care Rebalancing Committee (Medicaid Agency)  
Mass Care and Sheltering Taskforce  
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant  
Mobile Center for Independent Living  
Montgomery Career Center  
Montgomery Center for Independent Living  
Montgomery Library for the Blind Advisory Committee  
National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils  
OASIS Advisory Council  
People First  
Phenix City Career Center  
RespectAbility  
Roanoke Career Center  
Sheffield Towne Plaza  
Shelton State Community College  
Southeast ADA Network Training Team  
Sparks Clinic  
Special Education Advisory Panel  
State of Alabama Independent Living Council  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Trenholm State  
Tuskegee Blind Veterans Group  
Tuscaloosa Career Center  
UAB/Civitan-Sparks Consumer Advisory Council  
United Ability  
United Way of Birmingham  
University of South Alabama  
Valley Career Center  
Voices of Alabama

## Governor's Office on Disability Advisory Council through Fiscal Year 2017

**Dr. Dave Martin, Chairman**  
Auburn, Alabama  
*Parent Advocate*

**Kent Crenshaw\***  
Montgomery, Alabama  
*Person with a disability*

**Michael Davis\***  
Mobile, Alabama  
*Person with a disability*

**Christine Fleming**  
Auburn University  
Research Advocate

**Jackie Franklin**  
Vina, Alabama  
*Person with a disability*

**Steve Hamerdinger**  
Montgomery, Alabama  
*Person with a disability*

**Dan Kessler**  
Birmingham, Alabama  
*Independent Living Center representative*

**John Stephenson**  
Jackson Gap, Alabama  
*Recreational Access representative*

**Courtney Tarver**  
Montgomery, Alabama  
*State Agency/Mental Health Advocate*

**James Tucker**  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama  
*Statewide Disability Advocacy Program*

**Karl Wade**  
Prattville, Alabama  
*Person with a disability*

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

### GOOD Community Partnerships for Consumer's Needs



**Dr. Graham Sisson** presented a Governor's Certificate of Recognition to **Chris Jones**, employee of **Disability, Rights and Resource (DR&R)**. DR&R responded to a call from a concerned citizen, **Charlotte Robnett**, regarding the needs of an individual with a disability. Mr. Jones arranged for volunteers from **Trinity United Methodist Church** in Homewood to assist them with the project. The group did extensive repairs to the home and yard in the heat of summer. Many thanks to members of the Church: **Mike Jolly, Thermon Jones, Karl Reed, Bill McCall, and Mike Huffstutler** and from DR&R, **Judy Roy and Chris Jones**.



A consumer with a disability called the **Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD)**. He was worried that he could not afford a bike for his son for Christmas. It was his only Christmas wish! GOOD called local resources and located a bike and helmet. **Jim Flora** with the **Mobile Center for Independent Living** picked up the bike and presented it to the consumer. This is just one example of GOOD's partnering with other agencies and organizations to help meet the needs of it's consumers.



**Tamita Humphrey** with **Safe Haven Child Care Center** in Prichard answered the phone when **Marlene Word**, Deputy Director of **GOOD** called trying to locate a bike for a consumer with a disability. When Ms. Humphrey answered the phone, she said she had one 20" bike and helmet sitting behind her desk. It was the only one left after her organization distributed their donated Christmas items to children of families in need. The bike was the exact size the consumer with the disability told Ms. Word he needed. By partnering with other agencies and organizations, GOOD is able to assist consumers with a variety of needs.

## U.S. & AL Civilians Living in the Community By Disability Status: 2016

State	Total	Disability		No Disability	
		Count	%	Count	%
U.S.	318,175,867	40,747,411	12.8	277,428,456	87.2
AL	4,782,529	787,132	16.5	3,995,397	83.5

## U.S. & AL Civilians Living in the Community—Hearing Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Hearing		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	11,430,339	3.6	28.0
AL	4,783,491	778,819	198,012	4.1	25.4

## U.S. & AL Civilians Living in the Community—Vision Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Vision		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	7,668,316	2.4	18.8
AL	4,783,491	778,819	150,555	3.1	19.3

## U.S. & AL Civilians Living in the Community—Cognitive Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Cognitive		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	15,490,907	4.9	37.9
AL	4,783,491	778,819	299,350	6.3	38.4

## U.S. & AL Living in the Community—Ambulatory Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Ambulatory		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	21,235,966	6.7	52.0
AL	4,783,491	778,819	440,024	9.2	56.5

## U.S. & AL Living in the Community—Self Care Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Self-Care		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	8,131,154	2.6	19.9
AL	4,783,491	778,819	148,508	3.1	19.1

## U.S. AL Living in the Community—Independent Living Disability 2016

State	Total	Disability	Independent Living		
			Count	% Total	% Disability
U.S.	318,251,368	40,852,226	14,784,957	4.6	36.2
AL	4,783,491	778,819	289,740	6.1	37.2

**Employment—Civilians with Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	20,761,092	7,461,001	35.9
AL	421,135	115,799	27.5

**Employment—Civilians with Hearing Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	4,005,393	2,071,694	51.7
AL	74,181	32,379	43.6

**Employment—Civilians with Vision Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	3,928,723	1,710,056	43.5
AL	78,860	23,534	29.8

**Employment—Civilians with Cognitive Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	8,931,533	2,352,368	26.3
AL	181,891	34,692	19.1

**Employment—Civilians with Ambulatory Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Employed Count	% [1]
U.S.	10,097,156	2,502,518	24.8
AL	226,915	43,555	19.2

**Employment—Civilians with Self-Care Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	3,653,028	564,411	15.5
AL	68,890	8,750	12.7

**Employment—Civilians with Independent Living Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the U.S. & AL**

State	Total	Employed	
		Count	% [1]
U.S.	7,412,570	1,257,947	17.0
AL	150,400	14,640	9.7



# It's All GOOD

**Join The GOOD List**

**[www.good.alabama.gov](http://www.good.alabama.gov)**

**The Governor's Office on Disability**

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