

MISSION STATEMENT & HISTORY



MISSION STATEMENT

Momentum is Alabama's premier women's leadership program, empowering a diverse group of women to develop leadership skills that positively impact business, culture, and politics in Alabama.

HISTORY

Momentum's founder, Barbara Royal, was a UAB administrator, former science museum director and a longtime board member of the YWCA. Barbara researched the Momentum leadership concept and built its curriculum. Focus groups, brainstorming sessions and individual interviews with over 40 women were conducted to gather input about the status of civic, government and business leadership opportunities for women. Participating women were selected representing the Women's Section of the Birmingham Bar, the Junior League of Birmingham, the Women Society of CPAs, the Society of Women Engineers, as well as HR personnel from large corporations.

A strategic planning session was held with a diverse group of 15 Birmingham women leaders to discuss the elements and feasibility of a women's leadership project. In Fall 2001, a top-level advisory board of men and women leaders was put in place and Momentum was launched, with the first class initiated in September 2002. The program was housed within the YWCA. Momentum still has close ties to the YWCA today.

In 2007, the Momentum Alumnae Program (MAP) was formed, and in 2009, the program mission was expanded, MAP incorporated as a 501c3, and the alumnae program relocated to Pepper Place office space. In Fall 2014, MAP initiated a strategic plan to review goals and objectives and consider adding additional programming. Following the strategic plan, the Momentum staff grew in 2016 with the hiring of April Benetollo as Director of Marketing and Development. Barbara Royal announced her retirement in August 2017. April Benetollo began service as Interim CEO, then was named CEO effective November 1, 2017. Tina Upshaw has served as Director of Operations for 20 years. As programs have grown, Andrea McCaskey joined our team in March 2018 as Director of Programs. Darla Morrison joined in July 2021 and manages our mentor matching program, Katie Hannah joined as Development Director in 2022. Amy Gandy joined as the Huntsville Program Manager in June 2023. Lindsey Setzer joined the team in July 2023 as the Events Manager.

As of October 2022, Momentum has graduated over 522 executive women and 240 Upward early-career women representing more than 100 Alabama companies. In 2021, Momentum launched the Men with Momentum program to educate male leaders on creating more inclusive teams. Also in 2021, Momentum piloted Momentum Leaders in Medicine at UAB, with an inaugural class of 16 senior female leaders; the program is continuing with the 2022-23 program year. In September of 2022, Momentum launched our second executive leadership program in Huntsville for 16 key leaders in the area. Momentum also celebrated twenty years of advancing women in leadership in 2022!

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PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Three Executive Leadership Programs

- 75 competitively selected participants
- 2 two-day retreats x 3
- 6 monthly full-day sessions x 3
- 9 monthly co-mentoring sessions x3
- Networking & mentoring opportunities throughout the year
- Assigned executive coaching throughout the year

Upward Early-Career Program

- 65 competitively selected participants
- 2 full day retreats
- 6 half-day monthly meetings
- 9 monthly co-mentoring sessions
- Networking & mentoring opportunities throughout the year

Men with Momentum

- 9 powerful CEOs and 8 senior Momentum alumnae on Advisory Board
- In-person and virtual sessions
- Facilitated discussion on leading inclusive teams throughout the employee life cycle

Momentum Events & Workshops

- Monthly online and in-person workshops, podcasts, webinars and training sessions

2024 Biennial Conference

- 1500 attendees, keynotes, breakout sessions, and expo hall

Momentum Mentor Matching

- More than 1,000 mentor matches to date
- Free mentor matching for the community at large upon request
- Guided processes and free resources to ensure success