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**Hackathon event to tackle clean water, sanitation in Black Belt***Global innovation lab to advance UN Sustainable Development Goals turns focus to Alabama*

**May 10, 2021 –**The nation’s most talented young professionals will spend two days developing solutions to wastewater challenges in Lowndes County, Alabama as part of UNLEASH, a global innovation lab for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The hackathon style event is one of 24 virtual hacks around the world and will focus on [SDG 3](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/) (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) and [SDG 6](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/) (ensure access to water and sanitation for all).

The Alabama Department of Public Health estimates that as many as 90 percent of Lowndes County households have inadequate or non-existent septic systems. It has reported that 50 percent of the conventional, on-site septic systems are currently failing or are expected to fail in the future.

The virtual Hack is scheduled for June 5 and June 12 and participants will be part of an immersive innovation process facilitated by UNLEASH alumni, subject matter experts and members of the community. They will work toward developing solutions that examine the issue from multiple perspectives:

* Technology
* Organizational
* Governmental
* Social
* Financial

“Inequities in public service have a devastating impact on communities, and the wastewater sanitation crisis in the Black Belt is just one example,” said Anniestacia Miskel, a Mobile-based water engineer who is leading the effort. “Our goal is for Hack participants to collaborate alongside Lowndes County residents and others who have been invested in the Black Belt’s sanitation issue so we can see an end to this problem.”

Those interested in participating in the virtual hack may apply [here](https://bit.ly/3ei7FG1). The deadline to apply is May 23.

Learn more at [www.unleash.org](http://www.unleash.org) or [www.unleashhacksusa.com](http://www.unleashhacksusa.com).

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