



CULTURAL

INDICATORS

FOR ALABAMA AND THE U.S.

2020



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Cultural Indicators 2020 for Alabama and the U.S.

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Executive Summary

The Alabama Policy Institute is pleased to present *Cultural Indicators 2020 for Alabama and the United States*. This study tracks various Alabama-specific and national measures of societal well-being dating back to 1960, as statistics are available. Chapters are devoted to vital statistics; crime; education; family; health; poverty and welfare; and business and government. Some highlights of the study include:



Vital Statistics

- Since 1960, Alabama's population has increased 49% to 4.8 million in 2018, making it the 24th largest state in the Union. During the same time, the population of the entire United States increased 82%.
- In 2016, one of every ten births in Alabama was a low-weight birth, and one in every 11 pregnancies ended in an abortion.
- In 2017, Alabama had the ninth highest percentage of births to teenage mothers.
- Alabama's 2017 death rate was 18% higher than the national average. Heart disease and cancer are the two primary causes of death in both Alabama and the rest of the nation.
- Since 1960, infant mortality rates in Alabama have fallen 77%, but the state still has the highest rate in the nation.



Crime

- Since 1991, Alabama's crime rate has averaged about 13% above the national average.
- After peaking in 1991, Alabama's overall crime rate has fallen 39%. During the same time, the state's violent crime rate decreased 40%.
- Since 2011, Alabama's violent crime rate has averaged 17% above the national average.
- One of every 205 Alabamians was in a state or federal prison in 2017, giving the state the tenth highest incarceration rate in the nation.
- Since 1991, the inflation-adjusted cost per inmate in Alabama has increased by 54%.



Education

- Since 1960, the percentage of Alabamians age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma has almost tripled, and the percentage of adults with at least a four-year college degree has more than quadrupled.
- Despite these gains, Alabama ranks 45th in the nation in the percentage of adults age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and 44th for adults holding at least a bachelor's degree.
- ACT scores in Alabama have been flat since 1990.
- Alabama's national test scores for both math and reading have ranked near the bottom for more than ten years.

- From 1970 to 2018, inflation-adjusted, per-student spending on public education in Alabama has increased 190%, compared to 153% nationwide.



Family

- Alabama's marriage and divorce rates have been above the national average for almost 60 years.
- Over the past 46 years, about 873,000 children in Alabama have been directly affected by divorce.
- Since 1960, the percentage of births to unwed mothers in Alabama has increased from 11% to 45% in 2016.
- For every 8.7 births in Alabama in 2017, there was one abortion.



Health

- In 2017, suicide was the 12th leading cause of death in Alabama.
- Since 1970, the number of Medicaid recipients in Alabama has increased from 324,000 to almost 1.02 million.
- From 1999 to 2019, enrollment in Medicare has risen from 15.5% of the state's population to almost 21%.
- Alabama has the eighth highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in the nation, and the 12th highest rate of HIV infection.



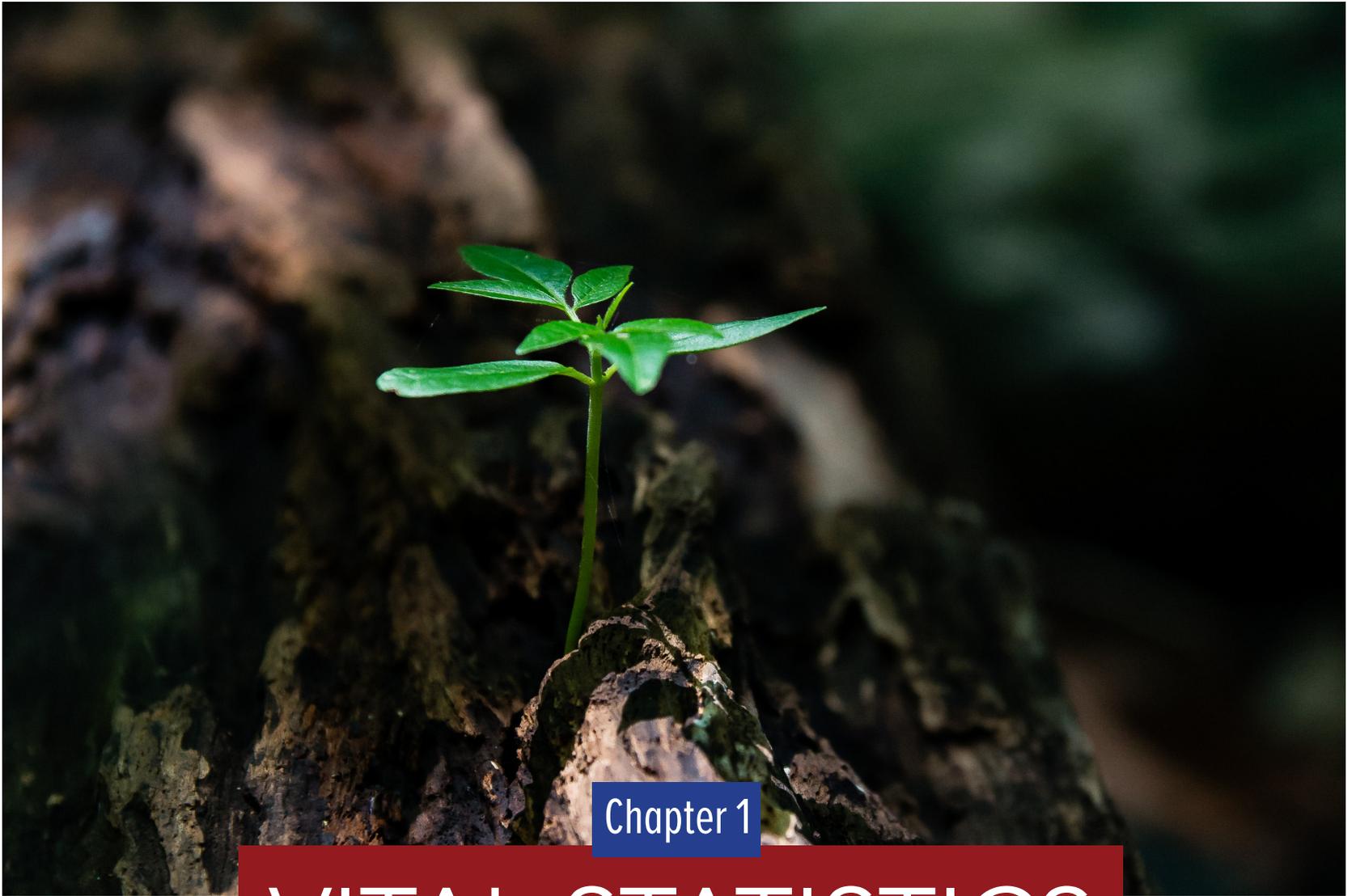
Poverty & Welfare

- In 2017, the typical Alabama household earned about \$13,000 less than the national average.
- Married-couple households in Alabama are one-sixth as likely to be in poverty as female-headed households.
- In 2018, one in six Alabamians received some support from food stamps.
- The total cost of payments for Supplemental Security Income in Alabama in 2017 was \$1.05 billion.
- During the 2018 school year, almost 82 million free and reduced-cost meals were served to Alabama students.



Business & Government

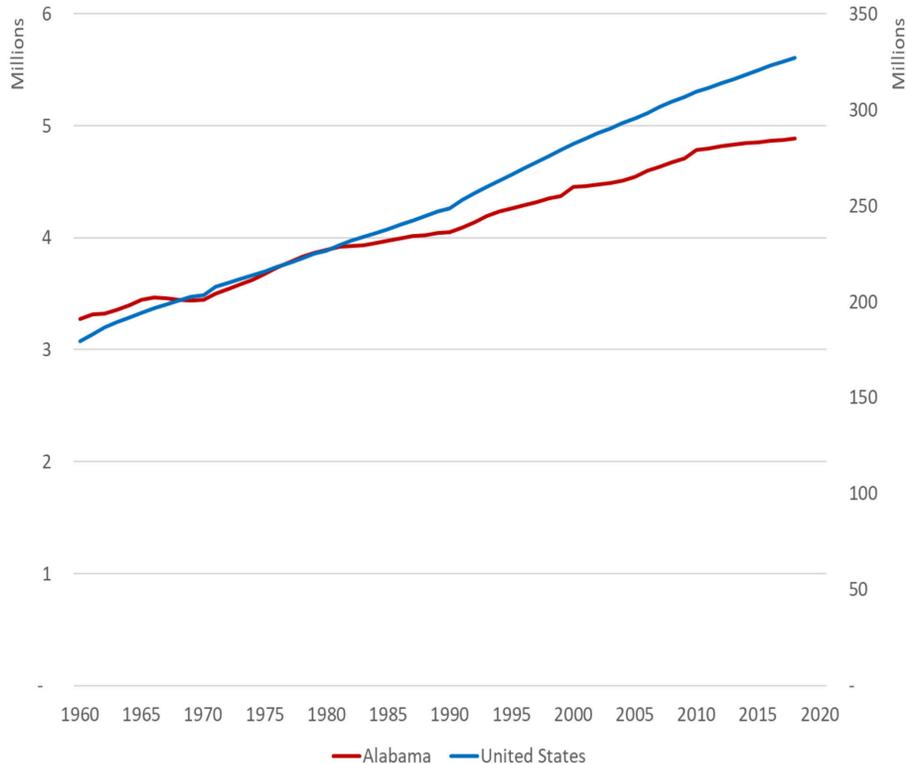
- Since 1975, the number of full-time equivalent, state and local government employees has increased by 77% and 75%, respectively.
- About one of every 17 Alabamians is either a state or local government employee.
- Since 1992, Alabama's inflation-adjusted total state and local expenditures have increased 83%.



Chapter 1

VITAL STATISTICS

Population



From 1960 to 2018, Alabama’s population increased 49%, from 3.3 million to almost 4.9 million, making it the 24th largest state in the Union.¹

At the same time, the population of the entire United States increased 82%, from 179.3 million to 327.1 million.²

In 2018, the largest age group in Alabama was 20-29 years old (13.6% of the population), followed by those 50-59 years old (13.3%), the 10-19 age group (12.8%), and those between 30-39 years of age (12.4%).

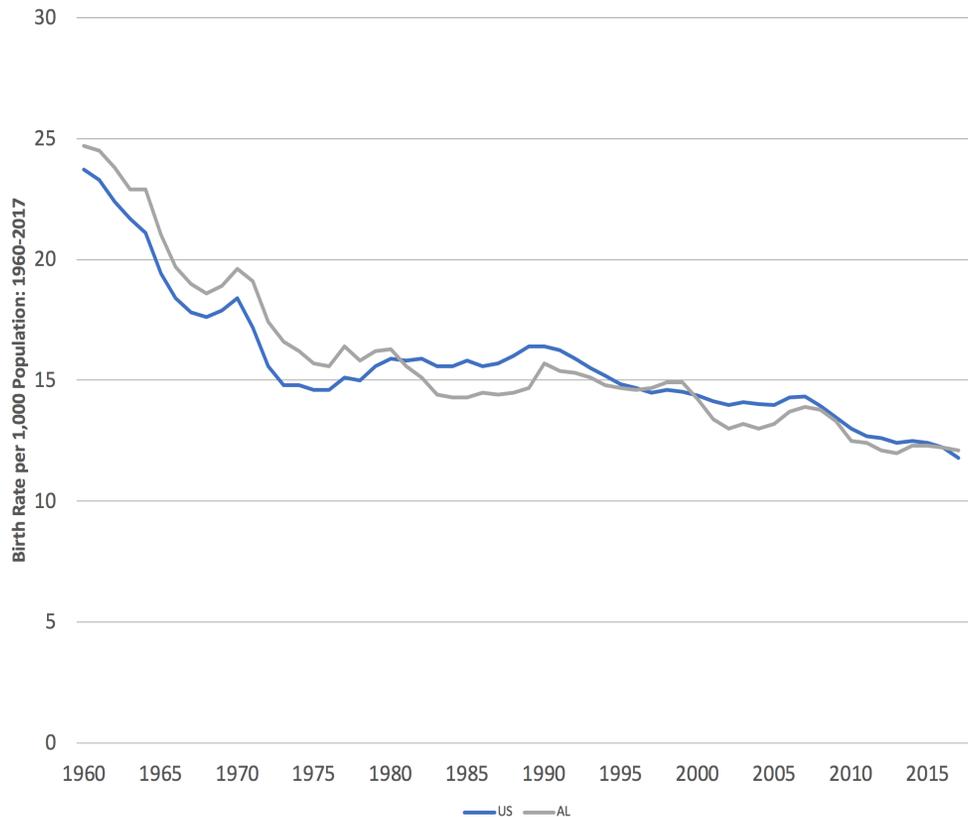
During the same year, Alabama’s population was 70.7% white (3.4 million), 27.8% black (1.3 million), and about 1.9% Asian (91,000).³ Hispanics of any race comprised almost 5% of the state’s population (226,000).⁴

After accounting for births and deaths, approximately 35% of the population growth in Alabama from 2010 to 2018 was the result of international migration.⁵

As of 2010, Alabama’s population density of 94.4 persons per square mile is 8% greater than the national average (87.4 persons per square mile).⁶



Birth Rates



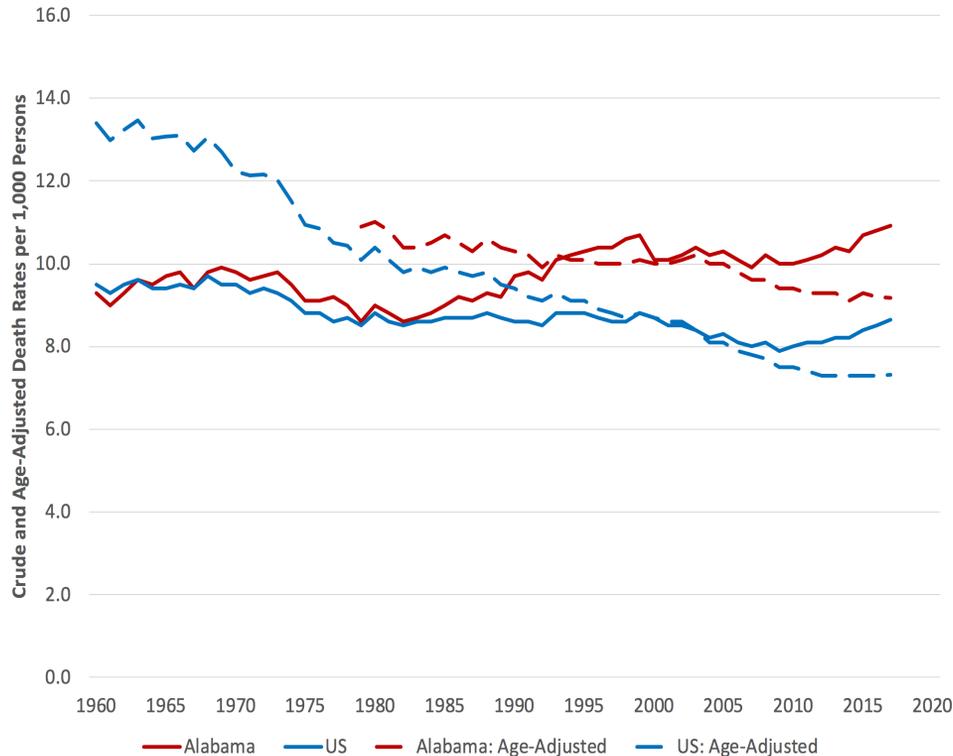
Since 1960, Alabama's birth rate has fallen from 24.7 per 1,000 persons to 12.1 in 2017, a decline of 51%. From 1960 to 1980, Alabama's birth rate was above the national average; since then, it has been below it for 32 of the past 37 years.

Nationally, the birth rate fell from 23.7 per 1,000 persons in 1960 to 11.8 in 2017, a decline of 50%.⁷

In 2016—the most recent year complete data are available—an estimated 78,563 pregnancies (75.2%) resulted in births; 12,514 (15.9%) died before birth; and 6,959 (8.8%) were aborted.

In the same year, approximately 6,104 births (10.3%) were low-weight births (birth weights of less than 2,500 grams / 5 pounds, 8 ounces).⁸

Death Rates



In 2016, 52,452 people died in Alabama, for a crude death rate of 10.2 persons per 1,000 population. Since 1960, Alabama's death rate has increased 17.4%. During the same time, the national crude death rate has fallen 9.1%, from 9.5 to 8.6 in 2017.⁹

Age-adjusting a rate is a way to make fairer comparisons between groups with different age distributions. For example, a county with a higher percentage of elderly people may have a higher rate of death than a county with a younger population, merely because the elderly are more likely to die.

The same distortion can happen when comparisons are made between races, genders, or time periods. Age adjustment can make distinct groups more comparable.¹⁰



When the 2017 death rates for Alabama and the nation are age-adjusted, the state's death rate decreased to 9.2, while the national rate dropped from 8.5 to 7.3.¹¹

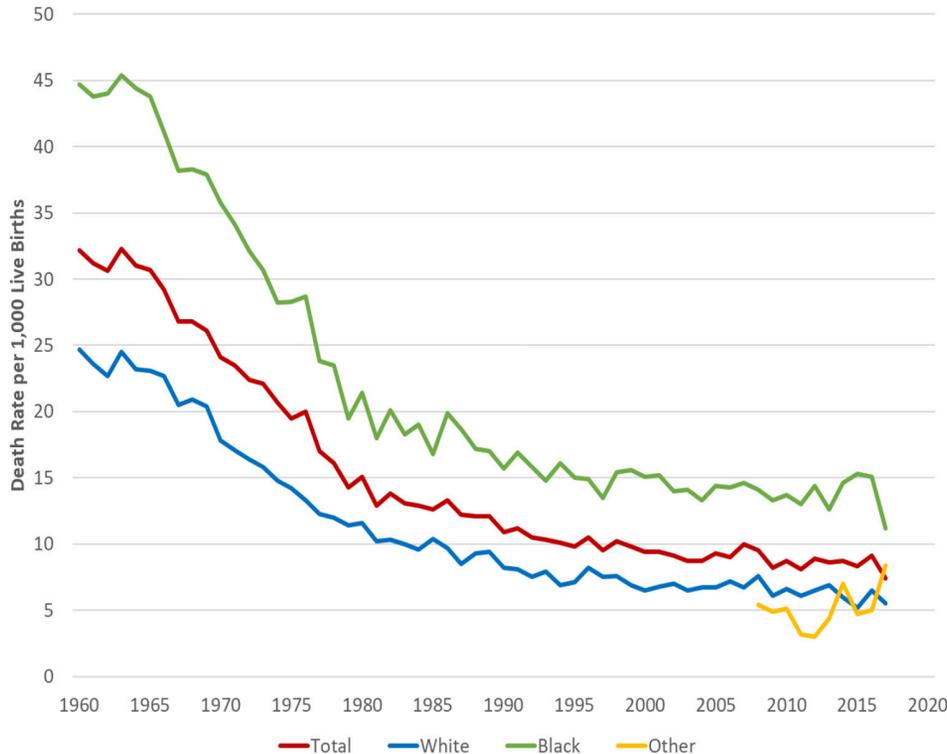
In 2017, the crude death rate for whites in Alabama (11.9) was 17% higher than that of blacks (9.1). However, when age-adjusted death rates are compared, blacks die at a higher rate (9.7) than whites (9.1).¹²

Heart disease was the primary cause of death in both Alabama and the nation. In 2017, Alabama's age-adjusted death rate from heart disease was 223.2 per 100,000 population, 35% higher than the national average (165.0).

The second-leading cause of death in Alabama and the United States was cancer, with Alabama's age-adjusted rate (170.0 per 100,000 population) 11.5% higher than the national average (152.5).¹³



Infant Mortality



Since 1960, infant mortality rates in Alabama and the United States have fallen 77% and 78%, respectively. In 1960, 32.2 of every 1,000 babies born in Alabama died within their first year of life. By 2017, that number had dropped to only 7.4 of every 1,000 babies born.¹⁴

Despite this progress, Alabama's infant mortality rate remains above the national average.

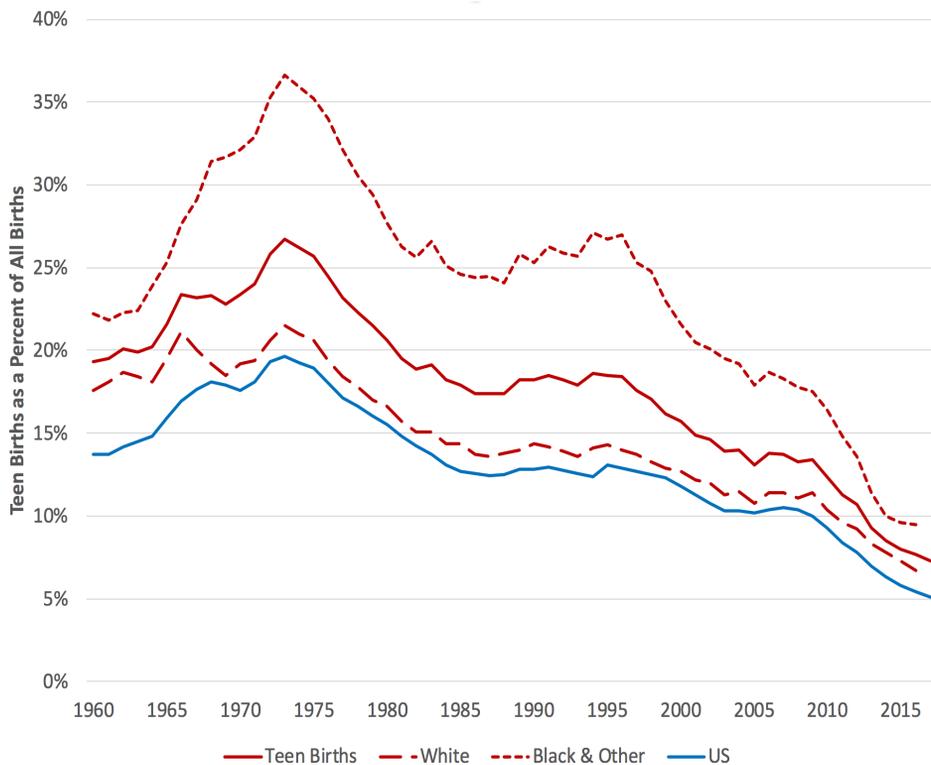
In 2016—the most recent year in which detailed state information is available—Alabama (9.08) had the highest infant mortality rate in the nation.¹⁵

Alabama's unsatisfactory infant mortality rate is largely the product of teenage pregnancies, which are more likely to produce low-weight, at-risk babies, and a lack of adequate prenatal care.

In 2016, the infant mortality rate in Alabama for babies whose mothers received inadequate prenatal care (10.1) was 2.2 times higher than that of infants of mothers who received adequate prenatal care and had no other known risk factors (4.5).¹⁶



Teenage Births



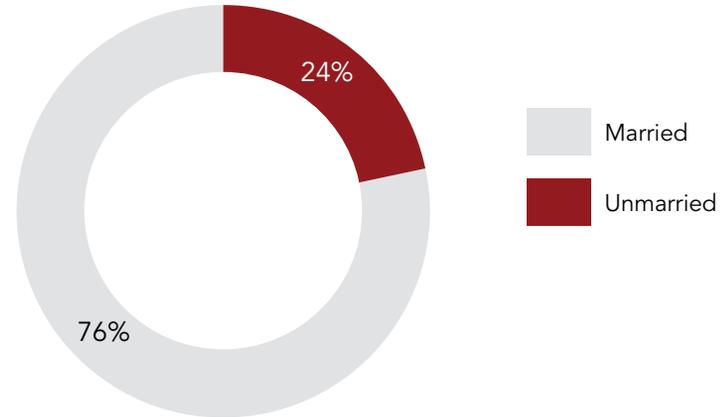
In 2017, 4,285 children were born to teenage mothers in Alabama. Since 1960, more than 655,000 children in Alabama have been born into similar households.

About 7.3% of all births in Alabama were to teenage mothers, compared to about 5.1% nationwide.¹⁷

Twenty seven of every 1,000 teenage women in Alabama gave birth in 2017, compared to the national teen birth rate of 18.8. In 2017, Alabama ranked ninth among the states regarding the birth rates of teenage mothers.¹⁸

In 2017, 7.3% of all births were to teen mothers, down from 10.7% in 2012.

Teenage Births in Alabama, 1960



In 1960, about 24% of teenage mothers in Alabama were unmarried, compared with 85.7% in 2016.

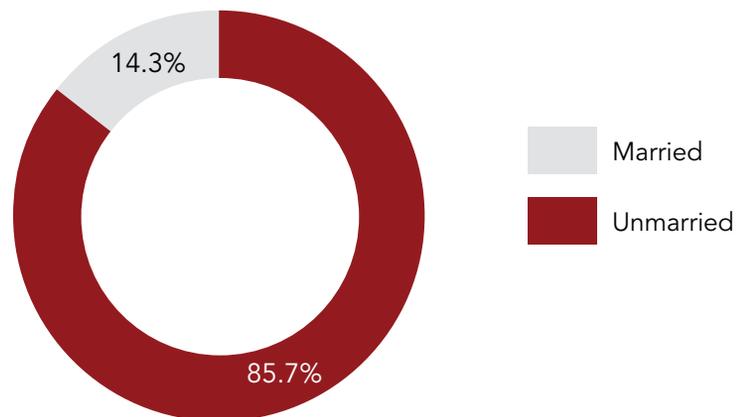
Among whites, the percentage of births to unmarried teens has increased seventeen-fold from 4.6% in 1960 to 78% in 2016.

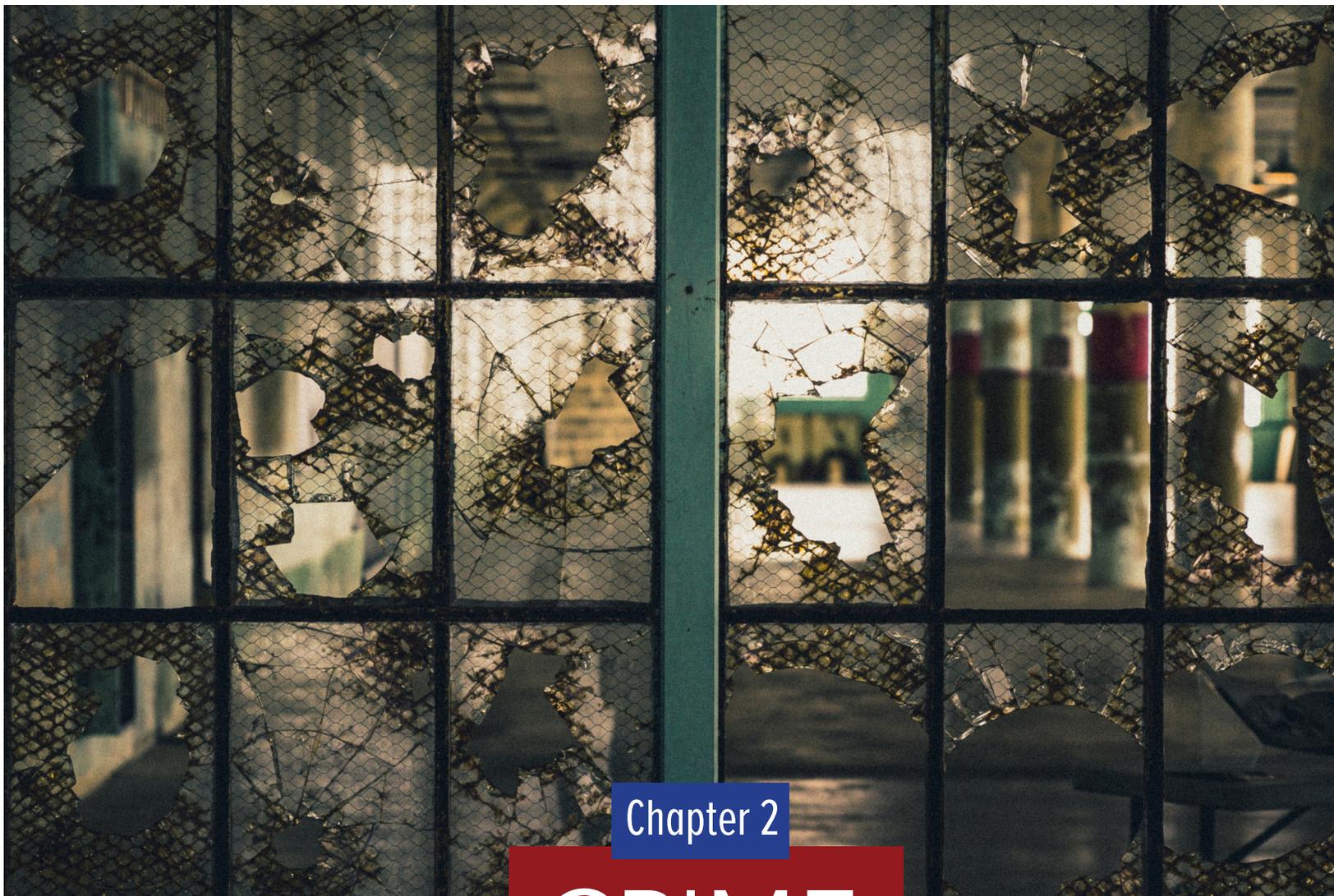
During the same period, the percentage of births to non-white, teenage, unmarried women has risen from 50% to 96.4%.¹⁹

Among Alabama teenagers, pregnancy rates in 2016 were highest among 18- and 19-year-olds, with seven percent becoming pregnant in 2016.

Within this group, 73% gave birth, 16% had a fetal loss, and 11% opted for an abortion.²⁰

Teenage Births in Alabama, 2016

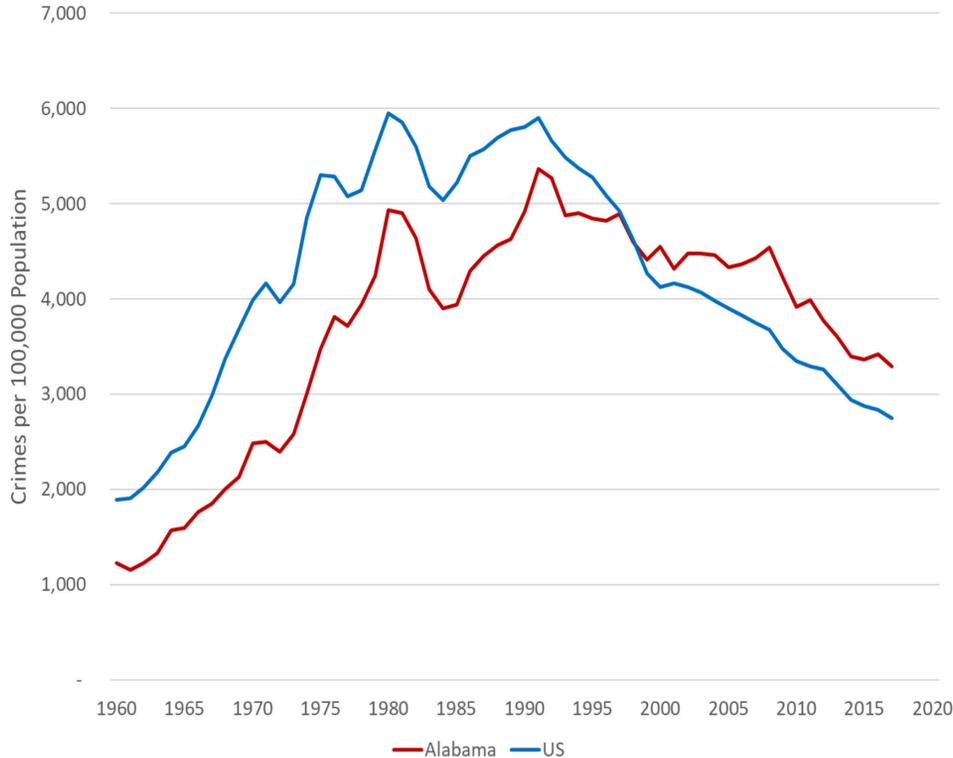




Chapter 2

CRIME

Crime



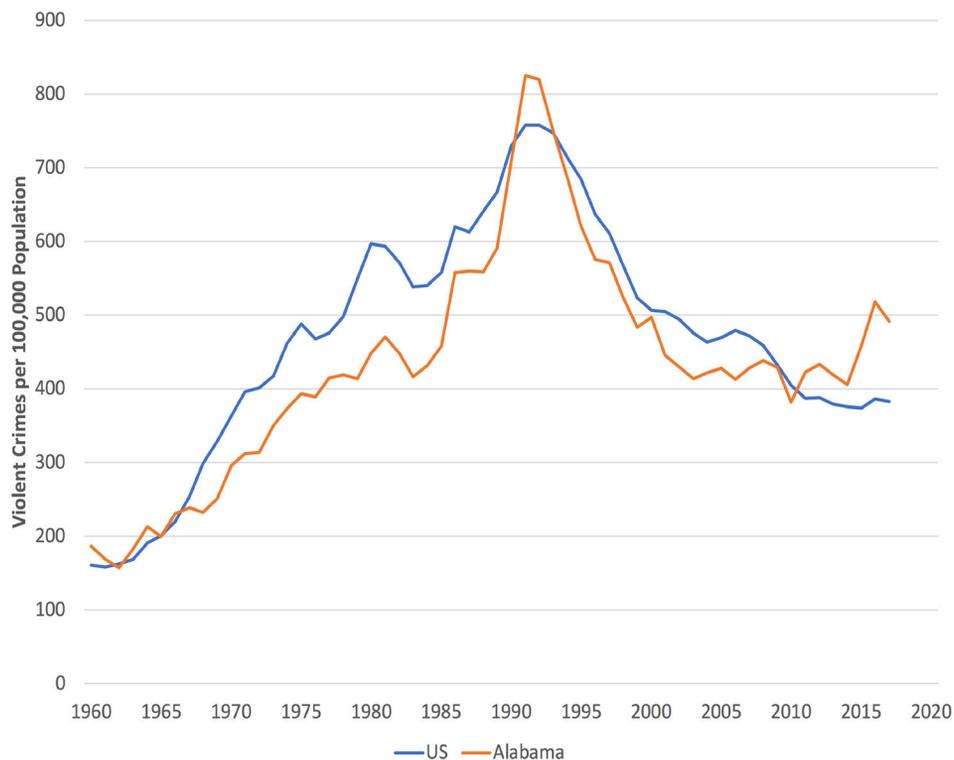
In 2017, approximately 159,032 Type I crimes—murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft—were reported in Alabama, about four times as many as reported in 1960 (39,920).²¹

Since 1960, Alabama's crime rate, which considers population changes, increased 170%, from 1,222 crimes per 100,000 population to 3,294.6 in 2017. Since peaking in 1991, Alabama's crime rate has dropped by 39%.²²

From 1960 to 1998, Alabama's crime rate was below the national average. Since 1999, the state's crime rate has averaged about 13% above the national average. While Alabama's share of the overall national population is about 1.5%, it is responsible for 3.5% of all crimes committed nationwide.²³



Violent Crime



There were 23,972 violent crimes—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—reported in Alabama in 2017. In 2017, about 15% of Alabama’s crimes were of a violent nature, compared to 14% for the nation.²⁴

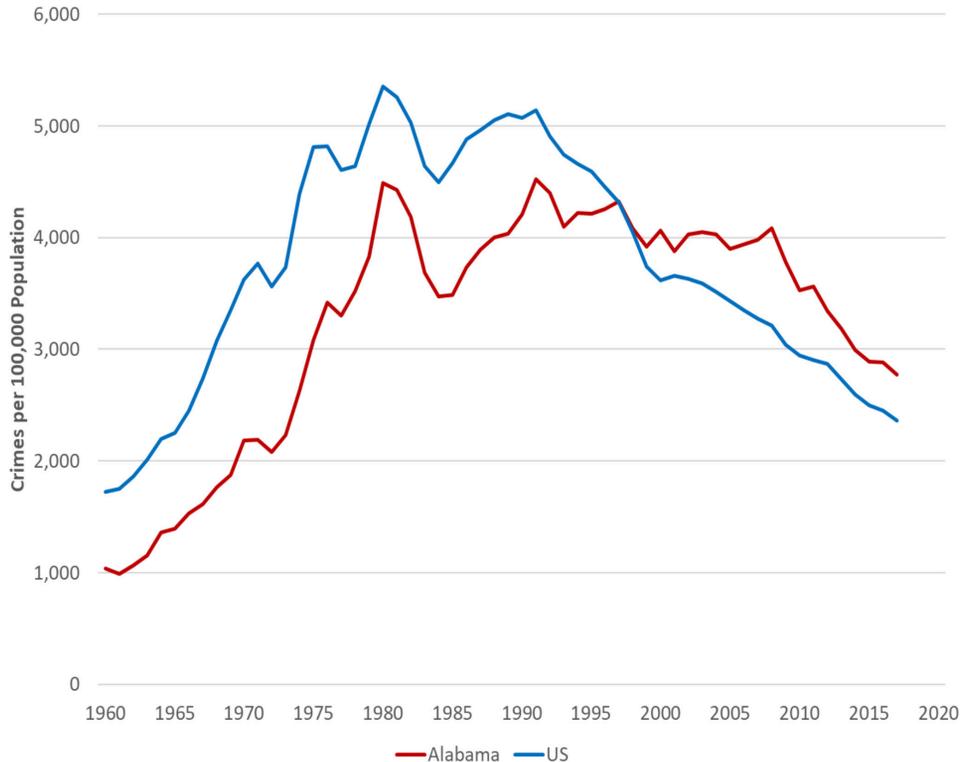
In 2017, Alabama’s violent crime rate was 491.7 per 100,000 population, about 5% lower than in 2016 but still higher than every year except 2016 since 2001. Since 2011, the state’s violent crime rate has been, on average, 17% above the national average.²⁵

Since peaking in 1991 (825.4 violent crimes per 100,000 population), the state’s crime rate has fallen 40%. During the same time, the national violent crime rate fell 49%.²⁶

Compared to neighboring states, the percentage of violent crimes in Alabama (15.1%) was higher than Georgia (11.1%), Mississippi (9.5%), and Florida (14%), but lower than Tennessee (18.1%).²⁷

Since 2013, Alabama’s violent crime rate has risen 13.6%.

Property Crime



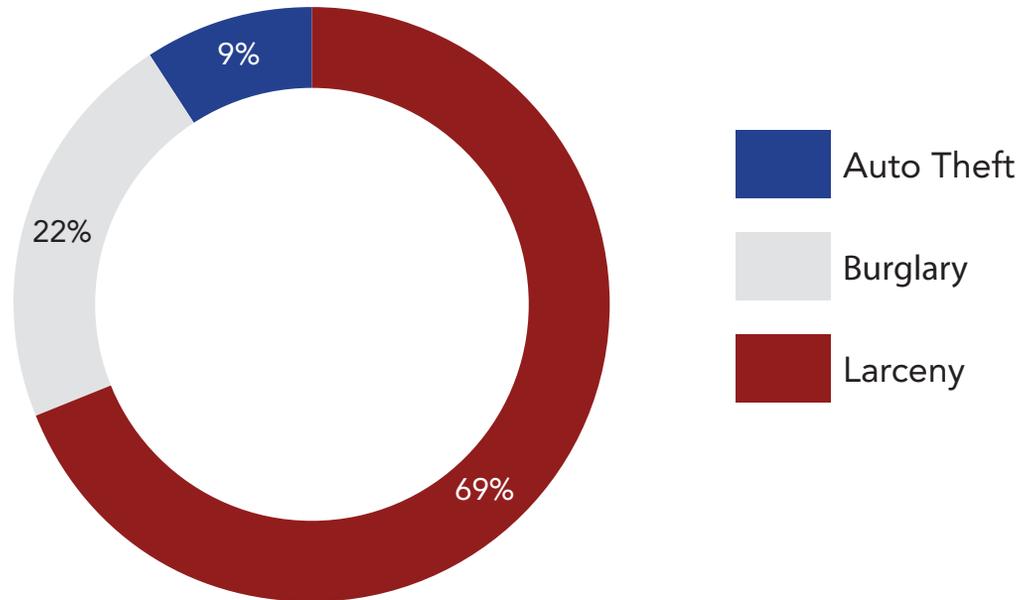
In 2017, Alabama's property crime rate—which includes burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft—was 2,770.4 per 100,000 population, or approximately 135,060 property crimes.

To put these numbers in perspective, the state's property crime rate has not been this low since 1974 (2,627.2), and the last time the total incidents of property crimes was lower was in 1978 (130,687).²⁸

In 2017, Alabama's property crime rate was about 17% above the national average. Between 1960 and 1996, Alabama's property crime rate was below the national average. Since then, it has been, on average, about 12.4% above the national average.²⁹



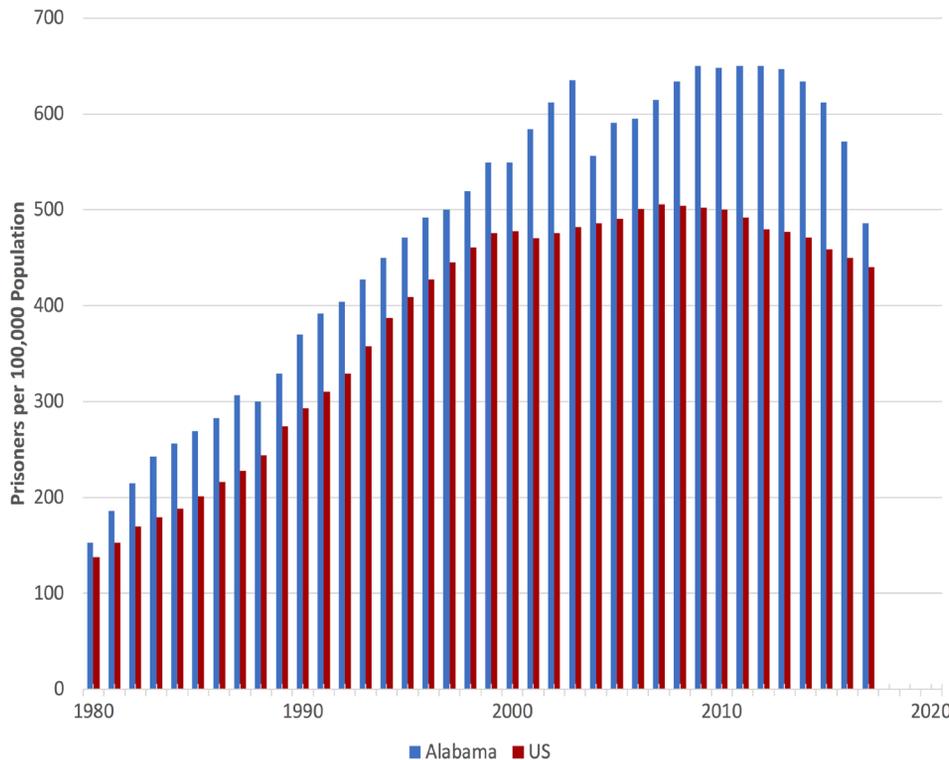
Property Crime in Alabama by Type, 2017



Of the 135,060 property crimes committed in Alabama in 2017, 69% were larcenies, 22% were burglaries, and 9% were auto theft.³⁰

After peaking in 1991, the rate of property crimes has decreased 38%. During the same time, the national rate of property crimes decreased by 54%.³¹

Prison Population



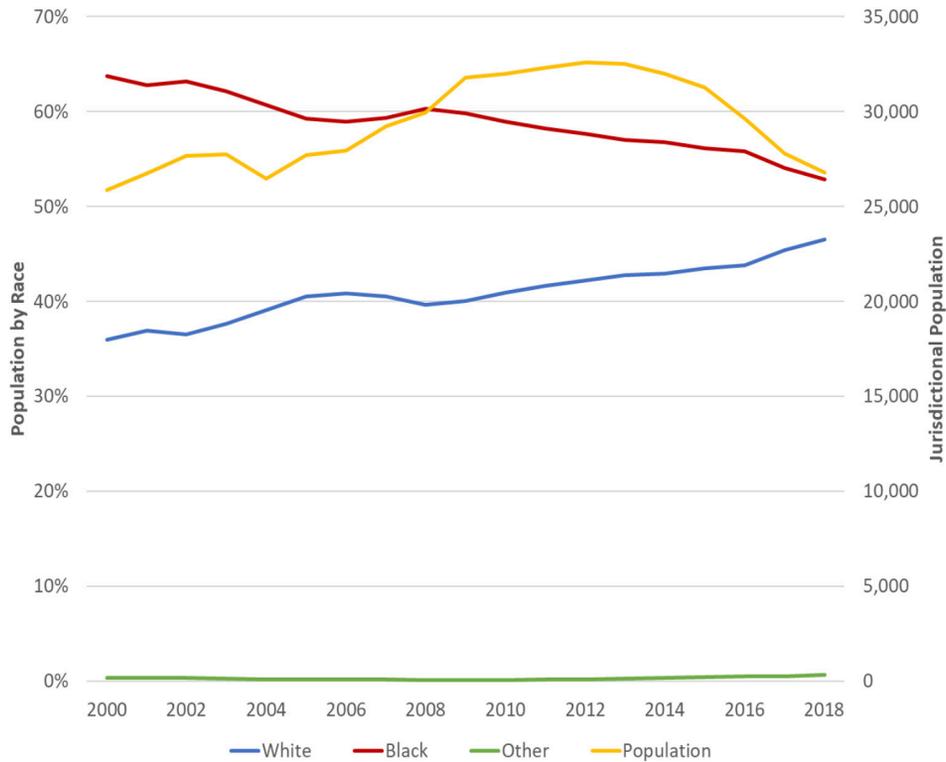
Since 1980, Alabama’s adult prison population sentenced to more than one year has increased 298%, from 5,961 to 23,724 in 2017. At the same time, the U.S. adult prison population increased 356%, from 316,000 to 1,553,000.³²

In 2017, one of every 205 persons in Alabama (0.5%) of Alabama’s population was in a state or federal prison serving a sentence of at least one year, slightly more than the national average of one of every 226 persons (0.44%). Alabama’s incarceration rate of 486 persons per 100,000 population is the tenth highest in the nation.³³

As of June 2019, 65% of all inmates under the jurisdiction of the Alabama Department of Corrections were serving time for at least one violent offense. Ninety percent of all inmates (25,264) were male, and 21% (5,924) were classified as habitual offenders. The median sentence was between 20 and 25 years.³⁴

Since 2012, Alabama’s incarceration rate has declined by 25%.

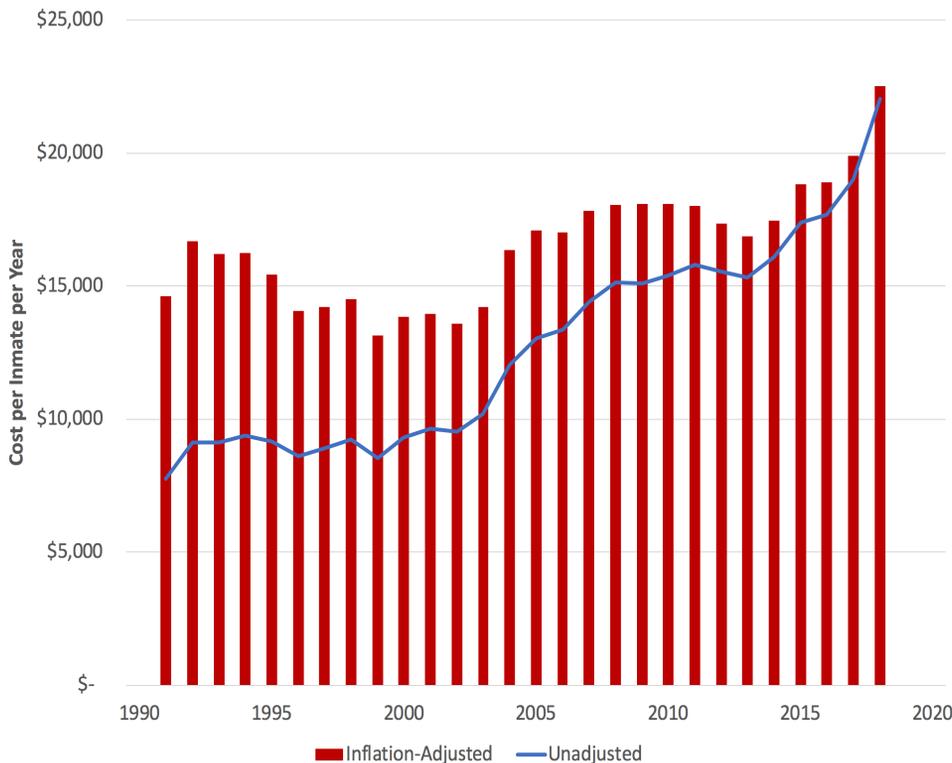
Prison Population by Race



Since 2000, the percentage of African-American prisoners under the jurisdiction of the Alabama Department of Corrections has declined by 17%, from almost 64% in 2000 to 53% in 2018.

This decline has remained steady, even while the state's prisoner population increased from 25,800 in 2000 to a high of 32,574 in 2012, then declined to 26,790 in 2018.³⁵

Cost of Imprisonment



In 2018, Alabama taxpayers spent an inflation-adjusted \$22,507 for each inmate in the state’s prison system. This is about 13% more than the \$19,897 spent per inmate in 2017.

Since 1991, Alabama’s cost per inmate has risen 54% after rising and falling several times.³⁶

In fiscal year 2018, expenditures for corrections totaled almost \$495 million. Of this amount, 34% (\$168.3 million) was for personnel costs, 33% (\$165.4 million) was for medical and other professional services, 13% (\$65.6 million) was for employee benefits, and six percent (\$30.9 million) was for supplies and operating expenses.

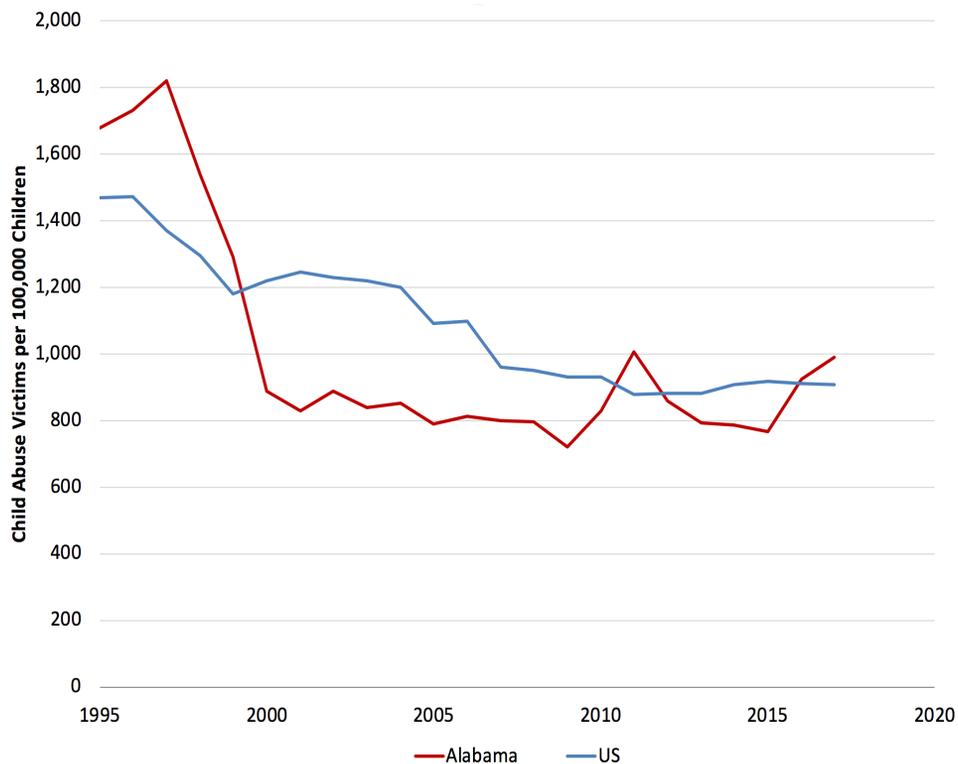
Only 3.8% (\$18.8 million) was spent on repairs, maintenance, or capital outlays.

For fiscal year 2019, corrections expenditures constitute \$472 million, or 23% of the entire General Fund budget. Only Medicaid (\$755 million; 37%) has a larger share of the budget.³⁷

The cost per-inmate of imprisoning Alabama’s inmates has increased almost 30% since 2012, from an inflation-adjusted \$17,353 to \$22,507 in 2018.



Child Abuse



In 2017, there were 27,677 investigations of child abuse in Alabama involving 38,871 children.³⁸ Not every report of child abuse or neglect, though, is authentic. Each report must be investigated to determine whether enough evidence exists to conclude that abuse occurred.

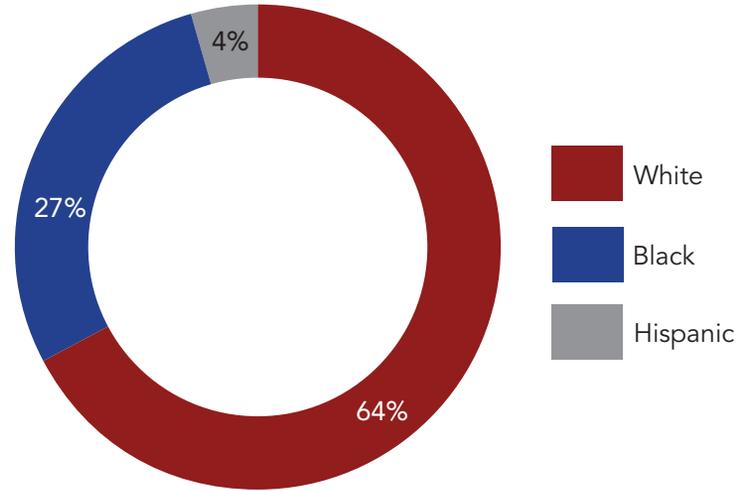
Of the number of cases reported in 2017, 10,847 (28%) were identified as actual victims, of which 82% (8,930) were identified as first-time victims.

Put another way, about one of every 28 children in Alabama was the subject of an investigation of child abuse, but only one in every 101 was substantiated as a victim.³⁹

By comparison, about one in every 110 children nationwide was substantiated as a victim.

Since 2012, the number of child abuse victims per 100,000 population has increased 15%.

Child Abuse Victims in Alabama by Race, 2017



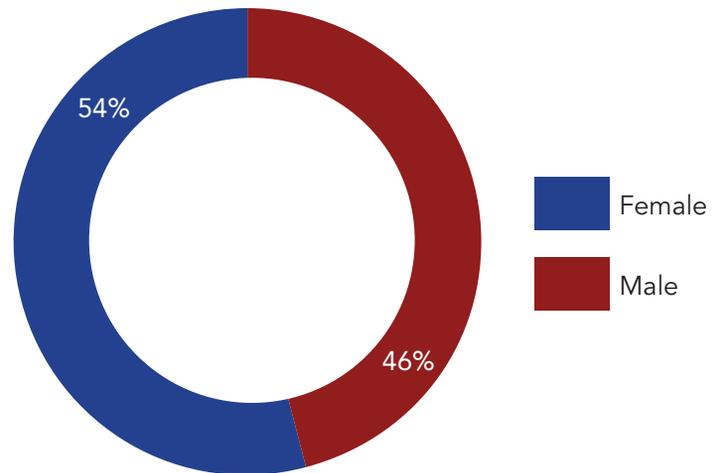
Since 1995, the victim rate per 100,000 children has decreased by 41% for Alabama and 38% for the nation.⁴⁰

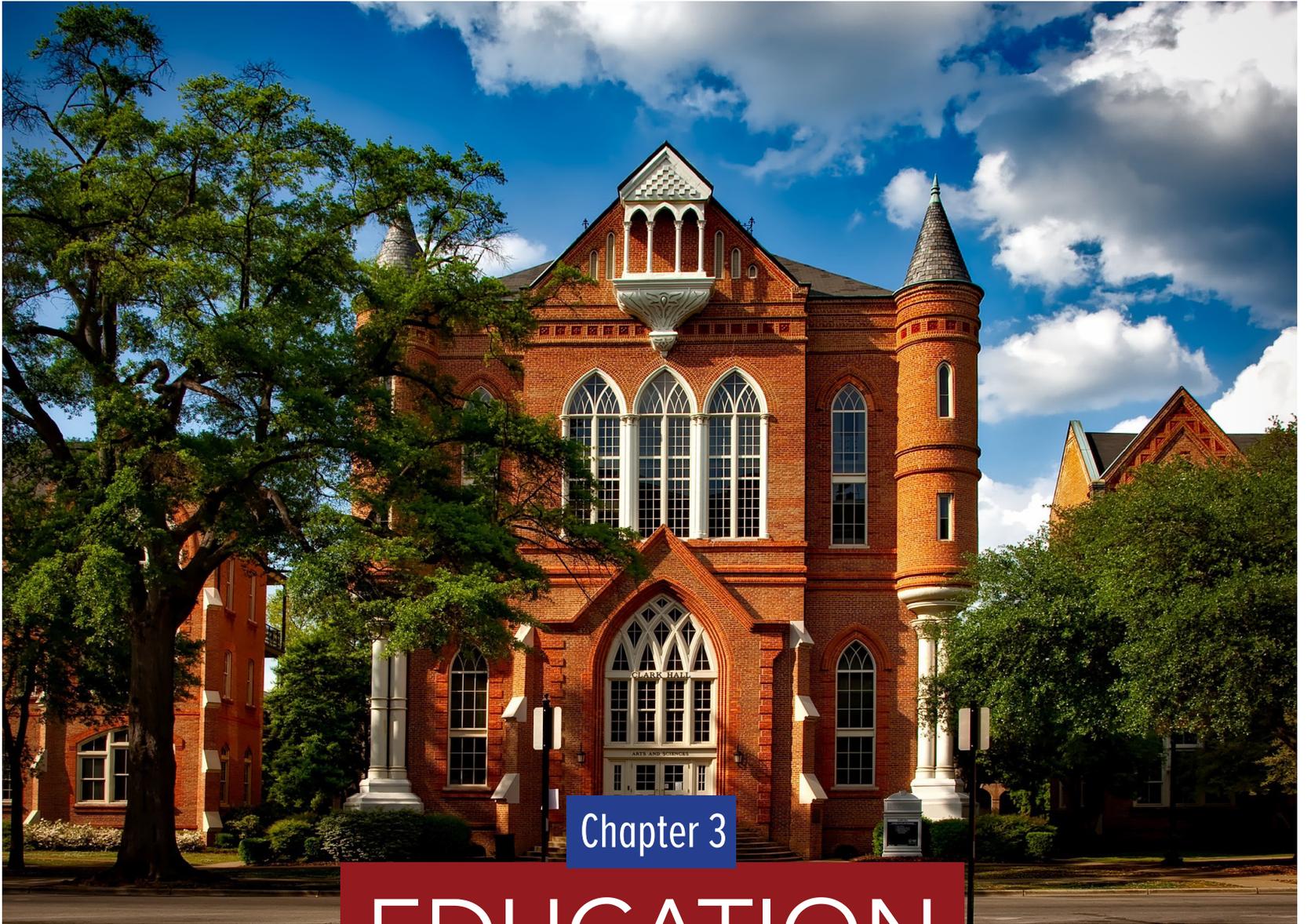
In 2017, 29% of Alabama’s child abuse victims were age two or younger, with the frequency of abuse declining as a child’s age increases.

Among cases where the sex of the victim is known, 46% of victims were boys and 54% were girls. Sixty-four percent of all victims were white, 27% were black, and four percent were Hispanic.⁴¹

By comparison, Alabama’s total youth population in 2017 was 62% white, 30% black, and seven percent Hispanic.⁴²

Child Abuse Victims in Alabama by Sex, 2017



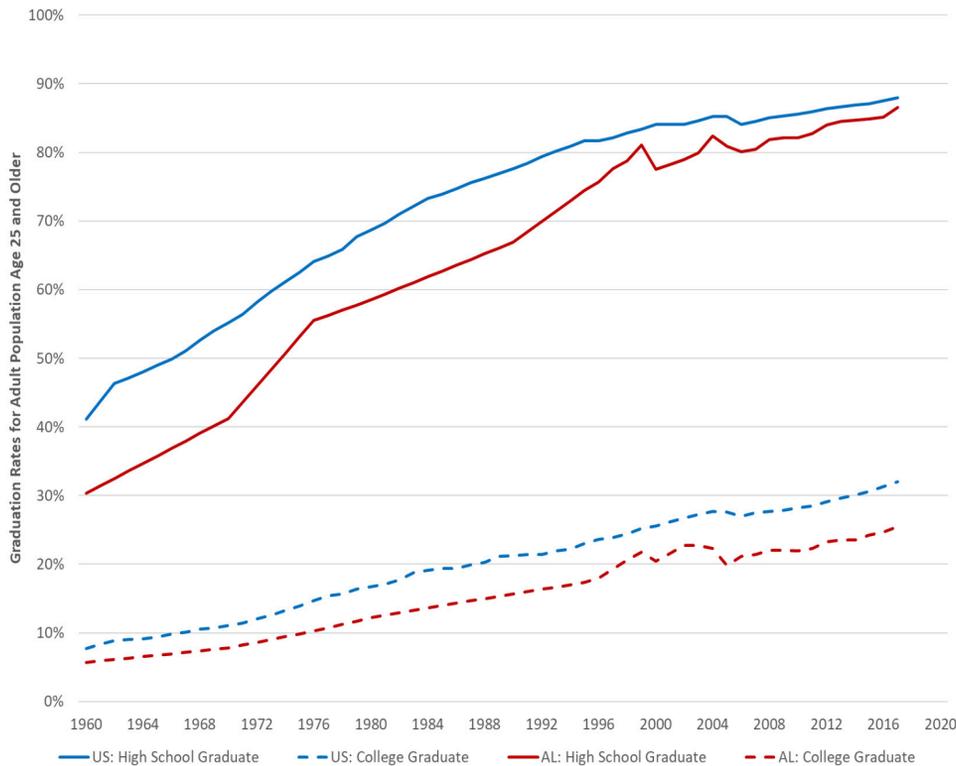


Chapter 3

EDUCATION



Academic Achievement



Since 1960, the percentage of Alabama residents age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma has almost tripled (185% gain), while the percentage of adults with at least a four-year college degree has more than quadrupled (348% gain).

By comparison, the percentages of adults nationwide with at least a high school diploma or a college degree have risen 114% and 315%, respectively.⁴³

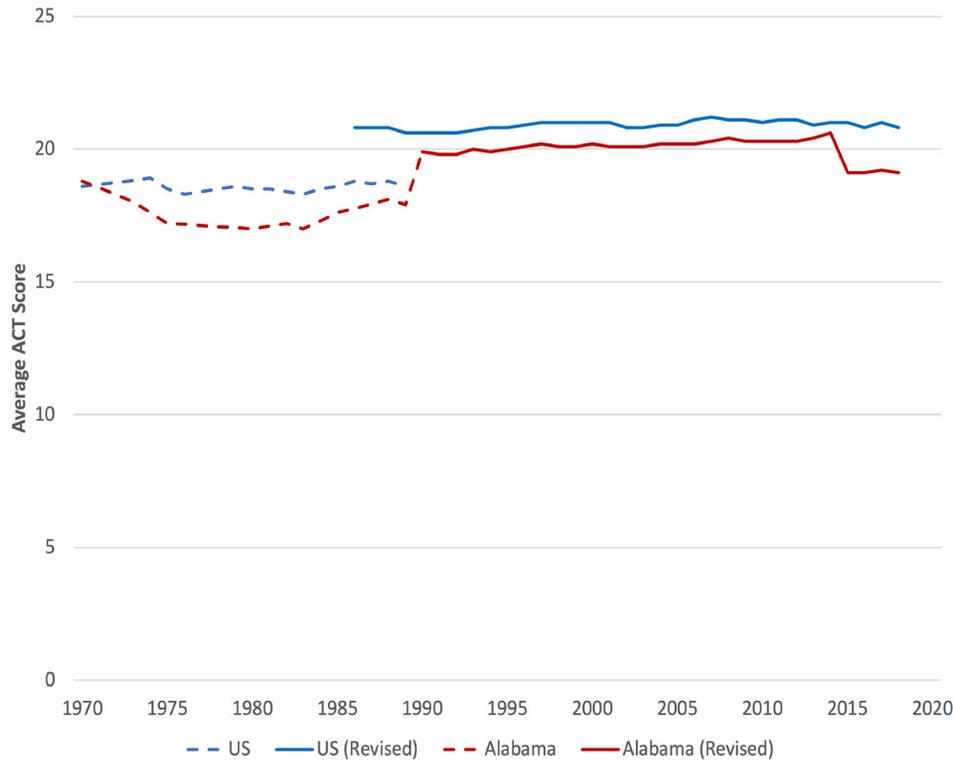
In 2017, Alabama ranked 45th in the nation in both the percentage of adults age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and 44th for adults holding at least a bachelor's degree.⁴⁴

The more diplomas someone holds, the greater their earning potential. According to data collected in 2017 by the U.S. Census Bureau, possessing a high school diploma raises personal income for Alabama residents by almost \$7,800 a year (\$29,440) and a bachelor's degree by about \$28,000 (\$49,520).⁴⁵

Since 2012, the number of Alabama adults age 25 or older with a college degree has increased 9.5% to 25.5%.



ACT Scores



Since 2000, the ACT scores of Alabama students have been stagnant, typically averaging about one point below the national average.⁴⁶

In 2018, all 58,177 graduating high school seniors in Alabama took the ACT. Of these, the average composite score was 19.1, the fifth lowest in the nation. In the state, the average English score was 18.9, and the average math score was 18.3. By comparison, the national composite average was 20.8.⁴⁷

In 2017—the most recent year detailed data are available—62% of students taking the ACT were core course completers—that is, they had taken at least four years of English and three years of math (algebra and higher), social sciences, and natural sciences. Of these, their composite average was 20.5, compared to 17.3 for students who were not core completers.⁴⁸

Since 2015, the average ACT score of students in Alabama has remained between 19.1 and 19.2, the lowest averages in 30 years.



In 2017, male students in Alabama had higher scores in math (18.6) than females (18.3), but females had higher composite scores (19.6 v. 19.1) as well as higher scores in English (19.8 v. 18.3) and reading (20.3 v. 19.4).⁴⁹

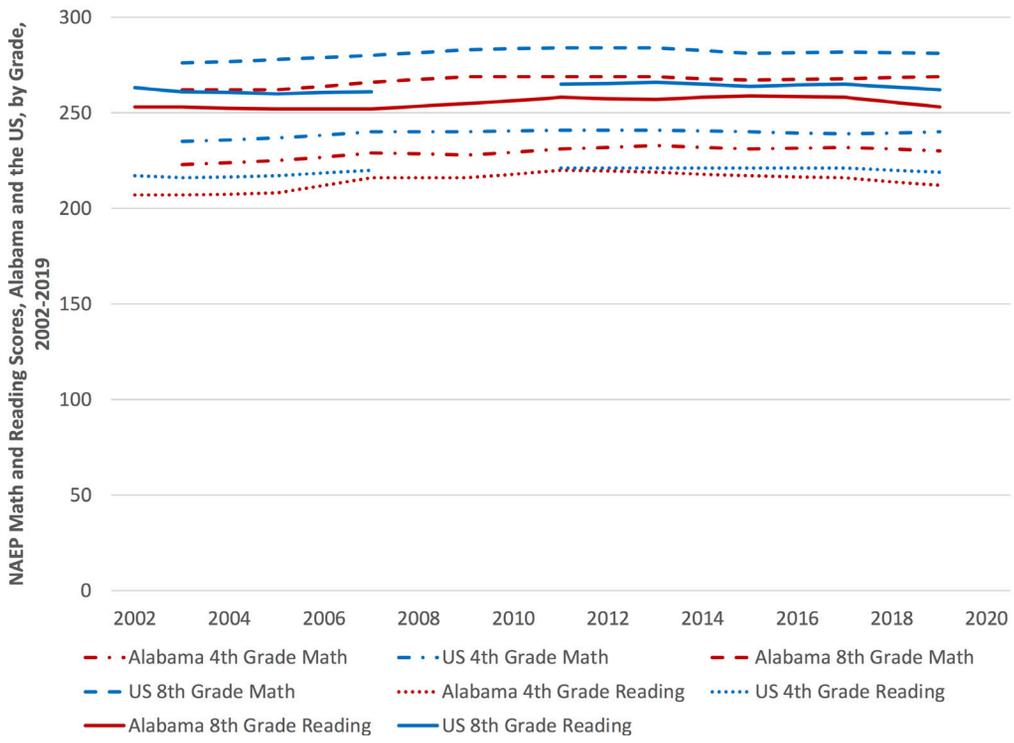
Ethnicity is a significant predictor of ACT scores in Alabama.

For reading, Asian students had the highest average score (23.2), followed by whites (21.4) and students of two or more races (20.8). By comparison, black students scored lowest (16.7), followed by Native Americans (18.1) and Hispanics (18.3). A similar relationship was found for math: Asians scored highest (24.5), followed by whites (19.6). Again, the scores of black students were the lowest (16.0), followed by Native Americans (17.1) and Hispanics (17.6).⁵⁰





NAEP Scores



The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) was mandated by Congress in 1969 to monitor the knowledge, skills, and performance of the nation’s school children. One form of monitoring has been national, standardized tests in mathematics, science, reading, geography, and other subjects.

In 2019, every state, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools participated in the mathematics and reading exams.⁵¹

NAEP uses a scale of 0 to 500 for its mathematics and reading tests.

In 2019, Alabama’s 4th grade math students ranked last nationally with an average score of 230, ten points below the national average of 240. Twenty-eight percent of Alabama’s 4th graders scored at or above “Proficient,” 12 points below the national average.⁵²

Since 2013, NAEP scores in every category of 4th- and 8th-grade reading and math are either flat or down slightly.



In the same year, 8th grade math students in Alabama and Arizona tied for last in the nation, with an average score of 269, with 21% at or above proficiency. By comparison, the national average was 281, with 33% at or above proficiency.⁵³

In 2019, Alabama's 4th grade students ranked 49th in the nation in reading with an average score of 212, seven points lower than the national average of 219. Twenty-eight percent of Alabama's students scored at or above proficiency, compared to 34% of students nationwide.⁵⁴

During the same year, Alabama's 8th grade students ranked 49th in the nation in reading, with an average score of 253, nine points below the national average. Twenty-four percent of Alabama's students scored at or above proficiency, compared to 32% of students nationwide.⁵⁵





Public Education Spending

In the 2018-19 school year, public schools in Alabama spent an inflation-adjusted average of \$10,443 per student, almost identical to the inflation-adjusted average of what was spent in 2017-18. By comparison, national spending per student declined 0.2% from \$13,681 to \$13,658.⁵⁶

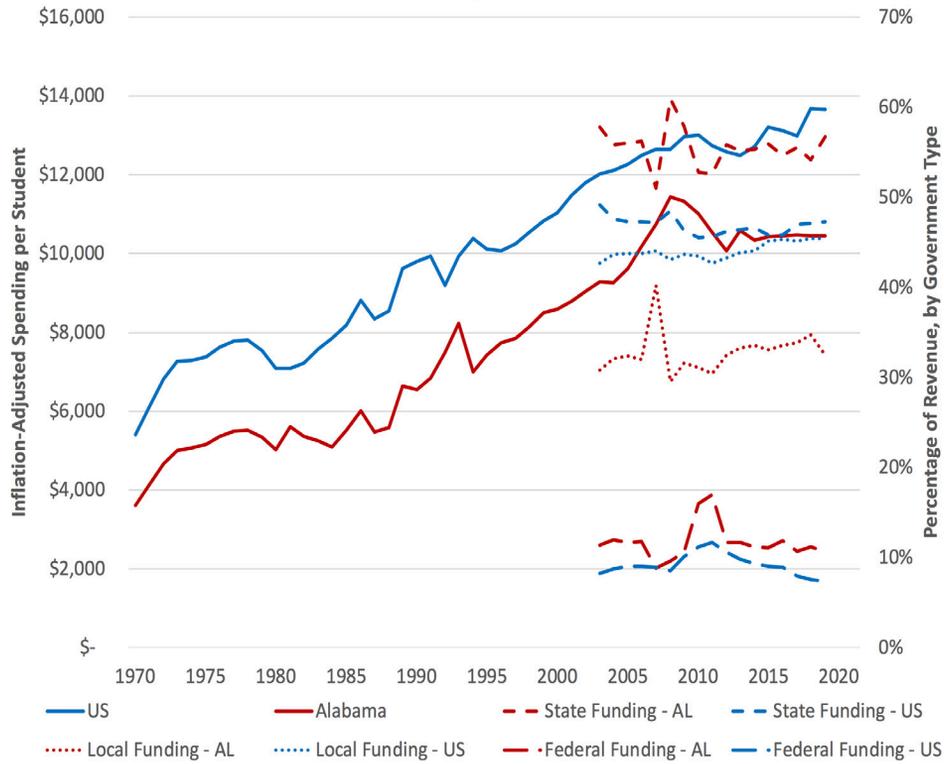
Despite occasional proration and income shortfalls, revenue for Alabama’s public elementary and secondary schools has increased substantially over the past 50 years.

Since 1970, inflation-adjusted spending per student in Alabama increased 190%, compared to 153% nationally.⁵⁷

In the 1969-70 school year, Alabama’s per-student outlays for K-12 public education (\$3,598 in inflation-adjusted dollars) were 33% less than the national average (\$5,397). By the 2018-19 school year, this gap had narrowed to 24%.⁵⁸

Revenues for Alabama’s public schools has tended to be more heavily dependent on state funding, with less coming from local funds. Since the 2002-2003 school year, about 55% of funding has come from the state, 12% from federal sources, and 33% from local districts. By comparison, national averages for state, federal, and local revenues have been 47%, 9%, and 44%, respectively.⁵⁹

Prior to the Great Recession in 2006-07, local funding constituted 40.2% of all state education revenue, but dropped to 29.5% the following year. To cover the difference, state funding jumped from 51% of revenues in 2006-07 to 61% in 2007-08. Since the 2010-11 school year, both revenue streams have stabilized to their pre-Recession averages.⁶⁰



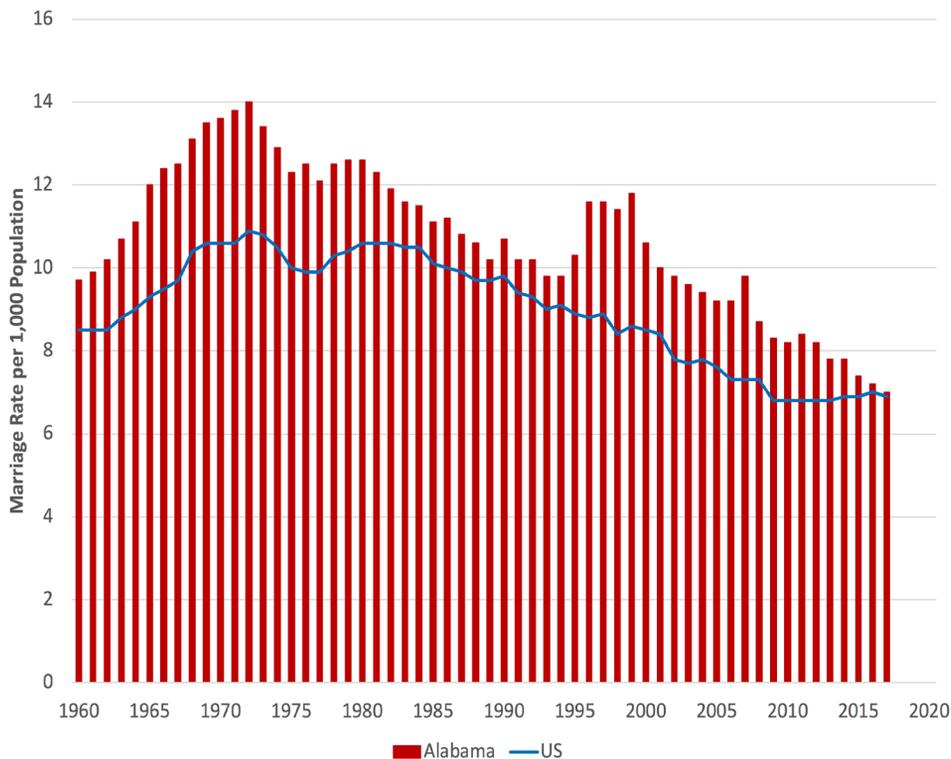


Chapter 4

FAMILY



Marriage



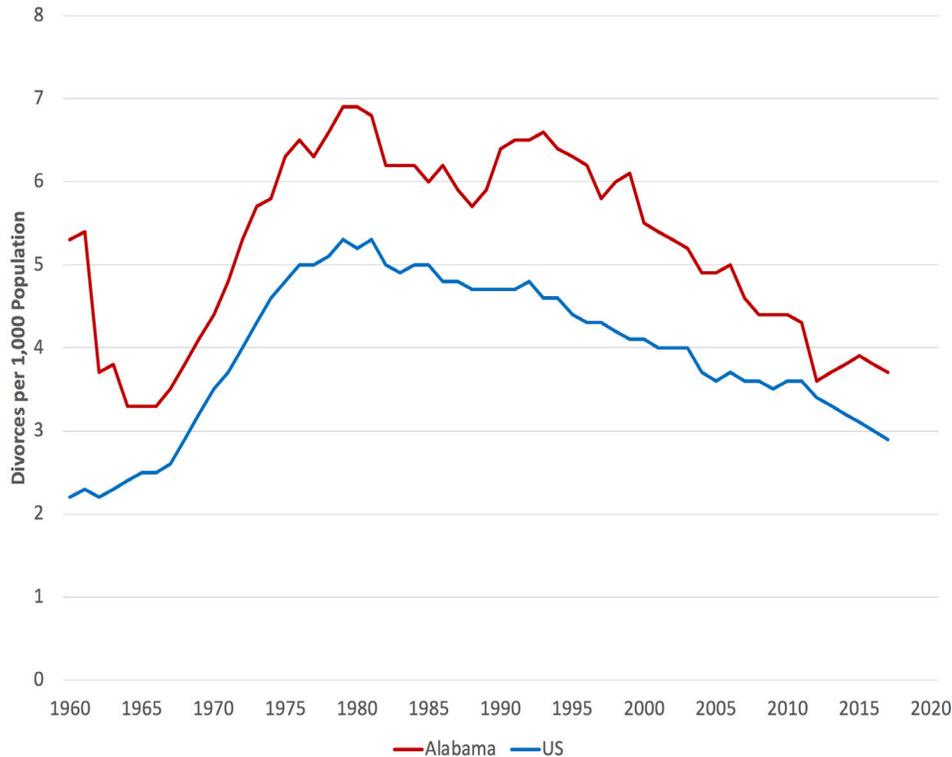
In 2017, there were 34,329 marriages in Alabama, giving the state a marriage rate of about 7 marriages per 1,000 population. Compared to the rest of the nation, Alabama’s marriage was marginally higher than the national average (6.9 per 1,000 population); this is the closest Alabama’s marriage rate has matched that of the nation in almost 60 years.⁶¹

At its apex in 1972 (14.0), Alabama’s marriage rate was 28% higher than the national average (10.9). Since then, both the number and rate of marriages in Alabama have fallen 31% and 50%, respectively. At the same time, the same national statistics fell by 2% and 37%, respectively.⁶²

In 2016—the most recent year detailed information is available—there were 2,220 persons under the age of 20 who married in Alabama (6.3% of all marriages).⁶³



Divorce



In 2017, approximately 17,887 divorces were granted in Alabama. The state's divorce rate has been above the national average for more than 60 years.

In 2017, Alabama's divorce rate (3.7 divorces per 1,000 persons) was 28% above the national average (2.9).⁶⁴

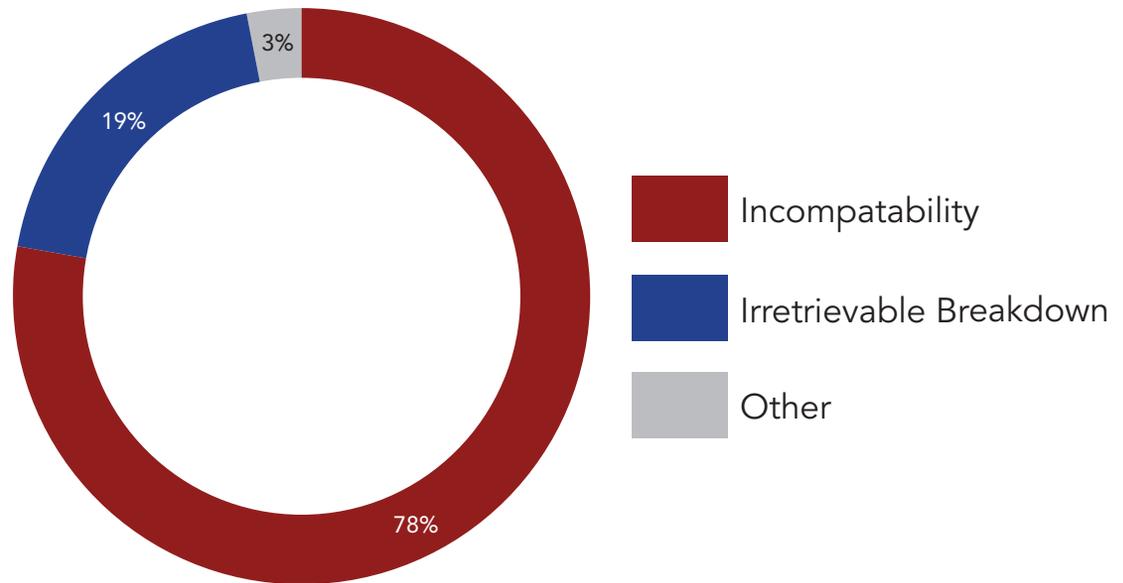
Between 1960 and 1979-1980, Alabama's divorce rate increased 30% from 5.3 divorces per 1,000 population to 6.9. It peaked again at 6.6 in 1993 before descending to its present rate.⁶⁵



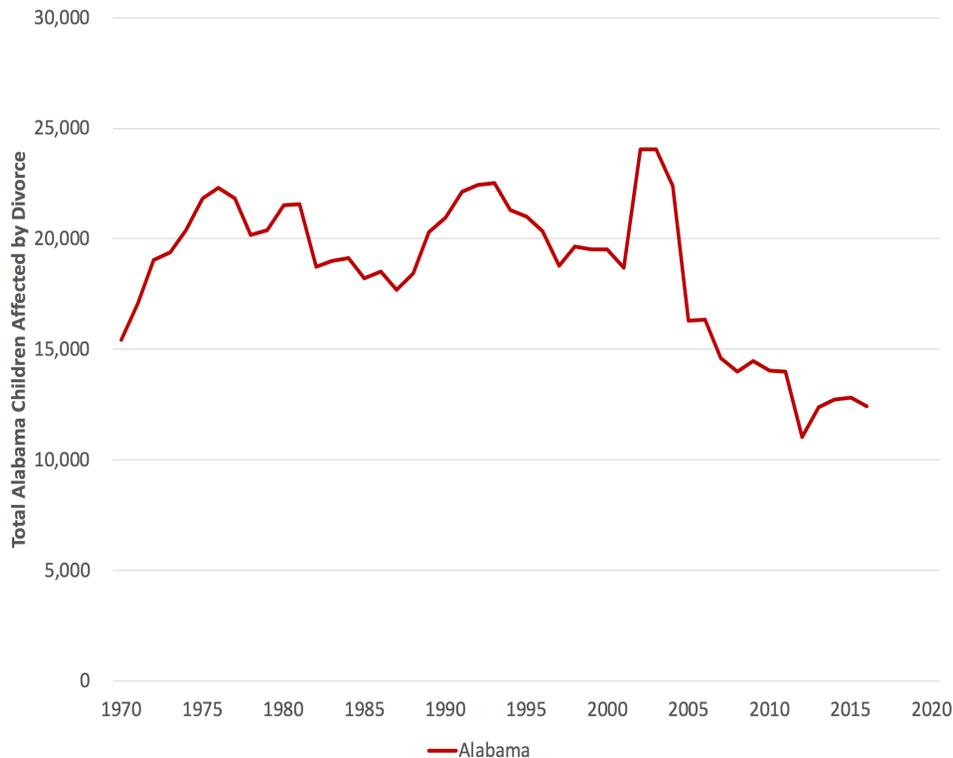
In 2016—the most recent year detailed information is available—the plurality of divorces (29%) occurred among couples who had been married between one and four years, followed by those married between five and nine years (25%).

The most common legal ground for divorce were incompatibility (78%)—as it suggests, a couple’s tastes, views, likes and dislikes have become divergent to the point that it is impossible for them to live together as husband and wife—and irretrievable breakdown (19%)—when the marriage is no longer working and further attempts at reconciliation are impractical, futile, or not in the best interests of the parties.⁶⁶

Divorce in Alabama, by Legal Grounds



Children Affected by Divorce in Alabama



Perhaps the greatest tragedy of divorce is its effect on the children involved.

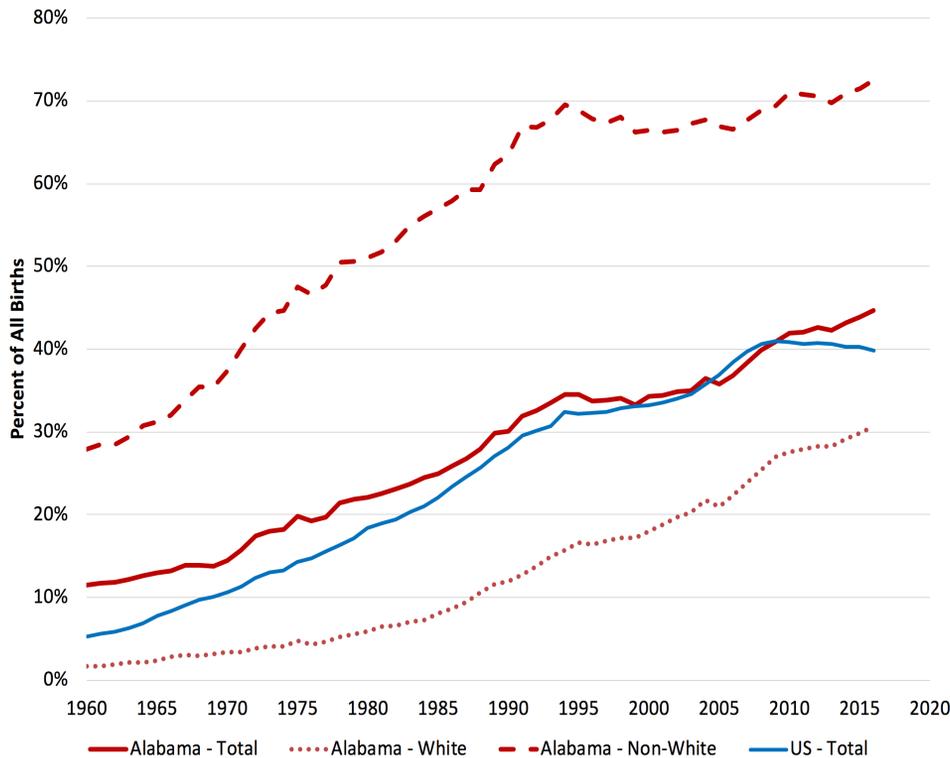
Since 1970, about 18,500 children in Alabama have had their homes split each year.⁶⁷

If none of these divorces had involved a second divorce (or more) for one of the parents, more than 873,000 children in Alabama have been directly affected by divorce since 1970.

This, of course, does not include all the children (and adults) who are indirectly affected.⁶⁸



Births to Unwed Mothers in Alabama



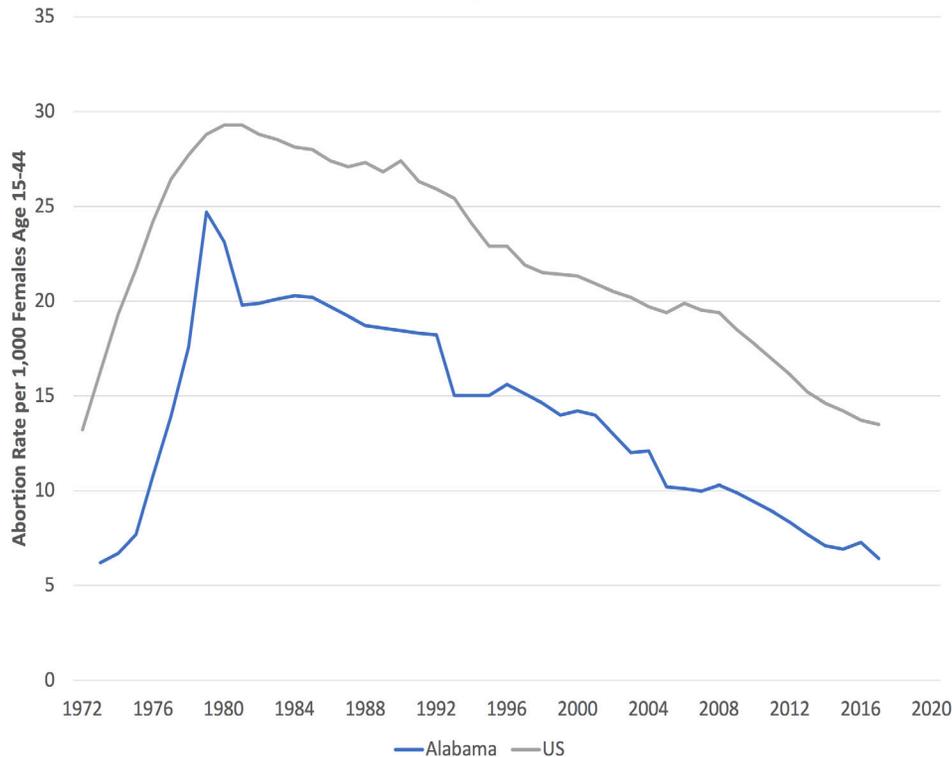
Since 1960, out-of-wedlock births as a percentage of all births in Alabama have increased by 290%. In 1960, only 11.5% of all births were out of wedlock, but by 2016, about 45% of all births were to unmarried mothers.⁶⁹ Nationwide, the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has increased 655%, from 5% to 40%.⁷⁰

Since 1960, almost one million children in Alabama—965,800—have been born into a home where their parents were not married.⁷¹ Nationally, almost 55 million children have been born to unwed mothers since 1990.⁷²

In 1960, 1.7% of births to white women in Alabama were out of wedlock. By 2016, that amount had increased to 30.6%, a thirteen-fold increase. In 1960, 28% of all children born to non-white females were born out of wedlock, compared to 72% in 2016, a 159% increase. The growth rate for out-of-wedlock births to non-white females, however, has plateaued somewhat since 1994.⁷³



Abortion



In 2017, there was approximately one abortion for every 8.7 live births in Alabama.

Of the 6,768 abortions performed, 10% were to women ages 10-19, 32% were to women ages 20-24, 29% were to women ages 25-29, and 17% were to women ages 30-34.

Most abortions (88%) were to unmarried women;⁷⁴ this is almost the same as the national average in 2014—the most recent year national data are available.⁷⁵

Since 2012, the number of abortions performed in Alabama has dropped from one for every 6.4 births to one for every 8.7 live births, a decline of 26%.



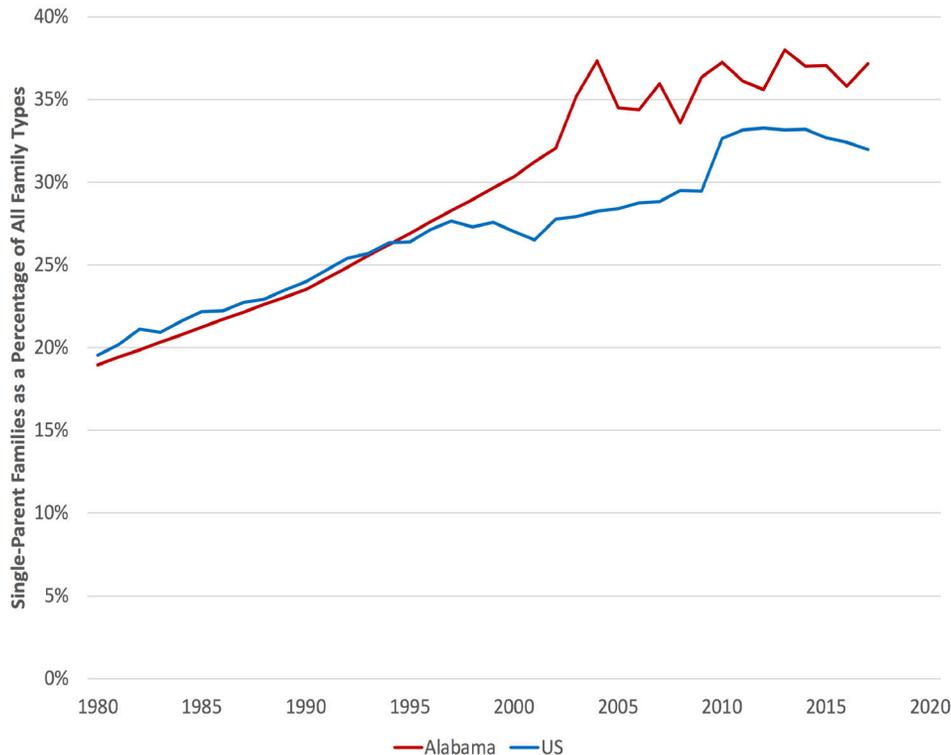
While the exact number of abortions performed in Alabama prior to their legalization in 1973 is unknown, more than 550,000 abortions have been performed between 1973 and 2017.⁷⁶

During the same time, about 60 million abortions have been performed in the United States.⁷⁷

Alabama's rate of 6.4 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44 is the 16th lowest in the United States, and is about half of the national average (13.5). Alabama's abortion rate was also lower than Florida (18.6), Georgia (16.9), and Tennessee (9.2), but higher than Mississippi (4.3).⁷⁸



Single-Parent Families



In 2017, about 37% of all Alabama families with children under age 18 were single-parent homes, compared to about 32% nationwide.

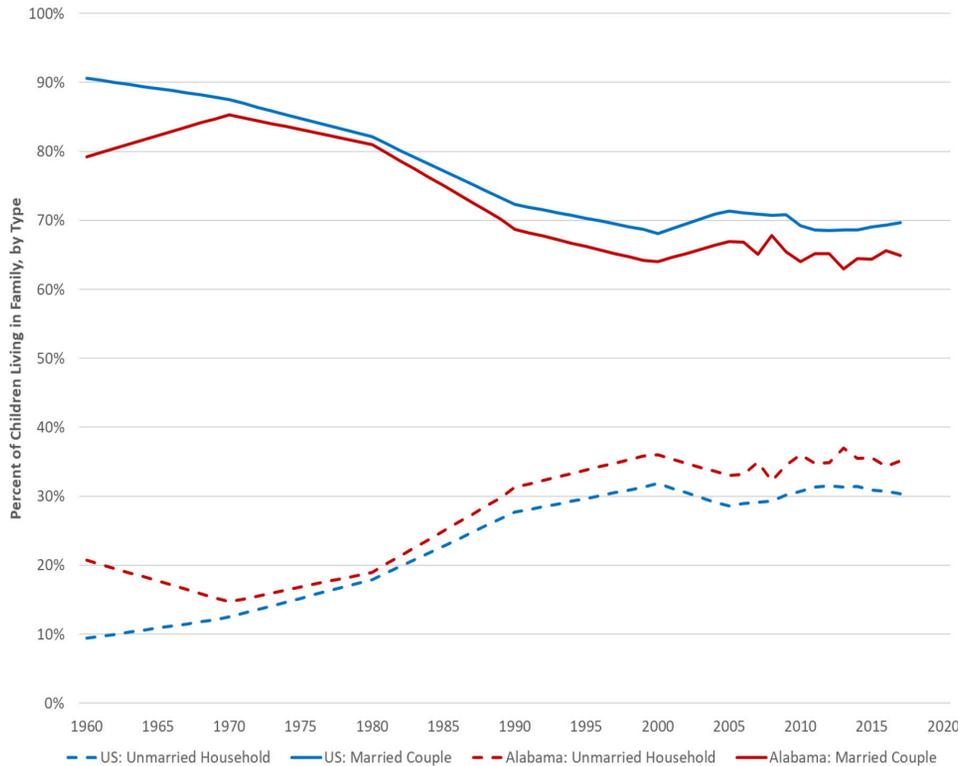
Since 1980, the percentage of families headed by a single parent in Alabama and the nation have increased by 92% and 51%, respectively.⁷⁹

National data from the 1960 census shows the extent to which family composition has changed: 91% of all families with children were married couples, 8% were single-parent, female-headed households, and 1% were male-headed, single-parent households.

By 2017, only 68% of American families with children were married couples, 24% were headed by a single, female parent, and 8% were single-parent, male-headed households.⁸⁰



Living Arrangements of Children

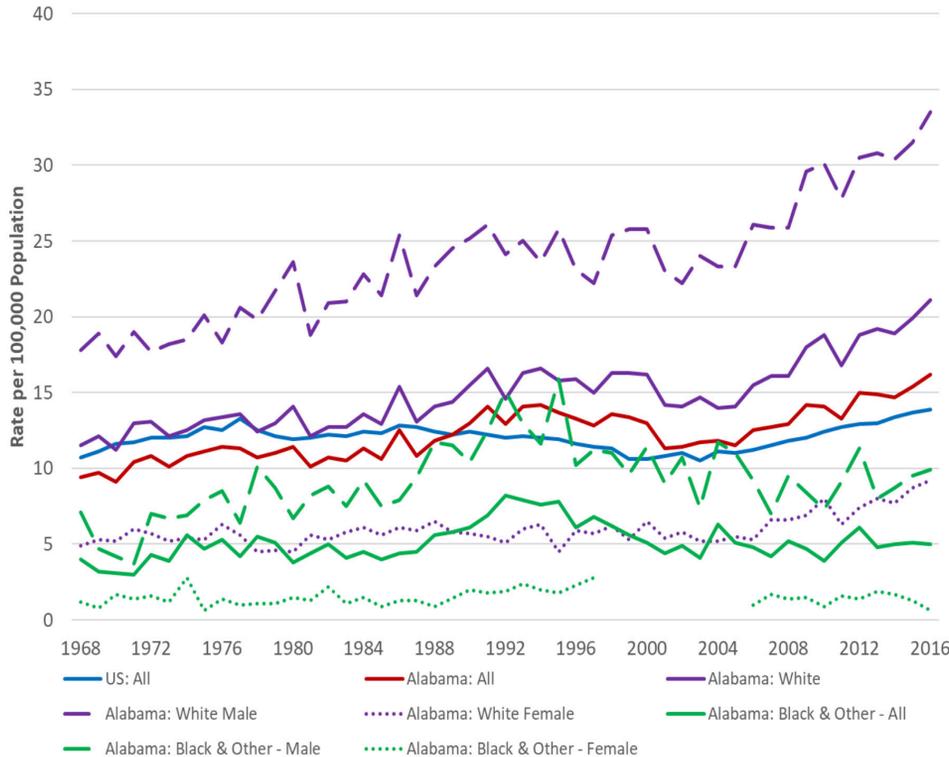


Since 1960, the number of children in Alabama living in married-couple families has declined by 18%, while the number of children living with a single parent has risen by 69%.⁸¹

In 2017, about 35% of all children in Alabama—about 328,000—lived in a home with a single biological parent.⁸²

Add to this the number of children who are in married-couple families where only one biological parent lives, those living with a grandparent or relative, those in institutions or group homes, and you have an incredible number of children who have not experienced the potential stability of one two-parent home for their childhood.

Suicide



In 2017, 834 Alabama residents killed themselves, for a rate of 17.1 per 100,000 residents. Most of them (74%) were white males (617; 22.2 per 100,000). Alabama's suicide rate has been at or above the national average since 1989.⁸³

From 1968 to 2017, the overall suicide rates for Alabama and the nation rose by 82% and 31%, respectively.

During the same time frame in Alabama, suicide rates for whites increased 93%, and the rate for blacks and other races increased 40%.⁸⁴

In 2017, suicide was the 12th leading cause of death for residents in Alabama. However, for residents between the ages of 15 and 24, it was the third leading cause of death. Only accidents and homicide were responsible for more deaths.⁸⁵

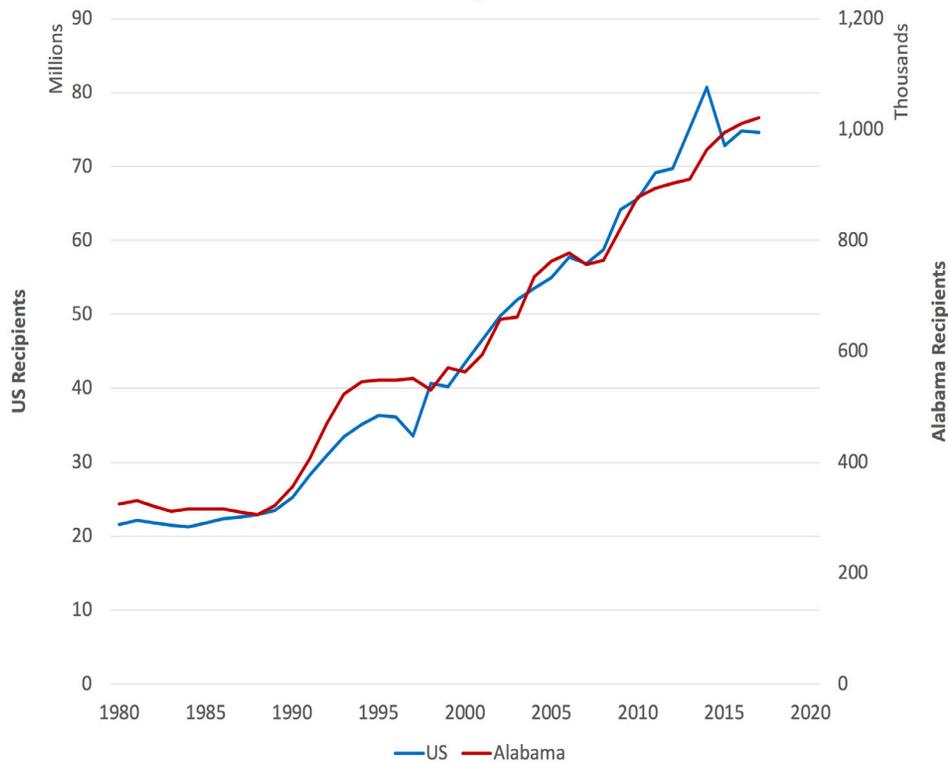


Chapter 5

HEALTH



Medicaid



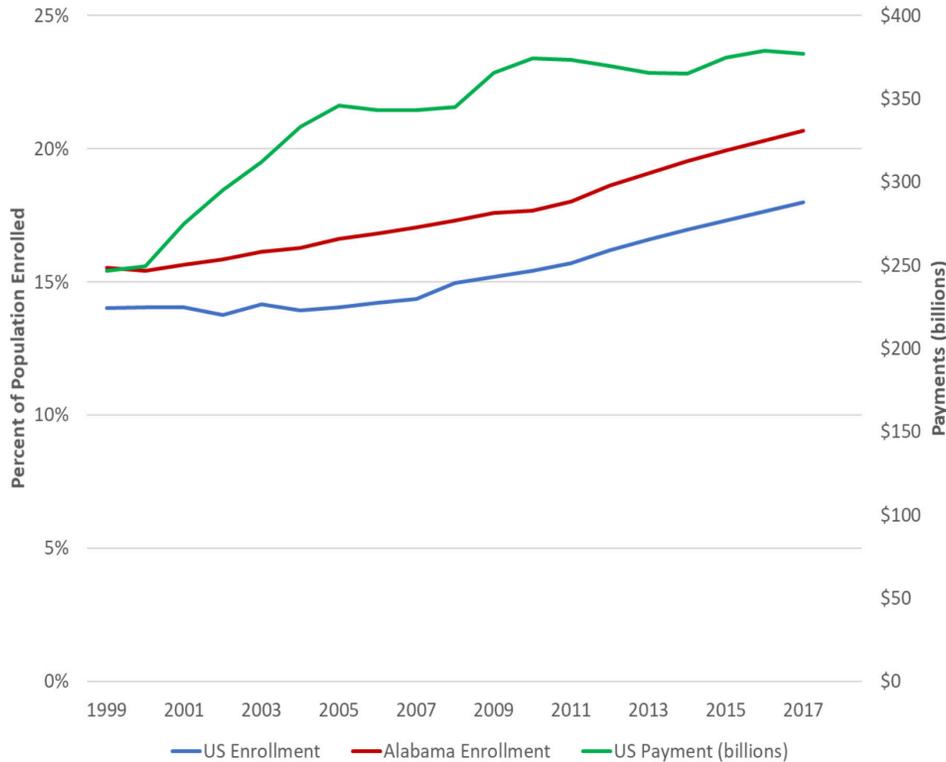
Begun in 1970, Medicaid pays for medical care and nursing home care for the poor.

Since 1980, inflation-adjusted Medicaid spending in Alabama has increased 647% to \$6.7 billion in 2017. At the same time, the number of Medicaid recipients increased 215%, from 324,000 in 1980 to about 1.02 million.⁸⁶

In 2017, approximately 74.6 million Americans received some level of Medicaid assistance, the total cost of which was \$600.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars.

Of the amount spent locally in 2017, 34% was spent on hospital stays, 15% on nursing homes, 11% on pharmacy purchases, and 9% on physician visits.⁸⁷

Medicare Enrollment and Benefits



Medicare was established in 1965 as a means of establishing a health insurance program for aged persons to complement the retirement, survivors, and disability insurance benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act.

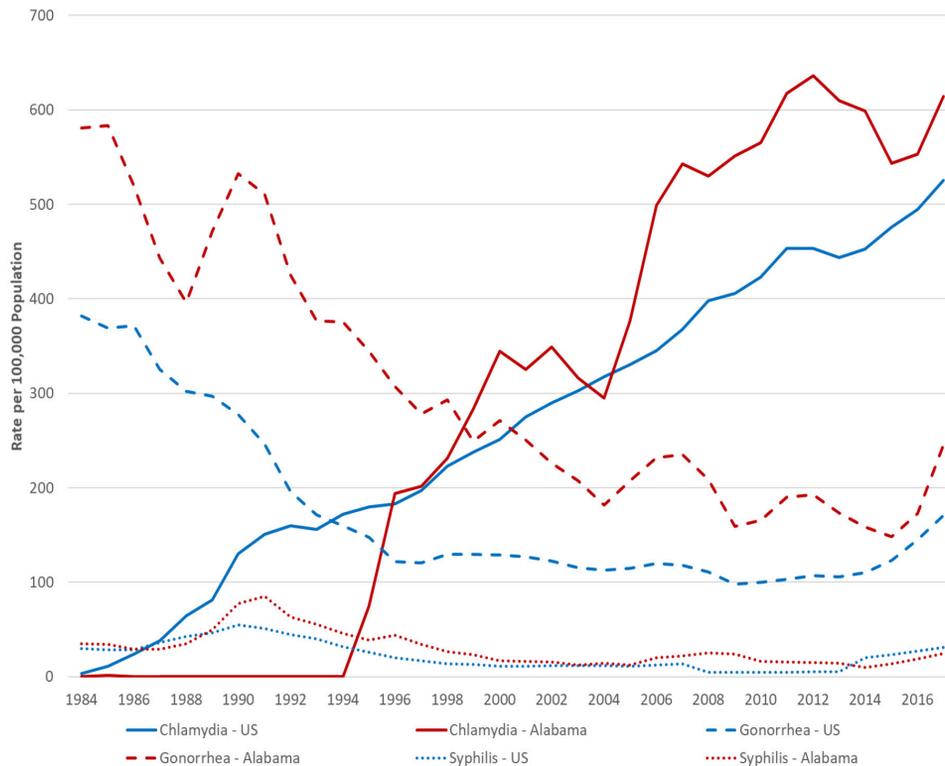
When first implemented in 1966, Medicare covered most persons aged 65 or older. Since then, it has expanded to include persons entitled to Social Security or Railroad Retirement disability cash benefits, most persons with end-stage renal disease, and those with Lou Gehrig’s Disease.⁸⁸

Since 1999, enrollment in Medicare in Alabama rose 45.7%, from 15.5% of the state’s population to 20.7% in 2017. Nationally, enrollment rose from 14% to 18%, an increase of 25.7%.⁸⁹

As enrollment as a percentage of the national population has increased by almost 50%, the inflation-adjusted benefits paid to Medicare enrollees have kept pace, rising from an inflation-adjusted \$256 billion in 1999 to almost \$395 billion in 2017, an increase of 53.6%.⁹⁰



Sexually Transmitted Diseases



In women, chlamydial infections, which usually have no symptoms, may result in damage to a woman's reproductive organs, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)—a major cause of infertility—ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain.⁹¹

Since 1984, Alabama's chlamydia infection rate has increased from almost none to 614 per 100,000 population in 2017, while the national rate has increased 160-fold, from 3.2 to 525.5 per 100,000 population.⁹²

In 2017, Alabama had the eighth highest rate of reported cases of chlamydia in the nation.⁹³

While chlamydia has become the new leader in sexually transmitted diseases in both Alabama and the United States, gonorrhea and syphilis are on the decline. As with chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis produce PID, long-term abdominal pain, and ectopic pregnancies.⁹⁴

Since 1984, the gonorrhea infection rate in Alabama and the United States has decreased by 58% and 55%, respectively.

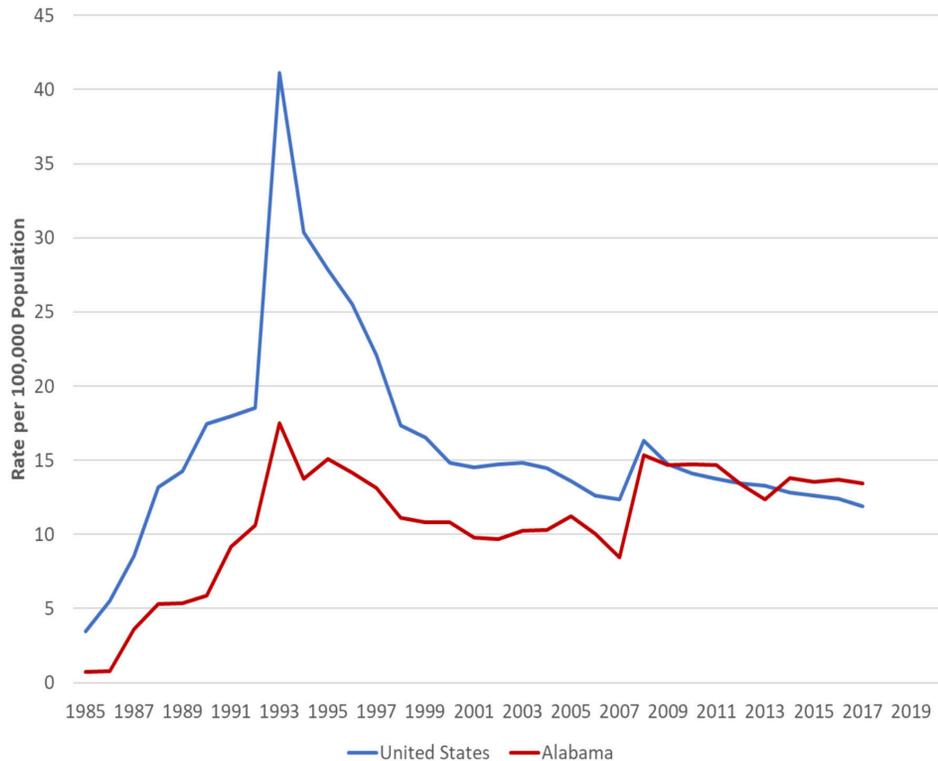
In 2017, Alabama had the eighth highest rate of reported cases of chlamydia in the nation.⁹⁵

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that is particularly dangerous to unborn children. If untreated, many children of mothers with syphilis are stillborn or die shortly after birth.⁹⁶

The reported rate of syphilis cases has fallen by 29% in Alabama and risen by 5% nationwide since 1984. In 2017, Alabama had the 15th highest rate of reported cases of syphilis in the nation (8.7 cases per 100,000 population).⁹⁷



HIV / AIDS



Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection (HIV) is a disease of the immune system. While the disease can be managed through antiretroviral therapy, which can help patients achieve near-normal life expectancies, there is no cure. The most severe phase of HIV is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Without treatment, people with AIDS typically survive about three years.⁹⁸

In 2017, there were 38,739 diagnoses of HIV infection in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the six U.S. dependent areas (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Of these, 656 were reported in Alabama.⁹⁹

The rate of HIV infection in 2017 was about 11.9 diagnoses per 100,000 population nationally and 13.5 per 100,000 in Alabama, giving the state the 12th highest infection rate in the nation.¹⁰⁰

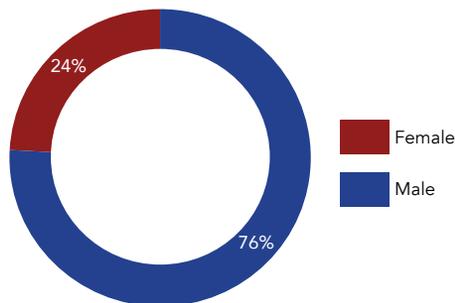
Nationally, the most common age group for new diagnoses of HIV in 2017 was 25-29 years old (32.9 per 100,000 population), followed by 20-24-year-olds (28.7) and 30-34-year-olds (25.6).¹⁰¹

In 2016, there were 1,006,691 persons living with HIV in the United States. Of these, 12,643 lived in Alabama. The plurality of those living with HIV nationwide are black (41%), followed by whites (30%) and Hispanics (23%). Seventy-six percent of persons living with diagnosed HIV infection are male.¹⁰²

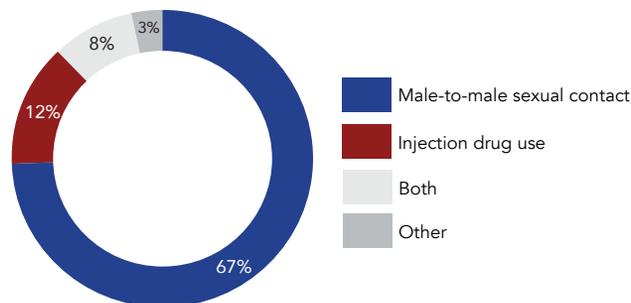
Among males in 2016, most contracted HIV via male-to-male sexual contact (67%), injection drug use (12%), or both (8%). For females, the primary sources of contact were heterosexual contact (72%) and injection drug use (24%).

The reason for the increase in AIDS rates in 1993 is because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised its AIDS surveillance case definition to include adolescents and adults with low CD4 (T-cell) counts, but no manifestation of any signs of illness.¹⁰³

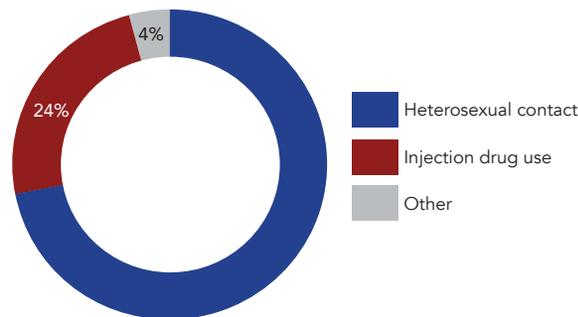
Total HIV Population by Sex, 2016



HIV Cause of Infection among US Males, 2016



HIV Cause of Infection among US Females, 2016



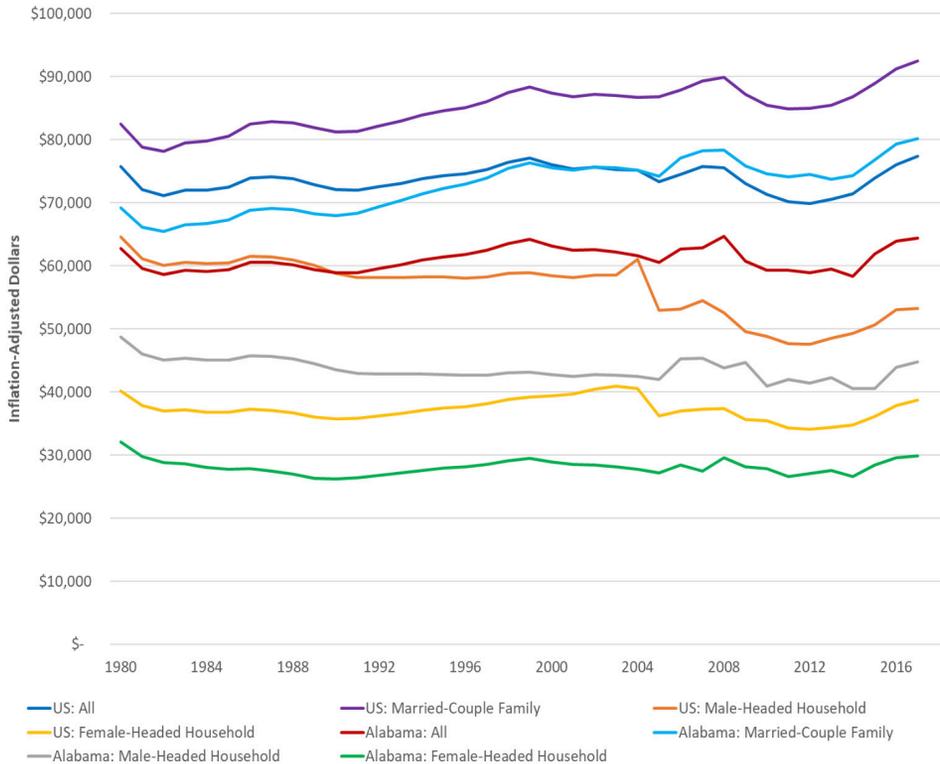


Chapter 6

POVERTY & WELFARE



Median Household Income



Since 1980, the inflation-adjusted, median household income for Alabama residents has increased 3%, slightly faster than the national median (2%). In 2017, the typical Alabama household earned an inflation-adjusted \$64,398, compared to the national median of \$77,358.¹⁰⁴

In both Alabama and nationwide, improvements in earnings were greatest among married-couple families.

In 2017, the average married-couple family in Alabama earned \$80,200, about 16% more than 1980. By comparison, American married-couple families nationwide earned an average of \$92,459, about 12% more than in 1980, after adjusting for inflation.¹⁰⁵

Since 2012, the inflation-adjusted income for the average household in Alabama has increased by 9% to \$64,398.



In general, the gap between Alabama's median household income and that of the nation has remained about the same, from an inflation-adjusted difference of 20.6% in 1980 to 20.1% in 2017. Married-couple families in Alabama, however, have narrowed the gap from 19% to 15%, as have male-headed households (33% to 19%).¹⁰⁶

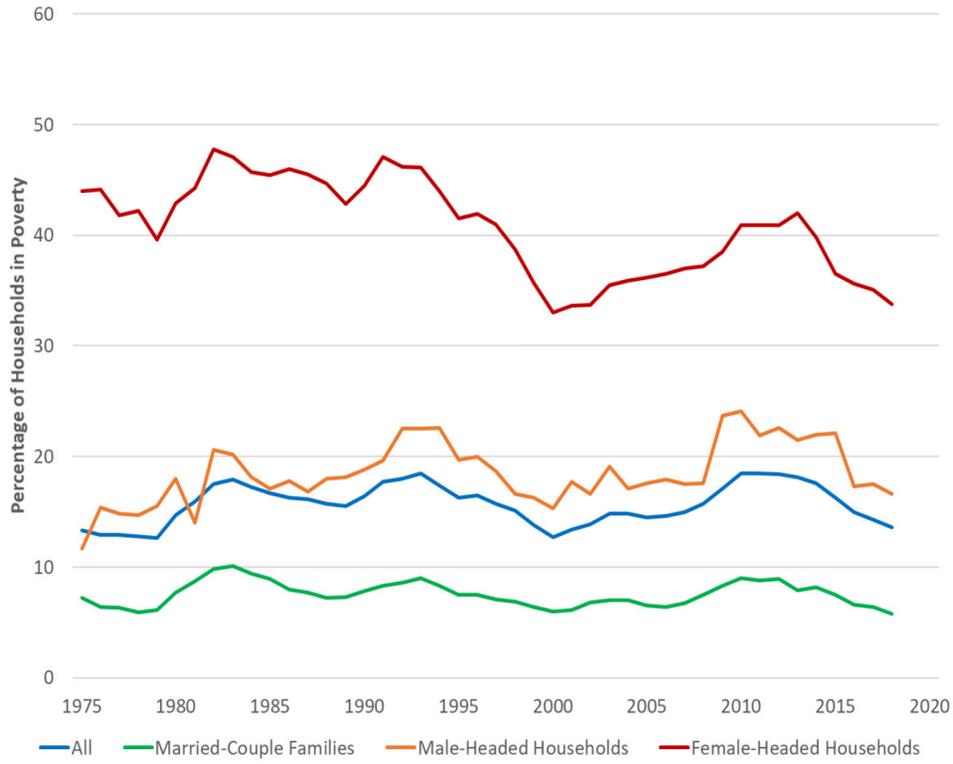
On the other hand, female-headed households in both Alabama and the rest of the nation have become poorer. After adjusting for inflation, female-headed households in Alabama saw their earnings drop by 7% since 1980, from \$32,025 to \$29,867.

Nationwide, median female-headed household income fell 4%, from \$40,187 to \$38,693. The income gap between female-headed households in Alabama and the rest of the nation has also worsened from a 25% difference in 1980 to 30% in 2017.¹⁰⁷





Families in Poverty, by Type



The U.S. Census Bureau updates its estimates of poverty annually using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The Bureau’s definition of poverty counts income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits, such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.¹⁰⁸

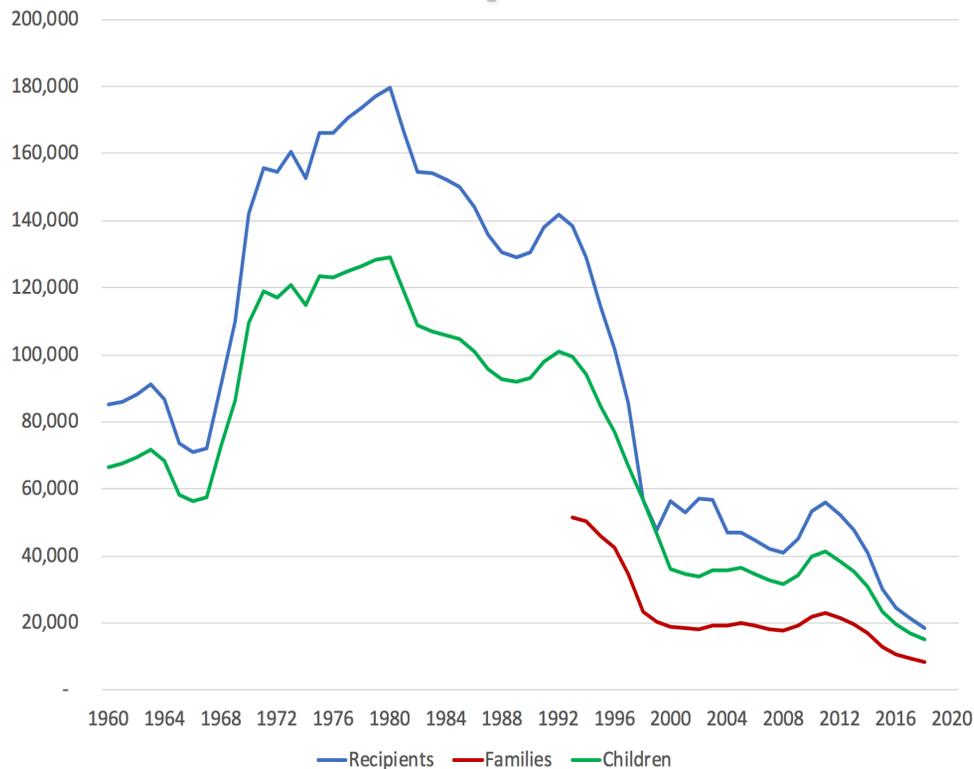
In 2018, about one in every 7 American households with children was in poverty. Since 1975, the percentage of all families with children in poverty has increased by 2.3% nationwide.¹⁰⁹

Married couples have the lowest percentage of poverty of all household types, averaging 7.5% since 1975. They also have the least variance, ranging from 10.1% to 5.8%. Between 1975 and 2018, the poverty rate for married-couple families decreased 19.4%, from an already-low 7.2% to 5.8%.¹¹⁰

Families led by a single parent, however, are more likely to be in poverty, even in healthy economic times. Since 2018, poverty levels among households led by a single female dropped 23.2%, from 44% to 33.8%, but they have ranged from 33% to 48%.

On the other hand, households led by a single male rose 42%, from 11.7% to 16.6%, and have ranged from 11.7% to 24.1%.

AFCD/TANF Recipients, by Type



Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was a cash assistance program primarily intended for women with children in their household. In most circumstances, if recipients married, they would lose their benefits. Created in 1935 and originally called Aid to Dependent Children, this program was originally created under the New Deal to assist widows (or wives of disabled men) and their children.¹¹¹

With the advent of the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, AFDC was replaced with TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), which gives states the flexibility to structure the program as they see fit.¹¹²

After peaking in 1980, the total number of individual recipients and children receiving benefits in Alabama dropped 90% and 88%, respectively, to 18,422 individual recipients and 15,024 children in 2018.¹¹³



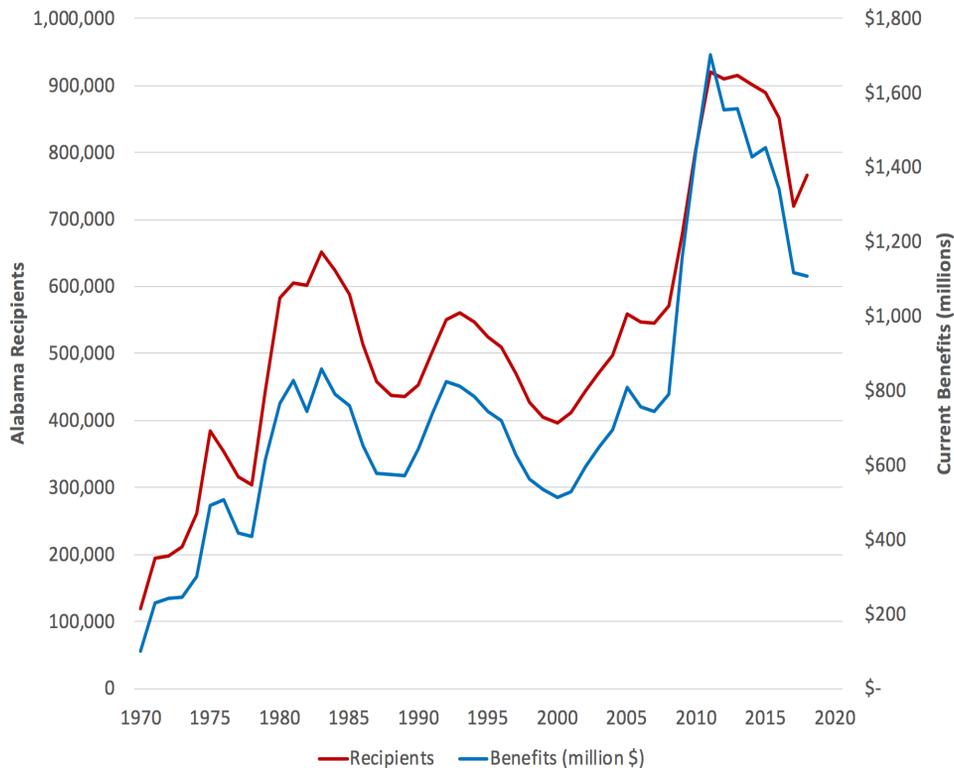
In 2018, about 2.2 million individuals and 1.7 million children received TANF benefits nationwide. In 1993, by comparison, there were 14.1 million individuals and 9.5 million children on AFDC.¹¹⁴

Prior to 1993, the number of families receiving AFDC was not published on a state-to-state level.

Since 1993, the number of families receiving TANF in Alabama has dropped by 84%, from 51,560 to 8,244 in 2018.¹¹⁵



Food Stamp Recipients and Cost



The current food stamp program began as a pilot program in 1961; was made a permanent program (operated at states' option) in 1964; and a mandatory program for all states in 1974. Since 1970, the inflation-adjusted cost of the program in Alabama and nationwide has increased 990% and 1,600%, respectively.¹¹⁶

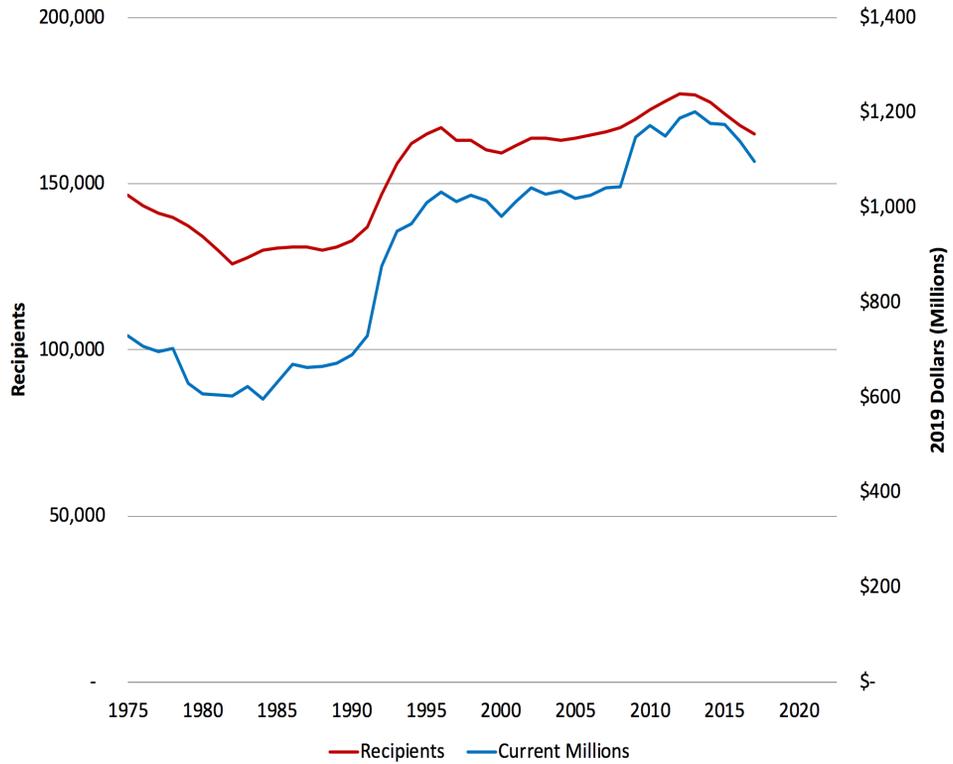
In fiscal year 2018, 39.7 million Americans received food stamps, at a cost of \$61.7 billion. Of these, 767,000 were Alabama residents, at a cost of \$1.08 billion. Since 1970, the number of program participants in Alabama has risen 548%, while national participation has increased 668%.¹¹⁷

The number of food stamp recipients in Alabama decreased substantially in three periods: between 1983 and 1988 (-214,000), between 1993 and 2000 (-164,000), and between 2013 and 2017 (-195,000). As of 2018, about one in 6 Alabamians (767,000) and one in 8 Americans nationally received some support from food stamps.¹¹⁸

Since 2013, the number of Alabamians receiving food stamps has dropped 16%, from 915,000 to 767,000 in 2018.



SSI Benefits

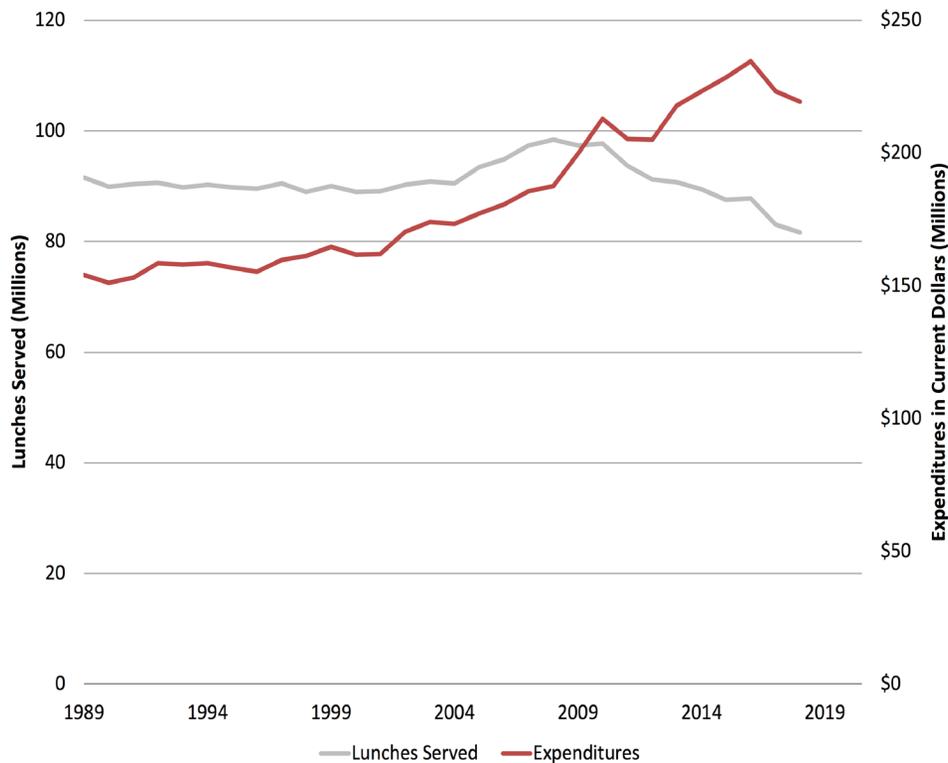


The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides payments to the aged, blind, and disabled who are poor. Prior to its implementation as a federal program in the mid-1970s, individual states operated programs to assist people in these categories.¹¹⁹

Since 1975, the inflation-adjusted total of SSI payments to Alabama residents has increased 585%. In 2017, payments to 165,000 recipients of SSI in Alabama totaled about \$1.05 billion.¹²⁰

During the last 40 years, SSI has changed from mainly serving elderly individuals to being a disability program. In 2017, the largest category of SSI payments in Alabama was to persons claiming disability (155,780; 94%).¹²¹

School Lunches



The National School Lunch Program began as a Depression-era program to provide surplus agricultural commodities to schools with needy children. In 1946, it was made a permanent federal program, and in 1962, funds were authorized for free and reduced-price meals.¹²²

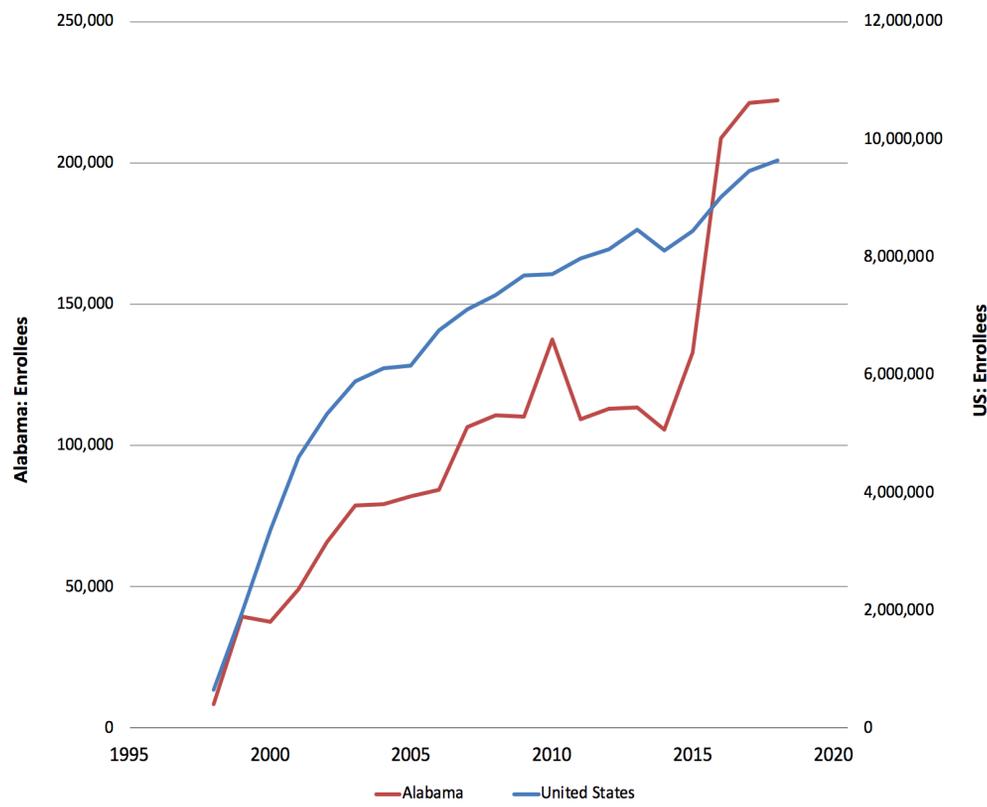
During the 2018 school year, approximately 499,000 Alabama public school students qualified for almost 82 million and reduced-price meals.

Nationally, about 4.8 billion meals were served during the same school year. Since 1989, the number of meals served in Alabama has decreased by about 11%, while increasing about 21% nationally.¹²³

For the 2018 school year, the total cost of the school lunch program in Alabama was \$219.3 million and \$12.8 billion nationwide. Since 1989, the total, inflation-adjusted amount spent on school lunches in Alabama and nationwide has increased 42% and 107%, respectively.¹²⁴



SCHIP Enrollees



The State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), also known as the Children’s Health Insurance Program or (CHIP), is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide matching funds to help provide health insurance to families with children. It was created in 1997 to assist children in families with incomes that are low, but too high to qualify for Medicaid.¹²⁵

In 2018, approximately 222,000 children in Alabama were enrolled in SCHIP, as were 9.6 million nationwide.¹²⁶ In 2017—the most recent year both state and national data are available—the total (inflation-adjusted) cost of SCHIP in Alabama was \$348 million, compared to \$18.3 billion nationwide.¹²⁷

Since 1999, SCHIP enrollment in Alabama rose 463%. Nationally, enrollment rose 390%, from 1.9 million to 9.6 million.¹²⁸

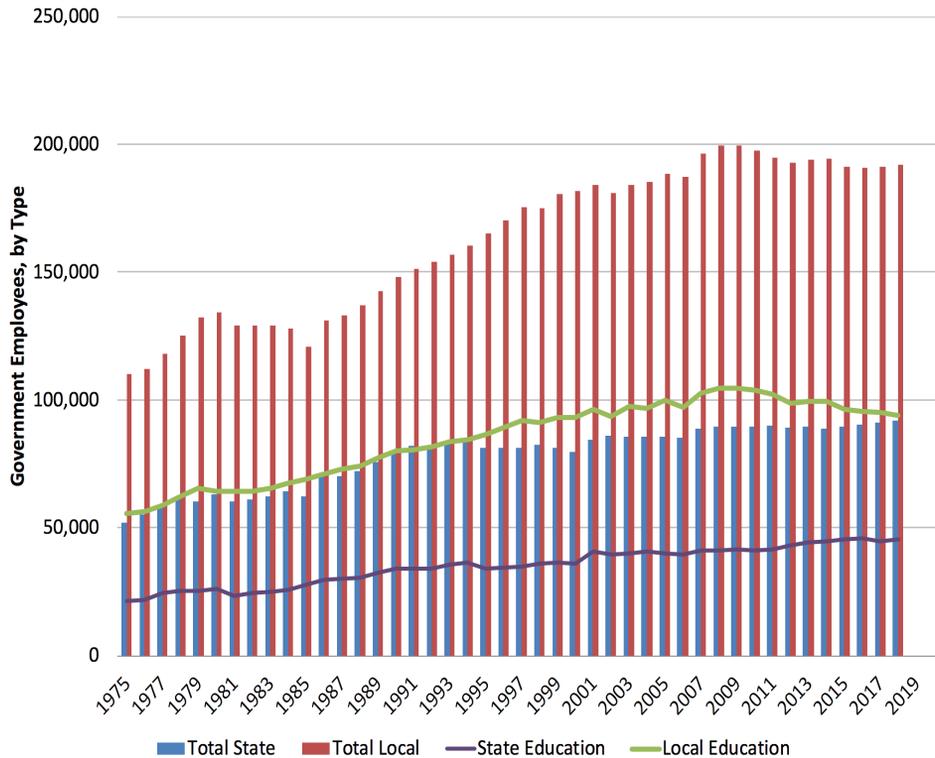


Chapter 7

GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS



Government Employees by Type

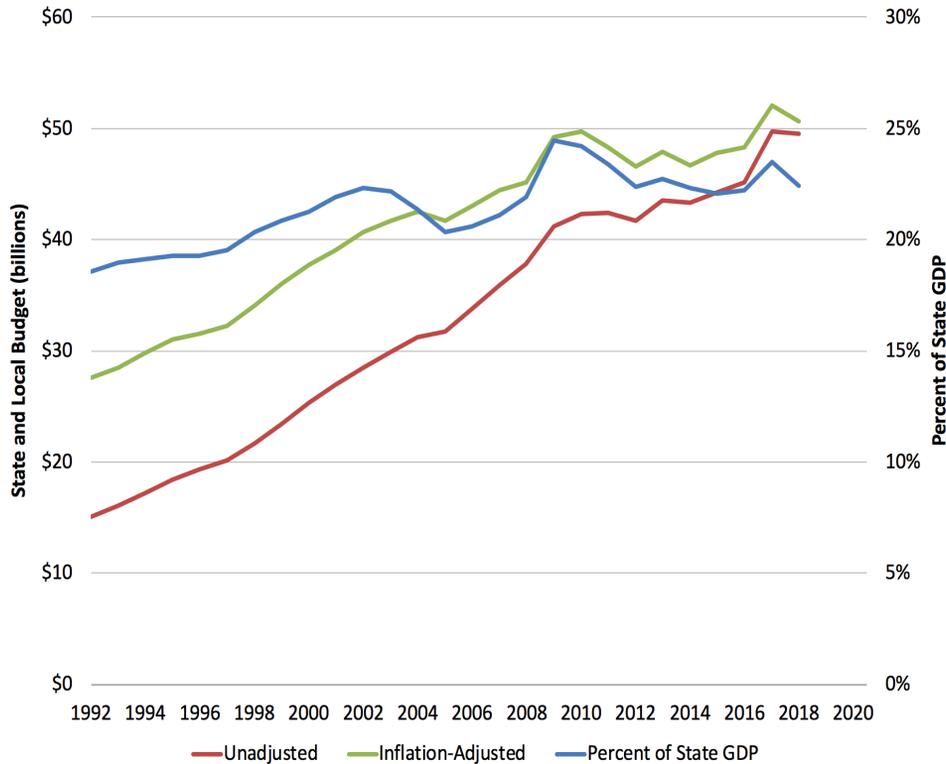


Since 1975, Alabama's population has increased by about 33%. At the same time, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) state and local government employees has increased by 77% and 75%, respectively.¹²⁹

In 2018, Alabama had a total of 283,939 FTE state and local government workers. Of these, 91,993 were state and 191,946 were local. Local government employees include teachers and other public education employees.¹³⁰

Since 2012, the number of state and local government employees has remained flat at between 281,000 and 284,000.

State Budget



In fiscal year 2018, Alabama’s combined state and local expenditures totaled \$50.4 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars. Since 1992, combined state and local spending has increased 83%.¹³¹

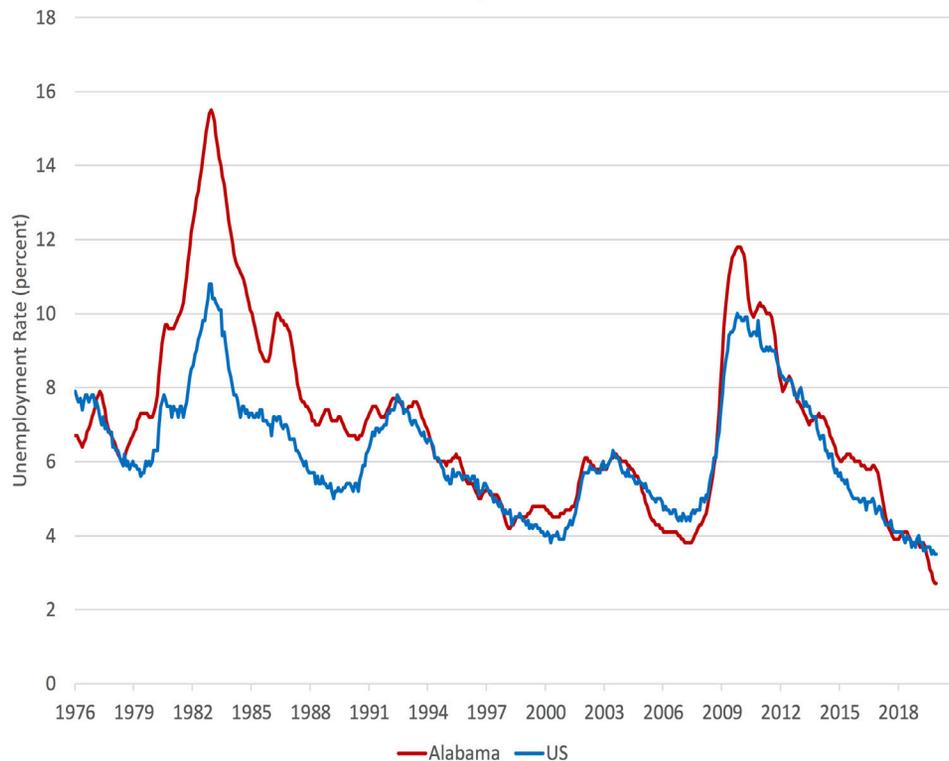
In 1992, Alabama’s combined state and local budget of \$15.1 billion equaled about 19% of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP) of \$81.3 billion. By 2018, the estimated budget of \$49.6 billion in actual dollars was 22.4% of the state’s GDP of \$221.1 billion.¹³²

Since the Republican takeover of the Legislature in 2010, state budget expenditures have increased at an inflation-adjusted 1.8% (17.25% if not adjusted for inflation).

In 2018, the three largest components of Alabama’s state and local budgets were education (28.7%), health care (28.5%), and pensions (7%).¹³³



Unemployment Rate



Since 1976, the unemployment rates for the United States and Alabama have closely mirrored each other.

Since December 2009, Alabama's unemployment rate has fallen 74% from 11.8% to 2.7% in December 2019, its lowest rate in 43 years. At the same time, the national unemployment rate has fallen 66%, from 9.9% to 3.5%.¹³⁴

Between December 2018 and December 2019, preliminary data show that Alabama gained 84,000 jobs, for a total of 2.2 million jobs.¹³⁵ The sectors with the greatest gains were professional and business services (6.1%), construction (4.3% increase), and leisure and hospitality (3.7%). The only sectors with a decline in jobs were information (-0.9%) and mining and logging (-4%).¹³⁶

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