

**MARY REYNOLDS BABCOCK FOUNDATION**  
**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**PREVIEW ONLY**

***Full application guidelines are available online after submission of an organizational summary and an invitation to apply.***

**Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation  
2920 Reynolda Road  
Winston-Salem, NC 27106  
(336) 748-9222  
www.mrbf.org  
E-mail: info@mrbf.org**

# MARY REYNOLDS BABCOCK FOUNDATION

## Mission and Beliefs

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation assists people in the Southeast to build just and caring communities that nurture people, spur enterprise, bridge differences and foster fairness. Our mission is to help people and places to move out of poverty and achieve greater social and economic justice. We support organizations and networks that work across race, ethnic, economic and political differences to make possible a brighter future for all.

We believe in the responsibility and power of individuals—including youth and young adults—to improve their own lives and to act collectively to increase opportunity for themselves and their communities. All human beings have the potential to be productive citizens, yet individual responsibility is not enough. Social and economic transformation in low-wealth communities requires changes in historic disinvestment patterns and removal of structural barriers.

We value democracy and inclusiveness. We believe in working with people in low-wealth communities to shape their own destiny. We believe that working across differences is essential for sustaining our democracy and for expanding economic opportunity.

We hold the following beliefs about how people and places move out of poverty.

- People have better chances at escaping poverty when they believe in themselves, make good choices, and have access to fundamental opportunities, which include excellent education, social networks that connect them to work and to the larger society, living-wage jobs, and fair financial institutions.
- Ownership of assets such as homes, businesses and savings is essential for moving and staying out of poverty.
- These basic societal advantages require a solid infrastructure and consistent investment in order to secure these advantages in low-wealth communities, changes in systems and policies—local, state and/or national—are almost always necessary. Long-term public and private investment is also essential.
- Connections are vital. Grassroots, community-led organizations must be connected with key institutions in their states, the Southeast or across the nation in order to achieve large-scale, lasting changes. On a bigger level, local economies must be connected to regional economies.
- Young people can take on leadership roles that improve their own lives, make contributions to their communities, and prepare them for lives of active citizenship.
- Large-scale, lasting change requires skilled individuals and effective organizations working for social and economic justices and a broad range of allies.
- Change takes time. Changing the conditions that cause persistent poverty is incremental, non-linear and long-term work that is dependent upon a combination of sound strategy, serendipity and intuition.

The Foundation seeks partners who share our mission and beliefs, and we honor the impact, integrity and creativity of people across our region already engaged in this work. We currently make grants to local, statewide and regional nonprofits in the Southeastern United States that have track records of helping low-wealth people build assets and transform economic conditions in their communities.

## Program Description

Throughout our region, people who live in low-wealth communities and individuals from the public, private and nonprofit sectors are forming creative and strategic partnerships to advance economic and social justice. We scout the region to identify and encourage promising partnerships, and we invite groups who meet the following description to contact us.

We support *grassroots* groups and networks in low-wealth communities who are poised to expand their scale of impact. We also support *statewide or regional* organizations and networks that are achieving large-scale impact. We are interested in both new approaches and proven strategies.

## Who Should Apply

The Babcock Foundation invites proposals from *local, statewide and regional nonprofits* in the Southeastern United States that have *track records of helping low-wealth people build assets and transform economic conditions in their communities*. We look for the most promising work that aligns with the Foundation's mission and beliefs and that meets the following criteria:

- **Strategies:** Competitive applicants will have clear, promising strategies for moving people and places out of poverty, including systems or policy change at the local, state or regional level. We look for strategies that help individuals gain assets and transform their communities so they can build promising economic futures for their families without having to leave their communities.
- **Scale:** We look for strategies that hold the greatest promise for long-term impact at various geographic levels (neighborhoods, cities, counties, states, regions). We are most interested in efforts that have potential to expand or deepen their impact, or that are already achieving large-scale impact. The size and duration of Babcock's investments are scaled to the size of impact.
- **Networks, alliances and resources:** At all levels of funding, we look for goal-oriented, flexible relationships among the nonprofit, public and private sector players necessary for leveraging influence and resources in order to achieve large-scale impact. The networks may be formal or informal, short-term or long-term, and structured in a variety of ways. We expect network structure, membership, relationships and strategies to evolve over time to get the job done effectively and democratically.
- **Connections to low-wealth people:** All applicants must have meaningful connections with low-wealth people and communities. We encourage and give preference to networks that include both grassroots organizations and institutional partners. Applicants that are not accountable to low-wealth people through their governance structures must demonstrate 1) impact in low-wealth communities, 2) trusting relationships with low-wealth people, and 3) an analysis of poverty that recognizes the need to address systems and policy.
- **Bridging differences:** We give preference to organizations and networks where people are working together across race, ethnic, economic and/or political lines. In order to receive long-term support from the Babcock Foundation, organizations and networks must build trusting relationships, shared values and productive work across these lines of difference.

- **Long-term view:** We are most interested in efforts that take a long-term view of what is required for people and places to build assets and move out of poverty. We are interested in achieving lasting impact on individuals and communities, nurturing new leadership, and investing in organizational effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Strategic and opportunistic:** We are interested in long-term, patient work to build critical infrastructure in communities, states and the region. We are also interested in supporting work where the moment to act is *now* in order to make significant change or leverage significant resources that will have long-term impact on the lives of many people and communities.

## How Funds May Be Used

**Grants:** Organizations may use grant funds in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- General operating support;
- Project support;
- “Glue” support for bringing together networks of grassroots and partner organizations;
- Organizational development support; including efforts to bring 18- to 30-year-olds into leadership roles in the organization.

We expect to establish relationships with applicants in order to learn how grant funds can be used most effectively to meet both the applicants’ needs and the Foundation’s goals. We use our experience over the past decade with support for organizational development, leadership development, and cross-race collaboratives to engage applicants and grantees in conversation about their needs in these areas.

**Size of grants:** The size and duration of grants is matched to the applicant’s scale of impact, need, capabilities, and opportunities. Initial grants are typically for one to two years, and subsequent grants may be for up to three years. The size of grants ranges from \$20,000 to \$50,000 annually for grassroots organizations, emerging networks or new projects that are poised to expand their impact. Organizations and networks with track records of impact are eligible for grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 annually, depending on their scale of impact. We welcome funding partners and rarely make grants that exceed 30% of a project or organizational budget. If you have questions about the appropriate terms for a grant request, please call the Foundation.

**Program Related Investments (PRIs):** We look for opportunities to make a few below-market-rate investments in economic development projects in low-wealth communities. To qualify, an organization must have a track record of managing debt or equity investments, a solid business plan, and other investors. The size of the investment is matched to the business plan. The Babcock Foundation typically makes PRIs to organizations with a past history or current relationship with the Foundation.

## **Expected Five-Year Outcomes**

From the universe of outcomes described below, we negotiate specific outcomes with each organization receiving Foundation support. Outcomes are tailored to the mission and strategies of each grantee.

*We expect all grants to demonstrate impact over time on moving people and/or places out of poverty* (e.g., home ownership, savings, education, job skills, employment, business ownership, asset retention, new investments in businesses and infrastructure in communities, or local ownership of assets).

*We expect each organization or network that is funded for multiple years to meet most but not necessarily all of the following outcomes:*

- Strategic linkages between grassroots groups in low-wealth communities and key institutions for achieving larger-scale impact than either can achieve alone;
- Specific progress on changing at least one local or state policy or system related to moving people and places out of poverty;
- Involvement of constituents, including youth, in democratic, inclusive processes for changing systems and policy;
- Cooperation and understanding across race, ethnic, economic, political and other fault lines in their communities;
- Better use of public, private and nonprofit resources in order to be more effective at moving people and places out of poverty; and
- Greater internal capacity (e.g., income streams, skilled staff and board, supportive public policy, relationships) to continue the grantee's impact.

## **Examples of What the Foundation Might Support**

Our website ([www.mrbf.org](http://www.mrbf.org)) offers examples of recent [grants](#) to illustrate what the Babcock Foundation is interested in supporting. Our interests are by no means limited to these examples. We are open to a wide range of organizations and strategies that meet our funding criteria and outcomes.

## **Application Guidelines**

The Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation does not have deadlines for proposal submission. The Foundation's board reviews proposals in June and October of each year.

Full application guidelines are available online after submission of an organizational summary and an invitation to apply. The application includes answers to the questions listed below, plus project and/or organizational budgets and a copy of your most recent audit.

### **Current Mission, Analysis and Impact**

1. What is your mission? Include constituency and geography served.
- 2a. What is your organization's understanding of the underlying causes of persistent poverty where you work?
- 2b. What are the challenges and opportunities for moving people and places out of poverty where you work?
3. What are your organization's major strategies (not programs or activities)?
4. Over the past five years, what have been your specific outcomes related to helping low-wealth people build assets and transform economic conditions in low-wealth communities? Specifically, what have you achieved?

### **Constituency and Partners**

5. Describe your connections to low-wealth people and communities. What roles do low-wealth people play in governance and decision making?
6. Who are the most important strategic partners in your current work, and what is the role of each?
7. If you are a network, partnership, collaborative or alliance, describe your structure and how decisions get made.

### **Proposed Outcomes and Activities**

- 8a. Briefly describe the primary purpose of your grant request.
- 8b. Explain the rationale for this request at this time. Include organizational factors (e.g., analysis, mission, strategies, capacity) and external factors (e.g., policy environment, community situation, partnership opportunities).
- 9a. List your long-term (five years) outcomes: Specifically, how will people and/or places be better off economically OR what new changed policies or systems will be in place? See Outcomes and Indicators attachment.

- 9b. List your short-term (one to two years) indicators of progress toward long-term outcomes. What will change in this grant period to let you know you are making progress toward the long-term outcomes? See Outcomes and Indicators attachment.
- 9c. Describe how you will achieve **each** outcome. Be specific about activities. Include activities for data collection and assessing progress toward outcomes. (Activities should clearly connect to the proposed budget.)
10. For the work described in this proposal, who will do what? (Include names and qualifications of key staff.) Describe key partners for the proposed activities, including roles they play and capacity they bring?

## **Outcomes and Indicators**

Please state your long-term outcomes (five years) and short-term indicators (one to two years) of progress toward these long-term outcomes. You may use the format on the next page as an attachment to your proposal or you may include the outcomes and indicators in the text of your proposal (Question 9 a&b). Before completing this section of your proposal, please review the following notes on the Babcock Foundation's expectations for statements of outcomes.

1. Some significant outcomes and indicators related to helping people build assets and transform communities are quantifiable. For these, we expect to see numerical targets in this proposal and then hard data later in grant reports. For those outcomes and indicators that are not quantifiable, we expect to see clear goals in proposals and descriptive data later in reports.
2. If you are requesting general operating support, state the organizational outcomes you seek to achieve in the grant period. If you are requesting support for a specific project, state its specific outcomes for the grant period.
3. If your organization or network needs to build new capacity or partnerships in order to complete the proposed work successfully, we encourage you to include capacity-building or organizational development outcomes. Include activities matched to these outcomes in your answers to Questions 8-10 and in your proposed budget.

**Outcomes and Indicators**

| <p><i>9a. Long-term (five years) outcomes:<br/>Specifically, how will people and/or places<br/>be better off economically OR what new or<br/>changed policies or systems will be in<br/>place?</i></p> | <p><i>9b. Short-term (one to two years) indicators of<br/>progress toward long-term outcomes: What<br/>will change in this grant period that lets you<br/>know you are making progress toward the<br/>long-term outcomes?</i></p> | <p><i>9c. Workplan activities: describe how you<br/>will achieve each outcome. Be specific<br/>about activities. Include activities for data<br/>collection and assessing progress towards<br/>outcomes. (Activities should clearly<br/>connect to the proposed budget.)</i></p> |
|--|---|--|
|  |   |  |