



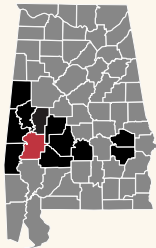
The Black Belt Bulletin

ISSUE 35 | MAY 20, 2024 | IMPACT ON HEALTH EDUCATION



SPOTLIGHT ON - MARENGO COUNTY -

Marengo County is located in west-central Alabama and is one of the 12 Black Belt counties serviced by BBCF. Although Demopolis is the largest city, Linden serves as the county seat.



MARENGO CO. HAS A TOTAL AREA OF **982** SQUARE MILES



The Choctaw people thrived in present day Marengo County until the 1816 Treaty of Fort Stephens forced them to relinquish their land. Two years later, the U.S. granted French settlers from Haiti (Whites who escaped the Black led rebellion in Haiti) four townships (92,000 acres) to grow grapes and olives (formally known as the Vine and Olive Colony). After meeting with minimal success, the settlers turned to cotton farming with the use of enslaved people, which was the economic base of Marengo County until the 1930's.



MARENGO CO. HAS A POPULATION OF **19.3K**

Marengo County's demographics and racial distribution include a population that is 52% Black and 47% White. In addition to Demopolis and Linden, other towns include Faunsdale, Providence, Thomaston, and Sweet Water. Among the largest employers in the area are the three school districts: Linden City, Demopolis City, and Marengo County with 10 schools total.

Today, Marengo County's primary agricultural output is grazing land, soybeans, timber, and catfish farming. Home to both the Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers, two important watersheds in the US, along with the 500+ acre Chickasaw State Park, Marengo County is a center of outdoor recreation, especially fishing and hunting.

The Black Belt Community Foundation actively engages with and supports the citizens of Marengo County through community and arts grants, among other programs. Those living in Marengo County can access the resources of the BBCF or donate to the organization through one of your local Community Associates.

Source: [encyclopediaofalabama.org](https://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org) (6/1/23)

BBCF MARENGO CO. COMMUNITY ASSOCIATES:

Ada Anderson-Davis, Audrey Burrell, Delores Cunningham, Tamika Dial, Willie Dillard, Odessa Head, Marstiner Jackson, Shirley McCaskey, Shirley Merriweather, Hattie Moore, Jesse Moore, Ernestine Mullen, Michelle Murdock, Ola M. Nixon, Toney Nixon, Edward Oates, Mary Phillips, Minnie Prince, Alex Roberson, Earlene Roberson, Thomas Rodgers, Mary Williams

BBCF MARENGO CO. 2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS:

(ARTS GRANTS & COMMUNITY GRANTS)

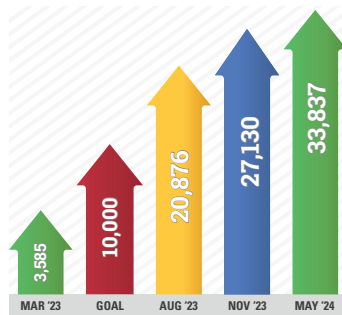
- Braxton Senior Care
- Eastern Star Baptist Church
- Friends of Theo Rattliff Activity Center
- Marengo BBCF Distribution
- Marengo Co. Foster Parent Assoc.
- Rural Business & Training Center

BBCF MARENGO CO. BOARD MEMBERS

Calida J. M. Henderson
Jefferson/Marengo County
Jesse J. Moore
Marengo County

Black Belt H.O.P.E. Program Celebrates Success

The Black Belt H.O.P.E. (Health, Outreach, Promotion and Education) Program was created through a grant awarded to BBCF in 2022 to provide a response to the COVID-19 epidemic. BBCF partnered with the Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Workforce Development Councils, and the UA School of Medicine (among others) to successfully engage with the community in COVID health education. The program design included the development of 25 community health workers (H.O.P.E. Ambassadors), forging new community partnerships to sustain health equity projects and activities to empower citizens of the Black Belt as healthcare self-advocates through education. Although the H.O.P.E. program will sunset May 31, 2024, the progress documented through data collection points to tremendous success. According to BBCF President Felecia Lucky, "health equity is vital to the citizens of the Black Belt. BBCF will continue to partner, educate, and engage with the community for many years beyond the life of this particular grant."



The graph above shows the number of residents surveyed over the course of the Black Belt H.O.P.E. Program.

In total, the H.O.P.E. Ambassadors surveyed **33,837** contacts with whom they shared vital and potentially life-saving information. Individual resident's responses indicated an 84% rate of satisfaction with the program. The H.O.P.E. program also forged **474** community partnerships, the key to sustaining and expanding health equity in the Black Belt (along with the development of the Black Belt Advisory Committee for Health Equity). Chris Spencer, BBCF Chief Community Engagement Officer stated, "BBCF will continue to address health equity through community engagement. We are currently looking at several opportunities to partner and promote community health advocates."



474
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



The H.O.P.E. program's culminating activity was the BBCF Health Equity Conference, held May 6 at the Carl C. Morgan Convention Center in Selma, AL. At the conference, community members engaged with physicians, counselors and other healthcare professionals. The primary topics included health equity, the importance of community health workers, mental health and telemedicine. The engaged audience was treated to speakers, table discussions, a community health workers' skit (performed by the H.O.P.E. Ambassadors) and lunch. President Lucky opened and closed the Health Equity Conference expressing "deep gratitude for the dedicated individuals that serve as H.O.P.E. Ambassadors, County Coordinators and the project leaders, Rev. Wendell Paris and Samantha Ledbetter."

Left: Collage of photos from the 2024 BBCF Health Equity Conference, includes group activities, a mental health panel discussion, and healthcare professionals checking blood pressure and performing blood glucose tests for participants at the conference.

Happy Birthday Head Start!

'Project Head Start' was launched in 1965 as a comprehensive child development program. Over the last six decades, it has served more than 39 million children and families. BBCF is proud to be a Head Start provider and support the #SchoolReadiness of our young students! #HappyBirthdayHeadStart!

