



# ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY

# 2024

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

# REPORT

**THE BULLDOG EFFECT:**  
From Normal to a New Norm  
of Innovation & Prosperity





# THE BULLDOG EFFECT:

**FROM NORMAL TO A NEW NORM  
OF INNOVATION & PROSPERITY**

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# THE BULLDOG EFFECT:

## FROM NORMAL TO A NEW NORM OF INNOVATION & PROSPERITY

### ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY 2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

The economic impact of Alabama A&M University (AAMU) on local and regional development powerfully uplifts the communities it serves, connecting its historic land-grant mission to the modern, innovative, and equitable growth of Alabama. Beyond the impressive economic and job creation numbers, the university's

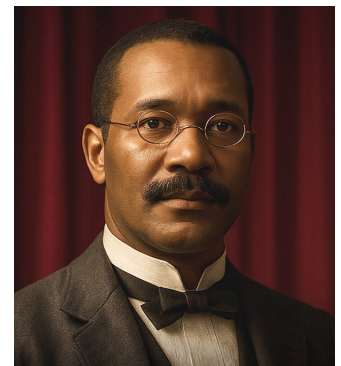
true story elevates individuals, empowers communities, and drives the state forward through education, research, and opportunity. For 150 years, AAMU has been an engine of opportunity, a catalyst for social mobility, and a cornerstone of economic vitality for the Tennessee Valley and the state of Alabama.

The economic footprint of AAMU is not measured in just dollars and cents, but in the ripple effect that begins on “The Hill” and spreads outward, transforming lives and communities. This is the story of the “Bulldog Effect,” the powerful and cascading impact of AAMU’s mission on the economic landscape. Based on its founding principles as a land-grant institution, AAMU is more than a campus—it is a powerful economic engine that generates hundreds of millions of dollars, thousands of jobs, and innovative research that directly benefits the Huntsville and North Alabama regions. The compelling narrative of AAMU’s economic impact can be told through its enduring legacy of service and innovation, the prosperity it creates for its graduates, and the deep roots it has built within the local community.

For generations, AAMU has been more than an education institution. It has been a crucible of opportunity. Founded by a former slave, Dr. William Hooper Councilll, in 1875, AAMU’s motto, “Service Is Sovereignty,” established its mission to empower its community from the start. This commitment to service is not merely a motto but a mission that has produced powerful economic outcomes. That foundation is the root of an economic story that has seen the university grow into a multi-million-dollar powerhouse and one of the Tennessee Valley’s largest employers. This is not just a story of growth, but of progress—expanding opportunity for those who have historically been denied access.



## INNOVATIVE RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS NORTH ALABAMA.



Dr. William Hooper Councilll



**\$738.42**  
**MILLION**  
ECONOMIC IMPACT



**935  
DEGREE  
AWARDEES**

In 2024, the total AAMU economic impact is **\$738.42 million**. The 2024 graduate lifetime earnings are estimated to be **\$2.73 billion**, with **935 degree awardees**. Amid growing scrutiny of higher education, as households question the value of degrees from academic institutions and new technological waves such as AI create uncertainty, this study underscores the critical role of AAMU in driving economic growth and regional progress while addressing societal challenges.



**\$2.73  
BILLION**  
GRADUATE  
LIFETIME  
EARNINGS

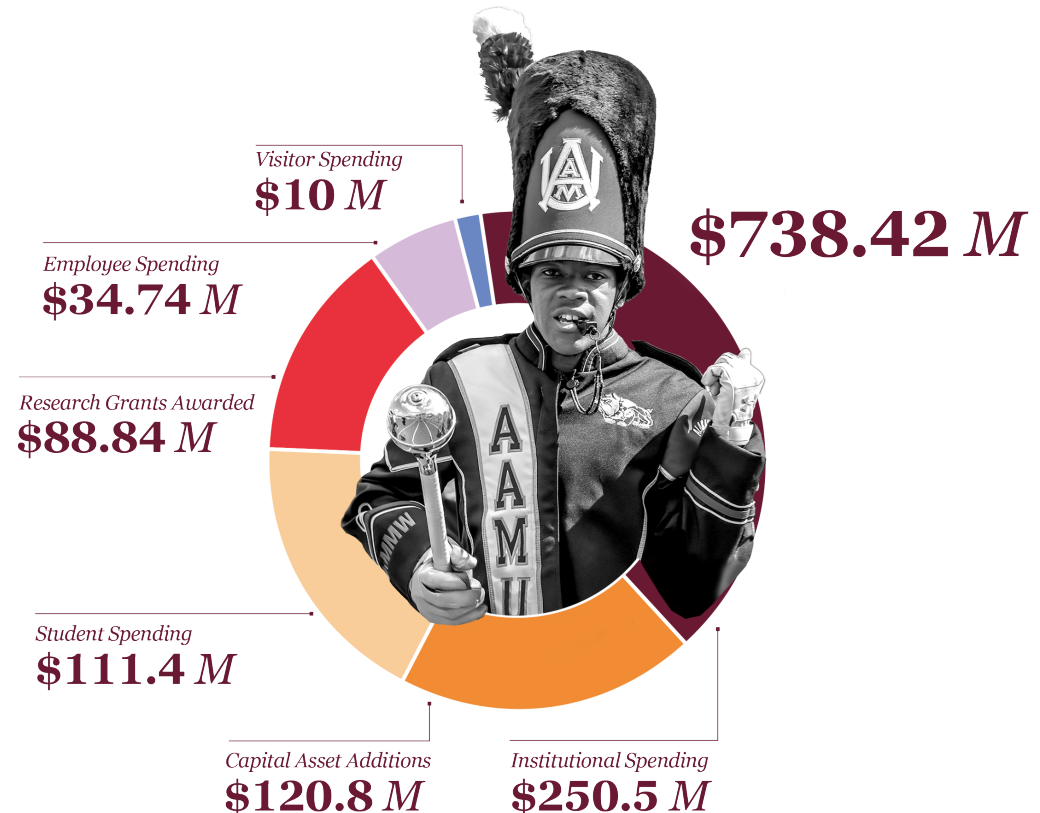
## AAMU ECONOMIC IMPACT BREAKDOWN

This report outlines the various activities and spending of AAMU on the local and regional economy (See page 13 for the estimation model).

**Direct impacts** are the immediate effects of AAMU expenditures, such as salaries paid to faculty and staff, purchases of research equipment, spending by students and visitors, and the construction of new campus facilities.

**Indirect impacts** occur when direct AAMU spending influences the supply chain. For example, AAMU food service vendors can buy ingredients from local farms, or construction contractors can source materials from Alabama suppliers.

## AAMU SPENDING & ECONOMIC IMPACT ESTIMATION RESULTS





**AAMU IS  
A TOP 20  
EMPLOYER  
IN MADISON  
COUNTY.**

**Induced impacts** arise from how employees, contractors, and other affiliated entities of AAMU spend their wages within the local economy. This includes many aspects, such as professors dining at restaurants in Huntsville, researchers buying homes in the area, or maintenance staff shopping at local retail stores.

**Dynamic impacts** are long-term effects resulting from graduates entering the workforce, the job opportunities created, and the research that drives innovation and economic growth.

Together, these layers of impact generate a multiplier effect, enhancing AAMU’s economic contribution throughout Alabama.

## **FUELING THE REGIONAL GROWTH THAT TRANSFORMS COMMUNITIES**

AAMU is not just educating the future workforce. It is a major economic driver right now. As a top 20 employer in Huntsville/Madison County, AAMU’s operational spending creates a multiplier effect that fuels economic activity throughout the region. The university’s economic influence creates a dynamic “ripple effect” felt far beyond its gates.

### **CATALYZING THE ECONOMIC ENGINE**

In 2024, AAMU had an annual operating revenue of **\$226.4 million** and a federal non-operating revenue of **\$24.1 million**. Each dollar the university spends generates positive economic benefits that flow through the community.



**\$226.4  
MILLION**  
ANNUAL OPERATING  
REVENUE

### **FUELING LOCAL JOB GROWTH & INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY**

AAMU supports thousands of on-campus and off-campus jobs (**2214 jobs** in 2024). This is a crucial function, as spending related with AAMU creates public and private sector jobs in the surrounding area. In 2024, AAMU supported **820 full-time employees** (of which 271 were instructional employees) with a **\$52.2 million** salary payment. As an employer, AAMU’s payroll directly contributes



**2214  
JOBS**

to local income when employees spend a portion of their earnings on locally produced goods and services. The 820 full-time employees contributed **\$34.74 million** to the local economy through direct spending. As AAMU employees and other economic activities create income, they generate tax revenue for local and state governments. For every job on campus, another 1.7 jobs (1,394) are created off campus, with a total economic value of **\$69.7 million**, demonstrating the university's crucial role in both the public and private sectors. Beyond direct payroll, AAMU education employees contribute to the local economy by strengthening the workforce and fostering innovation. AAMU employees contribute to the "supply side" of the economy by providing educated and skilled labor, thereby increasing the region's productivity and its ability to attract higher-paying jobs. AAMU faculty research and consulting contribute to the knowledge base of local businesses, igniting innovation and supporting the creation of new companies. By fostering a more educated labor market, AAMU increases wages for all workers in a region, including those without a college degree.

## TRANSFORMING FARM BUSINESSES

Since 1971, Cooperative Extension at Alabama A&M University, now known as the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, has delivered research-based knowledge that empowers Alabamians across North Alabama and beyond. Through its programs, small farmers and other consumers gain practical tools to enhance their operations and improve their quality of life. By adopting best management practices, small farmers (In 2024, the extension reached **3,415 farmers**) achieve healthier livestock and crops, reduce production costs, and attain greater economic returns for their families and communities.



**3,415**  
**FARMERS**



## ATTRACTING VISITORS THAT BOOST LOCAL COMMERCE

AAMU draws visitors for athletic games, campus events, and homecoming, injecting millions directly into the local economy. During events like homecoming, AAMU generates over **\$10 million** in economic activity for the City of Huntsville from alumni and visitors.

**ATHLETIC EVENTS** ► Throughout the year, athletic events draw fans across the region. Visitors attending games, whether football, basketball, or other sports, patronize local establishments for dining, lodging, and entertainment. In 2024, renovations to Louis Crews Stadium added to the game-day excitement, further boosting the potential for spectator spending.

**EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES** ► AAMU hosts and partners with various conferences and academic events that bring scholars and professionals to Huntsville. For example, AAMU collaborated with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on a program honoring Black inventors. Attendees of these events generate spending on travel, lodging, and meals.



**STUDENT & FAMILY ACTIVITIES** ► Parents and families of the **7,000+ students** at AAMU regularly visit the campus and the Huntsville area. Their visits for orientation, move-in days, and graduation provide a steady stream of revenue for local businesses.

**RESEARCH INITIATIVES** ► AAMU's status as a research institution attracts external partners and supports numerous grant-funded projects. The university's research foundation, AAMU RISE, executes government and private contracts, conducts research, and brings additional economic activities and visitors to the area.

**THE HOMECOMING HIGHLIGHT** ► For many, the most significant annual event on the AAMU calendar is Homecoming, a multi-day celebration that drives immense visitor spending and showcases Bulldog pride.

**A Financial Surge:** In 2024, the Homecoming festivities drove record-breaking fundraising, with over **\$2.4 million** in donations from alumni and supporters. While donations are distinct from tourist spending, the two are often intertwined. This financial support reflects the community engagement and enthusiasm fostered by events like Homecoming.

**Packed Stadium:** Game Day is the centerpiece of Homecoming, drawing a massive crowd of students, alumni, and fans to Louis Crews Stadium. In 2024, Homecoming attracted over **19,727 attendees**, generating a buzz that directly translated into dollars spent at local restaurants, hotels, and retail stores.

**City-wide Celebration:** Beyond the campus, Homecoming visitors fill local businesses throughout Huntsville. The impact spreads to alumni parties, family gatherings, and other events at venues across the city, such as the Stovehouse, a popular event space mentioned in the 2024 homecoming Recap. The overall visitor spending at AAMU contributes to the broader tourism and economic growth of Huntsville and Madison County, a major tourism hub in Alabama.

**A Tourism Powerhouse:** In 2024, Madison County generated over **\$2.4 billion** in tourism-related spending, with nearly **4 million visitors**. AAMU's events are a significant contributor to this vibrant tourism sector.

**Stimulating Job Creation:** The spending generated by AAMU visitors supports a wide range of jobs in the hospitality, food service, and entertainment industries. Tourism-related activities support thousands of jobs in Madison County, with AAMU-related events playing a significant role.

**AAMU  
VISITOR  
SPENDING  
ADDS TO  
MADISON  
COUNTY'S  
ECONOMIC  
GROWTH.**

**19,727  
ATTENDEES  
HOMECOMING**



## STUDENT SPENDING—A CRITICAL ECONOMIC DRIVER

Beyond the classroom, AAMU's vibrant student body is a powerful economic catalyst for the North Alabama region. Students' daily lives and purchases translate into significant financial contributions to the local economies of Huntsville and Madison County. In 2024, AAMU enrolled **7295 students** (of whom 6370 were undergraduates and 925 were graduate students). For 2024, AAMU students generated **\$111.4 million** in revenue for the local economy.



**7295**  
**STUDENTS**



**\$111.4**  
**MILLION**

**HOUSING & UTILITIES** ► for off-campus residents, student spending on housing provides income for local landlords and property management companies.

This also translates into increased revenue for utility providers, internet service providers, and local home furnishing stores.

**GROCERIES & DINING** ► Students rely on local grocery stores, specialty food markets, and convenience stores for their daily needs.

Off-campus dining, including quick-service restaurants, coffee shops, and fast-casual eateries, is a significant destination for students, directly boosting sales for local food establishments.

AAMU's on-campus credit union, Redstone Federal Credit Union, is a compelling detail that shows how student banking and financial activity are integrated with the local economy.

**RETAIL & PERSONAL SERVICES** ► Student purchases extend to retail, including clothes, electronics, and school supplies. Local retailers and shopping centers benefit from this sustained demand.

Students also spend money on personal services, such as hair care, barber shops, nail salons, and other specialty services, particularly from students who do not have a car to travel to distant businesses.

**TRANSPORTATION** ► Whether students own a car or rely on public transit, their transportation needs fuel the local economy. This includes spending on gas, auto maintenance and repair, ride-sharing services, and public bus fares.

**ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS** ► Student life includes spending time on entertainment, such as movie theaters, bowling alleys, and local music venues.

Major university events, such as homecoming, sporting events, and concerts, attract visiting students, alumni, and family members. This results in a massive influx of spending on hotels, restaurants, and retail, creating a significant economic boost for Huntsville.

# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

AAMU is intentionally building for the future, with long-term plans to achieve **Research Level II status**. AAMU has achieved record enrollment for three consecutive years, a powerful indicator of its rising reputation. The new construction directly responds to this unprecedented growth, ensuring that the infrastructure can support and enhance every student’s experience. In 2024, the university added **\$120.8 million** in capital assets.

## A PREMIER NATIONAL INSTITUTION

The **new Science Building**, additional **residential learning centers**, and focus on high-demand fields like cybersecurity and AI are all steppingstones toward establishing AAMU as a premier national institution. The new state-of-the-art Science Building will triple the instructional and laboratory capacity in biology, chemistry, and physics. This **\$82 million** investment serves as a beacon for the next generation of scientists and researchers, providing them with the advanced facilities necessary to conduct cutting-edge experiments and address the most pressing issues of the 21st century.

The new 93,000-square-foot **Student Amenities Building** will be a hub for student life and engagement. This **\$58 million** facility will provide a world-class student experience, featuring new dining options, collaborative spaces, and essential support services.



**\$120.8**  
**MILLION**  
CAPITAL ASSETS



# EDUCATING A WORKFORCE THAT ELEVATES THE ENTIRE REGION

AAMU’s story is one of transformation, particularly for underserved students. A significant portion of the student body receives financial aid, and a high percentage are the first in their families to attend college. By providing an accessible and affordable path to a degree, AAMU actively closes the wealth gap and builds generational prosperity. Its most profound impact is on the minds and careers of its graduates. The university unlocks its economic potential and strengthens the state’s workforce by equipping students with enhanced skills and leadership capabilities. AAMU creates a powerful economic and social mobility cycle by providing opportunities for underserved populations.



AAMU Civic Engagement Team, through a new Southern Poverty Law Center grant (\$100K), works to increase male voter registration & turnout.

**SERVICE IS  
SOVEREIGNTY**  
— BUILDS  
COMMUNITIES,  
EMPOWERS  
NEW LEADERS,  
AND CREATES  
A LEGACY OF  
EXCELLENCE.



**48.9%**  
**MORE**  
EARNINGS

The impact of an AAMU graduate extends far beyond their individual accomplishments, creating a powerful ripple effect of influence and excellence. They are living proof that “**Service is Sovereignty**” is more than a motto—it is a way of life that builds communities, empowers new leaders, and creates a legacy of excellence for generations to come. The AAMU story is not just about what graduates achieve. It is about the doors they open, the paths they forge, and the profound difference they make in the world.

## **LEADING IN CRITICAL FIELDS**

The university has a strong record of producing graduates in high-demand fields. AAMU is a national leader in producing African American STEM graduates, filling the talent pipeline for Huntsville’s high-tech sector. It ranks among the top HBCUs for graduating Black engineers and mathematicians and consistently graduates the largest number of minority STEM students in Alabama.

## **EMPOWERING THE WORKFORCE**

AAMU’s impact on its graduates is especially notable for those from lower-income backgrounds. An HBCU degree helps lift a higher percentage of students from the bottom of the income scale into the middle class than the national average. The university’s 2024 graduating class (935 students received their degrees, of whom 281 were graduate students) is projected to earn a collective \$2.73 billion in lifetime earnings—**48.9% more** than they would have without a degree. Individually, a single degree can translate into an additional \$1 million in income over a graduate’s career.

## **DEVELOPING YOUNG LEADERS**

Alabama Extension delivers 4-H programming to youth across the state, empowering the next generation of leaders (**4,128 youths** engaged in Alabama 4-H programs at AAMU in 2024) through hands-on learning and personal growth. As part of America’s largest youth development organization, 4-H prepares young people to lead in every facet of life. Through experiential learning, youth develop **STEM literacy**, explore careers in science and technology, and acquire essential soft skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity that are in high demand in today’s workforce. Many 4-H participants continue their educational journey at Alabama A&M University, advancing the spirit of leadership and innovation they gained through 4-H.

## **FORGING COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Bulldogs are present at all levels of society. For example, AAMU alum Mandela Barnes became the first African American Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, while others have gone on to become mayors, politicians, educators, entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, authors, artists, and business executives, including a Vice President at Microsoft.

# GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOR A HIGH-TECH FUTURE

Huntsville is a hub of technology and innovation, and AAMU is a key partner in its success. The university's specialized programs and advanced research directly contribute to the region's high-tech ecosystem. AAMU's intellectual capital drives innovation and solves real-world challenges across Alabama. AAMU has produced many scientists and engineers who work at institutions like NASA. From its origins as an agricultural and mechanical university, AAMU has evolved into a hub of innovation, applying its land-grant mission to modern challenges. Through its Division of Research and Economic Development, AAMU collaborates with businesses and government agencies to **translate groundbreaking ideas into commercially viable and community-focused applications**. AAMU's research and education directly feed Alabama's aerospace and technology industries.



AAMU food engineering students creating film packaging to make food safer – nanofilm.

## SHAPING THE STATE'S FUTURE

In 2024, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey selected AAMU to help create a new strategic economic growth plan for the state, leveraging the university's researchers to inform a vision for the next decade and beyond.

## INCREASED RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

In 2024, AAMU received a record **\$88.84 million** in sponsored research grant awards. AAMU's sponsored research expenditure totaled **\$11.42 million**, which exceeded the research expenditure threshold for an R2 Carnegie classification by \$6.42 million.



**\$88.84  
MILLION**

## DRIVING CRITICAL RESEARCH

AAMU researchers tackle real-world problems, from missile propellant analysis for the U.S. Army to sustainable agriculture techniques for small farmers. The university actively secures research and development contracts that boost its capacity and the regional technology-based economy.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL EMPOWERMENT

The university's Division of Research and Economic Development fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration that benefit the community. It fosters innovative projects and works with small businesses and other partners to



**2,136**  
**ENTREPRENEURS**

**GOVERNMENT  
& PRIVATE  
CONTRACTS**  
— ADVANCED  
MANUFACTURING,  
CYBERSECURITY,  
& AEROSPACE

promote economic growth in the region, particularly in the North Huntsville area (Worked with **2,136 entrepreneurs** in 2024). The Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Economic Development offers resources and support to small business owners, with a particular focus on the needs of the North Huntsville community, including underrepresented communities. This directly addresses local needs and fosters economic diversity.

**TECH-FOCUSED PARTNERSHIPS**

The university’s research foundation, AAMU-RISE, executes government and private contracts in **advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and aerospace**— areas that align with the core industries of “Rocket City” Huntsville.

**STEM-CENTRIC VENTURE HUB**

With funding from Innovate Alabama, a new Venture Hub will support underrepresented innovators by providing resources to develop and commercialize new STEM-based solutions.

**INNOVATING AGRICULTURE**

As an 1890 Land-grant university, AAMU is a leader in agricultural research and development. This includes programs that assist small-scale farmers and boost the overall agricultural economy. Research at the Small Farm Research Center helps small and limited-resource producers with business training and financial literacy.

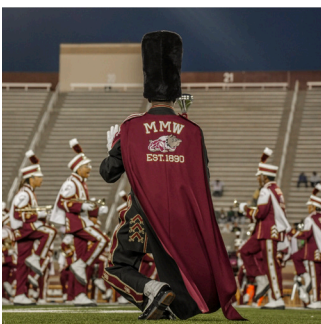
**STANDING AS A CENTRAL PILLAR OF  
COMMUNITY VITALITY**

AAMU’s economic footprint is inextricably linked to its role as a cornerstone of the North Alabama community. Beyond direct economic figures, the university’s presence creates a vibrant local culture and strengthens the social fabric.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** ► The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, a joint partnership with Auburn University, has offices in all 67 Alabama counties and addresses critical issues from obesity and food insecurity to the loss of heirs’ property and environmental resources (in 2024, the extension reached **474,300 programming contacts**). These practical tools are often free to the public, including multigenerational families, small farmers, and start-up entrepreneurs.

**HEALTHCARE ACCESS** ► In partnership with local hospitals, AAMU operates a mobile health clinic that provides preventive care to underserved communities.

**CULTURAL ENRICHMENT** ► As a cultural hub, AAMU hosts community events, a highly regarded art gallery, and the world-renowned Marching Maroon and White Band, which enriches the life of the entire region.



**SOCIAL ADVOCACY** ► AAMU provides a voice for higher education advocacy in Alabama, with its president and faculty speaking on essential issues like equitable funding for HBCUs.

**VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY SERVICE** ► While not direct spending, student volunteerism is a powerful asset to the local economy. For example, the annual “Serving the City as One Day of Service“ provides thousands of hours that students dedicate to community service, adding a social and human-centered dimension to their overall economic contribution.

## SERVING AS A BEACON OF POSSIBILITY, PURPOSE, AND PROGRESS

The AAMU economic impact is more than a list of figures. It is an uplifting narrative about a historic institution’s enduring purpose: to serve its community, empower its students, and propel the entire region toward a more prosperous future. It is a story of investment making progress possible, not just in infrastructure, but in human capital. For every dollar and every job, there is a story of a student who is now a leader, an innovator, or a public servant. That is the true measure of AAMU economic impact.

The story of AAMU economic impact is not just about dollars and cents. It is about purpose and uplift. It is a legacy of empowerment, a demonstration of excellence, and a constant promise of a stronger, more equitable future for Alabama and its people. The university serves as an engine of progress, proving that investing in inclusive education is one of the most powerful and profitable investments a community can make.

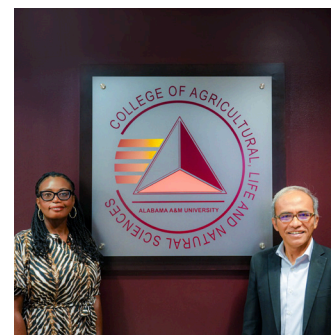
A LEGACY OF  
**EMPOWERMENT,**  
A DEMONSTRATION  
**OF EXCELLENCE,**  
AND A CONSTANT  
PROMISE OF  
**A STRONGER,**  
**MORE EQUITABLE**  
**FUTURE FOR**  
**ALABAMA.**



The USDA awarded \$950K in grants to AAMU research and Extension.

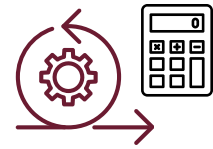


Four AAMU students won first place and a \$10K prize in the Alabama Collective x Innovate Alabama HBCU Business Pitch Competition.

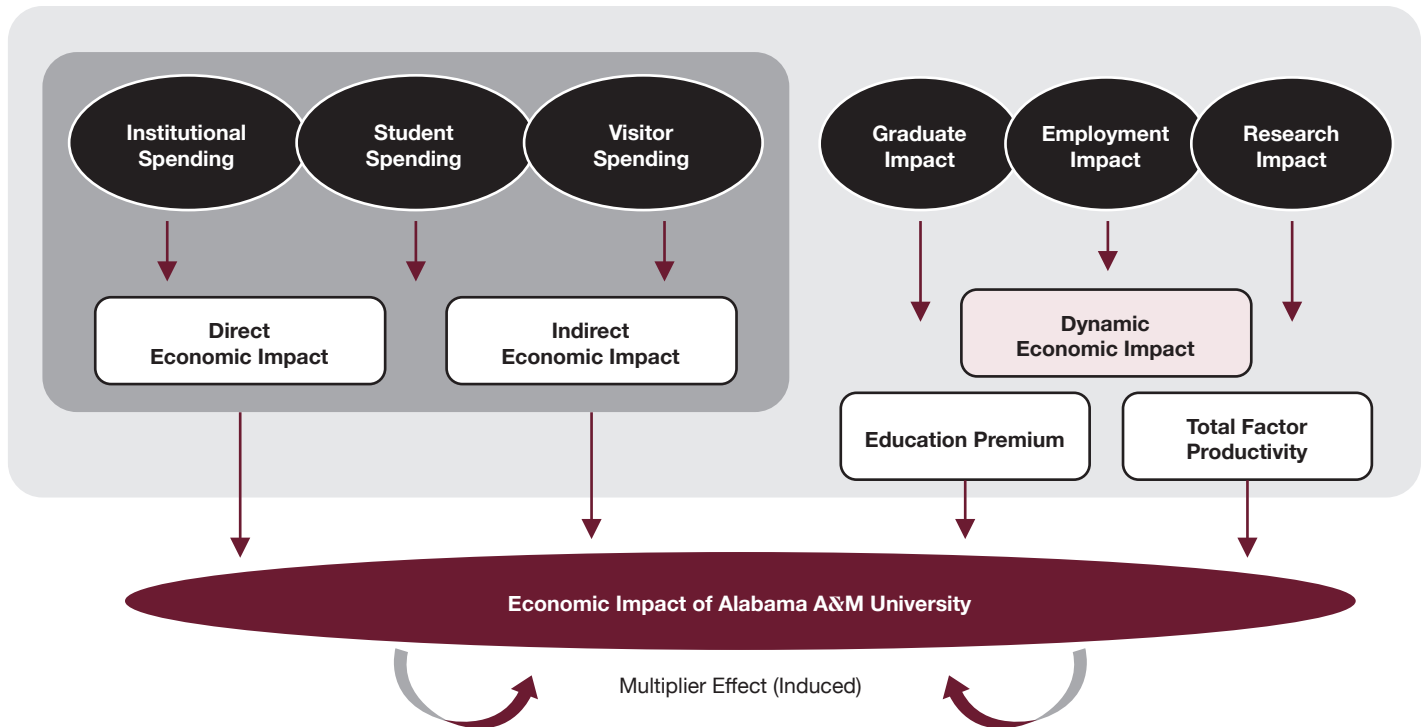


The NSF awarded AAMU a \$1 million grant to convert hazardous industrial wastes into eco-friendly construction materials using cutting-edge Negative Emission Technology.





## ESTIMATION MODEL





## **STREET ADDRESS**

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