



**WOMEN'S FOUNDATION
OF ALABAMA**

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

**President & Chief Executive Officer
Women's Foundation of Alabama
Birmingham, AL**

Advocacy ♦ Equity ♦ Inclusion ♦ Insight ♦ Impact

*"We envision a society where power and possibility are not limited by gender, race, or place."
- Vision of WFA*

The Opportunity

Founded in 1996, what is now known as the [Women's Foundation of Alabama](#) was launched "by twenty strong women [who] invested \$20,000 each... to change the lives of women in Birmingham." Today, Women's Foundation of Alabama (WFA) remains the state's first and only philanthropic Foundation focused solely on the needs of women and girls. The Foundation exclusively uses a gender lens for grantmaking, research, and advocacy. By combining data-driven research, targeted grantmaking, and policy advocacy, the Foundation has reshaped economic opportunities for countless women and families in Alabama. As a trusted leader for over two decades, WFA continues to expand its reach and effectiveness across the state.

Under the leadership of CEO Melanie R. Bridgeforth, the Foundation has grown into a philanthropic powerhouse advancing women's economic power. As Bridgeforth prepares to conclude her tenure in early 2025, WFA's Board of Directors has partnered with BoardWalk Consulting in the search for her successor, who will capitalize on this extraordinary momentum and lead the Foundation into its next chapter of impact.

The Foundation is about to complete its largest-ever fundraising campaign, securing \$10M in the Watershed Campaign to scale programming and double grantmaking to high-impact grantees across Alabama. The Watershed Campaign's goal of introducing 10,000 women into the workforce and on the path to economic mobility by 2027 is aggressive, but it has clearly resonated with funders and supporters.

The Campaign is comprised of three critical streams of effort:

1. Advocacy and Awareness
2. Grantmaking
3. Solidify infrastructure



Today, Women's Foundation of Alabama (WFA) remains the state's first and only philanthropic Foundation focused solely on the needs of women and girls.



WFA is well-positioned to build on its record of leadership to accelerate opportunities for Alabama women and strengthen families and communities today and for generations to come.

WFA's strategic approach, integrating grantmaking, policy advocacy, and collaborative partnerships, has generated a perspective that will guide future impact.

The Organization



A community-driven Foundation impacting the world around us by accelerating economic opportunity for women.



WFA has established itself as a force in the public arena through major defensive policy victories and legislative wins, such as helping secure the state's first Equal Pay Statute, a \$2.25M cumulative state budget appropriation to prepare women for in-demand careers, and a historic \$67.5M public investment in Alabama's workforce through the Child Care Tax Credit.

The Foundation now invests more than \$1M annually in grants to nonprofit organizations across 40 Alabama counties. The Foundation has doubled its staff, doubled the size of its endowment, and nearly tripled its revenues. WFA is well-positioned to build on its record of leadership to accelerate opportunities for Alabama women and strengthen families and communities today and for generations to come.

Armed with a Strategic Vision for 2030, WFA has established three strategic goals:

- 1. Creating conditions for sustainable impact.**
Ensuring significant milestones are achieved to strengthen the Foundation's financial future.
- 2. Advancing transformational change.**
Driving data-informed solutions and policy change.
- 3. Resourcing community-driven solutions.**
Impactful gender-lens investments in communities across Alabama.

WFA's grantmaking portfolio comprises catalytic initiatives, collaboratives, and targeted grants that streamline the ability of women to reach their full potential. Through impactful grantmaking, WFA philanthropy targets organizations across the state of Alabama that have unique talents and missions, such as wraparound support, skills training, success coaching, housing, and child care.

A major factor in the work of WFA is its evidence-based approach to elevating women. The Foundation conducts rigorous research to understand the issues at hand. For example, [Clearing the Path: The Business Case for Child Care](#) examines the significant role women play in Alabama's economic growth. In 2020, WFA published the Status of Women, a first-of-its-kind report on the challenges and solutions facing women in Alabama.



(Click the graphic to learn more).

While WFA grants provide direct relief through investment in community-based organizations, these efforts alone are insufficient. Without legislative change, women and their families will not have a clear path to success. WFA is a leading advocate for nonpartisan policies that break down barriers for women through legislative policy initiatives.

In 2024, WFA deployed a comprehensive advocacy strategy that aimed to permanently change the economic future for women through data-driven policy reforms and grassroots community building.



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The next President & CEO will build on WFA's comprehensive approach to effecting change by using data-driven research-based principles, investing in effective community-based organizations, and ensuring the feasibility of sustainable change through policy initiatives.



Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed the [“Working for Alabama” legislative package](#), which includes HB358, the child care tax credit bill that legislators say will help to increase the state's low labor force participation rate.

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The Mandate

Women's Foundation of Alabama's next CEO will inherit a Foundation that is community-powered and women-focused. To date, WFA has invested more than \$8M in initiatives, research, and policy to strengthen the community by building equitable opportunities for women. Driven by research, WFA identifies and funds innovative solutions to address critical needs and remove barriers to create deep, lasting change for the region and statewide.

Energized by recent legislative wins and exceptional fundraising success, the Board and the staff are committed to strategic, visionary thinking, bold(er) community investments, and the challenge of higher expectations with a growth mindset.

The Board is primed for a continued strong mission and a big vision for WFA to be a true catalyst for progress in its expanding footprint. Accordingly, the CEO can expect overlapping mandates with the following themes:

- ✔ **Continue to Deliver Big Wins for Alabama Women**, creating systemic change through research, legislative action, and grantmaking investment.
- ✔ **Expand and Strengthen the Statewide Presence and Impact**, building strategic relationships in all 67 counties in Alabama to truly have a statewide footprint.

✓ **Solidify Internal Organizational Infrastructure & Leadership**, recruiting, retaining, and inspiring a cohesive team, and improving the Foundation’s operational process.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Foundation of Alabama will provide visionary leadership, strategic direction, and operational management to drive research, advocacy, and grantmaking for the economic empowerment of women.

Vision. WFA seeks a CEO who will inspire, energize, and articulate the Foundation’s vision, guiding strategy, research, grantmaking, and advocacy. For more than 20 years, WFA has invested in the economic empowerment and advancement of women. Continuing the vision of measurable, sustained equity for Alabama women is essential. The CEO will expand the Foundation’s reach as a national model of intentionally using research, advocacy, and grantmaking to mobilize and empower women.

Fiscal Stewardship. The next CEO will be an exceptional fundraiser who builds and leverages strategic relationships with prospective and established donors. Building on the grassroots effort of “20 strong women investing in the lives of women in Alabama,” the next CEO will cultivate funding relationships with both individuals and corporations who will be catalysts for the Foundation’s continued growth and impact. The CEO will be a business-savvy steward of the Foundation’s resources, providing oversight of the budget and ensuring accountability and transparency in financial compliance and reporting.

Community Investment & Advocacy. The CEO will be the external advocate for WFA. The next leader will increase awareness of women’s advocacy with a clear call to action. A persuasive advocate, the CEO will be equally at ease with the State Legislature and community-based grantees—a leader who thrives in building relationships with key stakeholders, corporate partners, and individuals committed to making a positive impact in the lives of women.



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Armed with a new Strategic Plan to drive the Foundation's vision for 2030, the CEO will collaborate with the WFA Board to implement, enhance, and expand the reach and impact of WFA.

Organizational Leadership. The Women's Foundation of Alabama has a team of 10 deeply committed professionals. The next President & CEO will recruit, mentor, and retain a high-performing, cohesive team, fostering a trusted organizational culture that promotes inclusivity, collaboration, and professional development. The CEO will establish, motivate, and measure annual performance metrics while celebrating wins and coaching through issues.

Board Relations. The Board of Directors of the Women's Foundation of Alabama is comprised of 22 exceptional leaders in the state. Armed with a new Strategic Plan to drive the Foundation's vision for 2030, the CEO will collaborate with the WFA Board to implement, enhance, and expand the reach and impact of WFA. The CEO will ensure transparency and accurate accounting through monthly reports and make strategic recommendations to the Board.

Grant Strategy. Responsive grantmaking has been a major part of WFA's approach and success. Grants in response to specific requests will continue to be a critical part of the Foundation's portfolio. WFA's success fuels the appetite for bolder investments with bigger long-term impacts for the women of Alabama. The success of fundraising for the Watershed Campaign speaks to the donor relationships committed to investing in the goal of introducing 10,000 women into the workforce and on the path of economic mobility by 2027. The next CEO will directly invest in the goals of this campaign through grantmaking investments.

The Candidate

The next leader will bring a demonstrated commitment and ability to center equity and justice for women. The President & CEO will be a strategic thinker and an effective fundraiser who offers political influence and understands how to develop and sustain bi-partisan collaborative relationships.

The ideal leader is 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. WFA requires a strong advocate for women without alienating men and a CEO with tact and political savvy to engage business leaders and policymakers alike.

The CEO will be a credible, passionate, and tireless proponent of WFA's issues and constituencies. Keeping the focus firmly on the mission is critical.

The Board seeks a CEO who exhibits both gravitas and grace in connecting with others. A leader with the heart and head for this important work is best suited to lead into the Foundation's future. The CEO will be 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.

Personal Characteristics

- Dynamic communicator
- Rooted in and believes in Alabama
- Flexible negotiator
- Bridge builder, convener
- A future-forward thinker who brings creativity
- High energy; stamina
- Personal integrity
- Cares for people
- Humble
- High EQ
- People-first leader
- Intuitive listener
- Strong attention to detail



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The Relationships



The next President & CEO will recruit, mentor, and retain a high-performing, cohesive team, fostering a trusted organizational culture that promotes inclusivity, collaboration, and professional development.

<p>Reports to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women's Foundation of Alabama Board of Directors
<p>Manages:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Operating Officer • Vice President for Philanthropy and Learning • Director of Development • Program Officer • Senior Program Officer • Corporate and Foundations Relations Officer • Communication and Grassroots Coordinator • Development Coordinator • Executive Assistant • External Affairs
<p>Key Stakeholders:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Partners • Grantees • Collaborators • Donors • State Representatives • Leaders in corporate, civic, academic, health, philanthropic communities, and national mission-aligned Foundations serving the unique needs of women in other markets.

The Location

Alabama is a special place with a complicated history that gives rise to both opportunities and challenges. Women's Foundation of Alabama's beautiful new offices are centrally located in Birmingham, the largest metro area in the state. Birmingham is a vibrant hub of culture, with a thriving food scene, world-class museums, parks, and arts organizations, as well as organizations like the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the 16th Street Baptist Church that keep the ongoing struggle for civil rights prominent in the community's identity.



For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email:

WFACEO@boardwalkconsulting.com

or call Terri Kohan or Cynthia Moreland, at 404-262-7392.

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