2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ALIRP Annual Report

This year, ALIRP celebrates 6 years as a non-profit and marks 10 years of work in Alabama, given our start was in 2016 with a group of concerned individuals seeking change. This past year, the 11-member board has worked hard to develop and approve policies and procedures, maintain a website and other social-media platforms, recruit and orient volunteers, and implement our three-part mission of supporting refugees and asylum-seekers locally and globally through advocacy, education, and direct assistance. Our Board this year took a strategic approach to recruitment. We considered 2025 as a building year for ALIRP Direct Support programs. Due to the political climate, our programs had to evolve beyond Direct Financial Support to solidarity in community support. Therefore, we recruited several members who work in the immigration and refugee space with representation from **Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ), Hispanic and Immigrant Center for Alabama (HICA), Trinity West Outreach Hub,** and **Alabama Office for Refugees (AOR)**.

Through compiling this report, we, the Board of Directors, are thrilled to reflect on all that we accomplished together with our wonderful volunteers, community sponsors, grant funders, ALIRP Partners, and all our wonderful interns and staff who go beyond the call of duty year after year. We envision a world where all refugees and asylum seekers find safety and live with dignity. Our activities and efforts seek to:

1. Educate the community and elected officials about the current refugee crisis and the process of refugee resettlement;
2. Advocate for policies that address the root causes of the refugee crisis, and that increase U.S. support for refugees; and
3. Provide direct support for refugees and asylum seekers in the United States and in the Birmingham community.

This year was an extraordinary year of growth in strengthening our community networks, staffing, and infrastructure. We established several new collaborations with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) to host several internship opportunities in the areas of direct support and education outreach.

In 2025, ALIRP joined the ***Alabama Immigrant Advocacy Coalition***. The *Alabama Immigrant Advocacy Coalition* is a group of nonprofit and community-based organizations throughout the state of Alabama who are working to advocate for the rights and just treatment of immigrants, including refugees and people seeking humanitarian protection. The coalition coordinates statewide advocacy days and meets on a weekly basis during the Alabama legislative session. This coalition has been extremely valuable to ALIRP and to the state in general as a resource and vehicle for advocacy specifically relating to immigrants in Alabama. It is also the fulfillment of a vision shared by our Founding Board, the vision that we would have a coalition working and sharing resources for the immigrant and refugee communities in Alabama. Read more about this initiative in our section below focused on Education and Advocacy.

We have partnered with UAB School of Public Health since 2020 by providing internships to undergraduate and masters of public health students. This year, we had two wonderful bilingual, bicultural undergraduate students working with us on Direct Support programs:

- **Aldo Guerra, BS Public Health** who assisted with Direct Support and a new PhotoVoice program with our younger "youth" Partners. Aldo wrote about his experience with ALIRP in this UAB Student Spotlight published online.
- **Hae Fuerte-Tejeda, BS Public Health** started working with us on a special project focused on Maternal and Child Health with one of our Board Members, Jane Vines. As a result of the success, we chose to extend an offer of employment to Hae. Starting in January 2026, Hae will serve as our new **Community Health Coordinator**.

We also began a partnership with the UAB Institute of Human Rights on the Birmingham Immersive Community Empowerment Program (BICEP). The BICEP program is a collaboration with is a collaboration between IHR, the David Mathews Center for Civic Life (DMC), and more than fifteen community organizations in the greater Birmingham are including:

- **Meg Waldie, BS Anthropology - pre-law**, who assisted on the PhotoVoice project alongside Aldo Guerra.
- **Shreya Sunil, BS Cancer Biology - pre-med**, who has worked with us to focus on educational programs and human rights which we will feature in early spring 2026.

We accepted an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship of Alabama with former board member and current Medical Student at the **UAB School of Medicine, Divya Annamalai**. This project will work on designing a portfolio of resources and guides for our Partners seeking high education or professional training, specifically a College and Career Readiness program.

Finally, we accepted the summer internship with **Mary Clare Ingram** who helped to design a Book Club Reading Guide which was published on the ALIRP website.

Given the success and leadership we have seen in **Matthew Buttler,** ALIRP Senior Case Manager, the Board of Directors voted to promote him to **Executive Director** at the close of 2025. We look forward to his continued leadership at ALIRP. Starting in January 2026, we will have **two full time staff employees and one part-time employee**:

- Matthew Buttler, Executive Director
- Hae Fuerte-Tejeda, Community Health Coordinator
- Leonela Martinez, Communications Manager

This document is organized into the following sections: Executive Summary covering outcomes in Direct Support, Education, and Advocacy; ALIRP Board of Directors, which lists the board members from 2025; and ALIRP Financials, which provides a summary of the financial report for 2025.

Thank you for all your support of ALIRP.

Executive Summary

The Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership (ALIRP) is a 501c3 non-profit organization based in Birmingham, Alabama. ALIRP is a diverse coalition of community members, interfaith religious leaders and laypersons, as well as representatives of other community groups, who have come together for the purpose of supporting refugees and asylum seekers through direct assistance, education, and advocacy.

Direct Assistance & Program Impact (2025)

The 2024 calendar year marked significant progress toward ALIRP's goals for direct assistance. Through our programs and policies, we supported families navigating the asylum process while building stability and self-sufficiency. ALIRP began the year serving 37 partner families (146 individuals) and closed the year supporting 48 partner families (193 individuals). During this time, 5 partner families transitioned to alumni status, reflecting increased independence and reduced need for intensive case management.

Our partners achieved several important milestones toward asylum, refugee status, and economic stability in 2025, including:

- 21 adult partners received work permits
- 31 partners secured regular employment (some already had work permits from the previous year)
- 5 partners obtained driver's licenses

Access to employment and mobility allows our partners to support their families and engage more fully in their communities, fostering safety, stability and a sense of belonging. Much of ALIRP's work focuses on bridging the critical gap between arrival and long-term self-sufficiency while partners pursue humanitarian status.

In 2025, ALIRP allocated $60,000 toward temporary financial support provided directly to ALIRP Partner families for the next two years ($30,000 per year) from Direct Relief (https://www.directrelief.org/) Fund for Health Equity. Expenses were distributed as follows: 50% rent and utilities, 30% legal support, and 20% medical and other essential needs, including school supplies for children, space heaters in winter, and window air conditioning units in the summer.

ALIRP Furniture Donation Drive - Second Year and Continued Success

In 2024, ALIRP launched a Quarterly Furniture Donation Drive to help partner families turn housing into home. After speaking with ALIRP Partners about their needs in getting settled in their new homes in Alabama, the organization learned that furniture and appliances were a significant area of need for many of the families we support. The most urgent needs at first were beds for children and adults, and this is reflected in the quantity of beds collected and distributed during the first few donation drives. This project continued through 2025. Responding to a critical gap in household resources, the program brings

together ALIRP staff, volunteers, and faith partners to deliver essential furnishings directly to families in need.

The first ALIRP Furniture Donation Drive was conducted in 2024 using two pick-up trucks. Since then, ALIRP has been using a box truck that Canterbury United Methodist Church generously allows ALIRP to utilize for these quarterly donation drives. Since then, once per quarter, Executive Director Matt Buttler has coordinated furniture collection and same-day delivery to ALIRP Partner families. Volunteers played a vital role by donating items, spreading the word, and assisting with deliveries—transforming community generosity into immediate, tangible support.

Throughout 2025, ALIRP delivered full- and queen-size beds with frames and mattresses, dressers, dining tables and chairs, washers and dryers, and small appliances which corresponded to the expressed needs of ALIRP Partner families. Using Salvation Army and Goodwill valuation guidelines, the estimated total value of donated items in 2025 was $3,524. We believe that the popularity of the Furniture Donation Drives are representative of ALIRP's success in helping Partners meet their needs.

To further amplify the impact of this effort, ALIRP also launched a dedicated webpage highlighting the success and stories of the Furniture Donation Drive (https://www.alirp.org/furniture-donation-drive.html). The table below provides a snapshot of the items donated in 2025, reflecting the collective power of community support in creating safe, comfortable homes for our partner families. Not included in the table are: space heaters, heated blankets, fans, and other miscellaneous items that ALIRP also delivered.

Furniture Item (Selected)	**2025 Total Donations**
Beds (Twin, Double, Queen)	5
Bookcases	9
Coffee Table or Side End Tables	5
Coffee Table	1
Crib, Crib Mattress, or Changing Table	2
Desk Chair	2
Dining Chairs and/or Table with Chairs	15
Dresser	3
Lamps	3
Pots and Pans	2
Rugs	1
Living Room Furniture: Sofa, Loveseats, Recliner	10
Washer and/or Dryers	4
Total	**62**

New Program: ALIRP Youth-focused Programming

In 2025, ALIRP expanded our Direct Support programming to focus on engaging and supporting the youth members of ALIRP Partner families. This focus was an obvious choice, since more than half of our individual Partners are under 18 years old. In the spring and summer, we hosted small groups of youth ages 15-24 for a PhotoVoice project, which was supported by the UAB Institute of Human Rights through an intern, Meg Waldie, who worked on the PhotoVoice project alongside ALIRP staff and Hae Fuerte-Tejeda who was an intern at the time and was hired at the end of the year when her internship completed. The PhotoVoice project was a vehicle for facilitating structured interactions among ALIRP Partner youth participants. The project allowed ALIRP Partner youth to take photos in different locations and form narratives relating to the realities in which they were living. Over time, we saw that youth developed social relationships with each other and became more comfortable speaking about themselves and their lives.

Through the PhotoVoice project, we also received feedback from the youth participants that an engagement program should start with less-structured social gatherings like bonfires and outdoor activities. Overall, we learned that our ALIRP youth can benefit greatly from social interaction especially in environments where they feel safe. We also saw that several current Partner youth took on leadership roles in planning and facilitating ALIRP youth engagement activities.

In 2026, ALIRP plans to continue engaging our youth Partners through social and educational events including a bonfire social in the winter, college and career night in the spring, and soccer camp in the summer. ALIRP also wants to expand opportunities for youth and their parents to interact with and support each other through community.

Education & Advocacy Impact (2025)

Education and advocacy are foundational pillars of ALIRP's mission, strengthening our ability to support immigrant families while advancing more just and humane policies. In 2025, ALIRP was met with unprecedented challenges at the state level with several pieces of anti-immigrant legislation being introduced in the 2025 legislative session. 2025 was a year of building and expanding for ALIRP's advocacy and education efforts. ALIRP responded to attacks on immigrant and refugee communities by organizing with other groups from around the state and collectively expressing our support for immigrant rights and dignity as well as our opposition to legal and enforcement attacks on immigrant families and communities, including ALIRP Partners. Our Board President and Senior Case Manager spoke several times with the press at different events and have been quoted in local news:

- Alabama bill would create state registry of immigrants, asylum seekers: 'Very anti-immigrant'. *AL.com.* 16 April 2025.

https://www.al.com/news/2025/04/alabama-bill-would-create-state-registry-of-immigrants-asylum-seekers-very-anti-immigrant.html

- They crossed the border for better schools. Now, families and students are leaving the US. *AL.com.* 21 May 2025. https://www.al.com/educationlab/2025/05/they-crossed-the-border-for-better-schools-now-some-families-are-leaving-the-us.html

ALIRP also launched two new webpages for their Advocacy and Education programs. The Advocacy website (https://www.alirp.org/alirp-advocacy.html) details our efforts with the coalition that formed. For our Education program, ALIRP has hosted several Book Club events since 2020 and we chose to highlight those events as well as our reading guides and other resources on a single page (https://www.alirp.org/alirp-book-club.html).

Throughout the year, ALIRP also maintained a strong presence in the broader community. Below is a list of sponsored programs, invited outreach events, and professional convenings where Senior Case Manager Matt Buttler presented alongside several ALIRP Interns and academic partners.

Alabama Advocacy Coalition

In 2025, the Alabama Immigrant Advocacy Coalition was formed. Through this coalition, member organizations working in the areas of human rights, immigrant groups, and faith leaders came together to align a clear message towards the state legislature - we stand together in solidarity. Coalition member organizations included Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ), Hispanic and Immigrant Center of Alabama (HICA), Alabama Forward, ACLU of Alabama, Alabama Arise, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Alabama NAACP. Over the course of the 5-month-long Alabama legislative session in 2025 member organizations met together weekly to discuss the current political discourse. Through our work, the coalition accomplished the following:

- Developed a Collective Values statement along with a Coalition Infrastructure document which were approved by all coalition members. These documents guided the coalition as it moved forward to respond to legislative attacks on immigrant families and communities.
- Organized one Statewide Immigrant Advocacy Day to advocate for the rights of immigrants living in Alabama, and one “pack the house” event to stand in opposition to specific legislation which targeted immigrants and their communities.
- Near the end of the 2025 Alabama legislative session, Alabama Forward (mentioned above) assumed the role of supporting the immigrant advocacy coalition through funding, providing language access, and presenting training and technical assistance for members of the advocacy coalition.

Community Tabling Events

Each year we strive to meet the community at events around town. ALIRP tabling events in 2025 included:

- Kindness Summit at Hoover Public Library - Hoover, AL, 2 February 2025
- ESL Parent Night at Alabaster Public Schools - Alabaster, AL, 30 April 2025.

- “Sun Day” event at Avondale United Methodist - Birmingham, AL, 21 September 2025.
- Educational event at Center Point Library - Birmingham, AL, 15 November 2025.

Invited Speaking Events

Several ALIRP Board Members and Senior Case Manager, Matt Buttler were invited to present at several local churches and organizations on ALIRP’s programs, direct support model, and the lived realities facing our partner families—further amplifying ALIRP’s mission and impact.

“Immigration Basics: Pathways, Policies, and Recent Changes, Part I,” presented by Matt Buttler, Senior Case Manager, and Betsy Mishoe
Trinity United Methodist Church West Homewood, in-person, 29 January 2025.

“Immigration Basics: Pathways, Policies, and Recent Changes, Part II,” presented by Matt Buttler, Senior Case Manager, and Betsy Mishoe
Trinity United Methodist Church West Homewood, in-person, 23 February 2025

“Immigration Justice Panel at League of Women Voters Central Alabama,” presented by Dr. Meredith Gartin, Board President
Rojo - Birmingham, AL, in-person, 1 May 2025

“Immigration Justice Panel at League of Women Voters North Alabama,” presented by Matt Buttler, Senior Case Manager
Yellowhammer Brewing - Huntsville, AL, in-person, 20 May 2025

“ALIRP Outreach Presentation,” presented by Dr. Meredith Gartin, Board President
Crosscreek Baptist Church - Pelham, AL, in-person, 13 July 2025

“Immigration Basics: Pathways, Policies, and Recent Changes, Part IV,” presented by Matt Buttler, Senior Case Manager
Trinity United Methodist Church West Homewood, in-person, 28 September 2025

“HOAPnetwork Brunch & Learn,” presented by Matt Buttler, Senior Case Manager
ROJO - Birmingham, in-person, 25 October 2025

“Global Migration Health: Global-Local converge with the Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership, ” presented by Dr. Meredith Gartin, Board President
Global Public Health Student Group, Geisinger’s School of Medicine, online/virtual, 17 November 2025

“Rights of Non-citizens,” presented by Dr. Meredith Gartin, Board President
The Institute of Human Rights Social Justice Café, UAB, Birmingham, AL, virtual, 19 November 2025

Research Symposiums and Conference Presentations

As a community-based nonprofit organization, ALIRP partners with the University of Alabama Institute of Human Rights and the University of Alabama School of Public Health to create meaningful research internship opportunities for emerging professionals. These internships provide hands-on training and applied research experience while upholding the highest standards of scientific rigor and ethical data collection.

Data gathered through intern-supported research directly informs ALIRP's Direct Support programs, strengthening services for individuals seeking asylum and other forms of humanitarian protection as they pursue pathways to stability, permanent residency, and citizenship in Alabama. This research also shapes ALIRP's education and advocacy initiatives, ensuring that programming is evidence-based and responsive to community needs. Below, ALIRP highlights data-informed presentations and programs made possible through these collaborative internship opportunities.

Vines, J., Gartin, M., Ambler, A., Fuerte-Tejeda, H.M., Buttler, M., & Lukhele, B. (2025, November). Challenges Encountered When Exploring Pregnancy and Birthing Experiences among Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Birmingham, Alabama. [Poster, in-person]. Caucus on Refugee and Immigrant Health, Session on Social Determinants of Health Among Immigrants, Refugees, and Forcibly Displaced Populations. American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Gartin, M., Guerra, A., & Buttler, M. (2025, April). Results of a Needs Assessment with Asylum Seekers in Central Alabama: A focus on Engaging Youth. [Poster, in-person]. UAB School of Public Health 2025 Research Poster Session, Birmingham, AL.

Guerra, A., Buttler, M., & Gartin, M. (2025, April). "A bullet is in my refrigerator": Identifying the challenges of safe and adequate housing for asylum-seekers in Alabama. [Poster, in-person]. UAB School of Public Health 2025 Research Poster Session, Birmingham, AL.

Waldie, M., Guerra, A., Buttler, M., & Gartin, M. (2025, April -postponed). Engaging Asylum-seeking Youth in a Photovoice Project to Develop a community-based Mentorship Program. [Poster, in-person]. Minority Health and Health Equity Research Center Research Symposium, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL.

Waldie, M., Guerra, A., Buttler, M., & Gartin, M. (2025, April). Engaging Asylum-seeking Youth in a Photovoice Project to Develop a community-based Mentorship Program. [Poster, in-person]. Healing Collective Trauma: Navigating Shared Histories and Pathways to Restoration, Institute of Human Rights Conference, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL.

Buttler, M. & Gartin, M. (2025, April). A Focus on Faith: Women's coping with seeking asylum in the US during uncertain times. [Poster, in-person]. Healing Collective Trauma: Navigating Shared Histories

and Pathways to Restoration, Institute of Human Rights Conference, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL.

ALIRP Board of Directors

In 2024, the Board of Directors adopted a strategic approach to recruitment by adding at-large members. New Board members were invited from organizations including the Hispanic and Immigrant Center for Alabama (HICA), the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ), Alabama Office for Refugees (AOR), and Trinity West Outreach Hub. This initiative strengthened collaboration and coordination across the immigrant and refugee services sector.

List of Board Members for 2025

- Meredith Gartin (President - University of Alabama at Birmingham)
- Elishua Markham (Vice-President and Co-Chair of the Fundraising and Grant-writing Committee - United Way)
- Allison Cobb (Treasurer - Corporate America Credit Union)
- Betsy Mishoe (Secretary - Trinity West)
- Jane Vines (Co-Chair of the Education/Advocacy Committee - University of Alabama at Birmingham)
- Bola Fenny (Co-Chair of the Education/Advocacy Committee - University of Alabama)
- Edna Vásquez (Co-Chair of the Direct Support Committee - Trinity West)
- Karina Cortes (Board Member - United Way)
- Maria Elena Frias (Board Member - HICA)
- Idania Gonzalez (Board Member - ACIJ)
- Elizabeth Kurtz (Board Member - Alabama Office for Refugees)

Outgoing and Incoming Board Members

After years of service to ALIRP, Vice President Elishua Markham and Treasurer Allison Cobb decided to step down from their duties. Current Board members, Jane Vines and Edna Vásquez will serve as the Vice President and Treasurer, respectively. This will make room for two new at-large board members. Recruitment has already begun for the new board members.

Incoming Vice President: Jane Vines has served on the Board of Directors since 2022, co-chairing ALIRP's Education and Advocacy Committee. In her leadership role, Jane has led book club events, participated in state and national advocacy days, and conducted research to inform direct support programs. With a background in public health, nursing, and migrant health, she is committed to advancing health equity, migration justice, and partnerships that center the voices of those ALIRP serves.

Incoming Treasurer: Edna Vázquez serves on the ALIRP Board of Directors and has chaired the Direct Support Committee since 2024. She currently works with the Trinity West Outreach Hub and brings a

lifelong commitment to service. In her ALIRP role, Edna has strengthened and formalized the Temporary Financial Assistance Program, helping ensure fiscal responsibility, budget alignment, and sustainable direct support for partner families.

ALIRP Financials

In 2025, ALIRP generated $95,884 in public support, including $26,064 from individual donors, $41,500 in foundation grants, and $28,320 from organizational sponsors. These funds reflect broad community investment in ALIRP's mission and enabled the organization to significantly expand programs and direct support to partner families.

Total expenses for the year were $140,497, representing intentional investments in staff capacity, direct financial assistance, and essential operating costs necessary to meet growing demand. Through strong public support and disciplined financial stewardship, ALIRP more than doubled its year-end balance, underscoring the organization's resilience, sustainability, and continued momentum.

Account Balance Summary	
Beginning Balance	$95,908
Total Expenses	$140,497
Total Revenue	$95,884
2025 Net Income YTD	($42,493)
Ending Balance	$54,820

ALIRP allocates $60,000 towards Direct Support programs. This year's expenses totaled to $59,218 and can be further broken down into the following categories:

- ALIRP Rent & Utilities Assistance $35,125
- Legal Assistance $16,700
- Transportation Assistance $493
- Medical Assistance $2,737
- Other (e.g., emergency funds, school supplies) $4,162

Grants from Foundations

Philanthropic support plays a vital role in our ability to respond to emerging needs, pilot innovative approaches, and sustain programs that create lasting impact. With our funders, we are advancing a shared commitment to strengthening Alabama communities.

- Independent Presbyterian Church (2020-present)
- Canterbury United Methodist Church Outreach Committee (2020-present)
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church (2021-present)
- Robert R. Meyer Foundation (2021-present)
- Susan Mott Webb Charitable Trust (2022-present)
- Direct Relief (2024-present)

- Southminster Presbyterian Church Foundation (2025-present)
- Baptist Church of the Covenant Foundation (2025-present)

Organizational Sponsors

Organizational sponsors are organizations that make an annual donation of $500 or more to ALIRP. Organizational sponsors can include social clubs, churches, or agencies that identify a liaison to ALIRP who shares information about ALIRP initiatives and needs with the organizational members. Organizational sponsors like the Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham and the Birmingham Islamic Society have supported ALIRP since our incorporation in 2019.

- Baptist Church of the Covenant, 2022-present
- Birmingham Friends (Quakers), 2021-present
- Birmingham Islamic Society, 2019-present
- Crosscreek Baptist Church, 2024-present
- First Church Birmingham /First United Methodist Church, 2022- present
- Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, 2022-present
- Southminster Presbyterian, 2025-present
- Trinity United Methodist Church, 2022-present
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham, 2019-present

Friends of ALIRP

Individual donations of $50 earns the status of being a “Friend of ALIRP”. This year, we received around $26,064 in individual donations. Below is a list of all the donors who helped support ALIRP by becoming a Friend of ALIRP in 2025.

Robert and Kathleen Angus
Jessica Ata
Jan Bell
Kim Boettner
Barbara Burke
Debra Carlson
Allison Cobb
Tom Cobb
James Coleman
Liston Cook
Karina Cortes
DeEtte Currie
Brad and Donna Dahl
Susan Davenport
Maria DiCristina
Marion Fintel
D. and Cecile Franklin Family
Barbara and Edwin Gartin
Meredith Gartin
Lynda Grooms
Andrea and Kent Haines
John Haught
Roy Hiller
Debra Hollis
Hailey Hooey
Roger and Libby Falk Jones
Stephen Katsinas
Suzanne Larson
John Laurent
Emily Levine
Tricia Merritt
Robbi Mixon
Ann Elizabeth Montgomery
Katy Montgomery
Jayne and Tim Ness
Christy Nix
Cheryl Oatts
Emily Paxton
Teresa Schilder
Deborah Soniat
Jim and Patti Steelman
Rowena Teague
Louise Thibodaux
Charlotte VanSlyke
Jane Vines
Anne Wheeler
Barbara White
Lynda Wilson