



LEADERSHIP PROFILE



THE WOMEN'S FUND OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

President & Chief Executive Officer
The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham
Birmingham, AL

*"... an economic engine that provides prosperity
for the women of Birmingham."*

--Birmingham Business Journal, August 2017

THE OPPORTUNITY

For over twenty years, The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham ("TWF") has harnessed the considerable philanthropic power in the region to help break the cycle of poverty trapping too many of greater Birmingham's women and children.

From its modest beginnings as a component fund within The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, TWF has since earned accolades both locally and nationally for its creativity and tenacity in support of economic opportunity for all women.



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The Women's Fund became an independent nonprofit in 2011, the same year Jeanne Jackson began her tenure as CEO. TWF's reputation, impact and assets have grown considerably over the past six years. Clearly, TWF's motivating vision—economic opportunity for all women—is resonating across the community.

Coincident with these developments, TWF's leadership is also evolving. CEO Jeanne Jackson recently informed the board of her decision to retire by early 2018, and thus the search for a compelling successor is now underway.

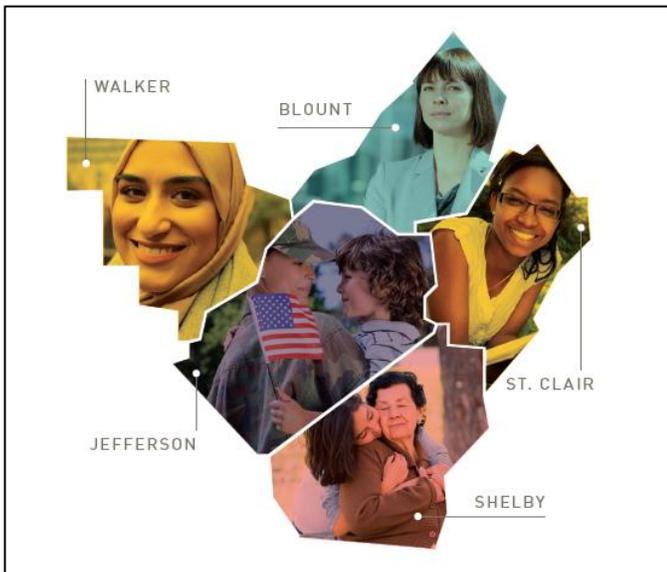
**"The Women's Fund is
engagingly fearless!"**

*--A long-time supporter who remains
ambitious for the mission*

THE ORGANIZATION

[The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham](#) was launched in 1996 "by twenty strong women [who] invested \$20,000 each ... to change the lives of women."¹ As with many start-ups, TWF's programs, grantmaking and people have changed over the years, but its values of dignity, equity, impact and innovation have remained constant.

Early on, TWF made what could be considered fairly typical grants to support relevant programs of area nonprofits. Over the years, TWF staff and stakeholders have become increasingly focused on economic security and the power of collaborative partnerships, especially in the context of a two-generation strategy to break the cycle of poverty.



2017 has been a year of affirmation for The Women's Fund:

- Financially, the \$5-million capital campaign met its ambitious target. The annual campaign was the strongest in the organization's history, and TWF's operating finances have never been more solid.

- Programmatically, TWF launched [Collaboration Institute 3.0](#), the third cycle of an evolving program designed to align

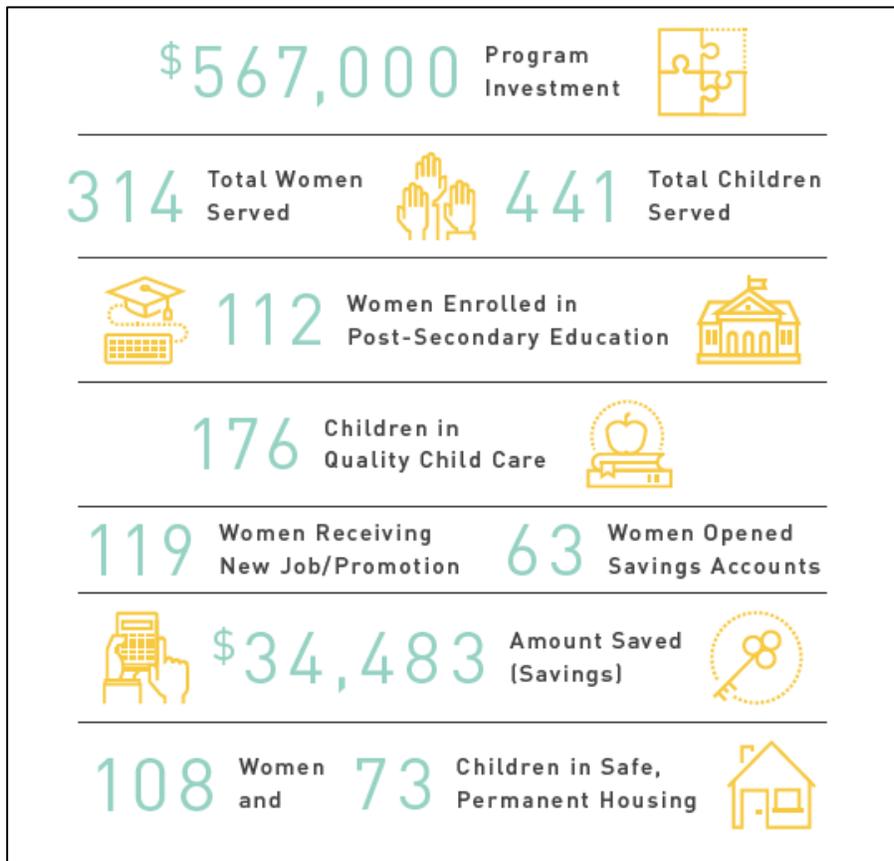
Birmingham's social services and workforce initiatives with the practical needs of low-income women and their families. This year, three teams of local agencies (community colleges, child care centers, job training programs and the like) will receive \$100,000 each to support the development of 2Gen

¹ From the 2016 Annual report

Family Hubs, wherein comprehensive services can be offered seamlessly within one physical location, as distinct from the disjointed and disconnected approach all too common now.

Similarly, [Families Forward](#) is a highly successful partnership with Jefferson State Community College, preparing single mothers for careers in high-demand health fields. Combining educational opportunity with high-quality childcare, Families Forward participants enjoy a graduation rate of 83%. In 2017, an alumni program was added to provide additional support to mothers in transition to higher-paying jobs. (One alumna's invigorating story can be found [here](#)).

- Operationally, the TWF [staff](#) is at its strongest ever, an agile multi-generational team with a shared commitment to women's economic stability and to deepening their own understanding of the complexity of their clients' circumstances.



[Data excerpted from TWF's 2016 Annual Report]

The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham is governed by a volunteer board comprising 20 influential women of greater Birmingham. Tellingly, they include life-long residents and relative newcomers, self-described children of privilege as well as women whose families might well have been clients had TWF existed at the time. Their individual paths to the TWF boardroom are quite varied, but their spirited generosity in support of its special mission is singular.

A compelling overview of the special struggles experienced by Birmingham's women in poverty can be found in TWF's 2017 report, "[Clearing the Path: Removing barriers to sustainable employment for working single mothers.](#)" Further information on The Women's Fund is available on TWF's extensive [website](#).

Here in Alabama, half of all single mothers live in poverty—the third highest rate in the country—including 45% of those in our five-county metropolitan region.

--from "Clearing the Path," 2017

THE MANDATE

The next CEO of The Women's Fund will be joining at an exciting time. The bold three-year plan is underway and well-grounded in both experience and aspiration, the focus on economic stability is clear, and enthusiasm for the work among both clients and stakeholders is strong and growing. Among the overlapping priorities the new CEO will be expected to address:

- 1. Collaboration.** Collaboration is at the heart of TWF's programmatic focus, and the CEO must model a collaborative spirit in essentially all dealings and relationships. The board and staff are excited by TWF's shift in recent years to innovative, research-based solutions that create deeper, sustainable change in the community. Such solutions are almost invariably the product of joint efforts, and the CEO must be a catalyzing leader in fostering organizational and financial support for such collaboration.
- 2. Advocacy.** The CEO is TWF's most visible champion. Its mission requires a nuanced approach to advocacy, with particular sensitivity to the cultural and political climate in which The Women's Fund operates. TWF is committed to strategic advocacy, whether focused on public policy (eliminating predatory lending, for example, which disproportionately affects the region's women) or financial support (e.g., demonstrating the cost/benefit implications of a

better prepared, more self-sufficient workforce). In all cases, the CEO must set the tone and ensure the best message—and messenger—to optimize the outcomes for women and their families.

3. Fund development. The issues TWF is tackling do not lend themselves to quick fixes, and thus broad support from patient funders is essential to long-term success. (It is telling that a number of TWF's earliest backers in 1996 continue to invest in the organization.) A diversified funding stream is both healthy and necessary, and the CEO must ensure a comprehensive, well executed development strategy fully aligned with TWF's programmatic ambitions. Stewarding relationships at both local and national levels is a continuing priority, and a robust grantwriting strategy is increasingly important.



4. Focus. TWF began by making smaller grants to help other local organizations advance the cause of women in Birmingham. Over time, however, TWF realized its more impactful role was as a coalescing agent focused on financial insecurity. Such clarity has enabled TWF to bring leaders together to help address poverty through multilayered efforts encompassing education, quality childcare, workforce development, advocacy and housing.

The Women's Fund is facilitating true generational change. Rooted in commitment to a clear mission, dedicated to data, and benefitting from momentum strengthened by impactful partnerships, TWF is poised for an even brighter future on behalf of Birmingham's women and their families.

THE LOCATION

The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham is headquartered in downtown Birmingham, Alabama. The nature of TWF's work likely favors candidates already in the area or receptive to returning to it, but the search committee is open to considering culturally attuned leaders with a compelling backstory.

THE RELATIONSHIPS

The CEO reports to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors, The Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham
And manages a staff of 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Director • Programs & Policy Director • Communications Director • Grants & Research Director • Development Associate/Executive Assistant
While stewarding other important relationships, such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program partners & collaborators • Leaders from across the corporate, civic, academic, health, philanthropic and nonprofit communities • Peers in similar funds/foundations in other markets

THE CANDIDATE

The next CEO of The Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham must be a leader passionate about promoting economic opportunity for women and compelling in making the economic case for systemic change with a variety of local, regional and, occasionally, national audiences. The best candidates will be ambitious for the mission, unafraid to take smart risks, and indefatigable (but respectful!) in pursuit of improved outcomes for women in poverty and their families.

The ideal candidate will have relevant experience leading and building a catalytic, community-based organization known for its systemic, collaborative approach to lasting change. Grantmaking experience would be useful, and the ability to attract support from local and, increasingly, national funders is essential. That said, TWF’s ability to help women and their children move beyond poverty hinges as much on its facility for leveraging relationships in common cause as it does in its ability to write checks.

Competence: Among the other traits being sought, TWF expects to hire...

- A leader fully comfortable as the chief advocate for economic security for women, whether one-on-one with a key donor, in the corporate suite, at the table with peer agencies or with policymakers at local and state levels

“You can’t just mentor people out of poverty!”

--Program officer with a major national foundation, speaking on workforce development initiatives, October 2017

- A respectful, empowering boss comfortable leading a team of smart, independent-minded colleagues accustomed to candor and transparency in their dealings with each other and the community at large
- A collaborative change manager experienced in cross-sector leadership; service at the helm of a community-based enterprise respected for sustained impact would be of special interest
- A CEO who respects the power of data but never forgets that TWF's data represents real people dealing with real struggles
- An externally focused generalist who can expand the power of TWF's brand, sharpening its message and expanding its market without neglecting operations, finance or programming; a facility for social media that reaches emerging generations of supporters would be additive
- A board-savvy manager energized by an entrepreneurial environment and largely unfazed by the small-business challenges intrinsic to such an opportunity
- A leader who thrives in a dynamic landscape characterized by smart and devoted stakeholders

Culture: We expect to attract...

- A CEO with the tact and political savvy to engage business leaders and policymakers alike
- A credible, passionate and tireless proponent for TWF's issues and constituencies, keeping the focus firmly on the mission, not the messenger
- A CEO who exhibits both gravitas and grace in dealings with others; a leader with the heart and head for this important work.

Character: We seek a CEO who is...

- At one with TWF's vision of economic opportunity for all women
- Tenacious, decisive and respectful in pursuit of agreed-upon objectives; someone with whom the community enjoys engaging even in the face of potential conflict
- A joyful leader who derives genuine pleasure from supporting the successes of others.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

TWF@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call Laura DiBacco or Sam Pettway

at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392)