



# Leveraging Resources to Advance Equity in Rural Areas

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# ALABAMA'S BLACK BELT

The Blackbelt is arguably one of the most pluralistic areas in the state. We are very diverse in regard to race, age, political ideology, and educational attainment. As an organization, we seek to enhance this dynamic by investing in programs and organizations that aim to bring communities together.

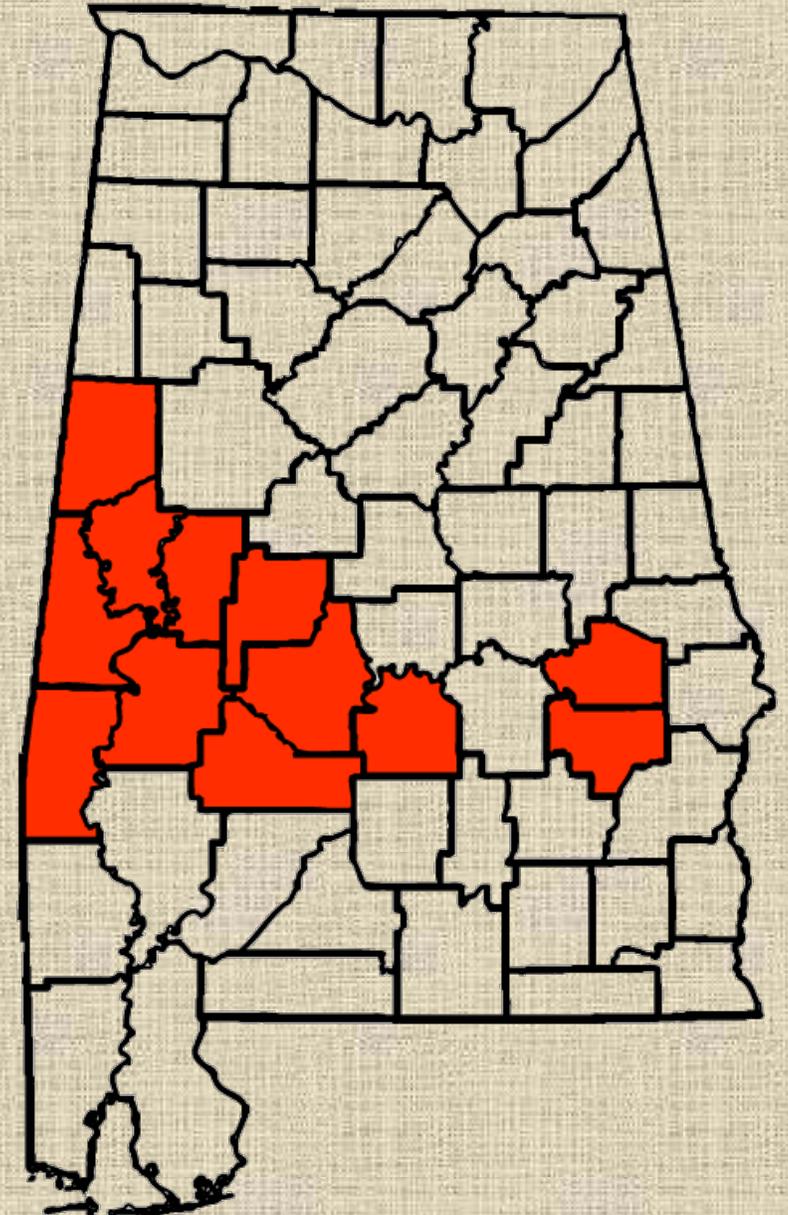
# INTERSECTION OF RACE AND RURALITY

The artifacts of slavery have had and continue to have a detrimental effect on the lives of all those living in former slave holding areas. Rural areas because of their large vegetation were synonymous with slavery and later sharecropping. There are many blacks within the Black Belt that still reside in the same areas their slave ancestors once lived. (Gees Bend, AL)



# Who We Serve

- Bullock
- Choctaw
- Dallas
- Greene
- Hale
- Lowndes
- Macon
- Marengo
- Perry
- Pickens
- Sumter
- Wilcox



# MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Black Belt Community Foundation is to forge a collective stream of giving from the community and other sources so we, the people of the Black Belt can enhance our continuing efforts to lift ourselves by “taking what we have to make what we need.”

We strive to create in our 12 county region a flow of resources:

- A. from the community
- B. to the community
- C. and by the community.



# VISION STATEMENT

We believe that every member of our community has a vested interest in seeing our vision – ***a transformed Black Belt, where all of our residents contribute to healthy communities and productive regional economy, and reap the benefits of our shared gifts*** – realized.



# VALUES

- We place the **community** as our highest priority.
- We value the strengths of a **multi-faceted community** where **economic, racial and social justice are universally practiced**.
- We value relationships and connections that build trust.
- We value **integrity, inclusion and transparency** in both grant-making and stewardship of resources.
- We value **community leadership** in acquiring and sharing knowledge.
- We value engagement in best practices and innovative models of service.

# HOW WE SERVE

We do this by helping those in the region see that all of us share the same problems, the same story, and we if do nothing to address our current situation, we will share the same fate.

Therefore, we show them that it is incumbent upon us all that we  
“take what we have to make what we need.”

# HOW WE SERVE

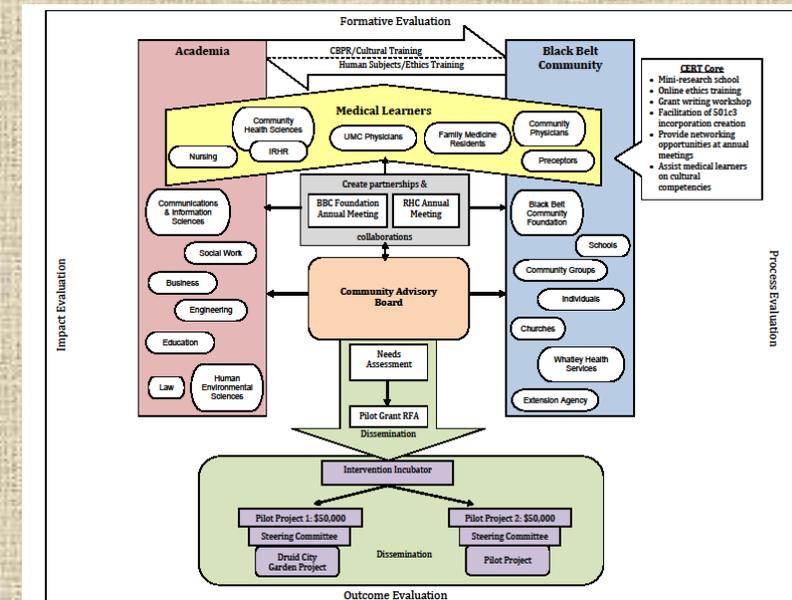
- The **Black Belt Arts Initiative Grants Program** provides funding to support nonprofits which promote the arts.
- **Community Associate Program** (BBCF's signature grassroots leadership development program) provides training opportunities for over 120 individuals throughout 12 Alabama counties.
- **Capacity Building Workshops:** Provide workshops on governance, financial administration, volunteer management and other tailored trainings to support grantees.
- **Community Grants Program:** Provide support for a wide variety of projects including volunteer fire departments, tutorial programs, etc.



# BBCF HEALTH & WELLNESS

PROJECT UNITED (Partnership with BBCF Community Associates (volunteers) and the University of Alabama's School of Medicine and Rural Health medical and research staff to conduct research on health disparities in the region.

This research is then owned, **IN PARTNERSHIP**, with the community and the university. The community must sign off on how and when the data is used. Community Associates are co-authors on papers that are published in journals.



# WAYS TO HELP

- Identify networks of collaboration, resource-sharing and co-strategizing that already exist.
- Prioritize leaders and organizations that have the trust of their community as represented in relationships and the influence to get people to show up and speak out!
- Support Southern community leaders and organizations that are able to articulate how identity, history and politics combine to suppress the power and prosperity of their communities.
- Additional resource: <https://www.ncrp.org/.../as-the-south-grows-on-fertile-soil>

In the words of Nikki Giovanni:

*"Take away our drums, and we will clap our hands.*

*We prove the human spirit will prevail."*

***WE WILL SHIFT THE POWER IN ALABAMA'S BLACK BELT***

***BY continuing to***

***'take what we have to make what we need.'***

