

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS OF COLOR-LED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE U.S. SOUTH

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

OVERVIEW

The Ms. Foundation for Women envisions a world in which Women and Girls of Color (WGOC) leverage their voice, power, and expertise to transform systems to live full and healthy lives. With an unapologetic commitment to a racial and gender equity/justice lens, we have shifted our grantmaking focus to building power and leadership of WGOC – which include Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Middle Eastern, and Asian/Pacific Islander women, girls, and nonbinary folks, both transgender and cisgender.

We are excited to embark upon the third year of our multi-year program strategy with the goals of strengthening the organizational and financial sustainability of an ecosystem of WGOC-led organizations; increasing connectivity between WGOC-led organizations; and positioning WGOC leaders as key experts and decision-makers in shaping policy and culture change. We believe that using an intersectional framework will wield the full strength of WGOC's knowledge, experience, and networks and lead to transformational change. Our sisters of color represent the future of this country, demographically, and we have an obligation to shine a light on them, their struggle, and their strength. WGOC are pivotal frontline leaders and organizers in the powerful social change movements that have paved the way for a more equitable and just democracy. They have led nearly every impactful grassroots movement in United States history. They are the primary constituency most impacted by inequity and live at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression including white supremacy, patriarchy, colonization, and unbridled capitalism. And yet, their work is under-resourced.

In 2020, Ms. Foundation commissioned a report, "[Pocket Change: How Women and Girls of Color Do More with Less](#)" and it provided us with a baseline of philanthropic funding and investment in WGOC throughout the United States and territories. We found that total philanthropic giving to WGOC averages out to less than \$6.00 per year for each woman or girl of color in the United States – and the amount for WGOC in the South is \$2.36 - the lowest in the nation at less than half the national average.

Our program team also engaged in deep learning and listening with southern leaders. While the need for more support of WGOC in the South is great, so too is the opportunity for strategic investment. Southern states have high and fast-growing populations of WGOC. The presence or emergence of regressive legislation in these states has the ability to influence the policy environments in other states. The South is home to current and former Ms. grantees whose expertise we can build upon. It is a place where other existing and potential funders can partner in this work to increase investment in WGOC.

Given these facts and findings, we have pivoted our grantmaking to address these funding disparities and capitalize on opportunities to move forward a WGOC-led agenda in 14 states in the South: **Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia**. Our inaugural round of \$1,000,000 in grants to WGOC-led groups in the U.S. South began in the spring of 2021. A second round of over \$1,500,000 followed in 2022. We are excited to continue our history as a first funder of emerging work as we deepen our investment in the U.S. South. We strive to assemble a balanced portfolio of rural, urban, emerging, and established organizations.

In this round of grantmaking, we will invest over \$1,500,000 in support of WGOC-led groups in the U.S. South across the spectrum of movement building and organizing, building on our investment of over \$2.5M to date. ([Current Ms. South grantees](#)) Our Ms. South strategy also supports the leadership of Southern WGOC through capacity building, networking, and communications to amplify the work of their organizations, and advocacy within the philanthropy community to increase giving to WGOC by a significant margin.

We are living in a historic moment. As the economy recovers from the COVID pandemic, we face a potential recession, a rise in anti-feminist activity exemplified by the striking down of Roe v. Wade, and an extreme, divisive political culture. We recognize the current challenges to organizations doing critical, intersectional movement building and organizing work, and we seek to fortify the ecosystem to ensure the survival of critical movement infrastructure through this sociopolitical climate. Our ability to support the leadership of WGOC is critical now more than ever. We are grateful for the support of our founders and allies as we pivot to where we *know* the need is the greatest.

ABOUT THE MS. FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN

Our Mission

The Ms. Foundation for Women works to build women's collective power in the U.S. to advance equity and justice for all. We will achieve our mission by investing in and strengthening the capacity of women-led movements to advance meaningful social, cultural, and economic change in the lives of women.

Our Vision

We believe in a just and safe world where power and possibility are not limited by gender, race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age. We believe that equity and inclusion are the cornerstones of a true democracy in which the worth and dignity of every person are valued.

Our Values

1. **Integrity:** We believe in holding ourselves responsible and accountable for all that we say in order to build an aligned, principled, and powerful movement for gender equity.

2. **Trust and Respect:** We believe in the truth that comes from those we work with and those most impacted by the issues affecting their communities. We believe in honoring their voices and supporting their leadership.
3. **Interconnectedness:** We believe that by achieving equity for women of color, we achieve equity for all. Given the complexity of the issues we face, we are committed to addressing issues holistically, understanding that we need to build power and alignment across multiple movements and sectors to win the battles we are facing.
4. **Social Justice:** We believe that structural changes are needed in order to increase opportunities for those who are least well off politically, socially, and economically.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Ms. Foundation for Women welcomes **requests for general operating support** from groups working in the U.S. South. Organizations are invited to apply for up to \$50,000 per year for up to two years. Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee funding and does not guarantee multiple years of funding. Those that are funded may not be funded at requested levels.

Please submit an application for general operating support to the Ms. Foundation for Women. The deadline for submission is ***Friday, January 13, 2023 at 5:00 PM ET.***

Below you will find grant application guidelines. Please follow instructions carefully.

Important grant information:

1. **Grant Type:** General operating support
2. **Grant Range:** \$20,000 - \$50,000 per year
3. **Total Funding Available:** \$1,500,000+
4. **Application Deadline:** ***Friday, January 13, 2023*** by 5:00 PM ET
5. **Grant Period:** We anticipate a May 2023 start. We aim to award two-year grants as a best practice. We cannot guarantee multiple years of funding.

If selected, Ms. grantee partners may have the opportunity to participate in capacity building and learning activities that may include grantee trainings, convenings, strategy sessions, and webinars. These activities would not involve additional costs to the grantee, with the exception of grantee convening travel incidentals. The Ms. Foundation for Women may also request grantees' participation in activities such as events, media outreach, and others to build national visibility around key issues and further support your advocacy.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered for this funding opportunity. (All criteria will be further explained during the informational webinar referenced below. Attendance of the webinar is highly recommended. A recording of the webinar and an FAQ document will be available on our [website](#).)

1. Applicant organizations should be led by Women and/or Girls of Color, i.e.
 - o The Executive Director (or one co-director, if you use a co-director model) is a Woman and/or Girl of Color
 - o 75-100% of the financial decision-makers for the organization must be Women and/or Girls of Color.
 - o More than 50% of the people on your board (or the people who have fiduciary responsibility for your organization) must be Women and/or Girls of Color.
2. Applicant must be doing work focused in one or more of the 14 states listed in the “Overview” section of this document.
3. We seek applicants that use movement building and organizing strategies.
4. Applicant must be a 501(c)(3) organization or fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization.
5. Organizational budget must not exceed \$10 million.

GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

An overview of the stages of the application process follows:

	Phase	Deadlines/Time frames
1	Information Session	<i>November 16, 2022 (3:30 PM ET)</i>
2	Application Phase	<i>Due January 13, 2023 at 5:00 PM ET</i>
3	Notification of Awards	Final award notifications will be sent by <i>late March/early April</i>

1. **Information Session:** Ms. will hold an optional 45-minute webinar on **Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 3:30 PM ET** to answer general questions about the RFP, proposal materials, and submission procedure. Webinar information will be available on the [website](#).
2. **Application Phase:** Organizations must submit applications by **January 13, 2023**. Please see the “Application Guidelines” section for details.
3. **Notification of awards:** Final notifications will be sent out by late March/early April.

Application Guidelines

Organizations are invited to submit an application along with the required attachments by ***Friday, January 13, 2023 at 5:00 PM ET*** through our online grant submission portal. Please see the link in the “Online Application Procedure” section of the RFP. *We will not accept materials by email. Only complete applications submitted via our online system will be considered.*

Required Attachments:

- 1. Proposal Narrative:** The proposal narrative (no more than 5 pages) should include the following:
 - a) Description of your organization’s primary activities;
 - b) Measurable outcomes of your work to date;
 - c) Funding amount requested per year and number of years of funding requested;
 - d) A brief statement of the problem(s) you seek to address, including challenges and opportunities specific to your context; and
 - e) A description of your plans to address the problem(s), including: goals and objectives; planned activities, including who will be served; approximate time frame; and how you will define progress and what are your indicators of progress?

Please note that current Ms. South grantees seeking a potential renewal may resubmit their Letter of Inquiry from the previous application cycle.

- 2. Organization Budget:** Most recent organizational budget. The budget must show total income and expenses for the fiscal year. The total budget amount must equal the amount listed in the online application form.

NOTE: We accept existing organizational budgets; you are not required to use the Ms. budget template. If you do not have an existing budget that clearly delineates income and expenses, we strongly encourage you to use the [Ms. - specific budget template](#).

- 3. Selected Pages from Form 990 (Page 1 and Schedule A):** Please submit a copy of Page 1 and Schedule A from Form 990; you do not need to send the full document. If your organization is not legally required to file a Form 990, please submit the financials you share with your board in lieu of audited financials. If you are unsure, please check [here](#).

- 4. Audited Financial Statements:** A complete copy of your organization’s or fiscal sponsor’s most recent audited financial statements. If your organization is not legally required to get an audit, please submit the financials you share with your board in lieu of audited financials. If you are unsure, please check [here](#).

5. **Board of Directors list:** A list of your board of directors, including roles on board and affiliations.

6. **Financial Decision-Maker Demographics Matrix:** A list of the individuals who make financial decisions for the organization and their demographic information. Please use [this template](#).

7. **Board Demographics Matrix:** A list of the members of your board (or the body of people with fiduciary responsibility for the organization) and their demographic information. Please use [this template](#).

8. **Staff Demographics Matrix:** A list of the organization's staff persons and their demographic information. Please use [this template](#).

Please note, you **must** submit all attachments through the online portal in order for your application to be considered. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications will not be accepted by email. Please see the "Online Application Procedure" section below.

ONLINE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Starting your application: We will not accept materials by email. Only complete applications submitted via our online system will be considered. Please use this link to access the online application form and create a user account. Please retain your username and password. The Ms. Foundation for Women does not have access to your account login information.

https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_829?SA=SNA&FID=35149

Continuing your application: To log back into the system once an application has been saved or submitted, please use this link.

https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_829?SA=AM

In order to view your account page, your internet browser must accept cookies. Please use Google Chrome to complete the application.

Contact Us

Troubleshooting: For technical difficulties with your online application, please send an email to Grants Administrator Alaya Gaddy (grantsmanagement@ms.foundation.org).

Questions on Proposal Narrative: For questions about your proposal narrative submission, please do not hesitate to contact program officers: Coya White Hat-Artichoker (cwhitehat-artichoker@ms.foundation.org) or Samantha Franklin (sfranklin@ms.foundation.org). We will make best attempts to respond to your inquiries in a

timely manner. Please note that due to a large volume of inquiries, response time may vary. We can also try to accommodate different language needs as we are able.

Thank You!

The Ms. Foundation for Women looks forward to learning more about your work.