

About the Women's Fund of Mississippi

The Women's Fund of Mississippi is a public foundation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in communities statewide by promoting social change and economic self-sufficiency through advocacy and strategic grantmaking. The Fund's three grant focus areas are early childhood education/care, teen pregnancy prevention, and the prevention of violence against women. The Women's Fund of Mississippi is the only grantmaking and advocacy organization in Mississippi entirely dedicated to funding programs that improve the lives of women and girls statewide. The Fund began in 2002 as a field of interest fund within the Community Foundation of Greater Jackson but became independent in April 2009.

In 2010, the Women's Fund granted over \$60,000 to nonprofits in Mississippi; 65% of our grant funds went to the Gulf Coast region.

The Fund operates with a theory of social change that when women are economically secure, safe, and healthy, then families and communities are economically secure, safe, and healthy.

Why Do We Need a Women's Fund in Mississippi?

- Mississippi has repeatedly been ranked the "worst state for women" by the Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- 23% percent of Mississippi women live in poverty (36% of African American women live in poverty, compared to 14% of white, non-Hispanic women).
- Less than 7 percent of giving from all foundations and corporations went to programs that specifically serve the needs of women and girls.

Why do we focus on early childhood education/care, teen pregnancy prevention, and prevention of violence against women?

- Most parents with kids work but the cost of infant child care is more expensive than tuition at the University of Mississippi for a year.
- Enrolling two children in full-time child care costs 70% of the wages of a minimum wage earner's salary. (Minimum wage is currently \$7.25 an hour).
- Mississippi has the highest teen birth rate in the nation. Pregnant teens are more likely to drop out of school, delay prenatal care, contract a sexually transmitted disease, have a problem pregnancy, and deliver a low birth weight baby.
- Mississippi women are more at risk of violence, and of dying of violent means, than their counterparts nationwide.

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