**Community/Public Service Worksheet**

**Service Category:** Educational Outreach Programs  

**Title:** Books for the Black Belt  

**Primary UA Contact(s):**  
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**Center for Economic Development**  
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**Community Partner(s) (If any):**  
- Dr. Darren Douthitt (334) 382-2665  
- Black Belt Superintendents  
- (Organization)  
- (Organization)  

**Program Description:** Books for the Black Belt is a project initiated by The University of Alabama’s Center for Economic Development focused on solving the issue of insufficient supply of books to the region. UACED organize events and collaborates with different groups at UA to collect books that go directly to over 50 schools in 12 Alabama counties.

**Objectives/Outcomes:** Our long term goals include: (1) Provide one book for every student in the Alabama Black Belt. (2) Raise awareness to the importance of a literate population as a foundation for social and economic success. (3) Develop lasting partnerships between organizations on the UA campus and the schools of the Black Belt.

**Assessment Measures:** The Books for the Black Belt program is assessed by the numbers of books collected and donated to schools, the amount of monetary donations distributed, the number of schools served, and the number of organizations and groups involved in the process.

**Results:** Over $10,000 have been raised for the Black Belt School Superintendents to distribute. Nearly 5,000 books have been delivered to school libraries in the AL Black Belt over the past 8 months (Perry Co: 1,400; Choctaw Co: 1,300; Selma City: 2,100). An additional 2,000 books have been donated to community libraries.

**Conclusions:** Books for the Black Belt fits well as a project of the state’s largest university because the project uses the many resources available to help serve and promote education to a large population K-12 students who lack the fundamental support.

**Improvement Actions:** Support and strengthen relationships between campus organizations and Black Belt schools. Further develop a clear and systematic program that makes the partners’ efforts most effective.