



2022 Gender Equity Action Agenda

Alabama Institute for Social Justice (AISJ) is committed to achieving meaningful and sustainable systems change in support of under-resourced children and families in Alabama's Black Belt. With a focus on the policy issues of child care, voter engagement, gender equity, and environmental justice, AISJ seeks to ensure a seamless transition for human success from birth through adulthood. Through collective action rooted in racial equity and social justice, we work to drive transformational change and address institutional and structural inequities that particularly limit and undermine the economic well-being of women and people of color.

AISJ's 2022 action agenda highlights the current gender equity policy landscape in Alabama and the direction of our work over the next year to advance systemic change in public policy, organizational culture, and the public narrative within our government, businesses, and communities.

Gender Equity

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, women already faced obstacles to achieving gender equity both in the workplace and society at large; the World Economic Forum estimated it would take an entire century to achieve gender equity. As we enter the third year of the pandemic, those estimates have now increased, indicating that COVID-19 has set the fight for gender equity back nearly four decades. The pandemic devastated jobs in industries predominantly occupied by women and forced other women to leave the workforce to take on new home schooling and unpaid care duties. Meanwhile, minority and rural women have disproportionately suffered from the health impacts of COVID-19 due to existing health disparities and lack of affordable and accessible health care.

During the 2022 Special Session, the Alabama State Legislature voted to use \$30 million of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act to assist rural hospitals. Another \$117 million was allocated to address pandemic-related health care services. Alabama is also slated to receive billions of dollars in federal investment through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. As we seek to recover from the pandemic, it is critical that we invest in programs and policies that not only address the progress lost due to COVID-19 but actively speed up the pre-pandemic timeline to advance gender equity and support Alabama's women and families.

2022 Actions

- Implement the Judge Tiffany B. McCord “Just Like You” Empowerment Program in cooperation with Title I schools to empower and encourage girls to reach their full potential by introducing them to local women who represent their own ethnic backgrounds in all types of careers, thereby expanding their expectations and knowledge of what is possible for their own lives.
- Advocate for the implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and other available federal funds to advance gender equity and improve the lives of women across rural Alabama and the Black Belt.
- Advocate for Medicaid expansion to improve health equity and outcomes for Alabama’s most underserved individuals and families, and support the recommendation by the Alabama Maternal Mortality Review Committee that Medicaid be extended for postpartum coverage from the current 60 days to a total of 12 months.