

Associational Missions and Church Planting

God is good and has blessed us in so many ways this past year. We have seen growth in our Deaf ministries across the state. We now have a variety of Deaf conferences that are training, empowering, and calling Deaf people not only in the Alabama Deaf communities but the Deaf communities across the nation. English as a Second Language is allowing us to do international missions overseas and at home. The hunger for English has allowed us to share the gospel with speakers of 101 language groups represented in Alabama alone. Our church and community ministries are feeding many people through our food pantries. The need has grown immensely with all the challenges in our world, but God continues to meet those needs as He always has. To God be the glory!

The last year church planting/replanting has continued to grow and mature. One of the key components has been a dynamic coaching network that assists all new planters. Presently, we have 18 coaches who meet monthly with the plants, and eight are ready to be trained this month. With our growing Hispanic planter network, this spring, we did our first Spanish assessment for five new planters. This has helped us to raise a team of assessors and partners for this work. Fourteen new Hispanic planters were equipped in our cohort training, and this fall, half of them will be planting soon. Four Hispanic residents have entered our process with partners, and one of them has now moved to be our first Hispanic planter in Huntsville. This fall, an assessment and cohort in English and Spanish are already planned, as well as a train-the-trainer event. In total, today, there are more than 65 church planters who have been either assessed, trained, resourced, supported, gathered, coached, or invested back into the network.

Associations are at the forefront of ministering to the churches, and a healthy association is essential to have healthy churches. Serving our associations as your missionaries from the Alabama State Board of Missions is a privilege. Strategic Planning is an ongoing action that associations need to experience to stay effective in serving their churches. A new process developed for Alabama Baptist associations is ready to be used. SPARC, **S**trategic **P**lanning for **A**ssociations in **R**ural **C**ontexts, is the process title that takes a little less than a year from start to finish. If your association has not signed up for this opportunity, encourage your leadership team to discuss this possibility with your Associational Missionary Strategist.