Dear Colleague:

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the 2017 Spring Convening for Grantmakers for Southern Progress (GSP), co-hosted by the Coastal Community Foundation in Charleston, SC. We thank the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Four Freedoms Funds, Hill-Snowdon Foundation, the Kendeda Fund, Kresge Foundation, the Ms. Foundation for Women, and the Solutions Project for your support of this convening.

We appreciate your commitment to participate in a three-day gathering to share and discuss the opportunities, challenges and best practices for supporting structural change and advancing progress in the South. We are also extremely excited about the launch and release of the As the South Grows report in partnership with the National Committee on Responsible Philanthropy.

The GSP Spring Convening has been designed to create a mutual learning opportunity for national funders and regional leaders. This is an opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences and strategies to help inform and shape our collective understanding of best practices and approaches that lead to structural change and ultimately progress in the South.

We have chosen to gather in Charleston, South Carolina because of the history of oppression and resistance which can be instructive to our quest to better understand what’s possible in the South with the support of philanthropy. Charleston, in so many ways represents the complexity of the South with its resilient people, diverse culture and natural resources, it is a place (like many in the region) well positioned to write a new history and story anchored by great work of local people making progress on really tough issues like equity and economic inclusion.

We look forward to learning from the field, learning from each other and exploring how we can best move forward to advance progress in the Southern Region.

It is our hope that we all leave this convening with a renewed commitment to strengthening the partnerships that will allow us to marshall the intellectual, human and financial capital necessary achieve comprehensive and lasting progress in the South.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for being our ally in building, aligning and leveraging resources for strategic structural change in the South.

Sincerely,

Nat Williams, GSP Co-Chair  Lavastian Glenn, GSP Co-Chair
Dear GSP Members, Funding Partners, and Friends,

I would like to personally welcome you to the Holy City of Charleston, South Carolina for the 2017 Spring Convening of the Grantmakers for Southern Progress.

As one of the most historically significant cities in the nation, Charleston is the perfect place to hold this event because it is one of the longest and most diverse of any communities in the U.S.

The planning committee has worked hard to create a space where funders and practitioners will be able to share and discuss the opportunities, challenges, and best strategies for supporting structural change and advancing progress in the South.

From panels to power circles, learning tours to “edutainment”...we hope you will leave this convening informed, enlightened and inspired to join the movement.

Fresh ideas, bold leadership, and strategic collaborations are needed to help move this work forward. The time is now. The place is here. Let’s get to work—together.

Thank you for joining us,

Darrin Goss, Sr.
President & CEO, Coastal Community Foundation of SC
get social with GSP

We want you to share with the world about what you're doing in the South this week. Post updates on your social media sites, friend us on Facebook, twitter, and posts plenty of photos and tag GSP!

Hashtags: #FundSouth | #GSP2017

Twitter: @SouthernGrants
Instagram: @SouthernGrants
Facebook: Grantmakers for Southern Progress
DAY ONE: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 –

11:00 AM  Registration (Location: Queen Street Gallery)

Welcome to the Charleston!
Welcome to Grantmakers for Southern Progress 2017 Spring Convening. From 11:00 am – 4:00 pm, we will open the Convening with a welcome lunch that will have a southern marketplace theme as a backdrop. Experience a warm southern welcome and interactive experience includes local cultural, arts and crafts vendors that will be on display to sell, demonstrate or sample their items.

12:30 PM  GSP Spring Convening Opening Program (Location: Ballroom)

1:00 PM  Opening Plenary (Location: Ballroom)

As The South Grows Frame: Understanding the Opportunities, Uncovering Assumptions and Removing Barriers

Learning Session 1
The opening plenary will launch the official release of the As the South Grows report and Initiative. This four (4) part report developed by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), in partnership with Grantmakers for Southern Progress and with contributions from the Institute for Southern Studies highlights core findings from interviews and focus groups with over 100 foundations and organizations working in the South around best approaches and practices for philanthropy to support structural change work in the South. During this session, NCRP will discuss report findings, provide a framework and share specific recommendations for philanthropists to partner more effectively with high-performing, under-recognized Southern leaders and organizations on the front-lines of change.

Discussants:
LaTosha Brown, Project Director of Grantmakers for Southern Progress, Moderator
Ainka Sanders, Executive Director of the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation
Chris Kromm, Executive Director of the Institute for Southern Studies
Ben Barge, Senior Associate for Learning and Engagement of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

Reflections from the Field: Uncovering and Identifying Our Assumptions. What Do We Really Know About the South? And, What Would We Really Want To Learn by Jeanné Isler by Vice President and Chief Engagement Officer of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
2:15 PM  Break

2:30 PM  Group Learning Activity: Sharing Circles Exercise (Location: Ballroom)

3:30 PM  Break

3:45 PM  Learning Circle Summary Report Outs

5:00 PM  Day Concludes

6:00 PM  Welcome to Charleston Reception at the Charleston Museum

8:00 PM  Welcome Reception Concludes
DAY TWO: Thursday, April 6, 2017 -

8:00 AM  Breakfast (Queen Street Foyer)

9:00 AM  Morning Plenary (Location: Rutledge Ballroom, Main Level)

Reflections from the Field: The Importance of Contextualizing Southern Capacity and Infrastructure by Gladys Washington, Deputy Director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

Fertile Ground: Strategies for Supporting and Strengthening Existing Infrastructure and Capacity in the South

Learning Session 2
This session will highlight approaches and strategies used by foundations and organizations around supporting infrastructure and capacity building in the region. The panelists will share their experiences and give context to capacity building within various models to include a local organization, statewide network, regional foundation & national foundation. Through a Power Building small group exercise attendees will also have the opportunity to learn and share the framework, tools and approaches of their institutions around supporting existing infrastructure and capacity building.

Discussants:
Justin Maxson, Executive Director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Moderator
Tamieka Atkins, Interim Director of ProGeorgia State Table
Bernie Mazyck, Executive Director of the South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations
Darrin Goss, President and CEO of the Coastal Community Foundation
Henry Der, Senior Program Officer of Four Freedoms Fund

10:30 AM  Break

11:00 AM  Group Learning Activity: Learning Circles Exercise
Tour #1: Lowcountry SC-History, Culture and a Sustainable Future - Extended Tour
(12:00 pm – 8:00 pm)

Take a trip to the past in order to understand current conditions and to envision what’s possible for the future if we continue to grow efforts that not only preserve and protect natural resources, but also embrace people and their culture as vehicles for a sustainable development. Convening participants will travel to St. Helena Island and the Penn Center in Beaufort South Carolina to learn about Gullah Geechy culture, cooperative farming and Heirs property land preservation. Guest speakers include the Center for Heirs Property Preservation, Dorothy & Gaylord Donnelly Foundation, the Rural Resource Coalition and the Gullah Farmers Cooperative. This tour will leave the Mills Hotel at 12:30 pm and will return to Charleston by 8:00 pm. Dinner, a Lowcountry boil at the Penn Center is included. You are encouraged to bring a journal, reading material, camera etc. There will be speakers on the bus ride down to St. Helena. No programming is scheduled for the ride back, so there’s time to rest and decompress from the day. Note: Bus departs promptly from the Mills House at 12:30 pm. Boxed lunch and dinner included.

Tour #2: North Charleston Neighborhood Tour - People, development and Institutional Accountability
(1:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

This tour will explore the issues of power, race, gender and inclusion in the context of community development. North Charleston is the community where thousands of low-moderate income people call home and have been actively organizing for over 20 years to improve living conditions, including access to safe affordable housing, ending environmental pollution and most recently increasing police accountability after the murder of Walter Scott. Tour participants will hear from local organizers and CED practitioners about the history of resistance in North Charleston but also efforts to build new vehicles for economic and social justice. Guest speakers include: Metanoia CDC, Black Lives Matter Charleston, SC Community Loan Fund, Girls Rock Charleston and Coastal Community Foundation of Charleston.

Note: Bus departs promptly from the Mills House at 1:00 pm and returns to the Mills House at 5:00 pm. Boxed lunch included. Dine on your own in downtown Charleston after the tour. A listing of restaurant within walking distance available at the registration desk.
Arc of Justice traces the remarkable journey of New Communities, Inc. (NCI) in southwest Georgia, a story of racial justice, community organizing, and perseverance in the face of enormous obstacles.

NCI was created in 1969 in Albany, Georgia by leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, including Congressman John Lewis, and Charles and Shirley Sherrod, to help secure economic independence for African American families. For 15 years, NCI cooperatively farmed nearly 6,000 acres, the largest tract of land in the United States owned by African Americans at the time, but racist opposition prevented them from implementing plans to build 500 affordable homes as part of their community land trust.

Unable to secure government loans to cope with the impact of successive years of drought, NCI lost the land to foreclosure in 1985. But 25 years later it was given new life as a result of a successful class action lawsuit brought by hundreds of African American farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for loan discrimination. With the settlement, the original founders purchased a 1,600-acre plantation once owned by the largest slave owner and richest man in Georgia. NCI is now growing pecans and using the antebellum mansion on the property as a retreat and training center, still committed to its original mission of promoting racial justice and economic development.

DAY THREE: Friday, April 6, 2017 -

7:30 AM Breakfast (Queen Street Foyer)

9:00 AM Morning Plenary (Location: Ballroom)

Reflections from the Field: The Value of Developing a Shared Analysis, Framework and Place-Based Strategies for Building Power that Centers People: Dennis Quirin, President of the Neighborhood Funders Group

**Harvesting and Expanding Southern Power: Strategies for Co-Learning, Aligning Our Work, Learning Framework, and Place-Based Strategies for Building Power that Centers People** by Dennis Quirin, President of the Neighborhood Funders Group

This session will explore, examine and highlight strategies that have been implemented by foundations and philanthropic institutions for the purpose of facilitating co-learning and strategic alignment within the field. Panelists will discuss best practices and lessons learned around specific models for greater funder alignment around structural change work in the region to include the development of a Funders network, establishing a collaborative fund, leverage funding and working groups. Convening participants will also have the opportunity to respond, exchange ideas and share within an open forum and small group exercise.

**Discussants:**
- Nat Williams, Executive Director of the Hill-Snowdon Foundation
- Chantelle Fisher-Borne, Project Director of the Out In the South Initiative
- Felecia Lucky, Executive Director of the Black Belt Community Foundation
- Eddy Morales, Morales Public Relations and the Southern Working Group
- Takema Robinson, Principal of Convergence and Coordinator of the Greater New Orleans Funders Network

10:30 AM Break

11:00 AM Group Learning Activity: PowerBuilding Circles Exercise (Location: Ballroom)

12:00 PM Break
12:30 PM     Closing Luncheon Plenary (Location: Ballroom)

Reflections from the Field: The Importance of Supporting Grassroots Organizations and Community Based Work: Vivian Anderson, Executive Director of Every Black Girl.

As the South Grows More Equitable and Just through Strategic Alliances: A Call to Action

Learning Session 4: In this session national and regional funders will share strategies and highlight partnership models that work successfully within the constraints of “regressive policies” to advance progress in the South in a traditionally conservative and politically polarized environment. This final session will provide an opportunity for GSP convening participants to discuss emerging work and explore next steps for moving forward together as a learning community for deeper strategic alignment. What are ways that Funders and practitioners can effectively work and learn together as partners to forge progress in the region? What are concrete steps to creating regional learning opportunities? Is there a desire to continue to move this conversation forward? If so, what should be our next steps?

Discussants:
LaTosha Brown, Project Director of Grantmakers for Southern Progress, Moderator
Aleyamma Mathew, Director of the Women’s Economic Justice Program of the Ms. Foundation
Fernando Cuevas, Executive Director of the Southern Partner Fund
Tyler Nickerson, Director of Investments and State Strategy of The Solutions Project
Lavastian Glenn, Program Director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

2:00 PM     GSP 2017 Spring Convening Concludes
WHO WE ARE?

Grantmakers for Southern Progress is a network of southern based and national funders who are committed to fostering thriving communities in the US South, based on the principles and practice of equity and shared prosperity. We envision a region, and a country, that is just and caring, where all people truly have the power to live healthy, prosperous and whole lives free of fear and marginalization. GSP believes that as we achieve this change in the south it will pave the way for it to happen across the country, for as the south goes, so goes the nation.

The enduring legacy of the South's but not unique, practice of structural racism, patriarchy, economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and social and cultural marginalization of minority groups requires a profound and targeted transformation of the institutional norms, policies, practices and social values of the region to create communities where all groups can truly thrive and reach their full potential. To achieve this goal, GSP believes that it is necessary is to fully embrace and embody the principle and practice of equity and shared prosperity in every aspect of life in the South.

For our part, GSP’s role is to engage and support the philanthropic and non-profit sector to transform its priorities and practices to help achieve this vision of equity and shared prosperity in the region. We carry out this role by 1) learning together whether that’s through deep placed-based engagement, 2) informal sharing of information, and/or 3) formal research.

DEFINITION OF TERMS/VALUES/PHILOSOPHY:

- Transformative progress. Equity (outcomes), differential investments to address different conditions, acceptance of role of structural racism, patriarchy and capitalism in creating gross inequities and depressed opportunities to thrive overall
- Transform the philosophy and practice of philanthropy along the spectrum of Individual change to Structural change to Equitable change. Equitable Change could be a new catch phrase (if you all like it) to describe the 1) structural change with equitable outcomes that we seek in communities; 2) the need to apply differential interventions to achieve equitable outcomes (equity not equality); 3) the need to do deep work on anti-racism work in the region; 4) the change in the relationship between southern and national funders that prioritizes southern leadership and authentic partnerships; etc.
- Equity
- Shared Prosperity
**GSP Beliefs:**

- Understanding Institutional Racism and Oppression is Fundamental—The current social, economic and political conditions experienced by low-wealth people and people of color in the region (high rates of poverty, stagnant growth, marginalization and devaluing of entire communities) are the results of decades and in some cases hundreds of years of economic and social policy decisions and institutional practices e.g. Slavery, Jim Crow, Segregation, Social Security Act, that in many of the states continue in some form even as the laws have changed.
- Addressing Culture is Critical—These same institutional policies and practices have created a culture of “exclusion, fear and devaluing” of people based on race, class, gender identity, and immigration status. This culture exists in various degrees and formation across the region.
- Inequality Is A Threat to Progress—In order to change our trajectory as a region, we must identify and fund strategies that seek to advance institutional policies and practices that even the playing field—“equity” and end discrimination and bias across multiple sectors and issues. In other words, “structural inequality” is a threat to regional progress and to the mission of many foundations.
- How and with whom you invest Matters—Philanthropy must invest in local people and networked institutions to lead change across the region. Institutional and informal leadership does exist within the region and among people who are directly impacted. Foundations must focus on supporting directly affected people and their allies to build organizational infrastructure to address structural barriers to a better life and to ultimately shift culture.

**GSP Core Values:**

- Equity
- Inclusion
- Sharing Power
- Fairness
- Justice
- Centering of directly affected people
- Learning
- Relationships
Why Do We Exist?

- 1) Historical pattern of low investments in the region from national foundations
- 2) Historical pattern of low investments in structural change strategies by foundations based in the South
- 3) Historical practice of either working in silos or low strategic engagement among Southern and National funders and other stakeholders
- 4) Overall, what we perceive is a lack of understanding of the region’s challenges as well as opportunity

What we hope to accomplish?

- Equity
- Inclusion
- Sharing Power
- Fairness
- Justice
- Centering of directly affected people
- Learning
- Relationships

How we will get there?

- The Southern US is a beautiful and complex region with as many community assets as there are challenges. GSP believes that we can accomplish our goals as a working group and network by 1) learning together whether that’s through deep placed-based engagement, 2) informal sharing of information, and/or 3) formal research.
- We know and believe that not one institution has all the answers and the only way we have a shot at being successful as funders is to be intentional about learning and committed as individuals and institutions to change or evolve our organizational practices when there is evidence of a better way forward. Southern Progress may be defined across a multitude of issues and strategies e.g. affordable housing, access to healthcare to workforce development, leading one to feel like GSP is ultimately a “big tent” network. This however this is not our goal. What’s more important is that as a working group we are coming together to accomplish the 3 explicit goals listed above AND that we operate with a set of core values and beliefs that guide our work and time together.
What do we do as GSP?

- Research on economic, social and political trends in the South, practitioners leading structural/cultural change to inform philanthropic practice/strategy
- Support members in placed-based learning and relationship building among funders and practitioners through learning tours, convening and coordination of place-based funder collaboratives
- Communicate and promote understanding of regional challenges and opportunities
- Support a cohort of funder colleagues in building their own individual and institution’s capacity for working in the South and addressing structural/cultural issues?
- Collaborate with other existing affinity groups to develop learning content for GSP network

Invitation to join GSP?

- If your foundation has an interest in supporting work in the American South
- If you’re looking for a resource to help inform your grantmaking in any of the states
- If you are a funder that funds, housing, job creation, workforce development, health, small business development, civic engagement, community organizing, government, racial equity, community economic development, climate change, leadership development and are open to learning, subscribe to GSP core values or have a commitment to developing an equity lens/structural change grantmaking approach, then GSP is a resource for you.

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THANK YOU
SPONSORS
A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FUNDERS FOR PARTICIPATING AND SUPPORTING THIS EFFORT!