

Alabama History at Risk: Can You Help?

The Alabama Department of Archives and History has suffered disproportionately heavy budget cuts and program losses since 2008 and now faces additional, destructive cuts in FY 2012.

The Governor's recommended budget contained an earmarked funding source that is no longer a viable option. If the final budgets contain only the General Fund and ETF appropriations currently in the bills, **the agency faces a shortfall of \$833,000**, an amount equal to one-third of our total FY12 personnel costs. A cut of this size would force the layoff of most of the younger professional staff and take decades to overcome.

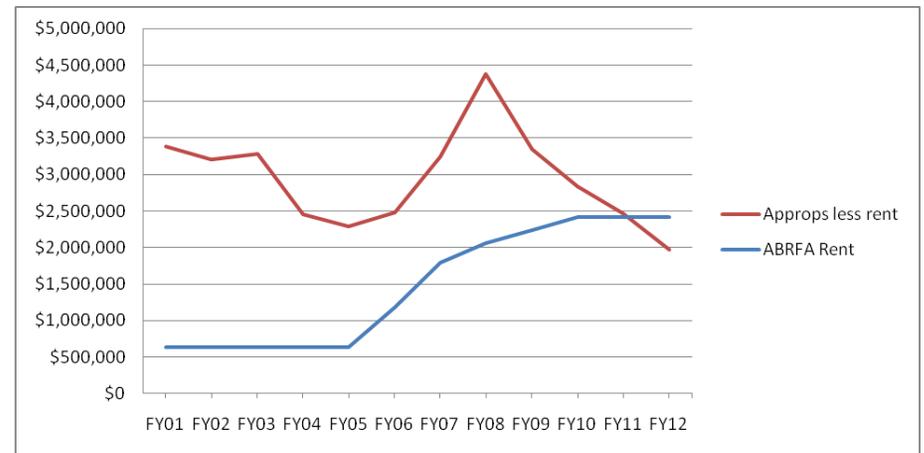
Cutbacks and losses are not new for ADAH. It has already:

- Lost 36% of its staff, affecting every area of service
- Reduced weekend hours to one Saturday per month
- Discontinued microfilming historic Alabama newspapers (a major source of historical documentation for our state)
- Ended digital scanning of photos, maps, and documents for purposes of preservation, security, and access
- Reduced substantially its public programs on Alabama history: Alabama Day; Educators Open House; Family Activities; and others
- Cut the processing of historical collections for preservation and access by approximately 50%
- Reduced security services, increasing risks to the collections
- Discontinued the purchase of commercially produced microfilm of major Alabama newspapers
- Scaled back the acquisition of reference books and historical works about Alabama
- Reduced assistance to local history organizations across the state
- Discontinued professional development for staff

How you can help

- **Please make a special effort to contact your representative and senator**, and tell them that you value the services provided by ADAH. Find your legislators by entering your zip code [at this web site](#).

Why Archives & History has been particularly hard hit



The rent paid by ADAH is a very high fixed cost that has risen repeatedly in recent years. When state appropriations are cut, high fixed costs mean that losses in the agency's operating budget are effectively doubled. Funds available for personnel and programs are now \$1 million below 2001 levels.

Why this agency matters

- ADAH is the state's archival, museum, and records management agency, and it is a key resource for history education in Alabama. These are core functions for all state governments.
- ADAH fulfills the state's responsibility to its citizens to preserve materials that tell of the lives of its people.
- We owe it to our ancestors to preserve the material that keeps their memories alive. We ourselves need these materials to understand the past. And we are obligated to pass on to our descendants the materials necessary for them to understand their heritage.
- Educating our young people about their past is critical for good citizenship. People do not love and care for what they do not know. When students learn their history, they are able to make better decisions as citizens, and their sense of connection to their home state becomes stronger.
- The records preserved by ADAH are vital to government accountability and transparency. They give citizens access to the documentation of governmental decisions that affect their lives.