

2025 Cycle 2 – Recommended Grants

Economic Opportunity for All – 9 Grants (\$326,000)

Birmingham Corps: \$50,000 to help power a transformational service-to-career model that directly connects overlooked local talent with high-impact, full-time jobs. Funding will support the strategic expansion of programming, made possible by a newly awarded AmeriCorps grant, which uniquely combines paid public service placements, career coaching, wrap-around support (transportation, childcare, and healthcare), and employer engagement to increase workforce participation in a meaningful way.

Community Care Development Network: \$40,000 to increase capacity of the Inspire Education Academy's career training and certification program. Students complete their GED if needed and enroll in community college or skilled trade certification programs. Participants receive case management to address the unique needs of each student, including assistance with stability, safety, transportation, food, clothing, and obtaining essential documents. Through partnerships with the Alabama Community College System and skilled trade certification providers, the Academy offers workforce development programs that provide students with the skills and certifications needed for high-demand careers.

East Lake Academy dba Banks Academy: \$15,000 to address food insecurity by expanding the school's nutrition program to include both breakfast and lunch for all students at no cost. Providing nutritious meals increases focus, attendance, and achievement and ensures all students begin the day prepared to learn.

Glenwood, Inc.: \$11,000 to establish a Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab at Allan Cott School, with extended access for adult participants in Glenwood's Community Experience program, the Alabama Department of Mental Health's Community Waiver program, and Journey Academy. The PAES lab is a powerful tool for supporting individuals with cognitive disabilities where they can explore real-world job tasks at their own pace. This exploration builds confidence and helps guide future educational and vocational planning, all while reinforcing independence and practical skill development.

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama: \$50,000 to advance economic mobility through ¡HICA!'s Workforce Development program by equipping participants with the job-specific skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. Focused on helping low-to-moderate income individuals access living-wage careers, the program provides personalized coaching, career readiness training, and digital skills support while also helping to address barriers such as childcare and transportation. Funding will support expansion of workforce development programming across high-demand sectors including healthcare, technology, education, and manufacturing. This support will advance career pathways and fuel economic growth that enables more families to thrive.

Legacy Prep: \$50,000 to support the Building a Legacy Capital Campaign, which expands access to high-quality education for Birmingham's underserved youth through the opening of Legacy Prep Intermediate in the Belview Heights neighborhood. The new campus relieves overcrowding at the elementary site and expands total capacity from 350 to 600 students, meeting strong community demand for tuition-free, college-preparatory education.

Momentum: \$40,000 to support non-academic scholarships across three core leadership programs: Executive Leadership, Upward Leadership, and Momentum Works. Founded in 2002 by professionals committed to advancing women, Momentum has reshaped the state's leadership landscape. Through dynamic training, mentoring, and a powerful support network, the organization equips women with the skills, confidence, and connections to thrive and lead.

M-POWER Ministries: \$40,000 to expand education and health services. M-POWER offers an array of adult educational opportunities and provides health care to the most vulnerable in our community. Funding will be used to increase marketing to bring in more students, to recruit and retain teachers, to provide additional mental health services for students, and to offer additional online tutoring and testing for GED completion.

REV Birmingham: \$30,000 to implement targeted strategies over the next year that will create new opportunities for growth in Woodlawn. Strategies include 1) engaging a property-management company to improve conditions at REV-owned properties, positioning them for higher future market rents; 2) making the district cleaner, safer, and more beautiful through pressure washing, litter removal, and landscaping; and 3) creating events that drive foot traffic. While REV has employed elements of these strategies in the past, this support will increase capacity to move them all forward at once.

Equity and Inclusion – 10 Grants (\$256,000)

Alabama Symphonic Association, Inc.: \$33,000 to support Momentum, a symposium that promotes community through music and is the first and only program of its kind in the Southeast. This free education symposium offers specialized professional development and music instruction for Alabama students of all backgrounds. Momentum is designed to exemplify and celebrate diversity and inclusion in the arts through programming that acknowledges Black history, showcases diverse voices, and introduces a spectrum of musical professions and skills to students from across Alabama, with a focus on engaging students from Alabama HBCUs.

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute: \$25,000 to expand the Legacy Youth Leadership Program, a year-long civic education initiative for high school students rooted in Birmingham's Civil Rights history, and to deepen the impact of the Community of STREAMers program, which brings culturally relevant STEM and literacy programming to K-5 students. These programs reflect a renewed institutional commitment to intergenerational education, narrative reclamation, and hands-on learning grounded in place and history.

Down Syndrome Alabama: \$5,000 to expand the EDge Up for Down Syndrome reading camp, designed to provide continuous educational engagement for students with Down Syndrome. Grant funds will address gaps in extended school-year services by offering structured, evidence-based literacy instruction during summer and holiday breaks. This investment will promote academic growth, reduce skill regression, and advance equitable access to education.

Grace House Ministries: \$45,000 to strengthen organizational capacity following the Growing in Grace capital campaign, which doubled on-campus Transitional Living Program capacity for girls in foster care. This growth requires stronger

systems to sustain quality care and leadership across the expanded campus. Grace House will add an Associate Director and a Human Resources Manager to enhance operations, accountability, and long-term organizational sustainability.

Holy Family Cristo Rey Catholic High School: \$25,000 to enhance bilingual outreach and engagement through HFCR's Bilingual Recruitment Coordinator (BRC). The BRC serves as the primary liaison for families (community meetings, personalized outreach, school tours, and even home visits). To ensure equitable accessibility, the BRC translates and adapts all informational and application materials. Grant funds will ensure HFCR is cultivating and expanding a culturally rich network and is participating in and hosting multicultural events to strengthen community ties.

Libby's Friends: \$8,000 to expand access to communication devices for children with speech and language challenges. Grant funds will provide Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices that enable children to express themselves, connect with peers, and engage in daily interactions. AAC devices support communication independence, help with social development, strengthen family ties, and improve the overall quality of life for children with complex communication needs.

Renew Birmingham: \$25,000 to support Renew's Leaders in the Making program, a 10-week youth leadership and career readiness initiative serving teens from Ensley, Tuxedo, and Wylam neighborhoods. The curriculum includes leadership development, career exploration, financial literacy, teamwork, public speaking, and a youth-led community service project. Each session features interactive workshops and guest speakers who reflect the diversity and lived experience of Birmingham's workforce and civic leadership.

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church: \$50,000 to support the creation of an Education and Visitors Center. This 14,200 square foot building will be a place of fellowship, healing, and reconciliation and will house expanded historical exhibits, a family-style restaurant designed to build community, and flexible meeting spaces for programs of all sizes. This project will ensure continued access to this national landmark, fostering reflection, education, and unity for future generations.

St. Clair Community Health Clinic: \$25,000 to support the hiring of a community outreach coordinator responsible for developing and executing strategies to connect minority, underserved, and vulnerable populations with essential healthcare and mental health services. The St. Clair Community Health Clinic is dedicated to elevating quality of life through a primary healthcare clinic that serves the uninsured, indigent residents of St. Clair County through innovative and compassionate care.

Woolley Institute for Spoken-Language Education: \$15,000 to launch a pilot After School Care Program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This initiative fills a critical gap in Alabama's continuum of care for children with hearing loss and their families, extending the proven impact of WISE's early intervention and preschool programming into the after-school hours. The program offers a language-rich, supportive environment where students can continue developing listening, spoken language, literacy, and social skills while receiving individualized attention from trained professionals.

Overcoming Persistent Poverty – 18 Grants (\$453,000)

Alabama Kidney Foundation, Inc.: \$40,000 to increase capacity of the Transportation Assistance Program for dialysis patients facing economic and health-related barriers. Grant funds will provide reliable transportation for up to 45 new patients to medical treatments, helping patients maintain consistent access to life-sustaining care. These services will help reduce health disparities, improve patient outcomes, and enhance quality of life for individuals managing chronic kidney disease.

Assistance League of Birmingham: \$15,000 to expand the Clothes for Class Shoppers initiative, which provides school clothing for students in need across Birmingham-area middle schools. Grant funds will greatly increase the number of schools and students served, ensuring children have appropriate attire for academic success and confidence.

Better Basics: \$50,000 to support after-school services for 80 students in Fairfield City Schools as Better Basics restructures following the loss of a federal grant. Better Basics has provided critical after-school programs to hundreds of students in Fairfield City Schools for over 15 years. These programs include rigorous academic support provided by certified teachers, homework help, enrichment opportunities, STEM lessons, physical fitness, and parental engagement activities.

Blount County District Attorney's Office: \$20,000 to expand the Helping Families Initiative designed to support families facing difficult life circumstances that negatively impact their child's school attendance, behavior, or academic success. When a student is struggling, it is often a reflection of challenges happening at home—financial stress, housing instability, family conflict, health issues, or other crises. This program aims to bridge that gap by providing timely, compassionate, and practical support to stabilize families and remove barriers that hinder a child's ability to learn and thrive.

Bundles of Hope: \$50,000 to support the purchase of their currently leased building, a 22,000 sq. ft. space centrally located in heart of downtown Birmingham. Bundles of Hope distributes 275,000 diapers, 440,000 wipes, and 114,000 period products each month. Resources are distributed through multiple program avenues: direct service/walk-in, mobile distribution, door deliveries, home visiting collaboration, partner collaboration, and disaster response.

Community Food Bank of Central Alabama: \$35,000 to support Mobile Pantry programs in Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Blount County. Mobile Pantries are food pantries on wheels that target areas without consistent access to fresh and healthy food options. Each person that comes to a distribution receives a 20 lb. box of shelf-stable goods, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and fruits and vegetables. The Community Food Bank operates 15 Mobile Pantries in CFG's footprint and distributed 966,579 meals through those sites in 2024.

GirlSpring: \$15,000 to expand mental health and empowerment programming for adolescent girls across Alabama. The six-session Social Emotional Learning program educates girls on goal setting, risk and resilience, communication skills, and healthy relationships. Since launched, the program has reached over 300 girls at nearly 20 schools. Funding will allow expansion into at least 5 new schools.

Grace Klein Community Inc.: \$50,000 to transform a 1,282-square-foot space at the FeedBHM Pelham facility into a fully operational, commercial-grade Sustainability Kitchen. The space will serve as the central hub for food preservation, education, and community resilience, ensuring rescued perishable food is efficiently processed and redistributed to families throughout central Alabama.

Hearts of Wheels: \$20,000 to purchase a small service cargo van and tools for the WorkForce Transportation Support Program. This vehicle will be equipped to perform light maintenance tasks for a fleet of mentee cars and community service events. These tasks include delivering parts to repair shop partners, unlocking car doors, replacing headlights, changing flat tires, and replacing dead batteries. The Workforce Transportation Support Program grants deserving youth access to a vehicle and provides them with essential training to foster independence and gainful employment.

Heidi's Kids: \$14,000 to expand Emotional Support Resource Room programs at Center Point Elementary. This work focuses on ensuring every student has access to consistent and reliable resources that address immediate needs and long-term barriers to learning. Funding will support implementation of two essential programs: Blessing Sacks (weekend and holiday food packs) and the Hygiene Resource Closet (stocked with essential supplies such as soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and feminine hygiene products).

Life On Wheels: \$10,000 to expand outreach to underserved Hispanic women that often face significant barriers to accessing pregnancy care. Many feel hesitant or fearful of approaching traditional clinics due to language barriers, cultural differences, or uncertainty about where to turn for support. By prioritizing cultural and linguistic accessibility, Life On Wheels ensures that Hispanic women can confidently seek care, receive timely pregnancy testing and ultrasounds, and connect with supportive resources. This project strengthens trust, promotes early pregnancy care, and advances health equity in our community.

Redemptive Cycles: \$10,000 to support façade improvements that will strengthen the organization's visibility and community presence in downtown Birmingham. Funding is provided as a grant match for the City of Birmingham's Facade Improvement Program. Redemptive Cycles provides opportunities for any adult who lacks dependable transportation to earn a bike, helmet, lock, and set of lights through their Earn A Bike program and provides refurbished bikes to children in Housing Authority of Birmingham District communities.

The Gatherings Mentoring, Networking and Outreach: \$15,000 to expand the Pathway to Success, Wellness, and Education Program by launching the Hub for Education in Brighton. This new facility will serve as the permanent home for Little Doves Trauma-Informed Childcare and expanded youth programs, providing a cradle-to-career continuum that addresses persistent poverty through education, mentoring, and family engagement. The hub will house early learning classrooms, tutoring and counseling spaces, workforce readiness labs, and community meeting areas, enabling delivery of wraparound services for children and young adults.

Trinity United Methodist Church: \$20,000 to increase capacity of the Food Share program at the Outreach Hub that serves over 650 households weekly. Funding will provide additional freezer and refrigeration space to safely store and distribute more fresh meat, produce, and dairy items.

Urban Purpose Inc: \$5,000 to increase capacity for the services offered at the Compound day shelter. At the Compound, Urban Purpose meets urgent needs with dignified solutions like nutritious food, hot showers, laundry facilities, hygiene items, clean clothing, and a safe place to rest. Beyond immediate relief, the team builds relationships that connect individuals to medical care, addiction recovery, employment, and housing resources.

Volunteer Lawyers Birmingham: \$45,000 to expand the Fresh Start Initiative, providing free legal services to help individuals overcome criminal record-related barriers to employment, housing, and stability. Funds will allow VLB to hire a dedicated staff attorney, recruit and train more volunteer lawyers, and host targeted legal clinics. It will also support outreach in communities most affected by the criminal legal system, with presentations, educational materials, and partnerships to connect residents with help.

Woodlawn Community Table: \$7,000 to provide consistent, nutritious food access for families facing poverty and experiencing food insecurity. Funds will support the cooperative model's core values of dignity, community ownership, and mutual support while building infrastructure for long-term viability and expanded impact.

Youth Towers: \$32,000 to expand transitional and rapid rehousing programs for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in Greater Birmingham. Grant funds will support emergency housing, individualized case management, and wraparound services that help participants achieve stability and self-sufficiency. This initiative reduces youth homelessness, improves access to safe shelter, and creates pathways to independence for vulnerable young adults.

Regional Cooperation – 4 Grants (\$104,000)

Birmingham Business Alliance Foundation: \$40,000 to support phase one of the Jefferson County Regional Economic Development Asset Map, a unified digital platform that consolidates the region's commercial and industrial property data, transforming how businesses, developers, and community leaders access and market local assets. This initiative will deliver professional-grade marketing tools to all 33 municipalities for their commercial and industrial assets while providing BBA with comprehensive regional intelligence. The platform becomes Jefferson County's unified front door for commercial and industrial expansion opportunities, transforming fragmented property information into accessible, searchable intelligence that drives business development across the region.

Cahaba River Society: \$40,000 to strengthen the newly merged Cahaba River Coalition (CRC), uniting Cahaba River Society and Cahaba Riverkeeper to protect and preserve the Cahaba River and its watershed. This unification combines the River Society and Riverkeeper's science, data, education, recreation, advocacy, stewardship and policy work, making the merged organization more efficient and impactful than the separate legacy organizations. The Cahaba faces escalating threats like polluted stormwater runoff, unpermitted wastewater discharges, habitat loss from overdevelopment, agricultural impacts, and the accelerating effects of climate change. CRC exists to meet these challenges and is uniting legacy resources and expertise, mobilizing communities, and providing the leadership needed to safeguard this vital source of clean water, recreation, and biodiversity.

City of Springville, Alabama: \$17,000 to support two feasibility studies for grocery and retail development along the I-59 corridor in St. Clair County. These studies will establish a shared, evidence-based framework for attracting grocery and retail operators, replacing isolated, city-by-city efforts with a unified regional approach. By launching this systemwide change, the I-59 corridor will better align resources, negotiate collaboratively, and strengthen long-term economic outcomes for residents.

Leadership St Clair County Inc: \$7,000 to ensure affordable access to Leadership St. Clair County, a program that equips participants with a comprehensive understanding of the county's strengths, challenges, and opportunities, while fostering connections across sectors and municipalities. Through a series of immersive sessions, participants gain insight into key issues impacting St. Clair County, explore its economic and cultural assets, and understand its influence within the state. Funding will help offset rising transportation and food costs to keep tuition affordable for participants.

Thriving Communities – 24 Grants (\$469,000)

Alabama Veteran: \$11,000 to expand Warrior Retreat annual events, add Endurance Retreats, and implement an Ambassador Program. Warrior Retreats facilitate mental and emotional healing through post-traumatic growth programming. Serving as a follow-up to Warrior Retreat, Endurance Retreats continue to support veterans' post-traumatic growth journey by connecting them to the outdoors. The Ambassador Program will be the primary response resource for veterans in crisis/critical need. Alabama Veteran's ambassadors will be located throughout the state, trained, and ready to respond. Whether it is housing, a mental health crisis, food, or employment, the Ambassador Program will be ready to assist.

American Baseball Foundation dba The SmartPlay: \$20,000 to support summer learning in Jefferson, Shelby, and St. Clair County that unites sports with academic growth and character development. Funds will be used to hire additional teachers, enhance curriculum, and provide new technology.

Blount County Children's Center Inc.: \$10,000 to construct a fully enclosed outdoor therapy space to promote emotional healing for children and families impacted by trauma. This new space will extend and enhance the existing outdoor area, transforming it into a private, nature-based setting where therapeutic activities can take place in a secure and calming environment. It will serve as a natural extension of the center's trauma-informed counseling services, offering opportunities for movement, reflection, creativity, and connection with the natural world.

Cancer Awareness Network for Children, Inc.: \$15,000 to expand the CAN Telehealth Digital Literacy Program, equipping senior adults, especially cancer patients, with essential technology skills for effective healthcare access. Grant funds will support hands-on instruction, group workshops, and individualized training that reduce barriers to telehealth and digital communication. Programming improves healthcare engagement, reduces isolation, and enhances quality of life for seniors managing chronic illnesses.

CASA of Jefferson County: \$30,000 to recruit, train, and support Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) - independent, compassionate advocates who champion the best interests of children as they navigate a complex and often intimidating legal system. Grant funds will strengthen volunteer training and case management capacity, ensuring every child has a trusted advocate in the legal system.

Children's Harbor, Inc.: \$25,000 to expand the Pediatric Mental Health Program by piloting counseling services and caregiver support at the UAB Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Funds will be used to provide mental health services and a support group for caregivers while they are in the NICU. This pilot will help Children's Harbor reach families earlier in their medical journey.

Firehouse Community Arts Center: \$8,000 to expand arts programming through the addition of a dedicated Program Manager who will enhance organizational capacity and student engagement at Avondale Elementary and beyond. The program manager will also launch and lead a band coaching program for intermediate and advanced students, giving them opportunities to collaborate, refine their skills, and perform together.

Forge Survivorship Center dba Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center: \$50,000 to enter a three-year lease-purchase of Forge's current building, securing a permanent sanctuary of hope and healing for breast cancer patients, survivors and co-survivors. Owning this space will not only ensure stability for the thousands served each year, but will also provide sustainability for Forge, allowing expansion of vital services, reduced operation costs, and increased accessibility. The mission of Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center is to support, empower, and improve medical access, health outcomes, and quality of life for breast cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones from the day of diagnosis through the rest of life.

Foster Coalition: \$5,000 to host educational conferences for foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers, DHR case workers, CASA workers, and teachers. The events will be open to all that are interested in learning about the foster care system and will focus on trauma-informed care and counseling.

Friends of the Locust Fork River: \$15,000 to expand public river access by stabilizing the stream bank and improving stormwater runoff management at Swann River Park. This project will add value to Blount County's growing network of

river front tourism sites. When completed, this project will enhance the well-known scenic covered bridge with a safe public access park, including off-road parking for local families and visiting nature lovers, paddlers, and tourists.

Great Heights dba Creative Wellness Institute: \$20,000 to launch a community-based STRONGGirls program that provides trauma-informed mental health support for adolescent girls ages. Grant funds will adapt a successful court-referred model to serve participants outside of the justice system, expanding access through schools and community partners. Each session combines group therapy, expressive arts, and experiential activities to foster emotional awareness, self-regulation, and social connection.

Hueytown Harvest Farmers Market, Inc.: \$17,000 to launch EBT/SNAP services at both the Hueytown and Hoover Farmers Markets. This initiative will remove a significant barrier to accessing fresh, local foods for low-income households and will create new revenue opportunities for local farmers.

Impact America: \$25,000 to support the pilot year of SpeakFirst Birmingham Urban Debate League. After 21 years of leading a single debate team for Birmingham-area high school students, SpeakFirst is expanding to develop a local chapter of the national Urban Debate League. In partnership with Birmingham City Schools (BCS), SpeakFirst aims to establish debate programs in every BCS high school, middle school, and K-8 school interested in participating in the League, making the benefits of debate available to more Birmingham-area students than ever before.

Love Like Lexi Project: \$15,000 to expand youth mental health and suicide prevention programming across the Greater Birmingham area. This grant will support the implementation of school- and community-based education, awareness, and peer-led initiatives that reduce stigma, increase early intervention, and create safer environments for young people to seek help.

McWane Science Center: \$40,000 to renew and enhance the Itty-Bitty Magic City exhibit, a cornerstone of early learning engagement at McWane Science Center. Grant funds will support exhibit updates, interactive design improvements, and educational programming aligned with current STEM learning standards. Funds will also support improvements for Tinker Shop and Workshop Makerspace experiences.

Rainbow Omega: \$13,000 to pilot an expansion of the Day Habilitation Program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Jefferson County. The program provides enrichment activities, skill-building workshops, and social engagement initiatives that promote independence. Funds will contribute toward the purchase of an ADA-compliant van to provide transportation for Jefferson County participants.

Space One Eleven: \$24,000 to support the hiring of a part-time curator to strengthen Space One Eleven's contemporary art exhibitions. The position will oversee curatorial research, artist selection, exhibition design, and public engagement programming such as artist talks and panel discussions. The curator will work closely with artists to present thought-provoking exhibitions addressing social justice themes, ensuring they are accessible and relevant to the greater Birmingham area's diverse communities.

Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth of Alabama, Inc.: \$20,000 to expand the Intensive In-Home Services program by integrating flexible supports that address barriers to family stability and reunification. Grant funds will provide critical resources for families facing poverty, housing instability, and transportation challenges that affect progress in therapeutic programs. This initiative will strengthen family resilience, reduce child welfare involvement, and promote long-term stability and healing.

Teach For America Alabama: \$35,000 to expand the Ignite Tutoring Fellowship, a high-dosage tutoring initiative designed to improve elementary school student achievement in reading and math through a series of small-group, virtual tutoring sessions that reinforce school curriculums. Ignite accelerates learning and fosters belonging with students and leverages research-based best practices for virtual high-impact tutoring.

The Hyperemesis Gravidarum Relief Project: \$8,000 to expand access to maternal care for Hyperemesis Gravidarum, a severe form of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Without proper care, HG can lead to serious, chronic complications, including malnutrition, preeclampsia, preterm birth, and long-term mental health challenges such as PTSD and postpartum depression. Funds will cover medication, counseling, and case management costs to overcome barriers to care for HG patients located in Blount, Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby counties.

Vulcan Park Foundation: \$8,000 to support the creation and installation of America250: The Alabamian Experience, a signature exhibition celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary. Grant funds will support exhibit design, interpretation, and promotion, highlighting Alabama's diverse and often-overlooked contributions to American history. This exhibition will foster civic pride, deepen public understanding of shared heritage, and connect visitors to stories that shape the state's cultural identity.

West End Hills Community Development Center: \$40,000 to launch the Nehemiah's Neighborhood Network that will provide programs and strategies aimed at improving housing, nutrition, early childhood education, and workforce development needs of low-income residents in Powderly, Wenonah, West End, and surrounding communities.

What About Us: \$7,000 to support community healing and awareness events such as the Put Down the Guns School Pledge Campaign across Birmingham City schools, which encourages youth to commit to nonviolence and build leadership skills. Funds will also be used to provide families with grief baskets, provide resources and mental health referrals, and to create community awareness campaigns that share real stories of loss and recovery to inspire prevention and promote community accountability.

Zero Zero Inc.: \$8,000 to expand ZeroZero's tutoring program that empowers underserved children and youth by leveraging sports as a foundation for academic achievement, personal development, and career exploration. ZeroZero addresses critical educational and developmental needs of low-income, underrepresented youth, who often face limited career aspirations beyond professional athletics. ZeroZero broadens horizons beyond sports, inspiring academic excellence, career readiness, and generational change.

2025 Cycle 1 – Grants

Economic Opportunity for All – 10 Grants; \$370,000

Bronze Valley Corp.: \$50,000 to increase capacity for and expand the Bronze Valley VentureLab (BVVL), a program operated in partnership with gener8tor, a nationally-ranked startup accelerator company. The BVVL targets three stages of the entrepreneurial journey through three established accelerator programs and C-Suite On Demand. gALPHA is a venture/ideation studio for HBCU students and affiliates; gBETA is an early-stage company accelerator; and the Bronze Valley Investment Accelerator is an equity-based accelerator program in which Bronze Valley invests \$100,000 in each participating startup. C-Suite On Demand is an advisory service that provides companies access to complimentary C-Suite level consulting services for various needs including bookkeeping, marketing, legal, software engineering, and sales.

College Choice Foundation: \$40,000 to support expansion of the Bateman Scholars Program into five additional high schools. The Bateman Scholars Program supports low-income students in applying to, enrolling in, and graduating from college. Programs and services for high school juniors and seniors include ACT prep, financial aid counseling, support with college applications, college visits, and more. Incoming college freshmen receive summer support to ease the college transition and ensure college success. Scholars receive support for up to 6 years in college including book stipends, tutoring, financial aid guidance, and emergency funds.

Community on the Rise: \$35,000 to support Wellness & Housing Opportunity Linked to Employment (WHOLE), a comprehensive housing, employment, development, and support program for women survivors of homelessness. The employment arm of WHOLE is a recycling workshop in which team members learn and build skills while diverting #5 polypropylene plastic waste from the landfill and our local ecosystems. Grant funds will be used to purchase new recycling machinery to increase productivity and capacity.

Elevate Birmingham: \$50,000 to increase capacity by hiring a Development Manager, a key role that will strengthen organizational sustainability and diversify revenue streams. The Development Manager will manage a comprehensive funding strategy, cultivate individual donors, develop corporate partnerships, and organize fundraising events. Elevate Birmingham builds long-term, life-changing relationships with low-income and under-resourced youth, helping them thrive and contribute to their community. Elevate uses a unique, relationship-based approach where full-time Teacher-Mentors serve as teachers, mentors, and life coaches, building relationships with students in and out of the classroom.

Junior Achievement of Alabama: \$50,000 to help build the Junior Achievement McWane Economic Education Center, which will feature immersive experiential learning labs providing 6th and 8th grade students hands-on experiences in macro- and micro-economic simulations. Through classroom curriculum and a day-long experience in simulated cities, students will combine economic education and experiences to help them prepare for their futures and understand how hard work can result in self-sufficiency and success.

Miles College: \$50,000 to further develop the Miles College Workforce and College Completion Project that aims to increase student retention, support adult learners, and strengthen workforce readiness. Grant funding will provide retention grants for students at risk of leaving due to financial hardship; expand student support services such as career counseling, academic advising, and mental health resources; and offer workforce-aligned certifications to enhance employability. Additionally, funds will support community outreach and employer partnerships to create pathways for job placement.

No Fear Finances Empowerment Center: \$5,000 to support Catch-Up Accounting and Tax Services programs, specifically designed to support minority and women-owned businesses in Jefferson County. This initiative addresses critical challenges that entrepreneurs face in accessing affordable, professional financial care, enabling them to achieve compliance, stability, and growth. The program's approach is holistic, hands-on, and tailored to the unique needs of each business owner. Services include bookkeeping setup, data organization, financial reporting, strategic planning, and tax preparation and filing.

Southern Museum of Flight Foundation: \$50,000 to expand the Aviation Workforce Initiative (AWI), a dynamic and growing partnership with Snead State Community College and the Alabama Community College System designed to provide high school students and adult learners with direct, hands-on experience in aviation maintenance and technology. Through a unique combination of dual enrollment programs, FAA-certified testing services, and curriculum-aligned instruction, AWI prepares students for high-demand, high-wage careers in aviation, one of Alabama's most rapidly expanding sectors and a pillar of the state's economic development strategy.

United Ability: \$10,000 to support Gone For Good, a social enterprise of United Ability that creates meaningful employment for adults with disabilities while offering secure document destruction and e-recycling services that keep 2 million pounds of paper each year out of landfills. Grant funding will support the purchase of software that integrates a CRM, online payment portal, and optimized routing, streamlining operations and improving customer experience.

VIDAL Access: \$30,000 to launch a college persistence program to complement VIDAL's college access program, providing comprehensive, wraparound support to guide students through college. Grant funding would support hiring College Persistence Counselors, ensuring students receive 1-on-1 check ins, academic advising, campus resource navigation, financial aid education and assistance, career readiness guidance and support, and educational success programming.

Equity and Inclusion – 6 Grants; \$151,000

AIDS Alabama: \$50,000 to support the Alabama Latino Access Center in creating an emergency response system for immigrant communities, including food vouchers, eye exams and eyeglasses, power bill assistance, and other essential resources. Funding will also support workshops and trainings to empower clients.

Chocolate Milk Mommies: \$15,000 to provide businesses with lactation room equipment, technical guidance, and financial assistance to create safe, sanitary, and accessible spaces for nursing employees. Chocolate Milk Mommies seeks to increase breastfeeding support and reproductive justice for marginalized women and teens in underserved populations within their workspaces, schools, communities, and homes.

Jefferson County Greenways Foundation: \$50,000 to transform East Side Park into a universally designed nature space with trails, bathrooms, and access to Alabama's unique natural habitats, offering an experience not found elsewhere. With a significant investment from the American Rescue Plan Act and the City of Birmingham, Jefferson County Greenways will transform the 6.5-acres into a park that goes beyond ADA accessibility, demonstrating the intersection of true accessibility and nature.

Shepherds Fold, Inc: \$8,000 to update bathroom and shower facilities, allowing for Shepherds Fold to serve up to 100 men in their residential program. Shepherds Fold empowers and equips men at risk of incarceration or recidivism with education, transportation, and job training.

The WildFlower Alliance: \$11,000 to support and uplift families of children with disabilities by creating an inclusive community, expanding access to resources, and offering emotional and practical support to caregivers. Programming focuses on education, connection, advocacy, and accessibility.

Unless U: \$17,000 to support Hub in the Hills, a space for local non-profit organizations to grow and thrive with like-minded co-laborers who have a desire to collaborate, grow together, and ultimately better serve our community. The Hub will expand the "Belonging-Centered Model", which creates space for marginalized people in the community while also uplifting the community as a whole. Funding will support capital improvements, including technology for classrooms and community engagement areas for students where they can focus on building their life and social skills.

Overcoming Persistent Poverty – 13 Grants; \$358,000

City of Montevallo: \$6,000 to replace aging public access technology used every day by Montevallo residents. Funding will provide 3 computers that will be available to all visitors. These computers are essential to the approximately 15% of Montevallo residents that do not have access to reliable high-speed internet in their homes.

College Admissions Made Possible: \$15,000 to support the Birmingham Summer Institute, a summer reading and math intervention program. Funds will be allocated for curriculum development, corresponding educational materials, weekly educational field trips and transportation, and supplemental enrichment activities. The central theme of BSI will be "BSI Takes Flight" and will be incorporated into all aspects of the programming emphasizing real-world connections, particularly within the context of Aviation in Alabama.

Downtown Jimmie Hale Mission: \$31,000 to upgrade technology at Royal Pines, a residential recovery program that serves individuals in a rural setting where access to educational and workforce development resources are often limited. This technology upgrade will ensure clients have access to modern tools for digital literacy, GED preparation, and job readiness training.

Firehouse Shelter: \$50,000 to support the Moving Toward Change program that empowers homeless men recovering from substance use disorders and struggling with mental health issues through job readiness training, employment placement, and peer recovery support. The program integrates wraparound services and strategic partnerships to help participants achieve stability, sobriety, and sustainable employment. By addressing the unique challenges of individuals in recovery, the program enhances job readiness, increases employment rates, and improves long-term recovery outcomes.

First Light: \$50,000 to support critical improvements for the 25-year-old facility that provides emergency shelter to homeless women and families with children. Critical updates include updating and adding bathroom and shower areas and creating additional living spaces, which will offer a more secure and private environment for families and individuals.

Holcomb Ministries: \$8,000 to support a NICU meal program, which ensures that families caring for medically fragile infants have access to nutritious, hot meals during long hospital stays. Many NICU parents face financial hardship due to medical bills and lost wages, making meal access a critical need.

Jones Valley Teaching Farm: \$50,000 to expand Good School Food, experiential food-based learning experiences with proven results of positive academic engagement, healthier eating choices, and increase environmental stewardship. Over the next 10 years, Good School Food will grow to reach all Birmingham City School students. Funding will support the first phase of expansion by creating hydroponic farm labs at eight schools in the Jackson-Olin High School feeder pattern. These labs will increase students' access and knowledge of local foods and will provide locally grown foods for Birmingham City School cafeterias.

Lettermen of the USA: \$3,000 to support Shelters for Heroes, an initiative that offers temporary shelter solutions for veterans facing housing insecurity, ensuring they have a stable and dignified place to stay while working toward long-term stability. In addition to shelter, the program will supply essential necessities such as food, hygiene products, and clothing. LotUSA will actively assist in connecting veterans to long-term housing solutions.

Magic City Harvest: \$30,000 to hire a reserve driver, a position essential for providing flexibility and ensuring uninterrupted service, especially during emergencies and natural disasters. Every year, Magic City Harvest (MCH) rescues hundreds of thousands of pounds of food that would otherwise be discarded and distributes it to local shelters, food pantries, and community programs. The two truck drivers employed by MCH are the backbone of the organization, and their work ensures that food is collected and delivered in a timely manner, meeting the growing demand in Birmingham.

Neighborhood Housing Services of Birmingham, Inc.: \$38,000 to compile an heirs' property report for Birmingham. Nationally and locally, heirs' ownership rights and legalities have become major challenges and the reason for loss of generational wealth. A lack of formal estate planning and legal barriers can prevent wealth transfers to future generations, causing many areas teetering on the brink of instability to tip over into distressed. The report will assess heirs properties by geography and identify program and policy strategies to prevent heir property loss. Grant funds will be used to secure consulting services from a subject matter expert and to hire two summer interns.

Pathways: \$50,000 to address the critical shortage of safe, affordable, and accessible housing in Birmingham by the addition of Permanent Supportive Housing units that will help more individuals and families transition out of homelessness and achieve long-term stability with the dedicated support of a social worker. Pathways programming provides access to education, employment, and healthcare, ultimately breaking cycles of homelessness and creating long-term community stability.

The WellHouse: \$7,000 to enhance security across the St. Clair County campus by installing surveillance cameras at all five residential buildings. The WellHouse serves female survivors of human trafficking and offers short-term, long-term, and transitional living homes, while providing holistic care for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing and health.

Women Under Construction Network: \$20,000 to support HomeSafe and REPAIR Angels, elder care programs that provide social support as well as small home repairs, allowing seniors to age in place. Angel Contractors, trade professionals and apprentices, perform these critical home repairs. Angel Companions are volunteers that connect with seniors twice monthly to increase social connection.

Regional Cooperation – 1 Grant; \$21,000

TechBirmingham Foundation: \$21,000 to support the strategic expansion of Sloss Tech, Central Alabama's premier technology conference organized by TechBirmingham, through enhanced regional collaboration that strengthens connections across Birmingham's technology ecosystem. By partnering with BASE (Birmingham Area Software Enthusiasts), a 2,600+ member tech community, TechBirmingham will establish a dedicated developer-focused track at the McWane Center. Grant funds will be used to support this partnership, increase transportation access, and support a regional call for speakers for the conference.

Thriving Communities – 26 Grants; \$608,000

Bib & Tucker Sew-Op: \$5,000 to purchase new sewing machines to support Bib & Tucker's growth and move into an expanded storefront. By outfitting the space with uniform sewing machines and tools, Bib & Tucker can teach beginner, intermediate, and advanced sewing techniques. The machines will be accessible to a variety of skill levels, ages, and physical abilities.

Birmingham Museum of Art: \$35,000 to update and improve the Digital Initiatives of the Museum's Learning and Engagement Department. Funding will be used for new screens in the Smartlab area, for updates to the Smartguide platform that allows visitors to engage more deeply with exhibits, and to develop new interactive visitor experiences.

Birmingham United Neighborhoods: \$24,000 to support Birmingham Cares, a demonstration project that takes the strategies and lessons of Magic City Blight Busters to all Birmingham neighborhoods through a comprehensive education and training program. For almost 5 years, Magic City Blight Busters has cleared and maintained vacant lots, spruced up abandoned houses, and removed tons of trash in the eight communities that make up Birmingham United Neighborhoods.

Blount County Education Foundation: \$35,000 to serve three Blount County communities - Appalachian, Locust Fork, and Susan Moore - by upgrading, repairing, and improving accessibility of three school playgrounds that are also open to the broader community beyond the school day.

Cawaco Resource Conservation and Development Council: \$20,000 to support Cool Green Trees, a program that develops healthy ecosystems for people living in Urban Heat Islands. Funds will support the purchase of a truck and trailer to transport trees, tools, and supplies to planting sites, furthering their mission of increasing tree canopy coverage, improving air quality, and fostering community engagement.

Childcare Resources: \$11,000 to expand resources and educational opportunities for early learning educators. Funding will increase the number of study and testing materials for the Child Development Associate credential; support a new speaker series; provide new mobile library resources; and provide a new wrap for the Early Learning Resource Library van.

Christian Service Mission: \$50,000 to transform Christian Service Mission's seventy-year-old building into a vibrant, multi-use hub where volunteers, partners, and community members can connect, access resources, and participate in meaningful programs. This hub will serve as a venue for partner organizations to host workshops, social services, and training programs while providing space for community meetings and family-friendly activities.

Christopher Kids: \$5,000 to create personalized, accessible spaces for children with chronic or critical health conditions, disabilities, and other life-altering challenges. Funding will help renovate and modify home environments to meet the unique physical, emotional, and developmental needs of each child, ensuring that every child can thrive in a safe, supportive, and functional space. Families will be provided with specialized medical equipment, adaptive furnishings, sensory tools, and other modifications that empower children to live with greater independence while enhancing their overall quality of life.

East Lake UMC - East Lake Recovery Drop In Center: \$28,000 to support the East Lake Recovery Drop-In Center in serving individuals recovering from homelessness, substance use disorders, and mental health crises. Funding will be used to increase program accessibility, enhance facilities, expand workforce development programming, hire additional staff, and provide essential resources to participants.

Episcopal Place: \$5,000 to support a pollinator garden that enhances local biodiversity and promotes social interaction for the residents of Episcopal Place. The gardens will be accessible to all residents with the addition of sidewalks for wheelchairs and walkers. Episcopal Place is a low-income complex for senior citizens and disabled adults that focuses on the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of all residents.

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools - Alabama: \$30,000 to support the renovation of the historic Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School building in Titusville to expand access to high-quality, tuition-free public education. Freedom Preparatory Academy will serve up to 300 students in grades K-5 in 2025, growing up to 960 at full capacity.

Freedom Source dba Addiction Prevention Coalition: \$20,000 to support Prevention First, a series of substance use prevention programs for K-12 students that use evidence-based methods to change youth knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors and to promote positive youth development. Prevention First instructors implement evidence-based prevention education in local elementary, middle, and high schools, in partnership with Birmingham City Schools, Fairfield City Schools, and Jefferson County Schools. Lessons are delivered weekly in classrooms and at no cost to the school.

Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama: \$12,000 to support a community outreach initiative that will provide direct, high-impact programming for 50 underserved girls in Birmingham Housing Authority communities. By removing financial and transportation barriers, this initiative ensures participants receive the benefits of Girl Scouts - fostering leadership, life skills, and a sense of belonging. The Girl Scouts will deliver a six-session, after-school program focusing on leadership, STEM, financial literacy, community service, and social-emotional learning.

Girls on the Run Birmingham: \$25,000 to increase organizational capacity to meet the growing demand for programming. Girls on the Run is an after-school empowerment program for girls in 3rd through 8th grades that uses games and activities as a platform for teaching girls critical life skills. The end of the eight-week program culminates with girls positively impacting their communities through a service project and completing a celebratory, non-competitive 5K.

Housing Authority of the City of Bessemer: \$50,000 to develop a 13,487 sq. ft., three story structure that will become the BHA Dream Center. The center will bring essential services and educational tools to an area that is accessible to all residents. The BHA Dream Center will become the focal point for community building and allow residents to come to one place for educational, health, and social services.

King's Home, Inc.: \$26,000 to renovate and update the nursery/daycare program to accommodate up to 20 children under the age of 4. The renovations will include enhanced safety measures, age-appropriate play areas, and facilities that better support their development. King's Home provides essential support services that foster healing, hope, and independence for women and children who have experienced abuse. A key component is the childcare program, which helps women focus on securing employment, attending therapy, and navigating legal processes while their children are in a safe, nurturing environment.

Levite Jewish Community Center: \$11,000 to expand access to Swim School, a water-safety and swim lesson program for underserved populations. Schools and afterschool programs partner with The J to enroll students and transportation is coordinated with partner schools. Swim School lessons are taught by trained instructors to groups of 6-8 students and take place over sixteen 45-minute sessions.

Mason Music Foundation: \$8,000 to increase access to music education, free from financial barriers. Mason Music provides high-quality music instruction to children in under-resourced Birmingham communities, fostering not only musical growth but also emotional and cognitive development, self-confidence, motor skills, discipline, perseverance, and resilience.

Offender Alumni Association: \$40,000 to support Phase II of OAA's Violence Intervention & Prevention Partners (VIPP) program. VIPP - Phase II provides support and follow up care to a broader scope of gun violence victims. This initiative supports victims, ages 16-60, providing follow-up care and resources to maximize their recovery and improve their quality of life. The program is aimed at reducing the chance of re-injury through violence, reducing retaliatory acts of violence, and supporting the healing and recovery process.

Railroad Park Foundation: \$50,000 to support Phase II of Sustaining Railroad Park's Walkways by replacing wooden planks on the park's three boardwalks with concrete planks that are expertly cast, integrally colored, and imprinted to emulate wood. This project will significantly reduce annual costs of inspecting, repairing, and replacing wood planks while keeping Railroad Park's design aesthetic strong and ensuring accessibility.

Seeds of Impact: \$5,000 to provide free, accessible parenting resources, mentorship, and community-building programs. Seeds of Impact (SOI) equips parents with healthy stress management tools through trauma-informed classes on positive discipline, emotional regulation, and child development. By partnering with addiction recovery centers, SOI also provides parenting support to reduce relapses and create stability for families.

STAIR of Birmingham: \$33,000 to support program expansion, sustainable growth, new partnerships, and increased advocacy allowing for more students to receive the critical literacy support they need. Funding will support new tutoring sites, a new central office, and expanded advocacy initiatives to secure funding and protect access to local libraries.

STEPS Ministries: \$10,000 to expand the STEPS Life Skills Education for Underserved Teenagers project that provides training to at-risk youth. Grant funding will be used to complete a curriculum focusing on emotional, mental, spiritual,

social, and personal well-being. By equipping students with practical life skills, tools, and knowledge, STEPS steers students away from negative outcomes and positions them to take practical, positive steps to realize their full potential.

Vulcan Park and Museum: \$30,000 to support the urgent maintenance and repair of the Vulcan Tower elevator system, ensuring accessibility for all visitors and restoring a vital revenue stream for the organization.

Woman of Worth, Inc.: \$5,000 to expand Woman of Worth's mentoring program into a full school year initiative, meeting twice weekly to provide consistent guidance, support, and skill-building opportunities. Funding will support student-led community service projects, leadership training, specialized instruction, and career exploration, and will provide meals for participants.

YMCA Birmingham: \$35,000 to expand access to Livestrong at the YMCA and Defeat PD, a Parkinson's Foundation certified PWR!Moves program. These are two evidence-based wellness programs offered at no cost to participants that provide essential exercise interventions and support for individuals in cancer survivorship and those living with Parkinson's disease.