



NEWS RELEASE

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New report looks at Alabama's low-wage economy and its impact on affordable housing

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP) today released a new report that finds nearly half of Alabama renters unable to afford appropriate housing. The state's low wage structure is largely to blame, the report says.

“The current housing crisis is in the news every day, but this report reflects the fact that for many Alabama families the crisis in affordable housing has been a long-standing issue,” said ACPP executive director Kimble Forrister. The report, titled *Locked Out: Low Wages and Affordable Housing in Alabama*, relies on income data from the U.S. Census and housing cost information from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It shows that 41 percent of the state's half-million renters pay housing costs that exceed 30 percent of available income, the maximum HUD considers “affordable.”

The Alabama housing wage – the hourly pay required to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment – reached \$11.44 in 2008. “Thousands of hard-working Alabamians simply do not have an income to provide for a decent place to live,” said Forrister. “Low-income families and people with disabilities face numerous obstacles in finding housing that is appropriate to their needs and within their budget.”

While Alabama has traditionally regarded housing policy as a federal responsibility, Forrister pointed out that the Legislature in the last regular session created the Interim Alabama Housing Trust Fund Task Force. “Housing trust funds have a proven track record over the past twenty-five years as a valuable tool in addressing housing needs. Thirty-eight states and hundreds of municipal and county governments have used trust funds to create sustainable funding for affordable housing programs. The creation of Alabama's task force is an important first step in exploring new approaches to housing adequacy.”

To read the full the *Locked Out* report, visit www.arisecitizens.org/Lockedout.html.

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Arise Citizens' Policy Project is a nonprofit statewide citizens' organization comprising 152 congregations and community groups dedicated to improving the lives of low-income Alabamians.