



THE TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN
AND ALABAMA'S ECONOMY

If ever there were a time for change, that time is now.

THAT LEAVES
67K+
JOBS UNABLE
TO BE FILLED.

A U.S. Chamber of Commerce report from late October of 2022 states that **Alabama had 143,000 job openings, but only 53 unemployed workers for every 100 open jobs.** Alabama fell into the “More Severe” category when it came to workforce challenges, and the issue has not gotten better since last fall. If we are to solve these pernicious problems and enable our state to reach its full economic potential, we must embrace change.

WOMEN ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SOLUTION

Fact is, women represent tremendous potential for Alabama. Consider the following:



49th

IN THE NATION FOR
FEMALE LABOR FORCE
PARTICIPATION

Alabama has the 49th lowest labor force participation rate in the nation.



\$12B

POTENTIAL OVERALL
ECONOMIC GROWTH

Closing the gender labor force participation gap would generate an additional \$8.5 billion in earnings, the overall economy would grow by \$12 billion, and total employment would rise by almost 33,000 in the first year.



80K+

WOMEN MISSING FROM THE
ALABAMA WORKFORCE

In 2022, over 80,000 women were missing from the state's workforce, placing Alabama dead last in labor force participation for women in the South.

CRIPPLING WORKFORCE SHORTFALLS, THOUSANDS OF WOMEN BLOCKED
BY DECADES OF STRUCTURAL ECONOMIC BARRIERS.

This is a watershed moment.

THE BARRIERS HOLDING WOMEN BACK ARE MANY

THE DAMS MUST BE BROKEN

For starters, women are paid only 73 cents compared to the dollar their male counterparts earn in Alabama (one of the largest wage gaps in the United States.) The longer we allow this to persist, the fewer women we are able to keep in the workforce which means more jobs need filling.

The child care crisis is holding women back. There is only enough licensed child care available in Alabama to serve 44% of its young children, and rising child care costs are driving more women out of the workforce. This means that nearly 80,000 hardworking Alabama families need access to child care but have no quality, affordable options in the communities where they live. Again, we could solve our workforce problems if we could meet the challenges women face.

All workers need the ability to be good employees and good caregivers for their family. Alabama must make work *work* for women. Many working women simply have to give up

their jobs or take unpaid leave in order to care for their family. **This is particularly concerning when you consider that 74% of Alabama families rely on a female breadwinner.**

In order to solve these complex problems, women must be at the forefront of change. It is no secret that those closest to the problem are best equipped to solve it. Yet women in Alabama continue to be underrepresented in key decision making. There is a wealth of data that shows that when women lead, governments are more likely to prioritize health and well being. Yet only 17% of the Alabama Legislature are women. When women lead, companies make more money and experience less churn but less than one quarter of top executives in Alabama (24.7%) are women. When women lead, economies grow.

Alabama needs more women represented in leadership. An investment in women is an investment in Alabama.



“

I had never heard of the “Motherhood Penalty”- where women’s pay decreases once they become mothers- until I became a mother myself. My penalty came in the form of a difficult decision during the happiest moment of our lives. Due to increasing costs and decreasing availability of child care, I was forced to decide between keeping a job I love and caring for my child.

Thankfully, my support system afforded my family the opportunity to make this choice. Alabama families need more affordable quality options for childcare and we need them now.”

Emily

Emily Cook

¹ Morse, Michelle Milford. “When Women Lead: Perspectives from a Global Dialogue.” Unfoundation.Org, 21 Nov. 2020, unfoundation.org/blog/post/when-women-lead-perspectives-from-a-global-dialogue/.



“

Alabama won't win until our women do. There's no organization working harder to make this happen than Women's Foundation of Alabama.

As a leader in Alabama's business community, I want women to have every opportunity to thrive in our state. Alabama Power was built on the notion of service, and we know for something to be good for our company it must first be good for Alabama. The state cannot move forward unless we are working together to create an equal path for all Alabamians to succeed. That's why we are working to create economic growth for women in partnership with the state's leading voice for women.”

Quentin

**Quentin Riggins
Senior Vice President of
Governmental and Corporate
Affairs, Alabama Power**

It's Time to Make Waves

**WOMEN'S FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA IS
POSITIONED TO DO JUST THAT**

At Women's Foundation of Alabama, we know through years of experience that transformative grantmaking, eye-opening research, and strategic advocacy fluidly working together are the difference between making ripples and making waves. For 27 years, we've been resourcing boots-on-the-ground organizations addressing the complex needs of Alabama women and their families. Over the past five years alone, the lives of more than 1,000 women have been transformed through grantmaking and many more through policy reforms.

This is a watershed moment.

By helping women overcome barriers and reach their full economic potential, we can deliver a torrent of unprecedented economic growth for Alabama.

In fact, we are so convinced of the critical timing of these efforts, we are calling on corporations, elected officials, and philanthropists to help us **move 10,000 women into the workforce and on the path to economic mobility by 2027.**

It's time to make a historic investment in women for economic growth promises significant return on investment.

But we need your help.

Your philanthropic investment combined with our data-driven grantmaking and policy interventions will help us seize the moment and advance the boldest economic plan for women in Alabama to date, tackling the most pressing economic challenges for women at the root cause. Helping 10,000 women enter the workforce is an audacious but achievable goal. That said, **it will require three streams of impact.**

INTRODUCING

WATERSHED

THE WATERSHED CAMPAIGN'S GOAL OF INTRODUCING 10,000 WOMEN INTO THE WORKFORCE AND ON THE PATH TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY BY 2027 IS NECESSARILY AGGRESSIVE. AGGRESSIVE GOALS REQUIRE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED PLANS. THE PLAN FOR THIS CAMPAIGN COMPRISES THREE CRITICAL STREAMS OF EFFORT.

STREAM ONE

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

STREAM TWO

GRANTMAKING

STREAM THREE

SOLIDIFY OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

STREAMLINE ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Execute the Essential Plan

The future of Alabama's economic growth hinges on a groundbreaking initiative – the Essential Plan. This comprehensive advocacy strategy aims to permanently change the economic game for women through data-driven policy reforms and grassroots community building. Central to this plan is an unprecedented call on state leaders to invest \$250 million to enhance women's economic outlook, access to opportunities, and retention in quality jobs.

Through the Essential Plan, we will:

- EXPAND access to quality child care through increased funding and tax credits for businesses and child care providers.
- ESTABLISH the state's first paid leave program for Alabama families.
- NARROW the wage gap by strengthening equal pay legislation.

To execute this ambitious plan, we must first gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Alabama women. The Essential Plan rests on transformative data gathered through a meticulous study of the multifaceted issues at hand. Key components include:

Commissioning and disseminating four of our Clearing the Path research publications focused on persistent and emerging economic barriers affecting Alabama women and families.

Convening senior corporate and government leaders around Clearing the Path findings, highlighting key recommendations to remove barriers to work for women.

Recognizing that the success of the Essential Plan demands collective effort, we will leverage our army of women advocates, including training and equipping 200 grassroots leaders through our Women's Policy Institute (WPI). A united front will drive the much needed change we all want to execute.

The WPI fellowship equips community leaders through a 40-hour experiential learning curriculum, specially designed to hone their skills in public policy advocacy. Rooted in gender and racial equity, WPI training sessions instill essential skills needed to successfully move policy such as organizing, civic engagement, and leadership.

By supporting fellows, we magnify economic policy wins for women thereby propelling the Essential Plan's impact and success.

By advancing and investing in women-led solutions and pushing for sweeping policy change through the Essential Plan, we not only clear the path for 10,000 women to enter the workforce, but we are creating economic conditions for every Alabama woman to thrive.

“

Women with children who want to join the workforce face significant challenges. Women's Foundation of Alabama understands that and gathers partners who can provide wraparound services, such as child care and mentoring, with educational and job opportunities. These coordinated services allow women to get good jobs, such as linemen, welders, and health care technicians, and this allows them to support their families. We find that 80% of women who go through these programs get off public assistance within 18 months to 2 years. This foundation is changing lives. That is what keeps me at the table.”

Nancy

**Dr. Nancy Dunlap Johns
Professor Emeritus,
University of Alabama at
Birmingham**



STREAM TWO

GRANTMAKING

Broaden Our Portfolio of Catalytic Initiatives, Collaboratives, and Targeted Grants

To meet the workforce needs of tomorrow, we must align our grantmaking with our policy efforts. The legislative wins of the Essential Plan will permanently remove barriers to employment for Alabama families, but policy work takes time. Until we achieve these big wins, we must invest in the needs of women today. Grantmaking makes that possible.

Last year alone, we received grant requests totaling close to \$2 million. We only had the resources to fund 40% of those requests, meaning women who needed a springboard to economic opportunity were left treading water.

Through this campaign, we will leverage \$3.5 million in new capital to expand and sustain our grantmaking portfolio to do the following:

- Expand our capacity to provide multi-year, competitive grant awards up to \$75,000.
- Move resources beyond our previously limited footprint to the communities at the forefront of workforce development including Mobile, Montgomery, Madison, Limestone, and the Black Belt.
- Strengthen our funded partnerships with community colleges and other training providers uniquely positioned to put women in jobs.
- Position the Foundation to invest, test, and scale promising solutions from community organizations addressing crippling economic barriers like child care and paid leave.



“

At Regions, we believe when our communities are strong and thriving, everyone benefits. As part of that principle, we are committed to supporting organizations that create measurable and meaningful impact. I personally feel that Women’s Foundation of Alabama is a great example. Their work with the ROAR Fund during the Covid-19 pandemic made a real difference in our local community when child care facility closures created an urgent need for families. After listening to the needs of people in the community and quickly assessing the situation, the foundation’s ROAR Fund made an investment in 20 child care businesses to keep them operational until federal relief arrived. These investments ensured 900 children were cared for and more than 300 parents’ jobs were saved – many of them frontline healthcare workers who helped get us through that very difficult time.”

Lajuana

Lajuana Bradford
Senior Vice President, Regional Community
Development Manager, Regions Bank

STREAM THREE

SOLIDIFY OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Achieving Our Blueprint for Change

We will solidify our organizational infrastructure with the talent, physical space, and tools needed to achieve our 10,000-woman goal. As effective as we've been, our current operational model has reached capacity and limits our reach. We could allow budget constraints to limit us but would rather rise to the challenge of meeting the needs of Alabama's employers and all of Alabama's women.

Here's the plan:

- We must attract, retain, and mobilize the highest caliber of talent to occupy mission-essential roles that cover key markets in the state including Montgomery and Huntsville.
- In anticipation of this successful campaign, we've transitioned to a spacious facility, granting us the capacity to convene the community and collaborate with partners while allowing for our team's growth.
- We will develop the staff and tools to better communicate our work for women, our successes, and our expanding vision. Growing the workforce and bringing more women into the economy in active roles is complex work which requires significant education and understanding.

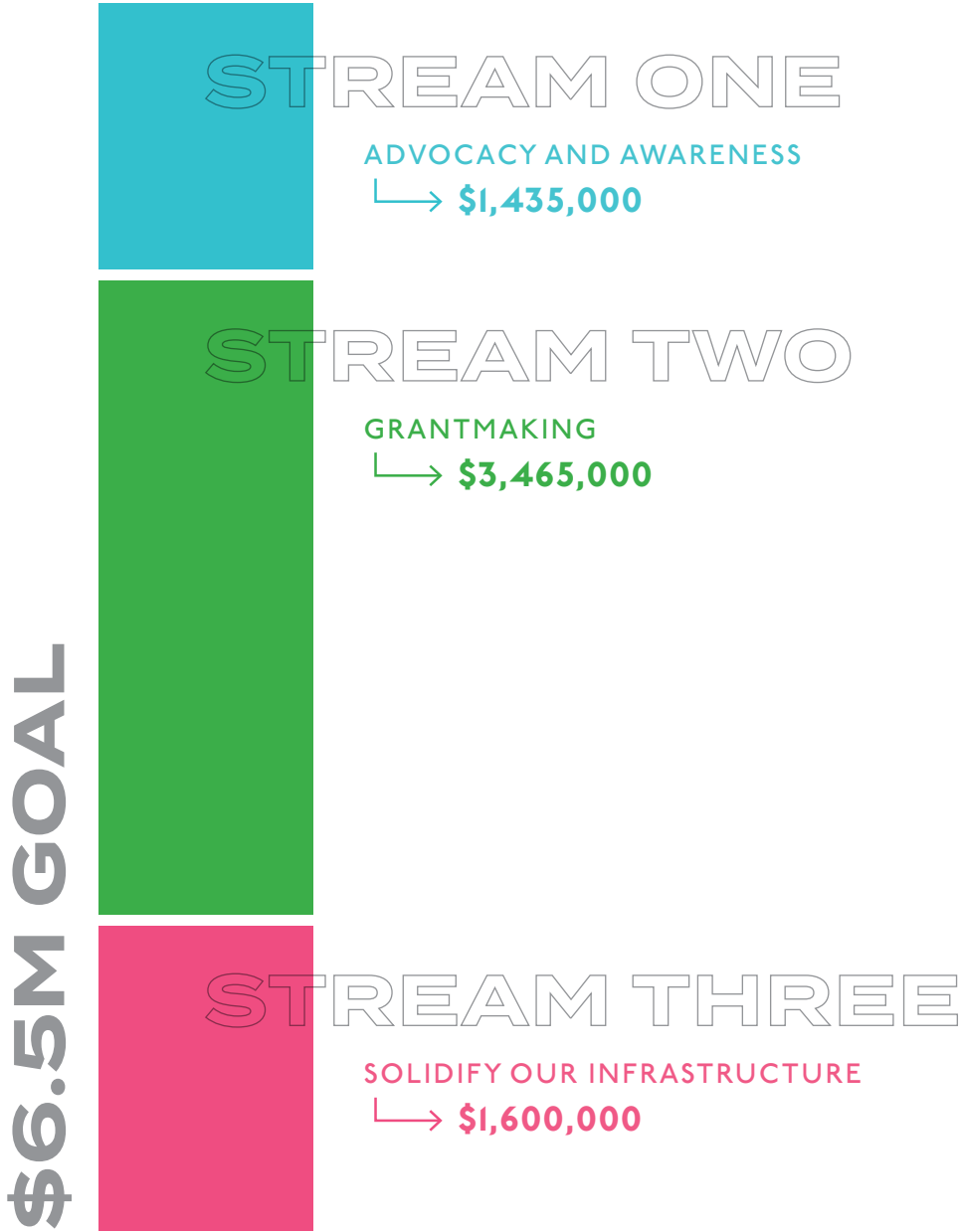


“This foundation is exceptionally effective. When they set a goal, it's achieved. That's why we have only grown our investment over time. The reality is we need WFA to operate at its maximum capacity because their work is key to Alabama's ability to live up to its own values: being a fantastic place for raising a family, for balancing the demands of work with the joys of life, for building a business and for civic responsibility. An Alabama where women can participate fully in the economy lives up to those values. That's the Alabama the foundation can help build and we are proud to stand right beside them.”

Brooke and Daniel
Brooke and Daniel Coleman
Community Volunteers



Watershed Campaign



It's Time for a Bigger Boat

There's a moment in the classic movie, JAWS!, when one of the characters, first sees the shark and exclaims, "We're gonna need a bigger boat." Our bigger boat moment has arrived. Mounting barriers for women and girls, matched with our new statewide footprint, demand that we expand the breadth of organizations we support and the work being done on the frontlines. We will never move 10,000 women into the workforce and onto the path of economic mobility if we remain largely constrained to central Alabama. Living into our new statewide footprint allows us to address the distinct needs of Alabama's unique communities and the women who call them home. We cannot fulfill such disparate needs without expanded resources. Your support allows us to continue and expand our role as funders of innovation and agents of change.

What we offer is a coordinated approach, one that produces collective impact, that stands to benefit our state by adding substantial talent to the workforce and put Alabama on the map when it comes to mobilizing the dormant economic and social power of women.

Women's Foundation of Alabama has been working to empower women through grantmaking, policy change, and other means. The learnings from those years of work are now ready for expansion.

We know what works.

Now, we need to scale.

And we need your help to do it.



**WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
OF ALABAMA**