

Alabama Communities of Excellence Selects Class of 2024

Daleville and Fairfield Join the ACE Program



Lori Johns • Communications Director • ALM

The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program selected the cities of Daleville and Fairfield, on August 29, 2024, to begin the designation process of joining the historic ACE program.

ACE encouraged mayors of eligible Alabama cities, those with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000, to apply for the program from February to May. The ACE Advisory Board then reviewed and made their recommendations for selection to the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM). ALM adopted the ACE program as one of its membership service programs in 2022.

“After thoroughly reviewing all applications, we are thrilled to welcome Daleville and Fairfield to the ACE family,” ALM Executive Director Greg Cochran said. “We are looking forward to assisting both communities with areas they are looking to improve and help them fulfill their visions of creating sustainable quality of life services and programs for their citizens.”

★ ACE was established in 2002 as a 501(c)(3) organization to provide technical assistance to select smaller communities in an effort to strengthen long-term economic success. Through a comprehensive, three-phase approach, ACE uses the collective expertise of its partner organizations - ranging from state agencies



The Daleville Lovely Touch Garden Club places memorial flags around the Daleville municipal complex for Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year to honor local veterans who gave their all. The UH-1 on display at the Daleville Cultural and Convention Center was flown in combat during the Vietnam War. Photo Credit: Councilmember Kevin Turley

The city of Fairfield celebrated the opening of a new playground, located directly across from Restoration Academy, on Nov. 6, 2023. The playground features two parts, a tot-lot and an area for older children, with multiple slides, swings and climbing equipment for all ages. Photo Credit: Goodwyn Mills Cawood

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Announces Class of 2024



Daleville and Fairfield join
the ACE Program!





and associations to banks, utilities, universities and others - to foster unique community development programs.

As participants of the 2024 ACE Class, Daleville and Fairfield will start Phase I of the program this fall. Phase I focuses on community assessment, while Phase II concentrates on leadership development and strategic planning. Phase III wraps up the program with comprehensive planning and implementing the strategic plan.

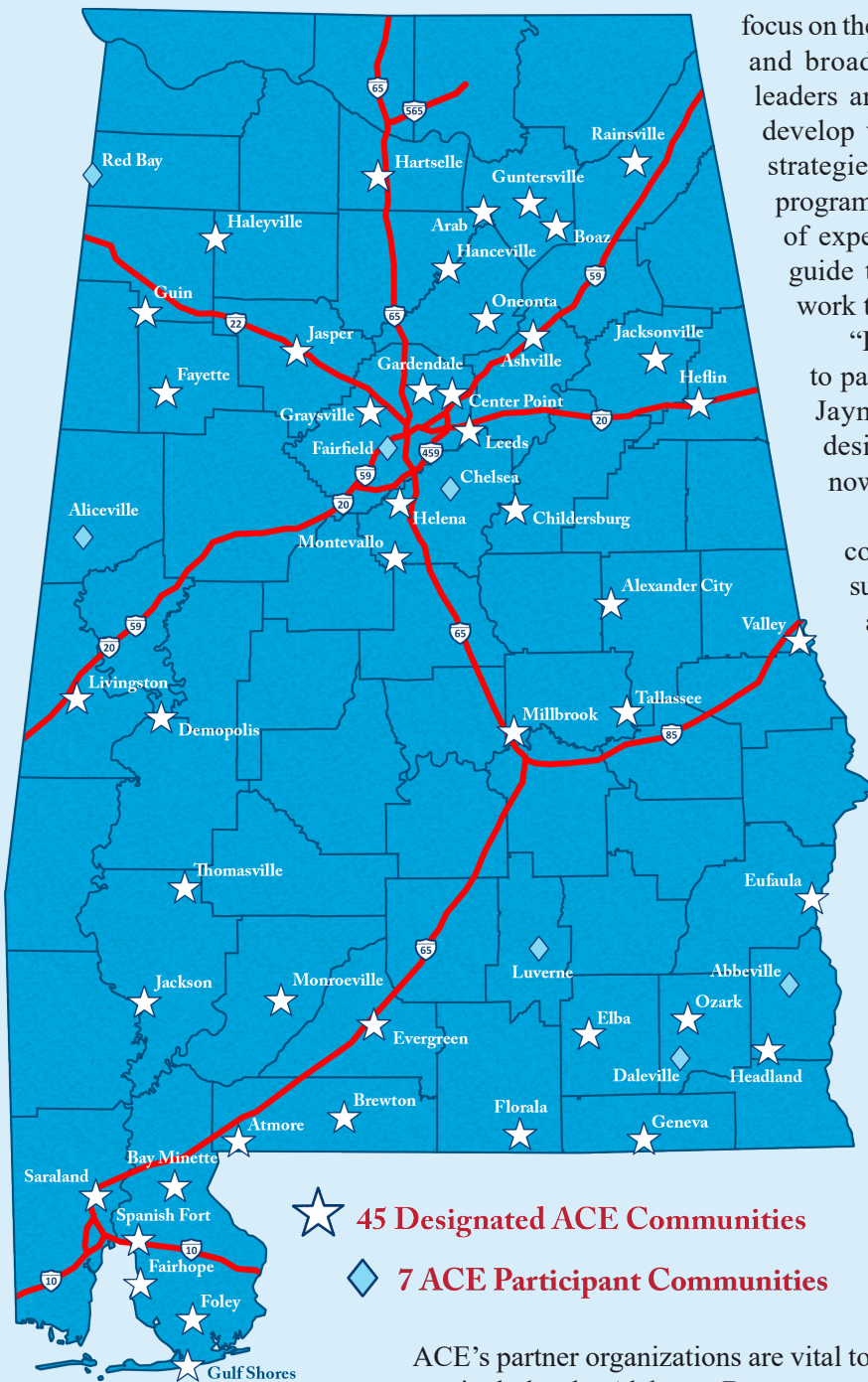
ACE Program Coordinator Mary Jackson, who oversees the program, said, “ACE helps build foundational elements by recruiting citizens to participate in local strategic planning meetings; building local leaders organically; establishing a sense of pride; and most importantly assisting officials to develop a vision toward moving their community forward. How do you know where you’re going without having a plan to get there?”

For 22 years, ACE has provided the resources and knowledge for small communities across the state to

Top: Miles College's football field, the Albert J. Sloan - Alumni Stadium, is located in Fairfield, Alabama. The stadium is home to the Miles College Golden Bears. Photo Credit: Miles College

Bottom: Speakers at the 2024 Daleville Veterans Day program pictured left to right: Reverend John Logsdon of BRAVE and AMVETS, Elaine McLeod of the American Legion, Councilmember Kevin Turley of AMVETS, Charlie Wigglesworth of VFW, Wayne Wigglesworth of the U.S. Veterans Motorcycle Club and VFW, and LTC TJ Menn Commander of the 1-223rd Aviation Regiment. Daleville is at the main gate of the Gateway of Army Aviation, Fort Novosel. Photo Credit: Skye Turley





★ 45 Designated ACE Communities
 ◆ 7 ACE Participant Communities

focus on the importance of planning, leadership development and broad-based community engagement. Community leaders are engaged through training and workshops to develop vision and mission statements, implementation strategies and a sustainable leadership development program. ACE assigns each community with a team of experts from the ACE Associates Council that guide them with an implementation strategy as they work through the program.

“I am grateful the city of Daleville has been selected to participate in the ACE program,” Daleville Mayor Jayme Stayton said. “I believe earning the ACE designation will positively impact our community now and in the years to come.”

ACE strives to guarantee widespread geographic coverage across the state. Forty-five cities have successfully completed the program to be designated as Alabama Communities of Excellence; they include: Alexander City, Arab, Ashville, Atmore, Bay Minette, Boaz, Brewton, Center Point, Childersburg, Demopolis, Elba, Eufaula, Evergreen, Fairhope, Fayette, Florala, Foley, Gardendale, Geneva, Graysville, Guin, Gulf Shores, Guntersville, Haleyville, Hanceville, Hartselle, Headland, Heflin, Helena, Jackson, Jacksonville, Jasper, Leeds, Livingston, Millbrook, Monroeville, Montevallo, Oneonta, Ozark, Rainsville, Saraland, Spanish Fort, Tallassee, Thomasville, and Valley. Daleville and Fairfield will join Abbeville, Aliceville, Chelsea, Luverne and Red Bay, who are currently working through the phases of the program.

“The city of Fairfield is honored to be selected for the ACE program,” Fairfield Mayor Eddie Penny said. “The program will help city leaders develop skills to boost economic development and so much more.”

ACE’s partner organizations are vital to the success of the program. The program’s 2024 partners include: the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association, Alabama Municipal Electric Authority, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Small Business Development Center Network, Auburn University – Government and Economic Development Institute, Goodwyn Mills Cawood, Spire, The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and the University of West Alabama. ■



The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) Program was created to help smaller communities (population 2,000 to 18,000) to Plan, Grow and Prosper. For more information about the ACE program, scan this QR code.