ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Extension Director Position Profile

extension
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

The Opportunity

Auburn University invites nominations and applications for the position of Director of the **Alabama Cooperative Extension System**. The director serves as Alabama Extension's chief academic and administrative officer, providing vision and leadership that enhance the system's tradition of excellence in education, research, service, and educational outreach. The director reports directly to the presidents of Auburn University and Alabama A&M University. This position will be permanently located in Auburn, Alabama.

As director, the individual selected will be responsible for leading Alabama Extension in pursuit of the system and university's shared values, including scholarship, instruction, and outreach. This individual will represent all departments and centers within the system by advancing all programs inside and outside the university. The director will support and advocate for all faculty and staff, both on campus and in locations throughout the state. The director will maintain a strong commitment to faculty and staff while ensuring stakeholder needs are met through the system's various programming options.

About Alabama Extension

The **Alabama Cooperative Extension System** is the primary outreach organization for the land-grant mission of Auburn University and Alabama A&M University in cooperation with Tuskegee University. Alabama Extension delivers research-based educational programs that empower individuals and communities to improve their quality of life and economic well-being. With a presence in all 67 counties of Alabama, Alabama Extension provides a wide range of services, including agricultural support, community development, health and nutrition education, and youth programs through 4-H.

Quick Facts

67
An office in each county

596
Total full-time employees

$75,142,891
Annual budget

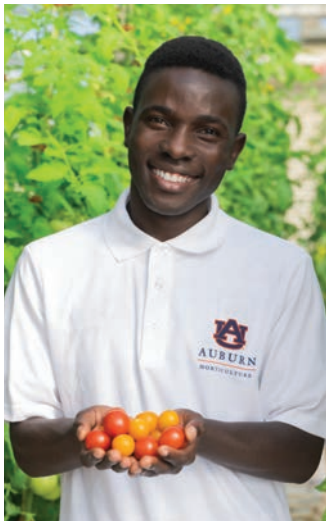
$45,243,995
State appropriations: Auburn

$12,120,312
Federal and county appropriations

$10,550,000
Extension grant revenue

16
Extension program teams

495 million
Global impressions generated by the Discover Alabama Extension marketing campaign



At Auburn, Extension specialists and professors serve the **Colleges of Agriculture; Forestry, Wildlife and Environment; Human Sciences; Veterinary Medicine; and Architecture, Design and Construction. They serve the College of Agricultural, Life, and Natural Sciences and the College of Engineering, Technology,** and **Physical Sciences** at Alabama A&M.

Alabama Extension is committed to addressing the diverse needs of Alabama's residents by offering practical solutions and innovative programs. The organization collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to ensure that its initiatives are relevant and impactful. From urban gardening workshops to financial literacy seminars, its programs meet the unique challenges different communities face. Alabama Extension reaches more than 1 in 3 Alabama residents.

For candidates aspiring to executive leadership within Alabama Extension, the opportunity to lead such a dynamic and influential organization is both challenging and rewarding. Leaders at Alabama Extension are expected to foster a culture of excellence and innovation. They must be adept at strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and resource management to drive the organization's mission forward. By joining Alabama Extension, leaders will have the chance to make a lasting impact on the state of Alabama and contribute to the well-being of its residents.

Mission

Transforming lives through science-based information, practical solutions, and meaningful experiences.

Vision

Serving communities to grow a better Alabama and a better world.

Who We Are

Alabama Extension takes the university to the people. As educators, we are partners in every county, bringing practical ways to better our homes, farms, people, and communities. Our research extends knowledge and improves lives.

Values

Service excellence. We exist to serve and share knowledge. We seek to understand the needs of those who depend on us and to exceed their expectations.

Teamwork. We work as a team. We listen, inspire, challenge, and support each other.

Inclusivity. We value everyone. We celebrate and respect the uniqueness of all people and the communities we serve.

Accountability. We own the results. We meet our personal and organizational commitments.

Integrity. We do the right thing. We are honest, transparent, and trustworthy to our stakeholders and each other.

Robust Partnerships

Alabama Extension is a valuable partner. Whether there is collaboration on campus or in a county setting, our employees are willing and able to work together to make Alabama a better place. Community partnerships are one of the hallmarks of our system, positioning us as a ready participant in community outreach. The ability to work in schools, libraries, places of worship, and other community gathering places makes Extension a versatile and educational component of any event, with our agents and specialists providing information that benefits individuals from birth to late in life.

In addition to campus and community partnerships, Alabama Extension employees work day in and day out with the **Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station** (AAES) research stations and outlying units. The 16 sites across the state house row crop, forage, fruit, vegetable, livestock, salt- and fresh-water marine life, and horticultural research projects. Alabama Extension agents and specialists work closely with station managers to conduct research in their given area and share what they've learned. The partnership with AAES is strong. Station personnel implement and maintain research, while agents and specialists analyze and share results with those who need it most.

Alabama Extension Program Teams

Agriculture, Forestry & Natural Resources

With its broad reach, the **Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources** program connects professionals and the public with science-based agricultural, forestry, and natural resource information through nine unique program areas. The work of the experts and the educational information they provide result in improved stewardship of Alabama's natural resources, expanded economic markets, and safer food systems for the enhanced well-being of everyone.

- Crop and livestock producers improve productivity and cost savings.
- Natural resource professionals and landowners are better stewards of forest, wildlife, and aquatic resources.
- Best management practices are adopted for planning, planting, and caring for plants in residential and community green spaces, indoors and outdoors.
- Food service workers and consumers learn how to incorporate food safety practices in every food preparation method used.
- Education is provided on research-based economic principles and farm management techniques.

- **Agronomic Crops**
- **Animal Science & Forages**
- **Aquatic Resources**
- **Commercial Horticulture**
- **Farm & Agribusiness Management**
- **Food Safety & Quality**
- **Forestry, Wildlife & Natural Resources**
- **Home Horticulture**
- **Poultry**

Alabama 4-H

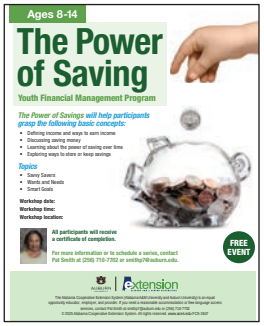
Alabama 4-H is the largest youth development program in the state, reaching more than 118,700 young people annually. Alabama 4-H operates in all 67 counties in 954 schools, providing diverse educational opportunities that foster leadership, citizenship, and life skills. The program emphasizes positive youth development through hands-on learning experiences in areas including science, healthy living, and civic engagement. Alabama 4-H collaborates with schools, community organizations, and volunteers to create a supportive environment where youth can thrive. Participants can engage in a wide variety of activities, such as livestock clubs, gardening competitions, sewing, culinary education, and digital skills training. These programs enhance their personal growth and benefit their communities. Through events like summer camps, national conferences, and competitive judging, Alabama 4-H helps youth build confidence and pursue their dreams. The program's impact is evident in the development of resilient, capable young leaders who contribute positively to Alabama's future.

- Alabama 4-H programs were successful thanks to **4,076** volunteers with an impact totaling **$2.1 million**.
- The Alabama 4-H Center hosted **1,314** summer campers.
- There were **2,038** active 4-H clubs in 2024.
- **23,746** youths engaged in citizenship and leadership activities.
- **5,742** youths participated in poultry and rabbit projects. **1,811** youths participated in companion animal projects. **165** youths raised **331** market hogs through 4-H Pig Squeal.
- **91** youths competed in forestry competitions. Aquatic education participants explored **28** water bodies and paddled **107** miles of freshwater.

Human Sciences

The **Human Sciences Extension** team is dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals and families across Alabama. Through evidence-based programs, they address critical issues such as health, financial security, and family relationships. Their initiatives include the **Escape Vapes** program, which has reached more than 1,690 children in 17 counties in 2024. The team also offers the **Just in Time Parenting** newsletters, reaching more than 14,500 subscribers nationwide with valuable information on child development and parenting skills. Additionally, the team supports Alabama's workforce development through the **Financial Aid Survival Toolkit (CareerFAST)**, helping high school seniors navigate FAFSA completion. By leveraging partnerships and delivering timely, relevant programming, the Human Sciences team empowers Alabamians to lead healthier, more financially secure lives and build stronger families who can make positive impacts in their communities throughout the state.

- **Family & Child Development**
- **Financial Management**
- **Health & Wellness**



Federal Nutrition Programs

Alabama Extension administers three impactful federal nutrition programs: the **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**, the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), and Thriving Communities**.

EFNEP focuses on improving dietary practices and resource management among limited-resource families and youth. EFNEP helps participants enrich their nutrition, food safety, and physical activity habits through hands-on, community-based education. In 2024, EFNEP served more than 7,601 individuals across 34 Alabama counties, significantly improving diet quality, food resource management, and physical activity habits.

SNAP-Ed, under the **Live Well Alabama** initiative, aims to educate and equip Alabamians to make healthier food and lifestyle choices. SNAP-Ed provides nutrition education, social marketing campaigns, and policy, system, and environmental change strategies to support healthy living. In 2024, SNAP-Ed reached more than 44,000 individuals and facilitated nearly 1,000 community changes to promote healthier environments. Both programs leverage partnerships with local organizations to extend their reach and impact, ultimately fostering healthier communities and empowering individuals to lead more active, nutritious lives.

The **Thriving Communities** grant, also under the **Live Well Alabama** initiative, aims to improve access to healthy foods, enhance physical activity opportunities, and support early childhood education in 12 Alabama counties with high obesity rates. The program promotes healthier lifestyles and stronger, more resilient communities by fostering community partnerships and implementing evidence-based strategies.

- **Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed)**
- **Thriving Communities**

Meeting Today's Challenges

Rural Healthcare Initiative

After a Chambers County installation in 2023, Alabama Extension, in partnership with Auburn University, has expanded its Rural Health Initiative by installing OnMed CareStations in Sumter, Hale, Wilcox, and Greene counties, providing residents with real-time virtual visits with licensed healthcare professionals. These stations address critical health care access challenges in rural Alabama, where hospitals and doctors are often far away, particularly benefiting seniors and school communities. Partnering with the University of West Alabama and local leaders, the initiative also creates opportunities for university faculty and students to support community health needs. The project is part of a broader effort to improve health care infrastructure in underserved areas, with OnMed CareStations becoming a key tool in bridging the healthcare gap.

Water Issues

At Alabama Extension, we tackle water challenges through initiatives like the Alabama Watershed Stewards program. We promote healthy watersheds and reduce water pollution by providing science-based information and tools to manage water resources effectively, ensuring sustainable use for drinking, irrigation, and recreation.

Housing

Through our partnership with Auburn's Rural Studio, we support housing improvements by offering educational programs on sustainable building practices and energy efficiency. By collaborating with local communities, we enhance residential living conditions, focusing on affordability and safety to improve the quality of life for Alabama residents.

Community Engagement

We foster community engagement through programs like Move Alabama, which encourages physical activity and healthy living. Other projects include Grow More, Give More, where participants "grow another row" and share their produce bounty with neighbors in need. Our events and challenges bring communities together, promoting local resources and creating a sense of belonging and active participation.

Financial Resource Management

We support individuals and families through various programs that enhance financial resource management skills. One key initiative is the WISE Money Management Calendar, designed to help users track income, savings, and expenses, set financial goals, and manage debt. The Human Sciences Extension team also offers workshops like WISE 101, which teaches participants how to use the WISE calendar effectively for better financial planning. These programs are part of Alabama Extension's broader mission to support financial literacy and well-being across Alabama, ensuring all residents have access to the knowledge and skills needed for financial stability.

About Auburn University

A nationally ranked land-grant institution, Auburn University is frequently recognized for its commitment to world-class scholarship, interdisciplinary research with an elite, top-tier Carnegie R1 classification, educational outreach, and an undergraduate education experience second to none. The institution is committed to providing exceptional instruction, extension, and research that translates the university's intellectual capital into unique solutions that impact the world.

In recent years, Auburn has gained considerable momentum—including record student enrollments, impressive retention and graduation rates, competitive program rankings, transformational research and scholarly advancements, and unprecedented levels of donor support—that continues to inspire our work and fuels our continuing drive for innovation.

With a $5.4 billion economic contribution to the state, Auburn has more than 300,000 graduates and provides 150-plus degree programs to nearly 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

About Alabama A&M University

Alabama A&M University (AAMU), located in Normal, Alabama, a neighborhood of Huntsville, is a public, historically black, land-grant university. Founded in 1875 by William Hooper Councill, AAMU has a rich history of providing quality education and fostering academic excellence. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs across various disciplines, including engineering, business, education, and the sciences. AAMU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and is a member of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund.

The university's campus spans 880 acres and features a blend of historic and modern buildings, including the Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. AAMU is committed to research and innovation, with state-of-the-art facilities and numerous research centers that support cutting-edge projects in areas such as agriculture, engineering, and technology. The university also emphasizes community engagement and service, aligning with its motto, "Service is Sovereignty."

With a strong focus on academic excellence, research, and community service, Alabama A&M University prepares its graduates to make meaningful contributions to society and succeed in their chosen careers.

Our Community

The 1862 Director is an employee of Auburn University. Auburn is a small, friendly university town in the rolling hills of east-central Alabama, with a population of approximately 76,000. Conveniently located along Interstate 85, Auburn is less than 60 miles northeast of Alabama's capital city of Montgomery, about 30 miles west of Columbus, Georgia, and 100 miles southwest of Atlanta. The pristine, sandy-white beaches of Alabama's Gulf Shores can be reached in less than four hours. The university has a special relationship with the City of Auburn, including partnerships such as the Yarbrough Tennis Center and the Auburn Research Park. The famed Toomer's Corner marks the spot where the city and university intersect and is a destination for the city and university communities to gather in celebration.

Auburn residents overwhelmingly rate the city as a great place to live, work, and raise children. Forbes has consistently ranked Auburn on its lists for Best Places to Retire and Best Small Places for Business and Careers. Auburn's public schools are regularly ranked among the best in the state and nation.

Residents have access to several city parks and recreational programs, as well as Chewacla State Park's 696 scenic acres, including a 26-acre lake, waterfall, and trails. The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center is a cultural destination offering world-class performances. The Gogue Center and Jule Collins Smith Museum offer a vibrant arts district for the campus, community, and region.

Opelika, Auburn's sister city, is full of small-town charm, rich in heritage, and offers a high quality of life for its nearly 30,000 residents. Opelika is the county seat for Lee County, the eighth-most populous county in Alabama. The Auburn-Opelika metro area has approximately 162,000 residents.

Opelika is also home to the Opelika SportsPlex and Aquatics Center, Opelika Performing Arts Center, East Alabama Medical Center, and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National.

Position Description

Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension System

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) invites applications for a nationally recognized leader to serve as the Director of ACES at Auburn University. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is truly unique in the nation. The strengths of two universities come together in one public agency under the joint leadership of the 1862 Extension Director (Director) of ACES at Auburn University andthe 1890 Extension Administrator (Administrator) at Alabama A & M University. TheOffice of the Director is located at Auburn University.

ACES is the primary outreach and engagement organization for the two land-grant universities, Alabama A & M University and Auburn University. These universities are dedicated to delivering research-based educational programs that transform lives and communities throughout the state of Alabama and beyond. The Director will be responsible for providing innovative, joint leadership to more than 700 faculty and staff located on two university campuses and in 67 counties across the state. The Director will oversee an annual budget of approximately $75 million.

The Director will pursue collaborative leadership with the Administrator and members of the administrative team. The successful candidate will be a skilled relationship builder and advisor with outstanding interpersonal skills and a strong focus on teamwork and collaboration. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Leadership and Direction

- Represent Alabama Extension within the Auburn University leadership team on leadership groups, cross-divisional teams, and the President's Leadership Council.
- Serve as a member of the ACES Leadership Team to establish strategic goals and evaluation metrics to plan services and programs for rural, urban, and suburban audiences that support the organizational mission.
- Provide leadership to evaluate capacity building, direction, and reporting to university, county, and state leadership.
- Provide effective budgetary planning leadership and oversight for annual and biennial budgets.

Partnership Development and Management

- Develop and maintain partnerships with a wide range of public and private organizations, advisory groups, and state/federal agencies involved in supporting Alabama Extension.
- Maintain strong partnerships with academic deans, directors of the Agricultural Experiment Station and administrators at Alabama A&M University and Auburn University, including negotiating and monitoring inter-institutional agreements that define funding and collaborative programming and developing integrated research and Extension activities.

Resource Development and Management

- Develop long-term strategies to increase and diversify revenue streams and cultivate external and other sources of support for Extension System programming, including philanthropic activity, traditional sources, new, innovative, and entrepreneurial sources.

Qualifications and Characteristics

In addition to being an imaginative and experienced leader with a commitment to supporting the mission, values, and strategic goals of ACES, the ideal candidate will bring many of the following qualities, skills, and experiences:

- Demonstrated leadership experience with university extension and outreach and the fundamental mission of a land-grant institution in improving the quality of lives of all citizens.
- Sensitivity to the educational needs of both traditional and nontraditional audiences and demonstrated experience in managing the relationship between research and statewide Extension programs.
- Ability to lead faculty and staff efforts to demonstrate the scholarly value and measurable impacts of Extension education.
- Earned terminal degree in a discipline or combination of disciplines that provides adequate background in developing, implementing, and evaluating formal and nonformal educational programs with credentials appropriate for rank of Professor with tenure.
- Familiarity with the principles of shared faculty governance and a commitment to the processes through which they are realized.
- Demonstration of emotional intelligence, genuineness, self-confidence, judgement, fairness, creativity, discretion, decisiveness, diplomacy, tact, resiliency, adaptability, courage of convictions, and tolerance for ambiguity.
- Exceptional skills in communications and interpersonal relations, including the ability to present difficult and complex issues to internal and external audiences.
- Initiative and self-discipline to bring about positive outcomes working with others.
- Unquestioned integrity and trustworthiness.
- Ability to make good, consistent, and fair decisions (based on data and fact).

Application and Nomination Process

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately and will continue to accept applications and nominations until the position is filled. Applicants must submit a current curriculum vitae and a letter of interest describing relevant experience. Submission of materials via email is strongly encouraged. Nomination letters should include the name, position, and contact information for the nominee. All nominations and applications will be handled in confidence.

Applications and letters of nomination should be submitted to:

Search Committee – ACES Director
Attention: Director, Breckenridge Partners
Email: lhm@breckenridgepartners.com
Phone: 847-525-7847

Auburn University is an EEO/Vet/Disability Employer and committed to building an inclusive and diverse community.

extension
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