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[Template:Infobox U.S. state symbols](/wiki/Template:Infobox_U.S._state_symbols) **Alabama** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en)) is a [state](/wiki/U.S._state) located in the [southeastern region](/wiki/Southern_United_States) of the [United States](/wiki/United_States). It is bordered by [Tennessee](/wiki/Tennessee) to the north, [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) to the east, [Florida](/wiki/Florida) and the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) to the south, and [Mississippi](/wiki/Mississippi) to the west. Alabama is the [30th-most extensive](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_area) and the [24th-most populous](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_and_territories_by_population) of the [50 United States](/wiki/List_of_U.S._states). At [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), Alabama has one of the longest navigable inland waterways in the nation.[[1]](#cite_note-1) From the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War) until [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), Alabama, like many states in the [South](/wiki/Southern_United_States), suffered economic hardship, in part because of continued dependence on agriculture. Despite the growth of major industries and urban centers, [white](/wiki/White_American) rural interests dominated the state legislature from 1901 to the 1960s, as it did not regularly reapportion the legislature from 1901 to 1961; urban interests and [African Americans](/wiki/African_Americans) were markedly under-represented.[[2]](#cite_note-2) African Americans and [poor whites](/wiki/Poor_Whites) were essentially [disenfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_Reconstruction_era) altogether by the state constitution of 1901, a status that continued into the mid-1960s before being alleviated by federal legislation. Exclusion of minorities continued under [at-large](/wiki/At-large) voting systems in most counties; some changes were made through a series of omnibus court cases in the late 1980s to establish different electoral systems.

Following World War II, Alabama experienced growth as the economy of the state changed from one primarily based on agriculture to one with diversified interests. The power of the [Solid South](/wiki/Solid_South) in Congress gained the establishment or expansion of multiple [United States Armed Forces](/wiki/United_States_Armed_Forces) installations, which helped to bridge the gap between an agricultural and industrial economy during the mid-20th century. The state economy in the 21st century is based on management, automotive, finance, manufacturing, aerospace, mineral extraction, healthcare, education, retail, and technology.[[3]](#cite_note-3) Alabama is nicknamed the [*Yellowhammer*](/wiki/Northern_flicker) *State*, after the [state bird](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_birds). Alabama is also known as the "Heart of [Dixie](/wiki/Dixie)" and the *Cotton State*. The [state tree](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_trees) is the [longleaf pine](/wiki/Longleaf_pine), and the [state flower](/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_flowers) is the [camellia](/wiki/Camellia). The capital of Alabama is [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama). The largest city by population is [Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama),[[4]](#cite_note-4) which has long been the most industrialized city, and largest city by total land area is [Huntsville](/wiki/Huntsville,_Alabama). The oldest city is [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama), founded by French [colonists](/wiki/Colonists) in 1702 as the capital of French Louisiana.[[5]](#cite_note-5)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|left|One of the entrances to](/wiki/File:Russell_Cave_Entrance_RUCA9323.jpg) [Russell Cave](/wiki/Russell_Cave_National_Monument) in Jackson County. Charcoal from indigenous camp fires in the cave has been dated as early as 6550 to 6145 BC.

The European-American naming of the [Alabama River](/wiki/Alabama_River) and state originates from the [Alabama people](/wiki/Alabama_people), a [Muskogean-speaking tribe](/wiki/Muskogean_languages) whose members lived just below the confluence of the [Coosa](/wiki/Coosa_River) and [Tallapoosa](/wiki/Tallapoosa_River) rivers on the upper reaches of the river.[[6]](#cite_note-6) In the [Alabama language](/wiki/Alabama_language), the word for an Alabama person is *Albaamo* (or variously *Albaama* or *Albàamo* in different dialects; the plural form is *Albaamaha*).[[7]](#cite_note-7) The word *Alabama* is believed to have come from the [Alabama language](/wiki/Alabama_language) and a suggestion that the name was borrowed from the [Choctaw language](/wiki/Choctaw_language) is unlikely.[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) The spelling of the word varies significantly among historical sources.[[9]](#cite_note-9) The first usage appears in three accounts of the [Hernando de Soto](/wiki/Hernando_de_Soto) expedition of 1540 with [Garcilaso de la Vega](/wiki/Garcilaso_de_la_Vega_(chronicler)) using *Alibamo*, while the Knight of Elvas and Rodrigo Ranjel wrote *Alibamu* and *Limamu*, respectively, in efforts to [transliterate](/wiki/Transliteration) the term.[[9]](#cite_note-9) As early as 1702, the French called the tribe the *Alibamon,* with French maps identifying the river as *Rivière des Alibamons*.[[6]](#cite_note-6) Other spellings of the appellation have included *Alibamu*, *Alabamo*, *Albama*, *Alebamon*, *Alibama*, *Alibamou*, *Alabamu*, *Allibamou*.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) Sources disagree on the meaning of the word. Some scholars suggested the word comes from the Choctaw *alba* (meaning "plants" or "weeds") and *amo* (meaning "to cut", "to trim", or "to gather").[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14) The meaning may have been "clearers of the thicket"[[13]](#cite_note-13) or "herb gatherers",[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15) referring to clearing land for cultivation[[10]](#cite_note-10) or collecting medicinal plants.[[15]](#cite_note-15) The state has numerous [place names of Native American origin](/wiki/List_of_place_names_in_Alabama_of_Native_American_origin).[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17) However, there are no correspondingly similar words in the Alabama language.

An 1842 article in the *Jacksonville Republican* proposed that it meant "Here We Rest."[[9]](#cite_note-9) This notion was popularized in the 1850s through the writings of [Alexander Beaufort Meek](/wiki/Alexander_Beaufort_Meek).[[9]](#cite_note-9) Experts in the [Muskogean languages](/wiki/Muskogean_languages) have been unable to find any evidence to support such a translation.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[9]](#cite_note-9) And, thus, this is probably erroneous.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Pre-European settlement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Indigenous peoples](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples) of varying cultures lived in the area for thousands of years before European colonization. Trade with the northeastern tribes via the [Ohio River](/wiki/Ohio_River) began during the Burial Mound Period (1000 BC–AD 700) and continued until [European contact](/wiki/European_colonization_of_the_Americas).[[18]](#cite_note-18) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Moundville_Archaeological_Site_Alabama.jpg) [Moundville Archaeological Site](/wiki/Moundville_Archaeological_Site) in Hale County. It was occupied by Native Americans of the [Mississippian culture](/wiki/Mississippian_culture) from 1000 to 1450 AD. The agrarian [Mississippian culture](/wiki/Mississippian_culture) covered most of the state from 1000 to 1600 AD, with one of its major centers built at what is now the [Moundville Archaeological Site](/wiki/Moundville_Archaeological_Site) in [Moundville, Alabama](/wiki/Moundville,_Alabama).[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20) This is the second-largest complex of the classic Middle Mississippian era, after [Cahokia](/wiki/Cahokia) in present-day [Illinois](/wiki/Illinois), which was the center of the culture. Analysis of [artifacts](/wiki/Artifact_(archaeology)) recovered from [archaeological](/wiki/Archaeological) excavations at Moundville were the basis of scholars' formulating the characteristics of the [Southeastern Ceremonial Complex](/wiki/Southeastern_Ceremonial_Complex) (SECC).[[21]](#cite_note-21) Contrary to popular belief, the SECC appears to have no direct links to [Mesoamerican](/wiki/Mesoamerica) culture, but developed independently. The Ceremonial Complex represents a major component of the religion of the Mississippian peoples; it is one of the primary means by which their religion is understood.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Among the historical tribes of Native American people living in the area of present-day Alabama at the time of European contact were the [Cherokee](/wiki/Cherokee), an [Iroquoian language](/wiki/Iroquoian_language) people; and the [Muskogean](/wiki/Muskogean)-speaking [Alabama](/wiki/Alabama_(people)) (*Alibamu*), [Chickasaw](/wiki/Chickasaw), [Choctaw](/wiki/Choctaw), [Creek](/wiki/Creek_people), and [Koasati](/wiki/Koasati).[[23]](#cite_note-23) While part of the same large language family, the Muskogee tribes developed distinct cultures and languages.

### European settlement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

With exploration in the 16th century, the Spanish were the first Europeans to reach Alabama. The expedition of [Hernando de Soto](/wiki/Hernando_de_Soto) passed through [Mabila](/wiki/Mabila) and other parts of the state in 1540. More than 160 years later, the French founded the first European settlement in the region at [Old Mobile](/wiki/Old_Mobile_Site) in 1702.[[24]](#cite_note-24) The city was moved to the current site of [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama) in 1711. This area was claimed by the French from 1702 to 1763 as part of [La Louisiane](/wiki/La_Louisiane).<ref name=alahisttmln/>

After the French lost to the British in the [Seven Years' War](/wiki/Seven_Years'_War), it became part of British [West Florida](/wiki/West_Florida) from 1763 to 1783. After the United States victory in the [American Revolutionary War](/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War), the territory was divided between the United States and Spain. The latter retained control of this western territory from 1783 until the surrender of the Spanish garrison at Mobile to U.S. forces on April 13, 1813.<ref name=alahisttmln>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[25]](#cite_note-25) Thomas Bassett, a [loyalist](/wiki/Loyalist_(American_Revolution)) to the British monarchy during the Revolutionary era, was one of the earliest White settlers in the state outside Mobile. He settled in the [Tombigbee District](/wiki/Tombigbee_District) during the early 1770s.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The boundaries of the district were roughly limited to the area within a few miles of the [Tombigbee River](/wiki/Tombigbee_River) and included portions of what is today southern [Clarke County](/wiki/Clarke_County,_Alabama), northernmost [Mobile County](/wiki/Mobile_County,_Alabama), and most of [Washington County](/wiki/Washington_County,_Alabama).[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28) What is now the counties of [Baldwin](/wiki/Baldwin_County,_Alabama) and [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile_County,_Alabama) became part of [Spanish West Florida](/wiki/Spanish_West_Florida) in 1783, part of the independent [Republic of West Florida](/wiki/Republic_of_West_Florida) in 1810, and was finally added to the [Mississippi Territory](/wiki/Mississippi_Territory) in 1812. Most of what is now the northern two-thirds of Alabama was known as the [Yazoo lands](/wiki/Yazoo_lands) beginning during the British colonial period. It was claimed by the [Province of Georgia](/wiki/Province_of_Georgia) from 1767 onwards. Following the [Revolutionary War](/wiki/American_Revolution), it remained a part of [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)), although heavily disputed.[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[30]](#cite_note-30) [thumb|right|upright=0.9|Map showing the formation of the Mississippi and Alabama territories](/wiki/File:Mississippiterritory.PNG)

With the exception of the area around Mobile and the Yazoo lands, what is now the lower one-third Alabama was made part of the Mississippi Territory when it was organized in 1798. The Yazoo lands were added to the territory in 1804, following the [Yazoo land scandal](/wiki/Yazoo_land_scandal).[[30]](#cite_note-30)[[31]](#cite_note-31) Spain kept a claim on its former Spanish West Florida territory in what would become the coastal counties until the [Adams–Onís Treaty](/wiki/Adams–Onís_Treaty) officially ceded it to the United States in 1819.[[25]](#cite_note-25)

### 19th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

Before the admission of [Mississippi](/wiki/Mississippi) as a state on December 10, 1817, the more sparsely settled eastern half of the territory was separated and named the [Alabama Territory](/wiki/Alabama_Territory). The Alabama Territory was created by the [United States Congress](/wiki/United_States_Congress) on March 3, 1817. [St. Stephens](/wiki/St._Stephens,_Alabama), now abandoned, served as the territorial capital from 1817 to 1819.[[32]](#cite_note-32) The U.S. Congress selected Huntsville as the site for the first Constitutional Convention of Alabama after it was approved to become the 22nd state. From July 5 to August 2, 1819, delegates met to prepare the new state constitution. Huntsville served as the temporary capital of Alabama from 1819 to 1820, when the seat of state government was moved to [Cahaba](/wiki/Cahaba,_Alabama) in [Dallas County](/wiki/Dallas_County,_Alabama).[[33]](#cite_note-33) [thumb|The main house, built in 1833, at](/wiki/File:Thornhill_01.jpg) [Thornhill](/wiki/Thornhill_(Forkland,_Alabama)) in Greene County. It is a former [Black Belt](/wiki/Black_Belt_(region_of_Alabama)) plantation.

Cahaba, now a ghost town, was the first permanent state capital from 1820 to 1825.[[34]](#cite_note-34) [Alabama Fever](/wiki/Alabama_Fever) was already underway when the state was admitted to the Union, with settlers and land speculators pouring into the state to take advantage of fertile land suitable for cotton cultivation.[[35]](#cite_note-35)[[36]](#cite_note-36) Part of the frontier in the 1820s and 1830s, its constitution provided for universal suffrage for white men.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Southeastern planters and traders from the [Upper South](/wiki/Upper_South) brought [slaves](/wiki/History_of_slavery_in_Alabama) with them as the cotton [plantations in Alabama](/wiki/List_of_plantations_in_Alabama) expanded. The economy of the central [Black Belt](/wiki/Black_Belt_(region_of_Alabama)) (named for its dark, productive soil) was built around large cotton [plantations](/wiki/Plantation_complexes_in_the_Southeastern_United_States) whose owners' wealth grew largely from slave labor.[[37]](#cite_note-37) The area also drew many poor, disfranchised people who became [subsistence farmers](/wiki/Subsistence_farmers). Alabama had a population estimated at under 10,000 people in 1810, but it had increased to more than 300,000 people by 1830.[[35]](#cite_note-35) Most Native American tribes were [completely removed](/wiki/Indian_removal) from the state within a few years of the passage of the [Indian Removal Act](/wiki/Indian_Removal_Act) by Congress in 1830.[[38]](#cite_note-38) [thumb|left|Ruins of the former capitol building in Tuscaloosa. Designed by](/wiki/File:Oldalabamastatecapruinsintuscaloosa.png) [William Nichols](/wiki/William_Nichols_(architect)), it was built from 1827–29 and was destroyed by fire in 1923. From 1826 to 1846, [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa,_Alabama) served as the capital of Alabama. On January 30, 1846, the Alabama legislature announced that it had voted to move the capital city from Tuscaloosa to [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama). The first legislative session in the new capital met in December 1847.[[39]](#cite_note-39) A new capitol building was erected under the direction of [Stephen Decatur Button](/wiki/Stephen_Decatur_Button) of [Philadelphia](/wiki/Philadelphia). The first structure burned down in 1849, but was rebuilt on the same site in 1851. This second capitol building in Montgomery remains to the present day. It was designed by Barachias Holt of [Exeter, Maine](/wiki/Exeter,_Maine).[[40]](#cite_note-40)[[41]](#cite_note-41) By 1860, the population had increased to a total of 964,201 people, of which nearly half, 435,080 were enslaved African Americans, and 2,690 were [free people of color](/wiki/Free_people_of_color).[[42]](#cite_note-42) On January 11, 1861, Alabama declared its [secession](/wiki/Secession_in_the_United_States) from the [Union](/wiki/Union_(American_Civil_War)). After remaining an independent republic for a few days, it joined the [Confederate States of America](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America). The Confederacy's capital was initially located at [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama). Alabama was heavily [involved in the American Civil War](/wiki/Alabama_in_the_American_Civil_War). Although comparatively few battles were fought in the state, Alabama contributed about 120,000 soldiers to the war effort.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Huntsville_Courthouse_Square_1864.jpg)[Union Army](/wiki/Union_Army) troops occupying Courthouse Square in Huntsville, following its capture and occupation by federal forces in 1864. A company of cavalry soldiers from Huntsville, Alabama joined [Nathan Bedford Forrest's](/wiki/Nathan_Bedford_Forrest) battalion in [Hopkinsville, Kentucky](/wiki/Hopkinsville,_Kentucky). The company wore new uniforms with yellow trim on the sleeves, collar and coat tails. This led to them being greeted with "Yellowhammer", and the name later was applied to all Alabama troops in the Confederate Army.[[43]](#cite_note-43) Alabama's slaves were freed by the 13th Amendment in 1865.[[44]](#cite_note-44) Alabama was under military rule from the end of the war in May 1865 until its official restoration to the Union in 1868. From 1867 to 1874, with most White citizens barred temporarily from voting and freedmen enfranchised, many African Americans emerged as political leaders in the state. Alabama was represented in Congress during this period by three African-American congressmen: [Jeremiah Haralson](/wiki/Jeremiah_Haralson), [Benjamin S. Turner](/wiki/Benjamin_S._Turner), and [James T. Rapier](/wiki/James_T._Rapier).[[45]](#cite_note-45) Following the war, the state remained chiefly agricultural, with an economy tied to cotton. During [Reconstruction](/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States), state legislators ratified a [new state constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Alabama) in 1868 that created the state's first public school system and expanded women's rights. Legislators funded numerous public road and railroad projects, although these were plagued with allegations of fraud and misappropriation.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Organized [insurgent](/wiki/Insurgent), resistance groups tried to suppress the freedmen and Republicans. Besides the short-lived original [Ku Klux Klan](/wiki/Ku_Klux_Klan), these included the Pale Faces, [Knights of the White Camellia](/wiki/Knights_of_the_White_Camellia), [Red Shirts](/wiki/Red_Shirts_(Southern_United_States)), and the [White League](/wiki/White_League).[[45]](#cite_note-45) Reconstruction in Alabama ended in 1874, when the Democrats regained control of the legislature and governor's office through an election dominated by fraud and violence. They wrote another constitution in 1875,[[45]](#cite_note-45) and the legislature passed the [Blaine Amendment](/wiki/Blaine_Amendment), prohibiting public money from being used to finance religious-affiliated schools.[[46]](#cite_note-46) The same year, legislation was approved that called for [racially segregated](/wiki/Racial_segregation) schools.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Railroad passenger cars were segregated in 1891.[[47]](#cite_note-47) After disfranchising most African Americans and many poor whites in the 1901 constitution, the Alabama legislature passed more [Jim Crow laws](/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws) at the beginning of the 20th century to impose segregation in everyday life.

### 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|left|The developing skyline of Birmingham in 1915](/wiki/File:Birmingham_Alabama_skyline_1915.jpg)

The new 1901 [Constitution of Alabama](/wiki/Constitution_of_Alabama) included provisions for voter registration that effectively [disenfranchised](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_Reconstruction_era) large portions of the population, including nearly all African Americans and Native Americans, and tens of thousands of poor whites, through making voter registration difficult, requiring a [poll taxes](/wiki/Poll_tax_(United_States)) and [literacy test](/wiki/Literacy_test).[[48]](#cite_note-48) By 1903, only 2,980 African Americans were registered in Alabama, although at least 74,000 were [literate](/wiki/Literate). This compared to more than 181,000 African Americans eligible to vote in 1900. The numbers dropped even more in later decades.[[49]](#cite_note-49) While the planter class had persuaded poor whites to vote for this legislative effort to suppress black voting, the new restrictions resulted in their disenfranchisement as well, due mostly to the imposition of a cumulative poll tax.[[49]](#cite_note-49) By 1941, whites constituted a slight majority of those disenfranchised by these laws: 600,000 Whites vs. 520,000 African-Americans.[[49]](#cite_note-49) Nearly all African Americans had lost the ability to vote. Despite numerous legal challenges that succeeded in overturning certain provisions, the state legislature would create new ones to maintain disenfranchisement. The exclusion of blacks from the political system persisted until after passage of federal civil rights legislation in the 1965 to enforce their constitutional rights as citizens.

The 1901 constitution required racial segregation of public schools. It also restated that interracial marriage was illegal, as it had been prohibited in 1867. Into the 1950s, the state legislature passed additional racial segregation laws related to public facilities: jails were segregated in 1911; hospitals in 1915; toilets, hotels, and restaurants in 1928; and bus stop waiting rooms in 1945.[[47]](#cite_note-47) The rural-dominated Alabama legislature consistently underfunded schools and services for the disenfranchised African Americans, but it did not relieve them of paying taxes.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Partially as a response to chronic underfunding of education for African Americans in the South, the [Rosenwald Fund](/wiki/Rosenwald_Fund) began funding the construction of what came to be known as [Rosenwald Schools](/wiki/Rosenwald_School). In Alabama these schools were designed and the construction partially financed with Rosenwald funds, which paid one-third of the construction costs. The fund required the local community and state to raise matching funds to pay the rest. Black residents effectively taxed themselves twice, by raising additional monies to supply matching funds for such schools, which were built in many rural areas. They often donated land and labor as well.[[50]](#cite_note-50) [thumb|The former](/wiki/File:Mount_Sinai_School_Autauga_County_July_2011_1.jpg) [Mount Sinai School](/wiki/Mount_Sinai_School) in rural Autauga County, completed in 1919. It was one of the 387 [Rosenwald Schools](/wiki/Rosenwald_Schools) built in the state.

Beginning in 1913, the first 80 [Rosenwald Schools](/wiki/Rosenwald_School) were built in Alabama for African-American children. A total of 387 schools, seven teachers' houses, and several vocational buildings were completed by 1937 in the state. Several of the [surviving school buildings](/wiki/The_Rosenwald_School_Building_Fund_and_Associated_Buildings_Multiple_Property_Submission) in the state are now listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places).[[50]](#cite_note-50) Continued racial discrimination and [lynchings](/wiki/Lynching), agricultural depression, and the failure of the cotton crops due to [boll weevil](/wiki/Boll_weevil) infestation led tens of thousands of African Americans from rural Alabama and other states to seek opportunities in northern and midwestern cities during the early decades of the 20th century as part of the [Great Migration](/wiki/Great_Migration_(African_American)) out of the South. Reflecting this emigration, the population growth rate in Alabama (see "Historical Populations" table below) dropped by nearly half from 1910 to 1920.

At the same time, many rural people, both White and African American, migrated to the city of [Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama) to work in new industrial jobs. Birmingham experienced such rapid growth that it was called the "Magic City". By the 1920s, Birmingham was the 19th-largest city in the United States and had more than 30% of the state's population. Heavy industry and mining were the basis of its economy. Its residents were under-represented for decades in the state legislature, which refused to redistrict after each decennial census according to population changes, as it was required by the state constitution. This did not change until the late 1960s following a lawsuit and court order.

Beginning in the 1940s, when the courts started taking the first steps to recognize the voting rights of black voters, the Alabama legislature took several counter -steps designed to disfranchise black voters. The legislature passed, and the voters ratified [as these were mostly white voters], a state constitutional amendment that gave local registrars greater latitude to disqualify voter registration applicants. Black citizens in [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama) successfully challenged this amendment as a violation of the [Fifteenth Amendment](/wiki/Fifteenth_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution). The legislature also changed the boundaries of [Tuskegee](/wiki/Tuskegee,_Alabama) to a 28-sided figure designed to fence out blacks from the city limits. The Supreme Court unanimously held that this racial "[gerrymandering](/wiki/Gerrymandering)" violated the Constitution. In 1961, ... the Alabama legislature also intentionally diluted the effect of the black vote by instituting numbered place requirements for local elections.[[51]](#cite_note-51)

Industrial development related to the demands of World War II brought a level of prosperity to the state not seen since before the Civil War.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Rural workers poured into the largest cities in the state for better jobs and a higher standard of living. One example of this massive influx of workers occurred in Mobile. Between 1940 and 1943, more than 89,000 people moved into the city to work for war-related industries.[[52]](#cite_note-52) Cotton and other cash crops faded in importance as the state developed a manufacturing and service base.

Despite massive population changes in the state from 1901 to 1961, the rural-dominated legislature refused to reapportion House and Senate seats based on population, as required by the state constitution to follow the results of decennial censuses. They held on to old representation to maintain political and economic power in agricultural areas. In addition, the state legislature gerrymandered the few Birmingham legislative seats to ensure election by persons living outside Birmingham.

One result was that [Jefferson County](/wiki/Jefferson_County,_Alabama), containing Birmingham's industrial and economic powerhouse, contributed more than one-third of all tax revenue to the state, but did not receive a proportional amount in services. Urban interests were consistently underrepresented in the legislature. A 1960 study noted that because of rural domination, "a minority of about 25 per cent of the total state population is in majority control of the Alabama legislature."[[2]](#cite_note-2) A class action suit initiated on behalf of plaintiffs in [Lowndes County, Alabama](/wiki/Lowndes_County,_Alabama) challenged the state legislature's lack of redistricting for congressional seats. In 1962 [*White v. Crook*](/wiki/White_v._Crook), Judge [Frank M. Johnson](/wiki/Frank_M._Johnson) ordered the state to redistrict. United States Supreme Court cases of [*Baker v. Carr*](/wiki/Baker_v._Carr) (1962) and [*Reynolds v. Sims*](/wiki/Reynolds_v._Sims) (1964) ruled that the principle of "[one man, one vote](/wiki/One_man,_one_vote)" needed to be the basis of both houses of state legislatures as well, and that their districts had to be based on population, rather than geographic counties, as Alabama had used for its senate.

In 1972, for the first time since 1901, the legislature completed the first congressional redistricting based on the decennial census. This benefited the urban areas that had developed, as well as all in the population who had been underrepresented for more than 60 years.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Other changes were made to implement representative state house and senate districts.

African Americans continued to press in the 1950s and 1960s to end disenfranchisement and segregation in the state through the [Civil Rights Movement](/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955–1968)), including legal challenges. In 1954, the US Supreme Court ruled in [*Brown v. Board of Education*](/wiki/Brown_v._Board_of_Education) that public schools had to be desegregated, but Alabama was slow to comply. During the 1960s, under Governor [George Wallace](/wiki/George_Wallace), Alabama resisted compliance with federal demands for [desegregation](/wiki/Desegregation).The civil rights movement had notable events in Alabama, including the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](/wiki/Montgomery_Bus_Boycott) (1955–56), [Freedom Rides](/wiki/Freedom_Rides) in 1961, and 1965 [Selma to Montgomery marches](/wiki/Selma_to_Montgomery_marches). These contributed to Congressional passage and enactment of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964)[[53]](#cite_note-53) and [Voting Rights Act of 1965](/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965) by the U.S. Congress.

Legal segregation ended in the states in 1964, but [Jim Crow](/wiki/Jim_Crow) customs often continued until specifically challenged in court.[[54]](#cite_note-54) Despite recommendations of a 1973 Alabama Constitutional Commission, the state legislature did not approve an amendment to establish home rule for counties. There is very limited home rule, but the legislature is deeply involved in passing legislation that applies to county-level functions and policies. This both deprives local residents of the ability to govern themselves and distracts the legislature from statewide issues.

Alabama has made some changes since the late 20th century and has used new types of voting to increase representation. In the 1980s, an omnibus redistricting case, [*Dillard v. Crenshaw County*](/wiki/Dillard_v._Crenshaw_County)*,* challenged the [at-large](/wiki/At-large) voting for representative seats of 180 Alabama jurisdictions, including counties and school boards. At-large voting had diluted the votes of any minority in a county, as the majority tended to take all seats. Despite African Americans making up a significant minority in the state, they had been unable to elect any representatives in most of the at-large jurisdictions.

As part of settlement of this case, five Alabama cites and counties, including [Chilton County](/wiki/Chilton_County,_Alabama), adopted a system of [cumulative voting](/wiki/Proportional_representation) for election of representatives in multi-seat jurisdictions. This has resulted in more proportional representation for voters. In another form of proportional representation, 23 jurisdictions use limited voting, as in [Conecuh County](/wiki/Conecuh_County,_Alabama). In 1982, limited voting was first tested in [Conecuh County](/wiki/Conecuh_County,_Alabama). Together use of these systems has increased the number of African Americans and women being elected to local offices, resulting in governments that are more representative of their citizens.[[55]](#cite_note-55)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|A general map of Alabama](/wiki/File:Map_of_Alabama_terrain_NA.jpg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Alabama is the thirtieth-largest state in the United States with [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of total area: 3.2% of the area is water, making Alabama 23rd in the amount of surface water, also giving it the second-largest inland waterway system in the U.S.[[56]](#cite_note-56) About three-fifths of the land area is a gentle plain with a general descent towards the [Mississippi River](/wiki/Mississippi_River) and the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico). The [North Alabama](/wiki/North_Alabama) region is mostly mountainous, with the [Tennessee River](/wiki/Tennessee_River) cutting a large valley and creating numerous creeks, streams, rivers, mountains, and lakes.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Alabama is bordered by the states of [Tennessee](/wiki/Tennessee) to the north, [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)) to the east, [Florida](/wiki/Florida) to the south, and [Mississippi](/wiki/Mississippi) to the west. Alabama has coastline at the Gulf of Mexico, in the extreme southern edge of the state.[[57]](#cite_note-57) The state ranges in elevation from sea level[[58]](#cite_note-58) at [Mobile Bay](/wiki/Mobile_Bay) to over 1,800 feet (550 m) in the [Appalachian Mountains](/wiki/Appalachian_Mountains) in the northeast.

The highest point is [Mount Cheaha](/wiki/Mount_Cheaha),[[57]](#cite_note-57) at a height of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).<ref name=ngs>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Alabama's land consists of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of forest or 67% of total land area.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Suburban [Baldwin County](/wiki/Baldwin_County,_Alabama), along the Gulf Coast, is the largest county in the state in both land area and water area.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Areas in Alabama administered by the [National Park Service](/wiki/National_Park_Service) include [Horseshoe Bend National Military Park](/wiki/Horseshoe_Bend_National_Military_Park) near [Alexander City](/wiki/Alexander_City,_Alabama); [Little River Canyon National Preserve](/wiki/Little_River_Canyon_National_Preserve) near [Fort Payne](/wiki/Fort_Payne,_Alabama); [Russell Cave National Monument](/wiki/Russell_Cave_National_Monument) in [Bridgeport](/wiki/Bridgeport,_Alabama); [Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site](/wiki/Tuskegee_Airmen_National_Historic_Site) in [Tuskegee](/wiki/Tuskegee,_Alabama); and [Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site](/wiki/Tuskegee_Institute_National_Historic_Site) near Tuskegee.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Additionally, Alabama has four [National Forests](/wiki/United_States_National_Forest): [Conecuh](/wiki/Conecuh_National_Forest), [Talladega](/wiki/Talladega_National_Forest), [Tuskegee](/wiki/Tuskegee_National_Forest), and [William B. Bankhead](/wiki/William_B._Bankhead_National_Forest).[[62]](#cite_note-62) Alabama also contains the [Natchez Trace Parkway](/wiki/Natchez_Trace_Parkway), the [Selma To Montgomery National Historic Trail](/wiki/Selma_To_Montgomery_National_Historic_Trail), and the [Trail Of Tears National Historic Trail](/wiki/Trail_of_Tears). A notable natural wonder in Alabama is ["Natural Bridge"](/wiki/Natural_Bridge,_Alabama) rock, the longest [natural bridge](/wiki/Natural_bridge) east of the [Rockies](/wiki/Rocky_Mountains), located just south of [Haleyville](/wiki/Haleyville,_Alabama).

A [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)-wide meteorite impact crater is located in [Elmore County](/wiki/Elmore_County,_Alabama), just north of Montgomery. This is the [Wetumpka crater](/wiki/Wetumpka_crater), the site of "Alabama's greatest natural disaster." A [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)-wide meteorite hit the area about 80 million years ago.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The hills just east of downtown [Wetumpka](/wiki/Wetumpka) showcase the eroded remains of the impact crater that was blasted into the bedrock, with the area labeled the Wetumpka crater or astrobleme ("star-wound") because of the concentric rings of fractures and zones of shattered rock that can be found beneath the surface.[[64]](#cite_note-64) In 2002, Christian Koeberl with the Institute of Geochemistry University of Vienna published evidence and established the site as the 157th recognized impact crater on Earth.[[65]](#cite_note-65)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|Autumn tree in Birmingham](/wiki/File:Autumn_tree_in_Birmingham_Nov_2011.jpg)

The state is classified as [humid subtropical](/wiki/Humid_subtropical_climate) (*Cfa*) under the [Koppen Climate Classification](/wiki/Humid_temperate_climate).[[66]](#cite_note-66) The average annual temperature is 64 °F (18 °C). Temperatures tend to be warmer in the southern part of the state with its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, while the northern parts of the state, especially in the Appalachian Mountains in the northeast, tend to be slightly cooler.[[67]](#cite_note-67) Generally, Alabama has very hot summers and mild winters with copious precipitation throughout the year. Alabama receives an average of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of rainfall annually and enjoys a lengthy growing season of up to 300 days in the southern part of the state.[[67]](#cite_note-67) Summers in Alabama are among the hottest in the U.S., with high temperatures averaging over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) throughout the summer in some parts of the state. Alabama is also prone to [tropical storms](/wiki/Tropical_storm) and even [hurricanes](/wiki/Hurricane). Areas of the state far away from the Gulf are not immune to the effects of the storms, which often dump tremendous amounts of rain as they move inland and weaken.

South Alabama reports many [thunderstorms](/wiki/Thunderstorms). The Gulf Coast, around Mobile Bay, averages between 70 and 80 days per year with thunder reported. This activity decreases somewhat further north in the state, but even the far north of the state reports thunder on about 60 days per year. Occasionally, thunderstorms are severe with frequent [lightning](/wiki/Lightning) and large [hail](/wiki/Hail); the central and northern parts of the state are most vulnerable to this type of storm. Alabama ranks ninth in the number of deaths from lightning and tenth in the number of deaths from lightning strikes per capita.[[68]](#cite_note-68) [thumb|left|Tornado damage in](/wiki/File:Phil_Campbell_tornado_damage.jpg) [Phil Campbell](/wiki/Phil_Campbell,_Alabama) following the statewide [April 27, 2011 tornado outbreak](/wiki/2011_Super_Outbreak). Alabama, along with [Oklahoma](/wiki/Oklahoma), has the most reported [EF5 tornadoes](/wiki/Enhanced_Fujita_scale) of any state, according to statistics from the [National Climatic Data Center](/wiki/National_Climatic_Data_Center) for the period January 1, 1950, to June 2013.[[69]](#cite_note-69) Several long-tracked F5/EF5 tornadoes have contributed to Alabama reporting more tornado fatalities than any other state. The state was affected by the [1974 Super Outbreak](/wiki/1974_Super_Outbreak) and was devastated tremendously by the [2011 Super Outbreak](/wiki/2011_Super_Outbreak). The 2011 Super Outbreak produced a record amount of tornadoes in the state. The tally reached 62.[[70]](#cite_note-70) [thumb|Snowfall outside Birmingham City Hall in February 2010](/wiki/File:Birmingham_city_hall_alabama_2010.jpg) The peak season for tornadoes varies from the northern to southern parts of the state. Alabama is one of the few places in the world that has a secondary tornado season in November and December, along with the spring severe weather season. The northern part of the state—along the Tennessee Valley—is one of the areas in the U.S. most vulnerable to violent tornadoes. The area of Alabama and Mississippi most affected by tornadoes is sometimes referred to as [Dixie Alley](/wiki/Dixie_Alley), as distinct from the [Tornado Alley](/wiki/Tornado_Alley) of the Southern Plains.

Winters are generally mild in Alabama, as they are throughout most of the southeastern U.S., with average January low temperatures around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in Mobile and around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in Birmingham. Although snow is a rare event in much of Alabama, areas of the state north of Montgomery may receive a dusting of snow a few times every winter, with an occasional moderately heavy snowfall every few years. Historic snowfall events include [New Year's Eve 1963 snowstorm](/wiki/New_Year's_Eve_1963_snowstorm) and the [1993 Storm of the Century](/wiki/1993_Storm_of_the_Century). The annual average snowfall for the Birmingham area is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) per year. In the southern Gulf coast, snowfall is less frequent, sometimes going several years without any snowfall.

Alabama's highest temperature of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) was recorded on September 5, 1925 in the unincorporated community of [Centerville](/wiki/Centerville,_Alabama). The record low of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) occurred on January 30, 1966 in [New Market](/wiki/New_Market,_Alabama).[[71]](#cite_note-71) [Template:Alabama weatherbox](/wiki/Template:Alabama_weatherbox)

### Flora and fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[thumb|A stand of](/wiki/File:CahabaRiverNWR1.jpg) [Cahaba lilies](/wiki/Hymenocallis_coronaria) (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) in the [Cahaba River](/wiki/Cahaba_River), within the [Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge](/wiki/Cahaba_River_National_Wildlife_Refuge). [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Alabama is home to a diverse array of [flora](/wiki/Flora) and [fauna](/wiki/Fauna), due largely to a variety of habitats that range from the [Tennessee Valley](/wiki/Tennessee_Valley), [Appalachian Plateau](/wiki/Appalachian_Plateau), and [Ridge-and-Valley Appalachians](/wiki/Ridge-and-Valley_Appalachians) of the north to the [Piedmont](/wiki/Piedmont_(United_States)), [Canebrake](/wiki/Canebrake_(region_of_Alabama)) and [Black Belt](/wiki/Black_Belt_(region_of_Alabama)) of the central region to the [Gulf Coastal Plain](/wiki/Gulf_Coastal_Plain) and beaches along the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) in the south. The state is usually ranked among the top in nation for its range of overall [biodiversity](/wiki/Biodiversity).[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73) Alabama is in the subtropical coniferous forest biome and once boasted huge expanses of pine forest, which still form the largest proportion of forests in the state.[[72]](#cite_note-72) It currently ranks fifth in the nation for the diversity of its flora. It is home to nearly 4,000 [pteridophyte](/wiki/Pteridophyte) and [spermatophyte](/wiki/Spermatophyte) plant species.[[74]](#cite_note-74) [Indigenous](/wiki/Indigenous_(ecology)) animal species in the state include 62 [mammal](/wiki/Mammal) [species](/wiki/Species),[[75]](#cite_note-75) 93 reptile species,[[76]](#cite_note-76) 73 [amphibian](/wiki/Amphibian) species,[[77]](#cite_note-77) roughly 307 native [freshwater fish](/wiki/Freshwater_fish) species,[[72]](#cite_note-72) and 420 bird species that spend at least part of their year within the state.[[78]](#cite_note-78) Invertebrates include 83 [crayfish](/wiki/Crayfish) species and 383 [mollusk](/wiki/Mollusk) species. 113 of these mollusk species have never been collected outside the state.[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|left|Alabama's population density](/wiki/File:Alabama_population_map.png) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Template:US Census population](/wiki/Template:US_Census_population)

The [United States Census Bureau](/wiki/United_States_Census_Bureau) estimates that the population of Alabama was 4,858,979 on July 1, 2015,<ref name=PopEstUS>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> which represents an increase of 79,243, or 1.66%, since the [2010 Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census).[[81]](#cite_note-81) This includes a natural increase since the last census of 121,054 people (that is 502,457 births minus 381,403 deaths) and an increase due to net migration of 104,991 people into the state.<ref name=census\_cum>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[Immigration](/wiki/Immigration_to_the_United_States) from outside the U.S. resulted in a net increase of 31,180 people, and migration within the country produced a net gain of 73,811 people.<ref name=census\_cum/> The state had 108,000 foreign-born (2.4% of the state population), of which an estimated 22.2% were illegal immigrants (24,000).

The [center of population](/wiki/Center_of_population) of Alabama is located in [Chilton County](/wiki/Chilton_County,_Alabama), outside the town of [Jemison](/wiki/Jemison,_Alabama).[[82]](#cite_note-82)

### Race and ancestry[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

According to the [2010 Census](/wiki/2010_United_States_Census), Alabama had a population of 4,779,736. The racial composition of the state was 68.5% [White](/wiki/White_American) (67.0% [Non-Hispanic White](/wiki/Non-Hispanic_White) and 1.5% [Hispanic White](/wiki/Hispanic_White)), 26.2% [Black or African American](/wiki/African_American), 3.9% [Hispanic or Latino](/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans) of any race, 1.1% Asian, 0.6% [American Indian and Alaska Native](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States), 0.1% [Native Hawaiian](/wiki/Native_Hawaiians) and Other [Pacific Islander](/wiki/Pacific_Islander), 2.0% from Some Other Race, and 1.5% from Two or More Races.[[83]](#cite_note-83) In 2011, 46.6% of Alabama's population younger than age 1 were minorities.[[84]](#cite_note-84) The largest reported ancestry groups in Alabama are: African American (26.2%), [English](/wiki/English_American) (23.6%), [Irish](/wiki/Irish_American) (7.7%), [German](/wiki/German_Americans) (5.7%), and [Scots-Irish](/wiki/Scots-Irish_American) (2.0%).[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86)[[87]](#cite_note-87) Those citing "American" ancestry in Alabama are generally of English or British ancestry; many [Anglo-Americans](/wiki/English_American) identify as having American ancestry because their roots have been in North America for so long, in some cases since the 1600s. Demographers estimate that a minimum of 20–23% of people in Alabama are of predominantly English ancestry and that the figure is likely higher. In the 1980 census, 41% of the people in Alabama identified as being of English ancestry, making them the largest ethnic group at the time.[[88]](#cite_note-88)[[89]](#cite_note-89)[[90]](#cite_note-90)[[91]](#cite_note-91)[[92]](#cite_note-92)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alabama Racial Breakdown of Population** | | | |
| **Racial composition** | **1990**[**[93]**](#cite_note-93) | **2000**[**[94]**](#cite_note-94) | **2010**[**[95]**](#cite_note-95) |
| [White](/wiki/White_American) | 73.6% | 71.1% | 68.5% |
| [Black](/wiki/African_American) | 25.3% | 26.0% | 26.2% |
| [Asian](/wiki/Asian_American) | 0.5% | 0.7% | 1.1% |
| [Native](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| [Native Hawaiian](/wiki/Native_Hawaiian) and  [other Pacific Islander](/wiki/Pacific_Islander) | - | - | 0.1% |
| [Other race](/wiki/Race_and_ethnicity_in_the_United_States_Census) | 0.1% | 0.6% | 2.0% |
| [Two or more races](/wiki/Multiracial_American) | - | 1.0% | 1.5% |

Based on historic migration and settlement patterns in the southern colonies and states, demographers estimated there are more people in Alabama of Scots-Irish origins than self-reported.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Many people in Alabama claim Irish ancestry because of the term Scots-Irish but, based on historic immigration and settlement, their ancestors were more likely Protestant Scots-Irish coming from northern Ireland, where they had been for a few generations as part of the English colonization.[[97]](#cite_note-97) The Scots-Irish were the largest non-English immigrant group from the British Isles before the American Revolution, and many settled in the South, later moving into the Deep South as it was developed.[[98]](#cite_note-98) In 1984, under the Davis–Strong Act, the state legislature established the [Alabama Indian Affairs Commission](/wiki/Alabama_Indian_Affairs_Commission).[[99]](#cite_note-99) Native American groups within the state had increasingly been demanding recognition as ethnic groups and seeking an end to discrimination. Given the long history of slavery and associated racial segregation, the Native American peoples, who have sometimes been of mixed race, have insisted on having their cultural identification respected. In the past, their self-identification was often overlooked as the state tried to impose a binary breakdown of society into white and black.

The state has [officially recognized](/wiki/State_recognized_tribes_in_the_United_States) nine American Indian tribes in the state, descended mostly from the [Five Civilized Tribes](/wiki/Five_Civilized_Tribes) of the American Southeast. These are:[[100]](#cite_note-100)\* [Poarch Band of Creek Indians](/wiki/Poarch_Band_of_Creek_Indians) (who also have federal recognition),

* [MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians](/wiki/MOWA_Band_of_Choctaw_Indians),
* Star Clan of [Muscogee Creeks](/wiki/Muscogee_Creek_people),
* Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama,
* [Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama](/wiki/Cherokee_Tribe_of_Northeast_Alabama),
* Cher-O-Creek Intra Tribal Indians,
* *Ma-Chis* Lower Creek Indian Tribe,
* *Piqua* [Shawnee](/wiki/Shawnee) Tribe, and
* *Ani-Yun-Wiya* Nation.

The state government has promoted recognition of Native American contributions to the state, including the designation in 2000 for Columbus Day to be jointly celebrated as American Indian Heritage Day.[[101]](#cite_note-101)

### Population centers[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Birmingham,_Alabama_Skyline.jpg)[Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama), largest city and metropolitan area [thumb|](/wiki/File:Downtown_Huntsville,_Alabama_cropped.jpg)[Huntsville](/wiki/Huntsville,_Alabama), second-largest metropolitan area [thumb|](/wiki/File:Downtown_Mobile_2008_01.jpg)[Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama), third-largest metropolitan area [thumb|](/wiki/File:Montgomery_Alabama_panorama.jpg)[Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama), fourth-largest metropolitan area [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Metropolitan Area** | **Population  (2014 Census estimate)** | **Counties** |
| 1 | [Birmingham-Hoover](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama,_metropolitan_area) | 1,143,772 | [Bibb](/wiki/Bibb_County,_Alabama), [Blount](/wiki/Blount_County,_Alabama), [Chilton](/wiki/Chilton_County,_Alabama), [Jefferson](/wiki/Jefferson_County,_Alabama), [St. Clair](/wiki/St._Clair_County,_Alabama), [Shelby](/wiki/Shelby_County,_Alabama), [Walker](/wiki/Walker_County,_Alabama) |
| 2 | [Huntsville](/wiki/Huntsville_Metropolitan_Area) | 441,086 | [Limestone](/wiki/Limestone_County,_Alabama), [Madison](/wiki/Madison_County,_Alabama) |
| 3 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile_metropolitan_area) | 415,123 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile_County,_Alabama) |
| 4 | [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery_Metropolitan_Area) | 373,141 | [Autauga](/wiki/Autauga_County,_Alabama), [Elmore](/wiki/Elmore_County,_Alabama), [Lowndes](/wiki/Lowndes_County,_Alabama), [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery_County,_Alabama) |
| 5 | [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa_metropolitan_area) | 237,761 | [Hale](/wiki/Hale_County,_Alabama), [Pickens](/wiki/Pickens_County,_Alabama), [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa_County,_Alabama) |
| 6 | [Daphne-Fairhope](/wiki/Mobile_Metropolitan_Area) | 200,111 | [Baldwin](/wiki/Baldwin_County,_Alabama) |
| 7 | [Auburn-Opelika](/wiki/Auburn_Metropolitan_Area) | 154,255 | [Lee](/wiki/Lee_County,_Alabama) |
| 8 | [Decatur](/wiki/Decatur,_Alabama_Metropolitan_Area) | 153,084 | [Lawrence](/wiki/Lawrence_County,_Alabama), [Morgan](/wiki/Morgan_County,_Alabama) |
| 9 | [Dothan](/wiki/Dothan_metropolitan_area) | 148,095 | [Geneva](/wiki/Geneva_County,_Alabama), [Henry](/wiki/Henry_County,_Alabama), [Houston](/wiki/Houston_County,_Alabama) |
| 10 | [Florence-Muscle Shoals](/wiki/Florence-Muscle_Shoals_Metropolitan_Area) | 147,639 | [Colbert](/wiki/Colbert_County,_Alabama), [Lauderdale](/wiki/Lauderdale_County,_Alabama) |
| 11 | [Anniston-Oxford-Jacksonville](/wiki/Anniston-Oxford_Metropolitan_Area) | 115,916 | [Calhoun](/wiki/Calhoun_County,_Alabama) |
| 12 | [Gadsden](/wiki/Gadsden_Metropolitan_Statistical_Area) | 103,531 | [Etowah](/wiki/Etowah_County,_Alabama) |
|  | Total | 3,633,514 |  |

Sources: Census.gov[[102]](#cite_note-102)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **City** | **Population  (2015 census estimates)** | **County** |
| 1 | [Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama) | 212,461 | [Jefferson](/wiki/Jefferson_County,_Alabama) |
| 2 | [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama) | 200,602 | [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery_County,_Alabama) |
| 3 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama) | 194,288 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile_County,_Alabama) |
| 4 | [Huntsville](/wiki/Huntsville,_Alabama) | 190,582 | [Madison](/wiki/Madison_County,_Alabama)  [Limestone](/wiki/Limestone_County,_Alabama) |
| 5 | [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa,_Alabama) | 98,332 | [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa_County,_Alabama) |
| 6 | [Hoover](/wiki/Hoover,_Alabama) | 84,848 | Jefferson  [Shelby](/wiki/Shelby_County,_Alabama) |
| 7 | [Dothan](/wiki/Dothan,_Alabama) | 68,567 | [Houston](/wiki/Houston_County,_Alabama) |
| 8 | [Auburn](/wiki/Auburn,_Alabama) | 62,059 | [Lee](/wiki/Lee_County,_Alabama) |
| 9 | [Decatur](/wiki/Decatur,_Alabama) | 55,437 | [Morgan](/wiki/Morgan_County,_Alabama)  Limestone |
| 10 | [Madison](/wiki/Madison,_Alabama) | 46,492 | Madison  Limestone |
| 11 | [Florence](/wiki/Florence,_Alabama) | 40,026 | [Lauderdale](/wiki/Lauderdale_County,_Alabama) |
| 12 | [Phenix City](/wiki/Phenix_City,_Alabama) | 37,570 | [Russell](/wiki/Russell_County,_Alabama) |
| 13 | [Gadsden](/wiki/Gadsden,_Alabama) | 36,084 | [Etowah](/wiki/Etowah_County,_Alabama) |
| 14 | [Prattville](/wiki/Prattville,_Alabama) | 35,420 | [Autauga](/wiki/Autauga_County,_Alabama) |
| 15 | [Vestavia Hills](/wiki/Vestavia_Hills,_Alabama) | 34,174 | Jefferson |

Sources: Census.gov[[103]](#cite_note-103)

### Language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

95.1% of all Alabama residents five years old or older spoke only English at home in 2010, a minor decrease from 96.1% in 2000. Alabama English is predominantly [Southern](/wiki/Southern_American_English),[[104]](#cite_note-104) and is related to South Midland speech which was taken across the border from [Tennessee](/wiki/Tennessee). In the major Southern speech region, there is the decreasing loss of the final /r/, for example the /boyd/ pronunciation of 'bird.' In the northern third of the state, there is a South Midland 'arm' and 'barb' rhyming with 'form' and 'orb.' Unique words in Alabama English include: redworm (earthworm), peckerwood (woodpecker), snake doctor and snake feeder (dragonfly), tow sack (burlap bag), plum peach (clingstone), French harp (harmonica), and dog irons (andirons).[[104]](#cite_note-104)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Top 10 Non-English Languages Spoken in Alabama** | |
| **Language** | **Percentage of population (**[**Template:As of**](/wiki/Template:As_of)**)**[**[105]**](#cite_note-105) |
| Spanish | 2.2% |
| German | 0.4% |
| French (incl. Patois, Cajun) | 0.3% |
| Chinese, [Vietnamese](/wiki/Vietnamese_language), [Korean](/wiki/Korean_language), [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language), [African languages](/wiki/African_languages), Japanese, and Italian (tied) | 0.1% |

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[thumb|Highlands United Methodist Church in Birmingham, part of the Five Points South Historic District](/wiki/File:Highlands_UMC_Birmingham_Dec_2012_2.jpg) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Briarwood_Presbyterian_Church_in_Birmingham,_AL.jpg)[Briarwood Presbyterian Church](/wiki/Briarwood_Presbyterian_Church) in Birmingham [thumb|](/wiki/File:Temple_B'Nai_Shalom_Dec2009_01.jpg)[Temple B'Nai Sholom](/wiki/Temple_B'nai_Sholom_(Huntsville,_Alabama)) in Huntsville, established in 1876. It is the oldest synagogue building in continuous use in the state. [thumb|The Islamic Center of Tuscaloosa, one of the Islamic centers that contain a mosque and facilities for the cultural needs of Muslims in the state.](/wiki/File:Islamic_Center_of_Tuscaloosa.jpg)

In the 2008 [American Religious Identification Survey](/wiki/American_Religious_Identification_Survey), 86% of Alabama respondents reported their religion as Christian, including 6% Catholic, and 11% as having no religion.<ref name=ARIS2008>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The composition of other traditions is 0.5% Mormon, 0.5% Jewish, 0.5% Muslim, 0.5% Buddhist, and 0.5% Hindu.[[106]](#cite_note-106) {| class="wikitable sortable" font-size:80%;" |+ style="font-size:100%" | Religious affiliation in Alabama (2014)[[107]](#cite_note-107)|- ! Affiliation ! colspan="2"|% of U.S. population |- | [Christian](/wiki/Christianity) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:30px;"| [Evangelical Protestant](/wiki/Evangelical_Protestant) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:30px;"| [Mainline Protestant](/wiki/Mainline_Protestant) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:30px;"| [Black church](/wiki/Black_church) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Catholic](/wiki/Catholic) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Mormon](/wiki/Mormon) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Jehovah's Witnesses](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Eastern Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| Other Christian |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | [Unaffiliated](/wiki/Irreligion) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| Nothing in particular |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Agnostic](/wiki/Agnosticism) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Atheist](/wiki/Atheism) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | Non-Christian faiths |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Jewish](/wiki/Jewish) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Buddhist](/wiki/Buddhist) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| [Hindu](/wiki/Hindu) |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | style="text-align:left; text-indent:15px;"| Other Non-Christian faiths |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | Don't know/refused answer |align=right| [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |- | **Total** || [**Template:Bartable**](/wiki/Template:Bartable) |}

#### Christianity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Details](/wiki/Template:Details)

Alabama is located in the middle of the [Bible Belt](/wiki/Bible_Belt), a region of numerous Protestant Christians. Alabama has been identified as one of the most religious states in the United States, with about 58% of the population attending church regularly.[[108]](#cite_note-108) A majority of people in the state identify as Evangelical Protestant. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the three largest denominational groups in Alabama are the [Southern Baptist Convention](/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention), [The United Methodist Church](/wiki/The_United_Methodist_Church), and [non-denominational](/wiki/Nondenominational_Christianity) Evangelical Protestant.[[109]](#cite_note-109) In Alabama, the [Southern Baptist Convention](/wiki/Southern_Baptist_Convention) has the highest number of adherents with 1,380,121; this is followed by the [United Methodist Church](/wiki/United_Methodist_Church) with 327,734 adherents, non-denominational Evangelical Protestant with 220,938 adherents, and the Catholic Church with 150,647 adherents. Many Baptist and Methodist congregations became established in the [Great Awakening](/wiki/Great_Awakening) of the early 19th century, when preachers proselytized across the South. The [Assemblies of God](/wiki/Assemblies_of_God) had almost 60,000 members, the [Churches of Christ](/wiki/Churches_of_Christ) had nearly 120,000 members. The [Presbyterian churches](/wiki/Presbyterian_church), strongly associated with Scots-Irish immigrants of the 18th century and their descendants, had a combined membership around 75,000 ([PCA](/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_in_America)-28,009 members in 108 congregations, [PC(USA)](/wiki/PC(USA))-26,247 members in 147 congregations,[[110]](#cite_note-110) the [Cumberland Presbyterian Church](/wiki/Cumberland_Presbyterian_Church)-6,000 members in 59 congregations, the [Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America](/wiki/Cumberland_Presbyterian_Church_in_America)-5,000 members and 50 congregations plus the [EPC](/wiki/Edgewater_Presbyterian_Church) and Associate Reformed Presbyterians with 230 members and 9 congregations).[[111]](#cite_note-111) In a 2007 survey, nearly 70% of respondents could name all four of the Christian [Gospels](/wiki/Canonical_Gospels). Of those who indicated a religious preference, 59% said they possessed a "full understanding" of their faith and needed no further learning.[[112]](#cite_note-112) In a 2007 poll, 92% of Alabamians reported having at least some confidence in churches in the state.[[113]](#cite_note-113)[[114]](#cite_note-114)

#### Other faiths[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Although in much smaller numbers, many other religious faiths are represented in the state as well, including [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism), [Islam](/wiki/Islam), [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism), [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism), [Sikhism](/wiki/Sikhism), the [Bahá'í Faith](/wiki/Bahá'í_Faith), and [Unitarian Universalism](/wiki/Unitarian_Universalism).[[111]](#cite_note-111) Jews have been present in what is now Alabama since 1763, during the colonial era of Mobile, when [Sephardic Jews](/wiki/Sephardic_Jews) immigrated from London.[[115]](#cite_note-115) The oldest Jewish congregation in the state is [Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim](/wiki/Congregation_Sha'arai_Shomayim_(Mobile,_Alabama)) in Mobile. It was formally recognized by the state legislature on January 25, 1844.[[115]](#cite_note-115) Later immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries tended to be [Ashkenazi Jews](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) from eastern Europe. Jewish denominations in the state include two [Orthodox](/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism), four [Conservative](/wiki/Conservative_Judaism), ten [Reform](/wiki/Reform_Judaism), and one [Humanistic](/wiki/Humanistic_Judaism) synagogue.[[116]](#cite_note-116) Muslims have been increasing in Alabama, with 31 mosques built by 2011, many by African-American converts.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Islam was a traditional religion in West Africa, from where many [slaves](/wiki/Slavery_in_the_United_States) were brought to the colonies and the United States during the centuries of the slave trade.

Several Hindu temples and cultural centers in the state have been founded by [Indian](/wiki/Indian_people) immigrants and their descendants, the most well-known being the Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in [Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama), the Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of Birmingham in [Pelham](/wiki/Pelham,_Alabama), the Hindu Cultural Center of North Alabama in [Capshaw](/wiki/Capshaw,_Alabama), and the Hindu Mandir and Cultural Center in [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa,_Alabama).[[118]](#cite_note-118)[[119]](#cite_note-119) There are six [Dharma centers](/wiki/Dharma_centre) and organizations for [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada) [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhists).[[120]](#cite_note-120) Most monastic Buddhist temples are concentrated in southern Mobile County, near [Bayou La Batre](/wiki/Bayou_La_Batre,_Alabama). This area has attracted an [influx of refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam](/wiki/Indochina_refugee_crisis) during the 1970s and thereafter.[[121]](#cite_note-121) The four temples within a ten-mile radius of Bayou La Batre, include Chua Chanh Giac, Wat Buddharaksa, and Wat Lao Phoutthavihan.[[122]](#cite_note-122)[[123]](#cite_note-123)[[124]](#cite_note-124) The first community of adherents of the [Baha'i Faith](/wiki/Baha'i_Faith) in Alabama was founded in 1896 by Paul K. Dealy who moved from Chicago to [Fairhope](/wiki/Fairhope) to participate in the growth of Fairhope as a [utopian community](/wiki/Fairhope_Single_Tax_Corporation). The first community of Baha'is in Alabama was racially integrated from the beginning due to the Faith's principles. Today there is an exhibit honoring Dealy in [Haifa](/wiki/Haifa), Israel at the world center of the [Baha'i Faith](/wiki/Baha'i_Faith). Baha'i Centers in Alabama exist in [Birmingham, Alabama](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama), [Huntsville, Alabama](/wiki/Huntsville,_Alabama), and [Florence, Alabama](/wiki/Florence,_Alabama).[[125]](#cite_note-125)

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

A [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](/wiki/Centers_for_Disease_Control_and_Prevention) study in 2008 showed that obesity in Alabama was a problem, with most counties having over 29% of adults obese, except for ten which had a rate between 26% and 29%.[[126]](#cite_note-126) Residents of the state, along with those in five other states, were least likely in the nation to be physically active during leisure time.[[127]](#cite_note-127) Alabama, and the southeastern U.S. in general, has one of the highest incidences of adult onset [diabetes](/wiki/Diabetes_type_II) in the country, exceeding 10% of adults.[[128]](#cite_note-128)[[129]](#cite_note-129)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The state has invested in aerospace, education, health care, banking, and various heavy industries, including automobile manufacturing, mineral extraction, steel production and [fabrication](/wiki/Fabrication_(metal)). By 2006, crop and animal production in Alabama was valued at $1.5 billion. In contrast to the primarily agricultural economy of the previous century, this was only about 1% of the state's gross domestic product. The number of private farms has declined at a steady rate since the 1960s, as land has been sold to developers, timber companies, and large farming conglomerates.[[130]](#cite_note-130) Non-agricultural employment in 2008 was 121,800 in management occupations; 71,750 in business and financial operations; 36,790 in computer-related and mathematical occupation; 44,200 in architecture and engineering; 12,410 in life, physical, and social sciences; 32,260 in community and social services; 12,770 in legal occupations; 116,250 in education, training, and library services; 27,840 in art, design and media occupations; 121,110 in healthcare; 44,750 in fire fighting, law enforcement, and security; 154,040 in food preparation and serving; 76,650 in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance; 53,230 in personal care and services; 244,510 in sales; 338,760 in office and administration support; 20,510 in farming, fishing, and forestry; 120,155 in construction and mining, gas, and oil extraction; 106,280 in installation, maintenance, and repair; 224,110 in production; and 167,160 in transportation and material moving.[[3]](#cite_note-3) According to the U.S. [Bureau of Economic Analysis](/wiki/Bureau_of_Economic_Analysis), the 2008 total [gross state product](/wiki/Gross_state_product) was $170 billion, or $29,411 per capita. Alabama's 2012 GDP increased 1.2% from the previous year. The single largest increase came in the area of information.[[131]](#cite_note-131)[Template:Failed verification](/wiki/Template:Failed_verification) In 2010, per capita income for the state was $22,984.[[132]](#cite_note-132) The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.8% in April 2015.[[133]](#cite_note-133) This compared to a nationwide seasonally adjusted rate of 5.4%.[[134]](#cite_note-134) Alabama has no state minimum wage and uses the federal minimum wage of $7.25. In February 2016, the state passed legislation that prevents Alabama municipalities from raising the minimum wage in their locality. The legislation voids a Birmingham city ordinance that was to raise the city's minimum wage to $10.10.[[135]](#cite_note-135)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[thumb|right|Alabama's beaches are one of the state's major tourist destinations.](/wiki/File:GulfShoresAlBeachJuly08B.jpg)

An estimated 20 million tourists visit the state each year. Over 100,000 of these are from other countries, including from Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan. In 2006, 22.3 million tourists spent $8.3 billion providing an estimated 162,000 jobs in the state.[[152]](#cite_note-152)[[153]](#cite_note-153)

### Healthcare[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[UAB Hospital](/wiki/UAB_Hospital) is the only [Level I trauma center](/wiki/Trauma_center) in Alabama.[[154]](#cite_note-154)[[155]](#cite_note-155) UAB is the largest state government employer in Alabama, with a workforce of about 18,000.[[156]](#cite_note-156)

### Banking[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Birmingham_skyscrapers_Nov_2011.jpg)[Regions-Harbert Plaza](/wiki/Regions-Harbert_Plaza), [Regions Center](/wiki/Regions_Center_(Birmingham)), and [Wells Fargo Tower](/wiki/Wells_Fargo_Tower_(Birmingham)) in Birmingham's financial district.

Alabama has the headquarters of [Regions Financial Corporation](/wiki/Regions_Financial_Corporation), [BBVA Compass](/wiki/BBVA_Compass), [Superior Bancorp](/wiki/Superior_Bancorp) and the former [Colonial Bancgroup](/wiki/Colonial_Bancgroup). Birmingham-based Compass Banchshares was acquired by Spanish-based [BBVA](/wiki/BBVA) in September 2007, although the headquarters of BBVA Compass remains in Birmingham. In November 2006, Regions Financial completed its merger with [AmSouth Bancorporation](/wiki/AmSouth_Bancorporation), which was also headquartered in Birmingham. [SouthTrust Corporation](/wiki/SouthTrust_Corporation), another large bank headquartered in Birmingham, was acquired by [Wachovia](/wiki/Wachovia) in 2004 for $14.3 billion.

The city still has major operations for Wachovia and its now post-operating bank [Wells Fargo](/wiki/Wells_Fargo), which includes a regional headquarters, an operations center campus and a $400 million data center. Nearly a dozen smaller banks are also headquartered in the Birmingham, such as Superior Bancorp, [ServisFirst](/wiki/ServisFirst) and New South Federal Savings Bank. Birmingham also serves as the headquarters for several large investment management companies, including [Harbert Management Corporation](/wiki/Harbert_Management_Corporation).

### Electronics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

Telecommunications provider [AT&T](/wiki/AT&T_Inc.), formerly [BellSouth](/wiki/BellSouth), has a major presence in Alabama with several large offices in Birmingham. The company has over 6,000 employees and more than 1,200 contract employees.

Many commercial technology companies are headquartered in Huntsville, such as the network access company [ADTRAN](/wiki/ADTRAN), computer graphics company [Intergraph](/wiki/Intergraph), design and manufacturer of IT infrastructure [Avocent](/wiki/Avocent), and telecommunications provider [Deltacom](/wiki/Deltacom). [Cinram](/wiki/Cinram) manufactures and distributes 20th Century Fox DVDs and Blu-ray Discs out of their Huntsville plant.

### Construction[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

Rust International has grown to include [Brasfield & Gorrie](/wiki/Brasfield_&_Gorrie), [BE&K](/wiki/BE&K), [Hoar Construction](/wiki/Hoar_Construction) and [B.L. Harbert International](/wiki/B.L._Harbert_International), which all routinely are included in the Engineering News-Record lists of top design, international construction, and engineering firms. (Rust International was acquired in 2000 by [Washington Group International](/wiki/Washington_Group_International), which was in turn acquired by San-Francisco based [URS Corporation](/wiki/URS_Corporation) in 2007.)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Law and government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

### State government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Alabama_Capitol_Building.jpg) [State Capitol Building](/wiki/Alabama_State_Capitol) in Montgomery, completed in 1851 [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The foundational document for Alabama's government is the [Alabama Constitution](/wiki/Alabama_Constitution), which was ratified in 1901. At almost 800 amendments and 310,000 words, it is by some accounts the world's longest constitution and is roughly forty times the length of the [United States Constitution](/wiki/United_States_Constitution).[[157]](#cite_note-157)[[158]](#cite_note-158)[[159]](#cite_note-159)[[160]](#cite_note-160) There has been a significant movement to rewrite and modernize Alabama's constitution.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Critics suggest that Alabama's constitution highly centralizes power in Montgomery and leaves practically no power in local hands. Most counties do not have home rule. Any policy changes proposed around the state must be approved by the entire Alabama legislature and, frequently, by state referendum. One criticism of the current constitution claims that its complexity and length intentionally codify segregation and racism.

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Ala_Supreme_Court_Building_Feb_2012_01.jpg) [Alabama Judicial Building](/wiki/Alabama_Judicial_Building) in Montgomery. It houses the [Alabama Supreme Court](/wiki/Alabama_Supreme_Court), [Alabama Court of Civil Appeals](/wiki/Alabama_Court_of_Civil_Appeals), and [Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals](/wiki/Alabama_Court_of_Criminal_Appeals).

Alabama's government is divided into three coequal branches. The [legislative branch](/wiki/Legislative_branch) is the [Alabama Legislature](/wiki/Alabama_Legislature), a [bicameral](/wiki/Bicameral) assembly composed of the [Alabama House of Representatives](/wiki/Alabama_House_of_Representatives), with 105 members, and the [Alabama Senate](/wiki/Alabama_Senate), with 35 members. The Legislature is responsible for writing, debating, passing, or defeating state legislation. The [Republican Party](/wiki/United_States_Republican_Party) currently holds a majority in both houses of the [Legislature](/wiki/Alabama_Legislature). The Legislature has the power to override a gubernatorial veto by a simple majority (most state Legislatures require a two-thirds majority to override a veto).

Until 1964, the state elected state senators by county, with one per county. It had not redistricted congressional districts since passage of its constitution in 1901; as a result, urbanized areas were grossly underrepresented. It had not changed legislative districts to reflect the decennial censuses, either. In [*Reynolds v. Sims*](/wiki/Reynolds_v._Sims) (1964), the US Supreme Court implemented the principle of "[one man, one vote](/wiki/One_man,_one_vote)", ruling that congressional districts had to be reapportioned based on censuses (as the state already had in its constitution but had not implemented.) Further, it ruled that both houses of bicameral state legislatures had to be apportioned by population, as there was no constitutional basis for states to have geographically based systems. At that time, Alabama and many other states had to change their legislative districting, as many across the country had systems that underrepresented urban areas and districts. This had caused decades of underinvestment in such areas. For instance, Birmingham and Jefferson County taxes had supplied one-third of the state budget, but Jefferson County received only 1/67th of state services in funding. Through the legislative delegations, the Alabama legislature kept control of county governments.

The [executive branch](/wiki/Executive_branch) is responsible for the execution and oversight of laws. It is headed by the [Governor of Alabama](/wiki/Governor_of_Alabama). Other members of executive branch include the cabinet, the [Attorney General of Alabama](/wiki/Attorney_General_of_Alabama), the [Alabama Secretary of State](/wiki/Alabama_Secretary_of_State), the [Alabama State Treasurer](/wiki/Alabama_State_Treasurer), and the [State Auditor of Alabama](/wiki/State_Auditor_of_Alabama). The current [governor](/wiki/Governor_of_Alabama) of the state is [Republican](/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)) [Robert Bentley](/wiki/Robert_J._Bentley). The [lieutenant governor](/wiki/List_of_Lieutenant_Governors_of_Alabama) is Republican [Kay Ivey](/wiki/Kay_Ivey).

The [judicial branch](/wiki/Judiciary) is responsible for interpreting the [Constitution](/wiki/Alabama_Constitution) and applying the law in state criminal and civil cases. The [state's highest court](/wiki/State_supreme_court) is the [Supreme Court of Alabama](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Alabama). Alabama uses partisan elections to choose judges, and since the 1980s judicial campaigns have become increasingly politicized.[[162]](#cite_note-162) The current [chief justice](/wiki/Chief_justice) of the Alabama Supreme Court is Republican [Roy Moore](/wiki/Roy_Moore). All sitting justices on the Alabama Supreme Court are members of the Republican Party. There are two intermediate [appellate courts](/wiki/Appellate_court), the Court of Civil Appeals and the Court of Criminal Appeals, and four [trial courts](/wiki/Trial_court): the circuit court (trial court of general jurisdiction), and the district, probate, and municipal courts.[[162]](#cite_note-162) The members of the Legislature take office immediately after the November elections. Statewide officials such as the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and other constitutional officers take office the following January.[[163]](#cite_note-163)

### Taxes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

Alabama levies a 2, 4, or 5 percent [personal income tax](/wiki/State_income_tax), depending upon the amount earned and filing status. Taxpayers are allowed to deduct their [federal income tax](/wiki/Income_tax_in_the_United_States) from their Alabama state tax, and can do so even if taking the [standard deduction](/wiki/Standard_deduction). Taxpayers who file itemized deductions are also allowed to deduct the [Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax](/wiki/Federal_Insurance_Contributions_Act_tax) (Social Security and Medicare tax).

The state's general sales tax rate is 4%.[[164]](#cite_note-164) Sales tax rates for cities and counties are also added to purchases.[[165]](#cite_note-165) For example, the total sales tax rate in Mobile is 10% and there is an additional restaurant tax of 1%, which means that a diner in Mobile would pay an 11% tax on a meal. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), sales and excise taxes in Alabama account for 51% of all state and local revenue, compared with an average of about 36% nationwide.[[166]](#cite_note-166) Alabama is one of seven states that levy a tax on food at the same rate as other goods, and one of two states (the other being neighboring Mississippi) which fully taxes groceries without any offsetting relief for low-income families. (Most states exempt groceries from sales tax or apply a lower tax rate.)[[167]](#cite_note-167) Alabama's income tax on poor working families is among the highest in the United States.[[166]](#cite_note-166) Alabama is the only state that levies income tax on a family of four with income as low as $4,600, which is barely one-quarter of the federal poverty line.[[166]](#cite_note-166) Alabama's threshold is the lowest among the 41 states and the District of Columbia with income taxes.[[166]](#cite_note-166) The corporate income tax rate is currently 6.5%. The overall federal, state, and local tax burden in Alabama ranks the state as the second least tax-burdened state in the country.[[168]](#cite_note-168) [Property taxes](/wiki/Property_tax) are the lowest in the U.S. The current state constitution requires a voter referendum to raise property taxes.

Since Alabama's tax structure largely depends on consumer spending, it is subject to high variable budget structure. For example, in 2003 Alabama had an annual budget deficit as high as $670 million.

### County and Local governments[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Alabama County Labelled Map](/wiki/Template:Alabama_County_Labelled_Map) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

Alabama has 67 [counties](/wiki/County_(United_States)). Each county has its own elected legislative branch, usually called the county commission. It also has limited executive authority in the county. Because of the constraints of the [Alabama Constitution](/wiki/Alabama_Constitution), only seven counties (Jefferson, Lee, Mobile, Madison, Montgomery, Shelby, and Tuscaloosa) in the state have limited [home rule](/wiki/Home_rule). Instead, most counties in the state must lobby the Local Legislation Committee of the state legislature to get simple local policies approved, ranging from waste disposal to land use zoning. The cumbersome process results in local jurisdictions being unable to manage their problems, and the state legislators are buried in local county issues.

The state legislature has retained power over local governments by refusing to pass a constitutional amendment establishing [home rule](/wiki/Home_rule) for counties, as recommended by the 1973 Alabama Constitutional Commission.[[169]](#cite_note-169) Legislative delegations retain certain powers over each county. United States Supreme Court decisions in [*Baker v. Carr*](/wiki/Baker_v._Carr) (1964) required that both houses have districts established on the basis of population, and redistricted after each census, in order to implement the principle of "one man, one vote". Before that, each county was represented by one state senator, leading to underrepresentation in the state senate for more urbanized, populous counties.

"The lack of home rule for counties in Alabama has resulted in the proliferation of local legislation permitting counties to do things not authorized by the state constitution. Alabama's constitution has been amended more than 700 times, and almost one-third of the amendments are local in nature, applying to only one county or city. A significant part of each legislative session is spent on local legislation, taking away time and attention of legislators from issues of statewide importance."[[169]](#cite_note-169) On November 9, 2011, Jefferson County, which was $4 billion in debt at the time, declared bankruptcy. This is the second-largest [Chapter 9](/wiki/Chapter_9,_Title_11,_United_States_Code) (municipal) bankruptcy in the United States, after the [Detroit bankruptcy](/wiki/Detroit_bankruptcy). Jefferson County emerged from bankruptcy in December 2013 following the approval of a bankruptcy plan by the [United States bankruptcy court](/wiki/United_States_bankruptcy_court) for the [Northern District of Alabama](/wiki/United_States_District_Court_for_the_Northern_District_of_Alabama).[[170]](#cite_note-170)[[171]](#cite_note-171)[[172]](#cite_note-172) Alabama is an [alcoholic beverage control state](/wiki/Alcoholic_beverage_control_state), meaning that the state government holds a monopoly on the sale of alcohol. The [Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board](/wiki/Alabama_Alcoholic_Beverage_Control_Board) controls the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages in the state. Twenty-five of the 67 counties are "[dry counties](/wiki/Dry_county)" which ban the sale of alcohol, and there are many dry municipalities even in counties which permit alcohol sales.[[173]](#cite_note-173)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **County** | **Population  (2010 Census)** | **Seat** | **Largest city** |
| 1 | [Jefferson](/wiki/Jefferson_County,_Alabama) | 658,466 | [Birmingham](/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama) | Birmingham |
| 2 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile_County,_Alabama) | 412,992 | [Mobile](/wiki/Mobile,_Alabama) | Mobile |
| 3 | [Madison](/wiki/Madison_County,_Alabama) | 334,811 | [Huntsville](/wiki/Huntsville,_Alabama) | Huntsville |
| 4 | [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery_County,_Alabama) | 229,363 | [Montgomery](/wiki/Montgomery,_Alabama) | Montgomery |
| 5 | [Shelby](/wiki/Shelby_County,_Alabama) | 195,085 | [Columbiana](/wiki/Columbiana,_Alabama) | [Hoover](/wiki/Hoover,_Alabama) (part)  [Alabaster](/wiki/Alabaster,_Alabama) |
| 6 | [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa_County,_Alabama) | 194,656 | [Tuscaloosa](/wiki/Tuscaloosa,_Alabama) | Tuscaloosa |
| 7 | [Baldwin](/wiki/Baldwin_County,_Alabama) | 182,265 | [Bay Minette](/wiki/Bay_Minette,_Alabama) | [Daphne](/wiki/Daphne,_Alabama) |
| 8 | [Lee](/wiki/Lee_County,_Alabama) | 140,247 | [Opelika](/wiki/Opelika,_Alabama) | [Auburn](/wiki/Auburn,_Alabama) |
| 9 | [Morgan](/wiki/Morgan_County,_Alabama) | 119,490 | [Decatur](/wiki/Decatur,_Alabama) | Decatur |
| 10 | [Calhoun](/wiki/Calhoun_County,_Alabama) | 118,572 | [Anniston](/wiki/Anniston,_Alabama) | Anniston |
| 11 | [Etowah](/wiki/Etowah_County,_Alabama) | 104,303 | [Gadsden](/wiki/Gadsden,_Alabama) | Gadsden |
| 12 | [Houston](/wiki/Houston_County,_Alabama) | 101,547 | [Dothan](/wiki/Dothan,_Alabama) | Dothan |
| 13 | [Marshall](/wiki/Marshall_County,_Alabama) | 93,019 | [Guntersville](/wiki/Guntersville,_Alabama) | [Albertville](/wiki/Albertville,_Alabama) |
| 14 | [Lauderdale](/wiki/Lauderdale_County,_Alabama) | 92,709 | [Florence](/wiki/Florence,_Alabama) | Florence |
| 15 | [St. Clair](/wiki/St._Clair_County,_Alabama) | 83,593 | [Ashville](/wiki/Ashville,_Alabama) &  [Pell City](/wiki/Pell_City,_Alabama) | Pell City |

### Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[thumb|upright=0.75|](/wiki/File:Robert_Bentley.jpg)[Robert J. Bentley](/wiki/Robert_J._Bentley), governor since January 17, 2011 [thumb|upright=0.75|](/wiki/File:Kay_Ivey.jpg)[Kay Ivey](/wiki/Kay_Ivey), lieutenant governor

During [Reconstruction](/wiki/Reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States) following the [American Civil War](/wiki/American_Civil_War), Alabama was occupied by federal troops of the [Third Military District](/wiki/Third_Military_District) under [General John Pope](/wiki/John_Pope_(military_officer)). In 1874, the political coalition of white Democrats known as the [Redeemers](/wiki/Redeemers) took control of the state government from the Republicans, in part by suppressing the African-American vote through violence, fraud and intimidation.

After 1890, a coalition of White Democratic politicians passed laws to [segregate](/wiki/Racial_segregation) and disenfranchise African American residents, a process completed in provisions of the 1901 constitution. Provisions which disenfranchised African Americans resulted in excluding many poor Whites. By 1941 more Whites than African Americans had been disenfranchised: 600,000 to 520,000. The total effects were greater on the African-American community, as almost all of its citizens were disfranchised and relegated to separate and unequal treatment under the law.

From 1901 through the 1960s, the state did not redraw election districts as population grew and shifted within the state during urbanization and industrialization of certain areas. As counties were the basis of election districts, the result was a rural minority that dominated state politics through nearly three-quarters of the century, until a series of federal court cases required redistricting in 1972 to meet equal representation.

Alabama state politics gained nationwide and international attention in the 1950s and 1960s during the [American Civil Rights Movement](/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1955–1968)), when Whites bureaucratically, and at times, violently resisted protests for electoral and social reform. Democrat [George Wallace](/wiki/George_Wallace), the state's only four-term governor, was a controversial figure who vowed to maintain segregation. Only after passage of the Federal [Civil Rights Act of 1964](/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964)[[53]](#cite_note-53) and [Voting Rights Act](/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act) of 1965 did African Americans regain the ability to exercise suffrage, among other civil rights. In many jurisdictions, they continued to be excluded from representation by [at-large](/wiki/At-large) electoral systems, which allowed the majority of the population to dominate elections. Some changes at the county level have occurred following court challenges to establish [single-member districts](/wiki/Single-member_districts) that enable a more diverse representation among county boards.

In 2007, the [Alabama Legislature](/wiki/Alabama_Legislature) passed, and Republican Governor [Bob Riley](/wiki/Bob_Riley) signed a resolution expressing "profound regret" over slavery and its lingering impact. In a symbolic ceremony, the bill was signed in the [Alabama State Capitol](/wiki/Alabama_State_Capitol), which housed Congress of the [Confederate States of America](/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America).[[174]](#cite_note-174) In 2010, Republicans won control of both houses of the legislature for the first time in 136 years, after a nearly complete realignment of political parties, who represent different visions in the 21st century.

### Elections[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

#### State elections[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

With the [disfranchisement of African Americans](/wiki/Disfranchisement_after_Reconstruction_era) in 1901, the state became part of the "[Solid South](/wiki/Solid_South)", a system in which the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) operated as effectively the only viable political party in every Southern state. For nearly 100 years, local and state elections in Alabama were decided in the Democratic Party [primary](/wiki/Primary_election), with generally only token [Republican](/wiki/United_States_Republican_Party) challengers running in the General Election. Since the mid to late-20th century, however, there has been a realignment among the two major political parties, and white conservatives started shifting to the Republican Party. In Alabama, majority-white districts are now expected to regularly elect Republican candidates to federal, state and local office.

Members of the nine seats on the [Alabama Supreme Court](/wiki/Alabama_Supreme_Court)[[175]](#cite_note-175) and all ten seats on the state appellate courts are elected to office. Until 1994, no Republicans held any of the court seats. In that general election, the then-incumbent Chief Justice of Alabama, [Ernest C. Hornsby](/wiki/Ernest_C._Hornsby), refused to leave office after losing the election by approximately 3,000 votes to Republican [Perry O. Hooper, Sr.](/wiki/Perry_O._Hooper,_Sr.). Hornsby sued Alabama and defiantly remained in office for nearly a year before finally giving up the seat after losing in court. This ultimately led to a collapse of support for Democrats at the ballot box in the next three or four election cycles. The Democrats lost the last of the nineteen court seats in August 2011 with the resignation of the last Democrat on the bench.

In the early 21st century, Republicans hold all seven of the [statewide elected executive](/wiki/Political_party_strength_in_Alabama) branch offices. Republicans hold six of the eight elected seats on the [Alabama State Board of Education](/wiki/Alabama_State_Board_of_Education). In 2010, Republicans took large majorities of both chambers of the state legislature, giving them control of that body for the first time in 136 years. The last remaining statewide Democrat, who served on the Alabama Public Service Commission was defeated in 2012.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177)[[178]](#cite_note-178) Only two Republican Lieutenant Governors have been elected since the end of Reconstruction, when Republicans generally represented Reconstruction government, including the newly emancipated [freedmen](/wiki/Freedmen) who had gained the franchise. The two GOP Lt. Governors were Steve Windom (1999-2003) and the current Lt. Governor, [Kay Ivey](/wiki/Kay_Ivey), who was elected in 2010 and re-elected in 2014.

#### Local elections[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

Many local offices (County Commissioners, Boards of Education, Tax Assessors, Tax Collectors, etc.) in the state are still held by Democrats. Many rural counties have voters who are majority Democrats, resulting in local elections being decided in the Democratic primary. Similarly many metropolitan and suburban counties are majority-Republican and elections are effectively decided in the Republican Primary, although there are exceptions.[[179]](#cite_note-179)[[180]](#cite_note-180) Alabama's 67 County Sheriffs are elected in partisan, [at-large](/wiki/At-large) races, and Democrats still retain the narrow majority of those posts. The current split is 35 [Democrats](/wiki/Alabama_Democratic_Party), 31 [Republicans](/wiki/Alabama_Republican_Party), and one Independent Fayette.[[181]](#cite_note-181) However, most of the Democratic sheriffs preside over rural and less populated counties. The majority of Republican sheriffs have been elected in the more urban/suburban and heavily populated counties.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the state of Alabama has one female sheriff, in [Morgan County, Alabama](/wiki/Morgan_County,_Alabama), and ten African-American sheriffs.[[181]](#cite_note-181)

#### Federal elections[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

The state's two [U.S. senators](/wiki/United_States_Senate) are [Jefferson B. Sessions III](/wiki/Jeff_Sessions) and [Richard C. Shelby](/wiki/Richard_Shelby), both Republicans. Shelby was originally elected to the Senate as a Democrat in 1986 and re-elected in 1992, but switched parties immediately following the November 1994 general election.

In the [U.S. House of Representatives](/wiki/U.S._House_of_Representatives), the state is represented by seven members, six of whom are Republicans: ([Bradley Byrne](/wiki/Bradley_Byrne), [Mike D. Rogers](/wiki/Mike_D._Rogers), [Robert Aderholt](/wiki/Robert_Aderholt), [Morris J. Brooks](/wiki/Morris_J._Brooks), [Martha Roby](/wiki/Martha_Roby), and [Gary Palmer](/wiki/Gary_Palmer_(politician))) and one Democrat: [Terri Sewell](/wiki/Terri_Sewell). [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further)

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Primary and secondary education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Vestavia_Hills_High_School.jpg)[Vestavia Hills High School](/wiki/Vestavia_Hills_High_School) in the suburbs of Birmingham

Public primary and secondary education in Alabama is under the purview of the [Alabama State Board of Education](/wiki/Alabama_State_Board_of_Education) as well as local oversight by 67 county school boards and 60 city boards of education. Together, 1,496 individual schools provide education for 744,637 elementary and secondary students.[[182]](#cite_note-182) Public school funding is appropriated through the Alabama Legislature through the Education Trust Fund. In FY 2006–2007, Alabama appropriated $3,775,163,578 for primary and secondary education. That represented an increase of $444,736,387 over the previous fiscal year. In 2007, over 82 percent of schools made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward student proficiency under the National [No Child Left Behind](/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind) law, using measures determined by the state of Alabama.

While Alabama's public education system has improved in recent decades, it lags behind in achievement compared to other states. According to U.S. Census data, Alabama's high school graduation rate—75%—is the fourth lowest in the U.S. (after Kentucky, Louisiana and Mississippi).[[183]](#cite_note-183)