

Mid South Commission to Build Philanthropy

The *purpose* of the Mid South Commission to Build Philanthropy is to develop a plan for increasing philanthropic resources that will fund the communities and nonprofit organizations in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to promote social, racial, and economic equity. Individual citizens, corporations, small businesses, churches, and other charitable organizations are critical elements of the philanthropic landscape. It is this landscape that the Mid South Commission to Build Philanthropy will seek to better understand and more effectively influence. The Commission, comprised of thirty philanthropic leaders from the region, is supported by a \$900,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to provide the funding for the first eighteen months of research, report findings, and proposals.

The Commission is committed to achieving several *goals* including 3 envisioning how the region's citizens and organizations can work collectively to address the critical issues of race and social equity 3 articulating strategies for how the region can better use and even increase its diverse philanthropic resources to support this agenda 3 and making recommendations to the Foundation for the Mid South and how it can best serve the region in carrying out these strategies by, for example, reshaping its governance structure, its grantmaking policies and practices, and its development efforts to support this shared vision of racial, economic, and social equity.

Commissioners will have an opportunity to learn together, to critically consider, and to develop a common *understanding* of 3 the structure of philanthropy - the giving of time, talent, ideas, and money - in the Mid South region 3 the strategies used by diverse philanthropic institutions throughout the world to address issues of racial and social equity 3 the historical and current traditions and perspectives that shape philanthropy in the region today 3 and the practices of philanthropy that promote or limit racial and social equity in the Mid South.

The *learning agenda* of the Commission includes 3 the development of a plan to build effective philanthropy that could include such activities as grants to communities and a leadership fellows program 3 readings, speakers, and seminar discussions 3 domestic and international site visits to enhance the Commissioners' perspectives and understanding of philanthropy outside of the Mid South as they work to create a new vision for the region - including experiences in rural areas, minority communities, and developing parts of the globe such as southern Africa, Brazil, or Eastern Europe.

for more information contact

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