



Southeastern Council of Foundations

# Equity Framework

*The Journey to Our Full Potential*

# Introduction



For 50 years, SECF members have powered incredible change in communities throughout the Southeastern region and the U.S. Virgin Islands, improving the lives of countless people.



While this work deserves to be celebrated, we cannot be content with where things stand in our region and in the communities our members serve. SECF's own research, and that of many others, has revealed the Southeast still suffers from distressing disparities in health, food security, income, education, lifespan, economic stability and other indicators of well-being. The reason for this is clear: Systemic inequity still exists in our region and presents a significant obstacle to philanthropy making a real, lasting impact.



This reality, along with a clear, stated desire from SECF members for support in addressing the root causes of our challenges, prompted the creation of this Equity Framework. It will serve as the foundation for our work going forward and has been designed so that our members can help guide its implementation and evolution while also deciding how it can best support their own organizations and leadership.

In the months ahead, the SECF staff and our Board of Trustees will work together to integrate this framework into our existing programs, benefits and services. We are also here to support you, whether you are just beginning to consider the role of equity in your work or you are already leading the way on addressing systemic issues.

As a membership association, SECF values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation from its members regardless of race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, geographic location or professional level. Through the unique and varied identities of our leaders and members, we grow and serve our communities at our best. Let's build on the progress that we have made and tell a powerful story as we look toward the next 50 years – a story of hope, justice and love for all humankind.

We look forward to undertaking this journey to our full potential and invite you to join us!

With a common purpose,

**Janine Lee**  
President & CEO,  
Southeastern Council of Foundations

**Gilbert Miller**  
Co-Chair, Equity Framework Task Force,  
Chair, Bradley-Turner Foundation

**Regan Gruber Moffitt**  
Co-Chair, Equity Framework Task Force,  
Chief Strategy Officer,  
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

## Equity Framework Task Force

**Gilbert Miller** (Co-Chair) | Bradley-Turner Foundation (Columbus, GA)  
**Regan Gruber Moffitt** (Co-Chair) | Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (Little Rock, AR)  
**Madelyn Adams** | Kaiser Permanente (Atlanta, GA)  
**Alfredo Cruz** | Foundation for Louisiana (Baton Rouge, LA)  
**Robert Dortch** | Robins Foundation (Richmond, VA)  
**Dr. Laura Gerald** | Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust (Winston-Salem, NC)  
**Eric M. Kelly** | Quantum Foundation (West Palm Beach, FL)  
**Antoinette Malveaux** | Casey Family Programs (Seattle, WA)  
**Mike Sweeney** | Healthcare Georgia Foundation (Atlanta, GA)  
**Janine Lee** (President & CEO) | Southeastern Council of Foundations (Atlanta, GA)

Special thanks to the following organizations for consulting with SECF on the creation of the Equity Framework:



MARGA INC.



We invite SECF's membership to help us guide the future of the Equity Framework and shape how it can best support their organizations.

# Our Vision & Our Work Toward Equity



**Our Vision:** SECF seeks to inspire and strengthen learning, leadership and actions within Southern philanthropy dedicated to the advancement of equity in our field and region. This Equity Framework is a pivotal part of the journey to our full potential.



**Our Definition of Equity:** SECF defines equity as the full inclusion of all people into a society in which everyone can participate and prosper. In an equitable society, everyone, regardless of the circumstances of birth or upbringing, is treated justly and fairly by its institutions and systems. To promote equity in the South and elsewhere, philanthropy must first acknowledge the historical roots of inequity, particularly caused by racism, and the present-day systems that perpetuate it. It must then use its resources to spark transformation that allows all people to reach their full potential, unhindered by hatred, bigotry, exclusion or discrimination.



**Our Work Going Forward:** SECF will deliver the Equity Framework to our members in a number of ways – some shaping our existing work, practices and operations, and others through new offerings that help Southern foundations understand and apply their commitment to equity.

## Looking Within

### SECF's ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS

**Organizational Culture:** We seek diverse perspectives and people who share common values grounded in justness, fairness, civility and respect to create a culture of diversity and inclusion.

**Systems:** We commit to examining and implementing organizational systems, policies and practices that prevent biases from operating and that do not rely solely on our positive intent.

**Guiding Principles:** We ask ourselves and our members the following questions: What does SECF stand for? What are we willing to fight for toward improving lives and transforming communities in the South?

**Program Integration:** Our programs will embody the concepts and priorities of diversity, equity and inclusion.

## Looking Ahead

### SECF's EQUITY PROGRAMMING

**Chair's Book Club:** Will introduce titles that help people find common ground and build meaningful relationships and dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Southern Learning Journeys:** Will help us understand how the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the human rights movement today shape educational and economic opportunities and outcomes for children and families in the South.

**Resource Library:** Will cultivate opportunities for members to use research, data and trends to best serve underrepresented, underserved and marginalized communities across the South and provide internal assessment tools.

**Storytelling:** Through multiple platforms, SECF will elevate the stories of members' work so that all can learn and benefit.

**Philanthropy Bridging Divides:** A safe space for a small group of foundation CEOs and other senior executive leaders to talk about the role of philanthropy during challenging and polarized times.

**Peer Leadership Circles:** Network communities for constituencies and other groups to discuss DEI, economic mobility, the environment and other issues.

For more details on the Equity Framework, and for updates on SECF's equity work and offerings, visit [SECF.org](https://secf.org)!



